

# INTERNATIONAL

## *Humedales costeros - a project competition*

The wetlands on the Pacific coast of South America form a valuable chain of areas of great ecological value with a high degree of endemism and of vital importance for numerous bird species. They are of great socio-cultural importance because of their beauty and the ecosystem services they provide to local communities, but at the same time they are very fragile and subject to great anthropic pressure.



Report by Johannes Burmeister

This initiative covers coastal wetlands along the entire arid-semi-arid coast of the South American Pacific. The approach is to create a dynamic wetland conservation at regional level by promoting cooperation between different actors, defining and prioritising lines of action and supporting their implementation.

In the first phase of this initiative (2015) we carried out a conservation status assessment of 34 wetlands between Piura in northern Peru and Los Vilos in central-northern Chile. We then contacted local stakeholders and promoted dialogue between decision-makers through meetings with government authorities, academics and NGOs in Chile, Peru and then in Ecuador. At the same time we promoted the initiative in relevant seminars and congresses in the region.

The Action Plan, developed in a participatory manner during the previous phase of the Coastal Wetlands Initiative, promotes cooperation between various stakeholders in Chile, Peru and Ecuador on the conservation of coastal wetlands and coastal birds on the arid-semiarid coast of the South American Pacific. This Action Plan provides a framework for coordinated conservation work between the various stakeholders; it defines priority areas, strategies, activities and specific objectives for wetland conservation, coastal bird protection and networking at regional level, involving stakeholders from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

To put this plan into practice, we have launched a project competition that encourages local non-profit organisations and universities to develop their own ideas, use their individual ca-

capacities and implement each of the components of the Action Plan according to the needs for the protection of their local coastal wetlands.

### Scope

On the occasion of the World Wetlands Day (February 02, 2019) we published the action plan and launched the project competition. The news was spread at a series of events organized in Chile and Peru on the occasion of the World Wetlands Day, and a dedicated website ([www.humedalescostero.org](http://www.humedalescostero.org)) was launched, containing all relevant information for potential applicants.

The dissemination of the competition was supported by the Ministry of Environment of Chile and Ecuador, and we used social networks and newsletters. The application window was open for a period of 3 months, from 15 February to 15 May 2019.

### Committee of the Coastal Wetlands Initiative

Within the framework of this project, we have set up the committee of our initiative, which is made up of representatives of our supporting organisations and the environmental ministries of Chile, Peru and Ecuador.

The first task of this committee was to evaluate the project proposals of this competition according to a uniform evaluation scheme in order to support the selection process of the winning projects. In the future, we intend to involve the committee in the evaluation of the funded projects and to seek its advice on the planning of ongoing activities and the strategic direction of the initiative.

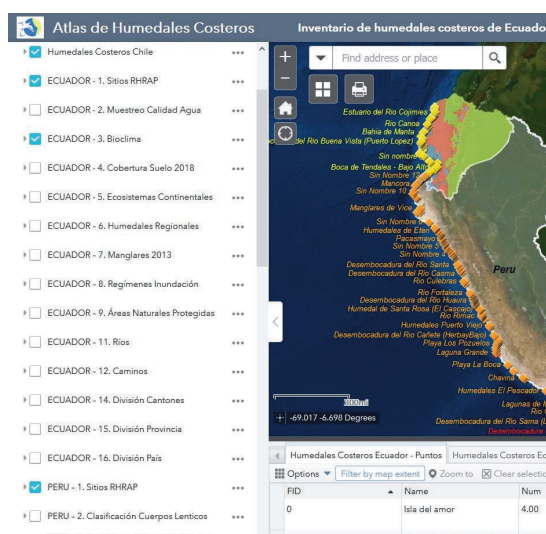
### Evaluation procedure

The evaluation of all the proposals that we received and that complied with the conditions set out in the competition guidelines was carried out by the committee.

The committee members evaluated each proposal independently using a template provided by us. The criteria used in the evaluation of the proposals were the same as those set out in the guidelines for applicants.

