



Bringing together wetland education centres in Asia

An exploratory workshop to develop an Asian regional network of the Wetland Link International (WLI)

Mai Po Nature Reserve
WWF Hong Kong
A Report by the participants

June 16 - 19, 2005



Contents

- i. Summary
1. Introduction
2. The workshop
3. Workshop Aim
4. Discussion Outcomes
 - 4.1 What can we learn from each other's case studies? What are our similarities and differences?
 - 4.2 What are the main issues and challenges facing wetland educators - globally and throughout Asia?
 - 4.3 What do we need to be 'better' wetland educators? What actions (particularly in terms of a WLI-Asia network) would help us to achieve this? Thus how would a Pan Asian WLI network be of benefit?
 - 4.3.1 Needs
 - 4.3.2 Proposed actions to address above needs - both individual and group (WLI).
5. Recommendation from feasibility discussions.
6. WLI Asia Action Plan
 - 6.1 Action Plan for Regional CEPA Conference 2006 - 'Asian Wetland Centres Conference'.
 - 6.1.1 Possible thematic areas for content
 - 6.1.2 Other actions
7. Who does what?
 - 7.1 Roles and responsibilities
 - 7.2 Promotional tools
8. Contacts for additional information about WLI-Asia
9. Acknowledgements
10. Appendices
 - 10.1 Appendix One - Workshop Programme
 - 10.2. Appendix Two - Workshop Participants



i. Summary

The report details the aims, objectives and outcomes of an exploratory meeting to assess the feasibility and possible activity of an Asian regional branch of the Wetland Link International (WLI), a global network of wetland education centres identified by Resolution VIII.31 on the Ramsar Convention's CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness) programme. The meeting concluded that such a regional network would have great benefit for Asian wetland centres. Thus WLI-Asia was established and a preliminary Action Plan developed.

1. Introduction:

Wetland Link International (WLI) is a global network of wetland education centres formed in 1991 by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT). It was created in response to a growing need to help organizations and governments throughout the world in the development of CEPA initiatives at wetland sites. Historically, educators, environmental interpreters and others designing or operating wetland centres often felt isolated from their peers and colleagues elsewhere. WLI was formed with the intention of reducing such feelings by connecting educators and sharing best practice. The Resolution VIII.31 identified the Wetland Link International (WLI) network as the key organisation to assist the Ramsar Contracting Parties in this area of work. A full description of the roles in this area of work of WLI, the Ramsar Contracting Parties, the CEPA focal points (government and non-government organisation - NGO) as well as the Ramsar Bureau, are laid out in Operational Objective 3.3 of the Resolution guidelines.

WLI is a global community aiming to:

- Exchange expertise and information among members
- Support and assist new and established wetland education centre developments and best practice
- Lobby for the inclusion of CEPA within wetland initiatives and policies worldwide.

In response to an increasing number of wetland centres in the Asian region, the concept of a Pan-Asian WLI network was proposed jointly by WWT, WWF-Hong Kong and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) of the Hong Kong SAR Government.

The idea of an exploratory workshop was mooted to assess the feasibility, potential activity and possible logistics of such a regional network.

2. The Workshop

With support from Cathay Pacific, WWF-Hong Kong and AFCD, an exploratory workshop was convened at the wetland reserve at Mai Po, Hong Kong, between 16-19 June, 2005. Representatives attended from:

- The Wetlands Centre (Shortland Wetlands Centre, Ltd), Australia
- The Hong Kong Wetland Park (AFCD), Hong Kong
- Mai Po Nature Reserve (WWF Hong Kong), Hong Kong
- Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM), South Korea.
- Sandspit Wetland Centre (WWF Pakistan), Pakistan
- Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (National Parks Board), Singapore
- Guandu Nature Park (Wild Bird Society of Taipei), Taiwan
- Bang Pu, Nature Education Centre (WWF Thailand), Thailand
- The London Wetlands Centre (Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust), United Kingdom.

3. Workshop Aim

The workshop aim was to bring together a small number of CEPA and other professionals from key Asian wetland centres together with representatives from an existing WLI regional network (WLI-Australia) and from WLI, the parent body.

The participants were to assess the feasibility of establishing a WLI-Asia network by sharing case studies from their own institutions and discussing the following questions:

- What can we learn from each other's case studies? What are our similarities and differences?
- What are the main issues and challenges facing wetland educators - globally and throughout Asia?
- What do we need to be 'better' wetland educators? What actions (particularly in terms of a WLI-Asia network) would help us achieve this?
- Is there the need for a 'WLI-Asia'?
- If so, what is our immediate Action Plan?

