Population trends for coastal migratory waterbirds in the East Atlantic Flyway:

A new initiative for monitoring in coastal West Africa







The results of long-term monitoring in the Wadden Sea indicate a strong decline in 70% of the populations of migratory waterbirds depending on tidal mudflats. It is not clear to what extent these declines are related to specific conditions in the Wadden Sea or are caused by conditions in other parts of the flyway.

Monitoring data from the whole flyway is needed for targeted conservation action. Good flyway trends are only available for 35% of the 52 key species. Increased monitoring in especially West Africa would greatly improve the situation. A further need is to collect data on reproduction and survival. These drivers of population change and its interactions with pressures will increase our understanding of the most important bottlenecks.

Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) & Conservation of Migratory Birds (CMB) project Monitoring Strategy in Coastal West Africa Monitoring reproduction and survival A monitoring strategy for coastal vital rate monitoring West Africa has been developed. reproduction It consist of yearly counts at a se- breeding studies Total counts in a 6 year interval lection of sites and total count of • juvenile proportions all key sites once in six years. • ring recoveries Counting in January has the first survival • mark-resight studies priority followed by July and Yearly counts at a selection of sites other months enabling the inclusion of the data in the Interna-2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 By studying reproduction and survival for key spe tional Waterbird Census of Wetpopulation

lands International. The counts of a selection of sites will start in January 2013, the first total count under this initiative will be organized in January 2014.

Monitoring pressure and response

cies, the drivers of population trends can be ana lysed. It will help to identify which stages of the life cycle are currently the most problematic. In combination with the registration of pressures and environmental factors, this will help to iden tify the drivers of population trends and distin guish between natural and human induced causes.

It is also important that information is collected on the threats that sites (or birds) are exposed to. In addition, it is important to know whether appropriate conservation actions are in place to counter these threats. These indicators allow a better understanding of the causes of detected population trends and are instru-

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mental to designing conservation strategies. The monitoring methodology of status, pressure and response developed by BirdLife International will be used in the monitoring in West Africa, and elsewhere along the flyway.





models

The current initiative aims to bring together all

research projects to ensure that the results are widely shared and their implications applied to conservation and management.

Colloboration is needed

The monitoring is initially organized in Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cape Verde. But we hope that other countries along the East-Atlantic Flyway will join as well. The ambition is to stimulate a truly East-Atlantic Flyway-scale cooperation for waterbird monitoring. Anyone interested in more information about this exciting initiative can contact us at the addresses below.

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1 Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, 2 SOVON Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology, 3 Birdlife International, 4 Wetlands International, 5 Vogelbescherming Nederland, 6 Common Wadden Sea Secretariat