### Proposals

By the end of the application window, a total of 27 project proposals had been received; 14 from Chile, 8 from Peru and 5 from Ecuador. After receipt of the project proposals, each proposal was first checked by our team for its admissibility, i.e. for compliance with the general criteria of the competition. In cases where information or documents about the applicant organization, letters of support, etc. were missing, we gave the applicants the opportunity to complete their proposal.



The Atlas of Coastal Wetlands has a Geographic Information System that covers all wetlands on the Pacific coast of South America and a wealth of information and data relevant to the conservation of these sites.

Despite our efforts, 5 proposals that did not meet the criteria or where missing information was not provided in time had to be excluded in the end. In the case of Ecuador in particular, the proportion of non-compliant proposals was very high; only 2 out of 5 proposals passed our admissibility check. The remaining 22 proposals were evaluated by the committee members and the average score for each of the projects was calculated.

According to the average score resulting from the Committee's evaluation, analysis of the individual comments and consideration of the complementarity of the individual projects in implementing the Action Plan, a total of ten projects were selected:

### Strengthening local capacities for participatory monitoring of coastal birds in mangrove areas (Ecuador)

Birds & Conservation is a national partner of BirdLife with the mission to support the conservation of birds, their habitat and biodiversity in general in Ecuador. As a very active and ambitious member of the international community for the conservation of coastal birds, it has designed and is now continuing the plan for the conservation of coastal birds in Ecuador. The project concerns an important coastal bird sanctuary with mangroves and extensive tidal swamps in a large estuary of the Gulf of Guayaquil. Based on previous efforts, 60 members of 3 local garbage fishermen associations will be trained to participate in the long-term monitoring of the avifauna present in the area, especially coastal birds, to observe changes in the abundance and richness of bird species.

### Strengthening of research, administration and institutionality for the environmental management of the coastal wetlands of Pisco and San Andrés (Peru)

The civil association Grupo de Aves del Perú (GAP) has a long history in the research and conservation of birds in Peru. It consists of local working groups in different parts of the country dedicated to the protection of birds in their natural habitats. The project combines different aspects of the Action Plan and focuses on the coastal wetlands of Pisco and San Andrés. By combining activities such as scientific fieldwork and the design and dissemination of educational materials with workshops for decision-makers and local stakeholders, the project aims to create knowledge and appreciation of these ecosystems and their biodiversity and to develop a management plan for the conservation of these wetlands.

### Getting to know our wetlands at the festivals on the north coast of Peru (Peru)

The Center for Ornithology and Biodiversity (CORBIDI) is a Peruvian NGO that brings together leading researchers from Peru and abroad with a common interest in bird conservation and biodiversity. Its mission is to promote science and disseminate knowledge about endangered species

and fragile ecosystems by conducting research and conservation activities. By creating alliances with the public and private sectors to work together on awareness campaigns, the project includes media campaigns, the organisation of special festivals and the painting of murals dedicated to coastal birds and coastal wetlands. The aim is to raise awareness, increase appreciation of these ecosystems and inspire pride in coastal wetlands and their birdlife among the local population in order to gain support for the Eten wet-



The herbicide bottle found under the washed up plastic waste in a coastal wetland illuminates the manifold threats to the sensitive ecosystems along the coast.

land to become a protected area and to improve wetland management in general.

### The guardians of the wetlands (Peru)

The Universidad Científica del Sur, with more than 10 years of experience in teaching and research in the field of wetland ecology, is conceived as one of the most important research institutes and producers of knowledge related to Peru's coastal wetlands. It has played a key role in the first wetland congresses (2017 and 2019) and has made an important contribution to the protection of wetlands at national level. The project takes an innovative approach to capacity building for ongoing research, monitoring and environmental education. Students from academic institutions in and around Lima have the opportunity to participate in a specially designed training course and become official „wetland conservationists“.



The goal of assembling a group of 30 students from several study areas will certainly provide a high quality, interdisciplinary education, creating a powerful group of young professionals committed to wetland conservation.