4. Discussion outcomes

4.1 What can we learn from each other's case studies?

What are our similarities and differences?

- Presenting case studies provided a good opportunity for educators and managers from different places in Asia to share their experience. Following the meeting, all participants were given a CD of the case study Powerpoint presentations.
- Most of the participants' centres are relatively young with short histories.
- Most are closer to or within an urban rather than a rural setting.
- Newer centres are more people-focused than animal (biodiversity)-focused.
- Newer centres focus on both school curricula and public awareness programmes.
- Centres are resource-limited and use volunteers extensively to save resources and increase public involvement
- Participants' centres are similar in size, relatively small, at around 50 - 100 hectares.
- Participants's centres are often coastal-based with extensive mangroves
- Most of the centres are keen to develop international linkages for resource, experience and information-base sharing.
- Exchange programmes, both of staff and materials, will help improve effectiveness of CEPA programmes and staff. The group recommends this.
- The development of guidelines, basic principles and models will help the development of new centres.
- It is agreed that a platform shall be built to facilitate networking in Asian countries under the WLI umbrella.
- It is essential to enhance co-operation between local NGOs and Government as well as international co-operations through WLI International and the Ramsar CEPA programme, etc.

4.2 What are the main issues and challenges facing wetland educators - globally and throughout Asia?

- The lack of resources.
- The lack of time - people are often overstretched. It is hard to attract new audiences or encourage repeat visitation. Tailored programmes are desirable but labour intensive.
- The status of education within an organization. Does it sit at the core or periphery of senior management? Is it mission-critical?
- Training in the specialized skills needed for 'wetland education'. Acquisition of appropriate professional staff.
- Staff motivation, development and turnover.
- Finding 'Asia'-specific approaches rather than relying on imported 'western' ideas.
- The Ramsar Convention is still focused mainly on waterbirds. Many wetland educators are also dealing with aspects of culture, heritage, poverty, sustainable livelihoods and other ecological issues etc.
- Language is a barrier for Asian-Pacific countries.
- Common language and understanding needed between scientists and educators. Better links needed between education, conservation and research.
- Diseases associated with wetlands (e.g. malaria, dengue fever, avian influenza etc.).
- Climate change.
- Global freshwater scarcity and threats to coastal wetlands.

- Exposing modern children to 'real life' experiences. Getting them away from the Play Station.
- Political shorttermism and the slowness of political change compared to rapid environmental change.

4.3 What do we need to be 'better' wetland educators? What actions (particularly in terms of a WLI-Asia network) would help us achieve this? Thus, how would a Pan-Asian WLI network be of benefit?

4.3.1 Needs

- Many educators may not have some of the varied skills and experience that come with the job. Training and peer learning for wetland educators is an important need.
- Education Resource development often takes time. Sharing resources (e.g. exhibit ideas, education packs, other education tools) and other documents will improve effectiveness and avoid 'reinventing the wheel'.
- Operational and infrastructure development needs expertise. It is recommended to share documents such as Management Plans, Operational Plans as well as infrastructure development expertise and protocols.
- Educators need to keep up-to-date. CEPA and biodiversity information and research conducted in other centres would be useful for developing and updating education resources.
- The internet contains a vast amount of information which is constantly updated. Information overload is an issue and there is a need for portals to filter relevant, topical information. Numerous types of networks exist and forming partnership with relevant networks (e.g. Shorebird network) could enhance centres' work.
- Educators and interpreters need to be intellectually stimulated and have enhanced working experiences.
- Difficulties in funding.
- Very often higher management may implement policy that may not take account of educators needs and job delivery. Need to have representation of CEPA staff at highest level of management.
- Need to promote "Group of Practitioners".
- Need "buddy" concept whereby centres guide and mentor each other.

4.3.2 Proposed actions to address above needs - both individual and group (WLI)

- WLI meetings could have add on training workshops (on CEPA, operations, management, skills etc).
- Document case studies and other resource materials on the WLI website (www.wli.org.uk) website Resource Pool.
- Compile list of existing networks and sharing.
- Ensure individuals are WLI members, on the WLI e-group and on the Ramsar CEPA Coordinator e-list. Put wetland centre profiles on the WLI website online directory (WLI World).
- Staff exchange is a good way to learn and enhance staff experience.
- Group proposals may increase chances of funding success.
- "Centre-base" exchange.
- A WLI - Asia network offers more opportunities for sharing documents including J&A, TORs, other operational documents, protocols, management plans.
- Develop the "buddy" concept of one centre helping another.

