



*The Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative - linking the Wadden Sea with critical sites along the East Atlantic Flyway in Africa*

## **Training course on migratory waterbird monitoring and conservation in a flyway context**

*Bubaque, Guinea-Bissau, 12-19 January 2013*



Report to the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat

by the Lead Trainer, **Paulo Catry**



## **Mission report**

### **8 January**

2100h – flight from Lisbon, arrival at Bissau 0130h the following day.

### **9 January**

Bissau - Day spent preparing and adapting materials for the course (translation to Portuguese, adaptation to Guinea-Bissau context).

1500h – meeting with Joãozinho Sá and Hamilton Monteiro to organize logistics and program for the course.

### **10 January**

Bissau - Again, day spent preparing and adapting materials for the course (translation to Portuguese, adaptation to Guinea-Bissau context).

1700h – meeting with the course participants to inform about practical details and organise departure for Bubaque.

### **11 January**

Bissau: 0800h-1000h. Still preparing materials for the course.

1100h – 1800h: travel from Bissau to Bubaque

2000h – communal dinner at Bubaque.

### **12-19 January**

Bubaque: training course. The first day was spent entirely in the conference room. The other days were organised so that the morning was spent doing fieldwork and the afternoon dedicated to the conference room. With had numerous sessions dedicated to identification, monitoring techniques, migration, flyway concepts, waterbird ecology, conservation. See Appendix 1 for details of the program.

### **20 January**

Travel Bubaque – Bissau

### **21 January**

Travel Bissau - Lisbon



### Training course evaluation

The training course developed with no major difficulties and was overall very successful. The results of the final evaluation exercise can be observed in Fig. 1. The global evaluation by each of the 16 trainees was positive. The only significant difficulties pointed out in the final discussion concerned calendar/timetable. The objectives of the program and subjects to be covered were perhaps too ambitious for the time available.

Logistics and other practical aspects were very successfully organised by the national team (Joãozinho Sá and Hamilton Monteiro), which allowed a pleasant and successful training course for everybody. The engagement of the national team in training activities was also very positive.

Fig 1. Final evaluation of the training course by the participants (trainers excluded).



The WOW Flyway Training Kit proved to be an invaluable support, and the same applies to the ONCFS kit. Games and exercises as well as theoretical contents were much used. However, the WOW powerpoint presentations proved very difficult to adapt to a “local” (Guinea-Bissau) context, as well as to the level of the trainees. Generally, better results were obtained when discussing the issues explored by the WOW kit without using the corresponding powerpoint presentations.

### **Counting waterbirds in the Bijagós Archipelago?**

One of the objectives of the WSFI and the present training course is related to getting national teams to regularly monitor important wetlands in their home countries. In the case of Guinea-Bissau this raises difficult questions. Counting the huge intertidal areas of the Bijagós archipelago is extremely challenging and needs very highly trained personnel plus very considerable financial resources (for fuel, boats and personnel). Even the best trained ornithologists in Guinea-Bissau have not yet reached a stage where they can carry out such types of survey successfully. For example, during the present training course it became immediately clear that their ability to estimate medium to large flocks (with hundreds to thousands individuals) was poor. The leading national ornithologists were also focused on points counts for which they have received extensive training, and did not feel confident about attempting to count entire mudflat sections, pointing out many different difficulties of doing so (note that wader counts on the Bijagós cannot be carried out at roosting sites, which are mostly placed in mangroves).

Local ornithologists also mentioned the frustration they felt when reading recent reports compiling census work in different African countries, because results from Guinea-Bissau concerned partial censuses of small areas and did not convey to the reader an idea of the importance of the country for waterbirds. The present training course did not sufficiently address this particular issue. There were too many themes to present and many trainees without basic skills for us to be able to try and implement the difficult task of counting challenging areas. Furthermore, we only realised that there was a major problem too late, as we were initially given the impression that there were 2-3 persons able to plan, organise and carry out this type of survey, which clearly was not the case.

Below, we present some recommendations regarding this and other issues.