#### [Pichilemu coastal wetlands: On the way to conservation \(Chile\)](#)

The Centre for Sustainable Development of Pichilemu (CEDESUS) is a local non-profit organisation that promotes and supports the protection and restoration of the natural and cultural heritage around the small but touristically developed coastal fishing village of Pichilemu. CEDESUS focuses on the wetlands of Cahuil and Petrel within the municipality of Pichilemu and actively involves several stakeholders in scientific fieldwork and monitoring, in the development of an integrated conservation plan and in the preparation of a dossier for the designation of Cahuil as Ramsar site or nature reserve and the recognition of Petrel as priority conservation area.

#### [Environmental improvement and restoration to protect and conserve the Mantagua wetlands \(Chile\)](#)

The Foundation for the Integration of Natural and Cultural Heritage (FIPaNCu) brings together young professionals with a strong interest in environmental protection. With the aim of enhancing the value of natural and cultural heritage and connecting local communities with their environment in a socio-ecologically integrated manner, the Foundation seeks to support a sustainable balance between human activities and nature on our planet. The project concerns the Mantagua wetland, located on a largely undeveloped stretch of coastline that is a priority for nature conservation. Activities focus on restoring and improving the habitat by restoring native vegetation, including environmental education for school children, conducting workshops for community members, and creating a website dedicated to this natural area.

#### [Seabird watching network for the protection of wetlands on the semi-arid coast of Chile \(Chile\)](#)

The Chilean Observatory Network for Birds and Wildlife (ROC) pursues the mission of protecting

birds and wildlife in Chile through research, public relations, science and environmental education, working with a group of ornithologists distributed along the Chilean coast and an extensive network of volunteers. The project aims to conserve two emblematic coastal bird species (*H. palliates* and *C. nivosus*) that nest in the sand dunes that surround the coastal wetlands, and finally to preserve these highly threatened habitats in central and northern Chile. The approach consists in the creation of a monitoring programme and a network for the reproduction of these birds, which will be implemented during one year in 6 local wetlands, with the idea of extending it to other sites in the future.

#### [Analysis and strengthening of governance related to coastal wetlands \(Chile, Peru, Ecuador\)](#)

The University of Nottingham-Chile is a foundation established by the British University to facilitate cooperation with partner organizations in Chile and to support development in Chile and throughout South America. The project addresses the management of coastal wetlands as a key issue, focusing on the relevant regulations in Chile, Peru and Ecuador. By analysing and comparing the legal frameworks, gaps will be identified, some recommendations for improvements will be made and the compatibility of coastal wetland management in the three countries will be assessed. The respective instruments will be combined in a „legal toolbox“ for coastal wetland protection at regional level.

#### [Water in the desert \(Chile\)](#)

The Kennedy Foundation, which was founded in Chile in 2004 by the British emigrant P. Kennedy, focuses on the conservation of wetlands and the protection of water resources. The Foundation leads conservation efforts in several important wetlands in Chile and actively promotes good governance, environmental education, research and public awareness. This project concerns the small but important wetland of La Chimba in the coastal city of Antofagasta. With the idea of observing the wetland under a magnifying glass and transforming it into an open-air laboratory, an integrated environmental education course was developed in coordination with schools and

local authorities, giving about 225 children the opportunity to learn about our hydrosphere, aquatic ecosystems and the influence we as humans have on these systems.

#### [E-learning course for the protection of coastal wetlands and beach birds \(Chile\)](#)

The Fundación Núcleo Nativo de Chile was founded in 2015 with the aim of strengthening the connection between man and his environment and promoting socio-ecological balance. In this context, the conceptual pillars of the foundation include business support for marginalized and vulnerable groups, environmental education and the protection and restoration of the natural environment. The project consists of the production and dissemination of an e-learning course specifically designed for the conservation of coastal wetlands and coastal birds in Chile, the application of which can be extended to the entire region covered by this initiative. It will be based on different aspects, depths and relevant areas of knowledge, make it accessible and effective for people from different backgrounds, highlight the importance of coastal wetlands and enable local communities to take the necessary measures to protect them.

**Funding period:**  
seit 2019

**Funding 2019:**  
55.000 EUR

**Project partner:**  
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