

# WetlandLIFE papers

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In support of the research project [WetlandLIFE's](#) engagement with the [Ramsar Convention's 13th Conference of the Parties \(COP\) in 2018](#) ecoartscotland carried a series of blogs collected here as issue 5 of ecoartscotland occasional papers.

These included pieces by Tim Acott (Principal Investigator) and Dave Edwards (Forest Research) on interdisciplinary environmental research; articles by the three artists involved (Victoria Leslie, Kerry Morrison and Helmut Lemke) and a report on the Ramsar COP by Adriana Ford.

## Background

[WetlandLIFE](#) (2016-19), a project within the [Valuing Nature programme](#), explored the ecological, economic, social and cultural values associated with wetlands in England to better understand how to manage change into the future.

Wetlands have always been an integral part of our landscape. Expanding and reinstating wetlands can bring many benefits to people and wildlife, but can also create concerns for local communities. Healthy wetlands provide important ways to mitigate short and long term impacts of climate change and can bring multiple benefits to people, particularly in relation to health and exercise. However, wetland expansion can also cause anxiety as people see landscapes change around them. For some communities wetlands may be viewed with trepidation, as associations with bogs, marshes and swampy terrain are connected with unwelcome insects, particularly mosquitoes.

WetlandLIFE is an interdisciplinary project utilising a range of natural and social science research techniques, as well as approaches from the humanities and the arts, to understand some of these values of wetlands from both an historical and contemporary perspective. From 2016 – 2019 the project studied cultural, historic and economic aspects of English wetlands, alongside an ecological focus on mosquito management now and in the past. The overarching aim was to improve wetland management by delivering ecological guidance for managing insect populations, particularly mosquitoes, for healthy wetland environments, and to encourage the recreational use of wetlands to support the health and well being of local human populations.

A key objective of WetlandLIFE was to demonstrate the role that artists can play in environmental research – not just by communicating its findings, but also by helping to generate new knowledge that changes how we value nature and the services it provides. With this in mind, three artists were commissioned in mid-2017. Kerry Morrison is a socially-engaged artist and interdisciplinary researcher collaborating with sound artist Helmut Lemke. Their work merges art and ecology to produce intriguing interventions in the landscape. Victoria Leslie is a researcher and published author with an interest in water narratives and gender in folklore and cultural history. Victoria immersed herself in the case study sites and other watery places, writing stories, blogs and creative non-fiction.

This work was supported by the Natural Environment Research Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under the [Valuing Nature Programme](#) (NERC grant reference number NE/NO13379/1).

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**Tim Acott and Dave Edwards**

# **A Disciplinary Dance**

published 24 October 2018



Photo Courtesy of Frances Hawkes

As part of the [Ramsar Culture Network](#)/ecoartscotland #art4wetlands story Tim Acott (Principal Investigator for [WetlandLIFE](#)) and David Edwards ([Forest Research](#)) here unpack their thinking behind involving artists in the WetlandLIFE project (part of the [Natural Environment Research Council's Valuing Nature Programme](#)). WetlandLIFE is focused on managing mosquitoes and the socio-economic value of wetlands for wellbeing.

On Sunday 28th October (18.15 in Room 7) the WetlandLIFE team will host a side event at the [Ramsar Intergovernmental Convention on Wetlands' 13th COP in Dubai](#). The event focuses on 'Sense of Place & Wellbeing in Wetlands: Using Film & the Arts to achieve SDG3'.

We'll be posting pieces by the artists over the coming days.

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Wetlands are ever-changing and dynamic, as water makes its presence felt through its association with a myriad of entities – plants, animals, humans, technology, legislation, economy and climate – all acting in diverse ways to co-create (mostly) watery places, both in reality and in our minds. For some, wetlands are bountiful lively precious places, to be celebrated and protected. For others, they are wastelands, disease ridden swamps that should be improved; 'remove the water, build a dyke, drain the land', might run the call, 'we don't want our landscape to be a mosquito infested swamp' interjects another. From liminal locations in coasts and estuaries to the urban heartland of our cities and towns, places with too much water to be land, and too little water to be a lake, can be received with mixed emotions.