5. Recommendation from feasibility discussions

The workshop agreed unanimously to establish a Pan-Asian WLI network to deliver WLI objectives in the Asian region. A preliminary task identified by the workshop is to promote the concept to other wetland centres in the Asian region and to build membership. WLI Asia will aim to build the capacity of Asian wetland centres through regular communication and information sharing, access to advice, support and expertise from within the region as well as outside the region and opportunities for training, meetings and staff exchange as WLI Asia develops. The establishment of WLI-Asia was noted and approved by the International WLI Coordinator.

6. WLI Asia Action Plan

- All workshop participant centres to join WLI - The WLI Coordinator (Malcolm Whitehead - MW) will add all participants' centres to WLI database if not already there.
- All participants to send their centre site profiles to MW if not already done.
- All participants to subscribe to WLI e-list by emailing wetlandlinkintl-wli-subscribe@yahoo.com. MW will approve as group moderator.
- All participants to send examples of learning and organizational resources to MW for posting on the WLI web site Resource Pool.
- CD Rom produced of the case studies presented at the workshop.
- Produce this report. Circulate to all Asian WLI members. Publicise on the WLI e-bulletin and upload on WLI website (MW).
- Promote WLI to other centres in this region. Lew Young (LY) to contact China; Jehangir Durrani (JD) to contact Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Dubai, Sri Lanka; Sunyoung to contact Korea and Japan.
- Anyone with information can e-mail MW.
- Plan Regional CEPA conference for 2006.

6.1 Action Plan for Regional CEPA Conference 2006 "Asian Wetlands Centres Conference"

6.1.1 Possible thematic areas for content:

- Materials exchange 'marketplace'.
- Wetland centre case studies of development and operations with the planned outcome of producing a booklet of case studies and good practice.
- Promoting WLI Asia to other Asian Centres.
- WLI Asia Business Meeting.
- Interactive Training Workshops.
- Pre-conference Events (e.g. students competition).

6.1.2 Other actions

- Information Gathering - send to MW.
- Build needs and wants list. Send to MW for WLI e-list.
- WLI-Asia needs a facilitator. The role may rotate throughout the region. In the first instance, it will be an 'acting' role for 12 months.
- Newsletter Coordination for region. Send to MW for e-bulletin.
- Circulate this workshop report to Asian Centres with a cover letter (from the WLI-Asia facilitator) to help promote WLI Asia (especially to encourage members to send to their contacts/networks)
- MW to send WLI Asia database to WLI-Asia facilitator. MW and WLI-Asia facilitator to inform each other of database updates.

7. Who does what?

7.1 Roles and responsibilities

7.1.1 Acting (12 month) WLI Asia Facilitator

To liaise with WLI-Intl, communicate with group, manage the WLI Asia list, be a spokesperson, Contribute to WLI Newsletter. Develop brief and team to organize 2006 CEPA Conference.

AFCD and WWF -Hong Kong to explore who may do above. MW to liaise initially with both Edmond Lam (AFCD), Sam Lee (WWF Hong Kong) and LY (WWF Hong Kong).

7.1.2 Development of Conference brief

AFCD and WWF-Hong Kong to explore who and how. Then form team to help.

7.1.3 Report of meeting

To be done (as first draft) before the end of 19th June. MW and LY to coordinate. All to input.

7.1.4 Promotion

The key promotional task is to get other centres on board, such as those in Japan.

Target organisations who should be informed of this initiative include: Mainland China, Cathay Pacific, HSBC, employers and partner organisations, countries not represented at the workshop, the Ramsar Convention, Wetlands International, especially Wetlands International-Oceania (Doug Watkins), key conservation organizations in the region, Australian Department of Environment and Heritage (Ms. Anne-Marie Delahunt), ASEAN secretariat.

The facilitator may have to decide what is the best method and promotional approach for each target group.

7.2 Promotional tools

- The Report
- A generic cover letter to accompany the Report, to be used by WLI Asia Facilitator as well as individual centres.
- A 'one-pager' summary that might inform press releases etc.
- Events coming up in the next 12 months which might offer promotional opportunities for WLI Asia need to be identified and, where resources permit, a promotional tool should be modified from the above to suit the event. Examples include: Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee Meeting in Sept-October, 2005, Ramsar COP in November 2005.

