

Participatory ecological monitoring of the Alaotra wetlands in Madagascar

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Abstract. Participatory ecological monitoring is a realistic and effective approach in wetlands such as Alaotra, Madagascar, where important biodiversity is found in an area with high human population density. Since 2001, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, government technical services, regional non-governmental organisations and local communities have collected data on key species, such as waterbirds, a locally endemic lemur and useful natural resources. The monitoring was linked with environmental quizzes and an inter-village competition, which helped raise interest in the monitoring and publicise results. The monitoring has assisted wetland management by guiding amendments to and increasing respect for the regional fishing convention, raising awareness, catalysing marsh management transfer to communities and stimulating collaboration and good governance. The sustainability of the monitoring scheme and the usefulness of the data for detecting trends and guiding local managements are discussed.

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