Photo courtesy of Tim Acott

Places are constituted through competing ideas and practices: the physical reality of the wetland is shaped by both the mechanical digger and the imagination. In the UK policy makers view the environment through the idea of ecosystem services. Here nature is reconfigured through the dominant perspectives of natural science, social science and economics to help decision makers 'capture' the value of the landscape. However, this approach can reinforce a utilitarian attitude towards nature that the arts can reframe or challenge, at times with unpredictable and potentially transformative effects.

With a particular focus on mosquitoes, [WetlandLIFE](#) (a three year interdisciplinary project funded by the [UK Research Councils](#) through the [Valuing Nature Programme](#)) explores how new knowledge about the values of wetlands can be used to inform their use and management. However, arriving at an understanding of wetland values is a fraught task. Competing epistemologies seek to provide authoritative accounts of value, but the competition is not on an even playing field. Scientific perspectives hold a dominant position, with even the qualitative social sciences, and especially the arts and humanities, having to argue hard for their case to be heard. Yet, in evoking science and economics as the privileged arbitrators of value – and of the frameworks through which values are understood – to what extent are other voices being closed out of the conversation? Is not one of the most insidious forms of power to control the rules by which debates, and hence decisions, are framed?

WetlandLIFE has sought to widen the lens through which we consider the value of wetlands and challenge the broader assumptions which shape and constrain land-use decisions. Listening to multiple voices is helping the project to engage with wetlands in a deep, critical and imaginative way. Two artists, Helmut Lemke, Kerry Morrison, and a fiction writer, Victoria Leslie, have been recruited to help the project team navigate the boundary of value elicitation and value creation. Working alongside local communities, economists, entomologists, human geographers, historians and environmental social scientists, they were invited to help shape the narrative around wetlands and mosquitoes. Within the project a position of epistemological equality is being adopted, whereby the contributions of all team members are being combined to co-create a place based narrative of wetland and mosquito values.

As the project progresses towards its final year it is becoming clear that artists are having a major contribution by helping to trace and create relational associations that underpin a tapestry of meanings and values. For instance, a walking poem by Helmut, capturing the feeling of being out on the marshes, creates an almost tangible sense of place, revealing something not normally expressed about relations between disparate entities such as wind, sheep, birds, mosquitoes, pylons, ships and other actors beyond the immediate wetland. Such a document can be a seed around which narratives are formed and coalesce. Another example is how Victoria is writing new stories about wetlands and helping the team to explore how narratology can develop reflections on discourses around science and arts. Is there science in art and art in science that could help shape what we are producing and how we judge outcomes? In a creative exchange of ideas, as the team members reflect on their individual roles in contributing to emergent wetland narratives, artists are spending time in science laboratories and scientists are picking up paintbrushes and pens to reflect on their practices.



Photo courtesy of Tim Acott

In conclusion, in WetlandLIFE the project team has sought to create an open and dynamic partnership between natural science, social science, economics, the arts and humanities. The result is an attempt to demonstrate how disciplinary boundaries can be overcome to develop a holistic interdisciplinary narrative of wetland values that does not give authority to

one voice but critically engages with dominant narratives about the value of nature and helps celebrate the wonder that is our wetland habitat in all its diverse forms.

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Tim Acott is Reader in Human Geography in the Department of History, Politics & Social Sciences at the University of Greenwich. His research is increasingly concerned with ways to understand the social and cultural value of ecosystems through concepts including sense of place, cultural ecosystem services and wellbeing, adopting arts and social science based approaches. He is the Director of the [Greenwich Maritime Centre](#) and is Principal Investigator on the [WetlandLIFE project](#).