8. Contacts for additional information about WLI Asia

1. Mr. Edmond Lam (Senior Wetland Park Officer), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong SAR Government, 6/F Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Tel: [852] 2150-6960 ; Fax: [852] 2314-2802. e-mail: yf_lam@afcd.gov.hk
2. Ms. Sam Lee (Director - Education), WWF Hong Kong, 1 Tramway Path, Central, Hong Kong. Tel: [852] 2526-1011 ; Fax: [852] 2845-2734. e-mail: slee@wwf.org.hk
3. Lew Young, (Mai Po Reserve Manager) Mai Po Nature Reserve, San Tin, Yuen Long, New Territories, Hong Kong. Tel: [852] 2471-6306 ; Fax: [852] 2482-0369. e-mail: lyoung@wwf.org.hk
4. Malcolm, Whitehead, WLI Coordinator, WWT-UK, London Wetland Centre, Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Barnes, London, SW139WT. e-mail: Malcolm.Whitehead@wwt.org.uk

9. Acknowledgements

WLI-Asia wishes to thank all those participants who contributed to its establishment. Thanks are due especially to Cathay Pacific for generously donating air tickets to bring international participants to the event, and for providing hospitality during the workshop. We are also very grateful to WWF-Hong Kong for hosting the workshop, providing hospitality and accommodation, and to AFCD for hospitality. MW thanks HSBC Bank plc for continuing generous support of the international WLI function.

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix One - Workshop Programme

Wetland Link International (WLI)

Exploratory meeting to develop an Asian Regional Network
June 16th- 19th 2005 – WWF Mai Po, Hong Kong

AGENDA

DAY 1: Thursday 16 June 2005

(am)	Facilitators: Edmond Lam (AFCD)
0920 – 0925	Welcome - Eric Bohm (CEO WWF Hong Kong)
0925 – 0930	Welcome – AFCD representative
0930 – 1015	The work of Wetland Link International – Malcolm Whitehead
1015 – 1035	Case Study: The Wetland Centre, Australia - Christine Prietto
1035 – 1055	Case Study: Mai Po, Hong Kong – Nicole Wong/AFCD
1055 – 1115	Break
1115 – 1135	Case Study: Korea – Kim Kuyong/ Park Sunyoung
1135 – 1155	Case Study: The Wetland Centre, Pakistan – Jehangir Durrani
1155 – 1215	Case Study: Sungei Buloh Nature Reserve, Singapore – Jeanne Tan
1215 – 1235	Case Study: Guan-du Nature Park, Taiwan – Lee Chih-ying
1235 – 1255	Case Study: Bang Pu Education Centre, Thailand - Thitivuth Kochasarnseen
1255 – 1400	Lunch
(pm)	Facilitator: Malcolm Whitehead (WLI)
	What can we learn from the morning's case studies?
	What are the main issues and challenges facing 'wetland educators' in Asia?
Dinner	Hosted by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

DAY 2: Friday 17 June 2005

(am)	Facilitator: Malcolm Whitehead (WLI)
	What is the value of sharing?"
	How do we share best practice? Training, development, work exchange etc.
	How do we develop practitioners and others to improve their skills as 'wetland educators'?
	How does it all work in practice?
(pm)	Facilitator: Sam Lee (WWF Hong Kong)
	What are the benefits of a pan-Asian regional network? (at country/Government level, as Ramsar COPs, as part of Flyways, joint programmes etc.).
	What would be the objectives of a WLI-Asian network?
	How do we improve communication and strengthen links between ourselves and the sector at the regional level?
Dinner	Hosted by Cathay Pacific

DAY 3: Saturday 18 June 2005

(am)	Facilitator: Christine Prietto
	Define and scope the need for an Asian Regional Network of WLI,
	Draft Terms of Reference for the Asian Regional Network.
(pm)	Facilitator: Christine Prietto
	Future Planning – A 2006 meeting for Asian wetland CEPA people, from practitioners to policy makers. To coincide with the opening of the International Wetland Park in Hong Kong.
Dinner	At Mai Po

DAY 4: Sunday 19 June 2005

(am)	Visit to the AFCD Wetland Park, Tin Shui Wai
(pm)	Visit to other CEPA facilities in Hong Kong (e.g. Ocean Park or Kadoorie Farm), or Free time, or Travel to the airport for those who are leaving that evening

DAY 5: Monday 20 June 2005

(am) Travel to airport for selected participants
(pm) Travel to airport for selected participants