### **Main recommendations regarding training**

1. To engage a larger number of people in ornithological work in Guinea-Bissau, one of the main priorities/needs should be the provisioning of more binoculars and field guides. In fact, there are several collaborators and people who attended the training course that do not have available binoculars and guides. Sending a good number (say 20) of the book “Echassiers, canards et limicoles de l’ouest africain”, by Olivier Girard, would seem to be a good and low cost option. Few people can read English in Guinea-Bissau, and hence the French version is to be preferred. Other books that it would be good to have in larger numbers include: “Birds of Senegal and the Gambia. By Nik Borrow, Ron Demey, Tony Disley. Editor: Christopher Helm” and “The Birds of the Gambia and Senegal. By Clive Barlow, Tim Wachter & Tony Disley. Helm Field Guides”.

2. Many trainees and people currently engaging in ornithological work do not speak or read foreign languages. They very much stressed the importance of having this training course delivered in Portuguese (and also in Creole), and also the need to have bibliography in this same language. Hence we recommend that a greater effort is made for future training to be in Portuguese.
3. Another interesting possibility, would be to translate the field guide by Olivier Girard mentioned above into Portuguese. This would be useful not only for Guinea-Bissau, but also for Cape Verde and Angola (and marginally so for Mozambique).
4. Several main recommendations can be presented concerning the difficult problem of counting the extensive mud or sandflats of the Bijagós (see discussion above): (a) large scale counts should be made by mixed teams or highly trained foreign researchers and national observers; (b) more (on-the-job) training, with smaller groups of knowledgeable national ornithologists, needs to be carried out with that specific purpose in mind; (c) more modest and feasible objectives must be set for the current ornithological teams in Guinea-Bissau – valuable work can be done that does not involve extensive wader surveys.

#### **Main notes and recommendations regarding conservation issues**

1. Currently, there are no significant immediate known threats to the vast wader populations that winter in the intertidal areas of Guinea-Bissau. The same does not necessarily apply to waders using freshwater habitats (particularly extensive ricefields), but hunting appears to be still quite limited in scale. Habitat changes do occur, mainly involved with trends in rice cultivation, a very broad issue which can hardly be tackled by conservation organizations/institutions.
2. More immediate needs include surveying/monitoring and protecting important nesting sites, particularly those of (migratory) terns, such as the royal tern *Sterna maxima*, but also those of other species such as pelicans, herons, egrets, etc. Disturbance and particularly harvest of eggs and in some cases of adults and chicks is a significant threat, and in the case of the terns it affects a large proportion of the regional populations, with likely demographic impacts.
3. Disturbance at the Ramsar site of Cufada is also likely important and its occurrence and impact must be better documented in order to promote the adoption of mitigation measures by the authorities who manage this park.
4. Broader threats, such as cutting of mangroves and changes in sea level are also relevant, but in Guinea-Bissau usually addressed in the context of much broader initiatives, not linked with waterbirds only.



**Programa**  
**Curso de Monitorização e Conservação de Aves Migradoras**  
**Bubaque Janeiro 2013**



*Nota: este programa é indicativo e deverá ser flexível, sofrendo alterações e adaptações em função dos constrangimentos logísticos, do desenrolar da formação e da resposta dos formandos, das sessões de avaliação e do feedback dos participantes.*

**Sexta-feira – dia 11**

Viagem e chegada. Confraternização e se possível observações pelo caminho.

11:00 – Concentração de todos participantes no Ponte Cais;

12:00 – Partida do barco rumo a Bubaque;

18:30 – alojamento;

20:00 – Jantar de confraternização e discussões a volta da formação.

**Sábado – dia 12**

0830h: Boas vindas – Meio Dia Sepa Maria Ié Có, Coordenador da Casa Ambiente BB;

: Apresentação do curso – *J. Sá*

0845h: Apresentação dos participantes e expectativas para o curso (com jogo de apresentação aos pares) – *P. Catry, moderador*

0915h: Introdução à ODZH, CMB, WSFI, IWC, AEWA, RAMSAR & CITES – *J. Sá*

1005h: O IBAP e o seu papel na conservação da biodiversidade (especialmente a avifauna) – *A. Regala*.

1015h. Pausa para café.