David Edwards is Programme Manager and Senior Social Scientist in the Social & Economic Research Group at [Forest Research](#). David leads initiatives to understand and enhance interdisciplinary working, knowledge exchange and research impact across the environmental sector. He has a particular interest in the role of the arts and humanities in transformative learning and the co-production of knowledge.

# Victoria Leslie

published 25 October 2018





Photo courtesy of Tim Acott

Victoria Leslie is one of the artists working with the [WetlandLIFE project](#), part of the Valuing Nature Programme. As part of the [Ramsar Culture Network](#) and [ecoartscotland #art4wetlands](#) story leading up to the Ramsar Intergovernmental Convention on Wetlands' COP (Conference of the Parties) we are highlighting the role of artists in environmental research. In this piece Victoria, talks about being part of the team and the role of storytelling and folklore.

On Sunday 28th October (18.15 in Room 7) the WetlandLIFE team will host a side event at the [Ramsar Intergovernmental Convention on Wetlands' 13th COP in Dubai](#). The event focuses on 'Sense of Place & Wellbeing in Wetlands: Using Film & the Arts to achieve SDG3'.

It's a bright spring day, though a chill persists, a memory of recent snowfall. We have forgotten the cold for now, huddled around the fire – a raised fire-pit more accurately – as we eat our sandwiches. There are quite a few of us converged around the warmth, mostly Hands on Heritage volunteers, enjoying a well-earned break from their labours on the Saxon longhouse we are ensconced within. I am the interloper, warming my hands, as I listen to their stories amid the crackle and spit of the flames.

It's dark inside, the only light emanates from the doorway, the stained-glass windows at the gabled end and the fire itself, which, as long as a trough accommodates us all comfortably. It is easy to see why homesteads were constructed in this manner, with the room arranged around this central channel, creating such a practical socialising space. And it is just as easy imagining yourself in that bygone time, thanks to the many convincing details: the unlevelled render over the wattle and daub, the intricate wood carvings based on a ninth century original.

This recreation of the Saxon longhouse, part of the Avalon Marshes Landscape Partnership Project, is one of the initiatives brought to life by enthusiastic volunteers learning a range of heritage crafts. They are just some of the people I have been meeting as part of my role assisting Dr Adriana Ford with her Community Voice Method, a participatory approach examining the relationships people have with their local wetlands. Thus far, I have been fortunate to meet a whole host of people keen to talk about their experience of the Levels, from reserve managers and volunteer conservationists to local historians and environmental bloggers.

Being part of the WetlandLIFE team in an artistic capacity, I am interested in local storytelling traditions, customs and folklore and am engaging with this material to produce new narratives for the wetlands in writing both fiction and non-fiction. My creative approach usually involves plumbing the depths of the archives but in working with Adriana I have also had access to a wide range of people, keen to talk about their experiences and to share stories belonging to the wetland's past. As a folklore enthusiast, this makes for rich pickings, with traditions such as the wassailing of the apple harvest still enduring, along with memories of reballing – the fishing of eels with a knot of worms – and even tales told of a large wild cat stalking the moors.

In turn, Adriana and myself – and the WetlandLIFE team more broadly – have been engaging with theoretical approaches to storytelling, thinking about how the narratives we tell undoubtedly contribute to the cultural identity of a place and



sometimes function to preserve particular environments, often due to the sentimental associations they generate. Adriana's interview process includes an exploration of oral histories, but through working together, now contains questions related to literature and discourse; of the stories that wetland-users consume as well as the ones they tell.

I think that this kind of relationship offers a fresh perspective and approach, a different way of interpreting and giving voice. It certainly strikes me, sitting at the fireside, that it would have been in a hall very much like this one, throughout the long bleak nights, that people would have gathered together and told stories. Orbiting the fire, fictions would have been created, memories and experiences shared. It is this spirit of exchange that resonates through WetlandLIFE, of ideas kindled by thinking together, of stories unearthed by collective exploration and of taking turns to stoke the flames.