10.2 Appendix Two - Workshop Participants

Wetland Link International (WLI)
Exploratory meeting to develop an Asian Regional Network
June 16th- 19th 2005 - WWF Mai Po, Hong Kong

Overseas workshop participants

	Name	Office	Contact
1	Malcolm Paul WHITEHEAD (WLI Coordinator)	WWT London Wetland Centre, UK	Malcolm Whitehead, WWT London Wetland Centre, Queen Elizabeth Walk, Barnes, London SW13 9WT UK e-mail: Malcolm.Whitehead@wwt.org.uk
2	Nooruddin Jehangir Durrani (Centre Manager)	Wetland Centre, Karachi, WWF Pakistan.	WWF-Pakistan, 606-607, Fortune Centre, Sharae Faisal, Karachi, Pakistan. Tel: 92-21-4544791-2 e-mail: Karachi@wwf.org.pk
3	John PARR (Director of Conservation) Bangkok	Bang Pu Nature Education Centre, WWF Thailand, Centre,104 Outreach Building,	WWF-Thailand, Bang Pu Nature Education AIT, Klong Nung, Klong Luang Pathum Thani 12120, Thailand. Tel. 66-2-524-6128-9 ext. 101; Fax. 66-2-524-6134 e-mail: johnparr@loxinfo.co.th
4	Thitivuth KOCHASARNSEEN	WWF Thailand, Bangkok	Address as above. Tel: 66-2-7095005 e-mail: THITIVUTH@WWFThai.org
5	TAN Pek Hoon, Jeanne (Senior Outreach Officer)	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Singapore	Jeanne Tan, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, National Parks Board, Singapore. Tel: +65 67942414 ; Fax: +65 67937271 e-mail: Jeanne_P_H_TAN@nparks.gov.sg
6	LEE Chih-ying (Manager, Planning Division) Taiwan.	Guandu Nature Park, Wild Bird Society of Taipei, 112, Taiwan	Guandu Nature Park 55, Guandu Rd., Taipei City, Tel: 02-2858-7417 ext: 232 Fax: 02-2858-7416 e-mail: cylee@wbst.org.tw

7	PARK, Sunyoung (Coordinator, Wetlands and Marine Conservation Team)	Korean Federation for Environmental Movement, Seoul, Korea.	Ms. Sunyoung, KFEM 251, Nuha-Dong, Jongno-Gu, Seoul, Korea Tel: 82-2-735-7000 ; Fax: 82-2-730-1240 Mobile 82-16-733-0668 e-mail: sunyoung@kfem.or.kr
8	Christine PRIETTO (Principal)	The Wetland Centre, Australia	Christine Prietto C/O The Wetlands Centre PO Box 292 Wallsend, New South Wales Australia, 2295 e-mail: priettoclub@hunterlink.net.au

Local workshop participant

	Name	Office	Contact
1	Edmond YF LAM (Senior Wetland Park Officer)	Hong Kong Wetland Park, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong SAR Government	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, 6/F Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Tel: [852] 2150-6960; Fax: [852] 2314-2802 e-mail: yf_lam@afcd.gov.hk
2	Sam LEE (Director - Programme) (Director - Education from Sept 2005)	WWF Hong Kong	WWF Hong Kong, 1 Tramway Path, Central, Hong Kong Tel: [852] 2526-1011; Fax: [852] 2845-2734 e-mail: stlee@wwf.org.hk
3	Nicole WONG (Education Manager)	WWF Hong Kong	Island House Conservation Studies Centre, Island House, Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong. Tel: [852] 2656-1272 ; Fax: [852] 2651-0276 e-mail: nwong@wwf.org.hk
4	Yamme LEUNG (Education Officer)	WWF Hong Kong	Island House Conservation Studies Centre, e-mail: yleung@wwf.org.hk
5	WEN Xianji (Senior Training Officer)	WWF Hong Kong	Mai Po Nature Reserve San Tin, Yuen Long, New Territories, Hong Kong. Tel: [852] 2471-6306; Fax: [852] 2482-0369 e-mail: xjwen@wwf.org.hk
6	Tobi LAU (Reserve Officer)	WWF Hong Kong	Mai Po Nature Reserve e-mail: tlau@wwf.org.hk
7	Bena SMITH (Reserve Officer)	WWF Hong Kong	Mai Po Nature Reserve e-mail: bsmith@wwf.org.hk
8	Lew YOUNG (Reserve Manager)	WWF Hong Kong	Mai Po Nature Reserve e-mail: lyoung@wwf.org.hk