1030h: O mundo maravilhoso das aves migradoras – *P Catry*

1200h: Módulo 1 e 2 do kit ONCFS (revisão de conceitos básicos de identificação de aves) – *H Monteiro & P Catry*

1230h- 1400h: ALMOÇO

1400h: Módulo 1 do WOW Kit – Introdução geral às vias de migração “flyways” (ppt1) (inclui exercício de desenhar uma flyway) – *P Catry*

1530h: Módulo 2 do WOW Kit – Estratégias de migração (ppt2) (inclui jogo da tarambola) – *P Catry*

**PRIMEIRO DIA FICÁMOS AQUI**

1630h: Módulo 3 do WOW Kit – Conceito de área/sítio (ppt3) – *P Catry*

1700h: Avaliação do dia e discussão.

### **Domingo – dia 13**

0700h: Sessão prática com saída a pé em Bubaque. Identificação de algumas aves. Experimentar material óptico e guias. Sessão de formação sobre GPS – *H Monteiro & P Catry*

1030h – identificação de famílias e de espécies - módulo 3 do kit ONCFS – *H Monteiro & P Catry*

1230h - 1400h: ALMOÇO

1400h: Habitats e sítios importantes para as aves na Guiné – *J Sá & P Catry*

1500h: Trabalho de grupo sobre ameaças às aves na Guiné-Bissau & sobre possíveis medidas de conservação. *P. Catry, moderador*

**NESTE DIA FICÁMOS AQUI**

1615h: Módulo 5 & 6 do WOW Kit. Ameaças ao longo da flyway e dinâmica populacional (ppt 5 & 6) – *P Catry*

1715h: Avaliação do dia e discussão

### **Segunda-feira – dia 14**

0700h: Sessão prática na praia de Bruce. Identificação, exercícios e pequenos ensaios de contagens. *H Monteiro & P Catry*

1230h - 1400h: ALMOÇO

1400h: Cuidados a ter numa visita a colónias de reprodução de aves aquáticas – *P Catry & H Monteiro*

*Continuação de trabalhos de identificação e ecologia das espécies de aves*

1445h: Módulo 8-10 do WOW Kit. (correção – ppt2&3) Técnicas de estudo de migrações. Conservação em sítios particulares no contexto de uma flyway. Áreas/sítios críticos. Gestão de áreas/sítios. (ppt 8-10). – *P Catry*

*Continuação de debate sobre ameaças e possíveis soluções*

1700h: Avaliação do dia e discussão

### **Terça-feira – dia 15**

0700h – Partida para Anguruma - realização de contagens e outros exercícios pelo caminho.

1230h- 1400h: ALMOÇO

1400h - Como contar aves no arquipélago dos Bijagós (marés, técnicas, segurança, etc.) e outras áreas de acordo com plano do IBAP - *H Monteiro*

1500h - Como contar aves na lagoa de Cufada – *Fai Djejo & A Infanda*

1515h – Exercício de planificação e organização de contagem na manhã seguinte em torno de Anguruma.

1600h Módulos 5-7 ONCFS (contar e estimar) – inclui exercícios de estimação com bagos de arroz.

#### **Quarta-feira – dia 16**

0700h – Contagens, estimativas e treino de identificação em redor de Anguruma.

1230h- 1400h: ALMOÇO

1400h: Continuação de observações e exercícios de campo.

1630h: Regresso a Bubaque.

#### **Quinta-feira – dia 17**

Contagens de aves aquáticas

#### **Sexta-feira - dia 18**

Contagens de aves aquáticas

#### **Sábado – dia 19**

0830h: Para que servem as contagens de aves? Funcionamento de redes de contadores de aves aquáticas. – *J. Sá*

1100h: Tratamento de dados, preenchimento de fichas e organização de relatórios. – *J. Sá*

1230h- 1400h: ALMOÇO

14:00h – Dúvidas, apoio na preparação de relatórios, temas avançados. – *P Catry & J Sá*

1600h - Sessão de avaliação final com discussão de coisas a melhorar e perspectivas futuras

#### **Domingo – dia 20**

Despedida e viagem para Bissau.