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Victoria Leslie is writer and folklorist, author of a short story collection, *Skein and Bone*, and a novel, *Bodies of Water*. Her fiction has accrued a number of awards and nominations and she has been awarded fellowships for her writing at Hawthornden in Scotland and the Saari Institute in Finland, where she researching Nordic water myths. Her non-fiction has appeared in *History Today*, *The Victorianist* and *Gramarye*.

**Kerry Morrison**  
**the way I view mosquitoes**

published 27 October 2018

Reflecting on being part of the WetlandLife team and how interdisciplinary working has shifted the way I view mosquitos  
Kerry Morrison  
11.07.18

The interdisciplinary nature of WetlandLIFE  
The openness and inclusiveness  
Has broadened my understanding  
And my views  
Of wetlands  
Of mosquitos

Information exchanged  
Put out there  
Into the group  
Relating to the collective research  
Offers insights that we can delve in to  
Or not  
As we choose

Peter posted: *in praise of the midges pestering footballers in the world cup*  
Gay responded:  
...best of all for me is link at the end of the article to a study on the flight behaviour in swarms, which is what my colleague, Lionel, and I are working on in mosquitoes. It is an amazing study – so thank you for many reasons!  
I hit the link and read the paper: *Collective Behaviour without Collective Order in Wild Swarms of Midges* [1]

Some time later  
Out on Alkborough Flats  
In July  
At dusk  
Helmut and I found one of the mosquito traps  
Well hidden in the dank, yet humid, undergrowth  
Well surrounded by flying mosquitos

Venturing in I witnessed what I now know to be male mosquitos  
Flying in a swarm  
Out to attract females  
With this little knowledge,  
gained from conversations with the team entomologists  
and from reading the paper  
I felt partly safe  
Male mosquitos don't bite  
(though the females will likely be somewhere nearby)

Informed by me read of 'Collective Behaviour without Collective Order in Wild Swarms of Midges' (2014)  
I watched the swarm  
Intently  
Paying attention to the individual's movements  
and  
The swarm as a whole  
Looking intently  
I observed  
More than a twilight swarm in a disordered phase  
I saw a male mosquito gathering

Collective behavior became visible  
As if in a choreographed dance

The small swarm

To start  
Disorderly  
Then  
As two came into close proximity of one another  
Millimeters apart  
Their movements synchronized and mirrored  
Two darted sideways in unison  
Three spiraled upwards at an angle in unison  
then together semi circled downwards  
Two more spiraled upwards and outwards  
then back into the swarm  
When all came together  
In close proximity  
The whole swarm  
Spiraled down  
As one collective mass  
As if a murmuration

Beautiful  
Awe-inspiring  
Experience  
Walking into mosquitos  
For the first time  
Seeing  
Male mosquitos Dance  
No longer misunderstood as biting beasts  
But seen as dancing males  
Moving in murmurations  
Waiting for females  
to charm with their songs

My vision might not yet be clear  
My understanding still murky  
and not yet fully informed  
Yet  
What I see has shifted  
And in shifting  
My views have expanded

[1] Attanasi A, Cavagna A, Del Castello L, Giardina I, Melillo S, et al. (2014) Collective Behaviour without Collective Order in Wild Swarms of Midges. PLoS Comput Biol 10(7): e1003697. doi:10.1371/journal.pcbi. 1003697

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Kerry Morrison is an artist, a Director of [In-Situ](#), and has completed a Phd in Cultural Ecosystem Services.

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**Helmut Lemke**

**thoughts on scientists, artists, collaborations**

published 26 October 2018

Helmut Lemke is one of the artists working with the [WetlandLIFE](#) project, part of the [Valuing Nature Programme](#). As part of the #art4wetlands leading up to the [Ramsar Intergovernmental Convention on Wetlands](#) COP (Conference of the Parties) we are highlighting the role of artists in environmental research. In this piece Helmut offers his “thoughts on scientists, artists, collaborations”.

On Sunday 28th October (18.15 in Room 7) the WetlandLIFE team will host a side event at the [Ramsar Intergovernmental Convention on Wetlands](#) 13th COP in Dubai. The event focuses on ‘Sense of Place & Wellbeing in Wetlands: Using Film & the Arts to achieve SDG3’.

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to be curious

to observe with senses and minds

to develop questions

to create ways n methods to answer those questions

to enjoy a playful rumination of models of inquiry

to gather knowledge

to share knowledge

all of the above is human – none of the above is specific to one gender, one cast, one religion, one race, one profession

all of the above happens in time – none of the above has an end result

there is no answer following from the above that does not lead to further questions

all of the following (in no particular order):

ownership, copyrights, the notion of the ‘genius’,

research profiles, impact & esteem

are expressions of artificial hierarchies and

the result of a system that values any increase in knowledge

in terms of financial/monetary profit & status

however, because neither ‘artificial hierarchies’ nor ‘financial profits’ or status

have so far contributed to the development of

the understanding and acceptance of us humans

as equals in the ecological system we are part of

or to the creation of a fairer society,

it is of crucial importance to replace

artificial hierarchies with equality

and

the thrive for capital gain and status with the joy of sharing

therefore

**ONE SHOULD NOT ASK, ‘WHY TO COLLABORATE?’ BUT  
‘WHY NOT TO COLLABORATE?’**

and, by the way, I assume that knowledge and understanding reaches beyond the rational

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## MY ROLE IN THE WETLAND LIVE PROJECT

wherever I work I communicate,  
that might be with people, with the environment or with (and through) my material and equipment.  
I have learned to understand that my role as an artist is not that of a creator and maker, but to be promoter and advocate of what is very often already there and more often neglected, over'heard' and/or over'looked'.  
the process of communication and sharing has replaced the obsession with the product.  
therefore when I am asked, *"what (do) you think you can contribute and also what (do) you actually do to connect, ie your approach to connecting with the scientists and their research, wetlands and mosquitoes..."* my answer is quite simple: I do what I always do.

I meet,

I share	thoughts observations impressions experiences knowledge emotions
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I wait for shared	thoughts observations impressions experiences knowledge emotions of others
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I share through	talk, listen, draw, write, read, sound, image poetry
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some of the above is everyday medium  
some is attributed to artists  
all is interchangeable.

by being in a collaborative environment, where all participants through untested communication processes aim to create new, sometimes unpredicted outcomes those processes will flow on all levels in diverse directions. wherever communication media (language, image, other) need translation the collaborators will do so.  
my contribution will be 'me' – where and what aspects of 'me' are useful will be determined by a collective process and by demands of the project group.

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Helmut Lemke is a German sound artist who moved to the UK in 1996. His international, and enthusiastically ecumenical practice, has led him to work everywhere from the frozen seas round Greenland, to a palace in Venice for the 55th Biennale. Along the way he has collaborated with other Sound Artists and Musicians, with Dancers and Scientists, Visual



Artists and Architects, Poets and Archaeologists, Performance Artists and Wildlife Rangers.

Since 1995 he has taught at art academies & universities in Germany, France, England, Finland, Thailand. From 1997 until 2000 he was lecturer at the pioneering Phonic Art Course in Hull. He was Research Fellow in Interactive Arts (Media Events) at Manchester Metropolitan University in 1997 and held an AHRC-Fellowship at the University of Salford from 2004 to 2007.

**Adriana Ford**

**On WetlandLIFE at Ramsar COP13**

published 2 February 2019



Flamingoes on the Ras Al Khor wetlands with Dubai's skyline in the background. Photo: Adriana Ford

For World Wetlands Day, Adriana Ford reports on the [WetlandLIFE](#) project's side event at the [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#) in Dubai and how it was received. Highlighting the various contributions (on the Community Voice Method and by two of the artists Victoria Leslie and Kerry Morrison), Adriana goes on to report on the responses from the audience (who 'got' what the arts and cultural value focused approaches had to offer).

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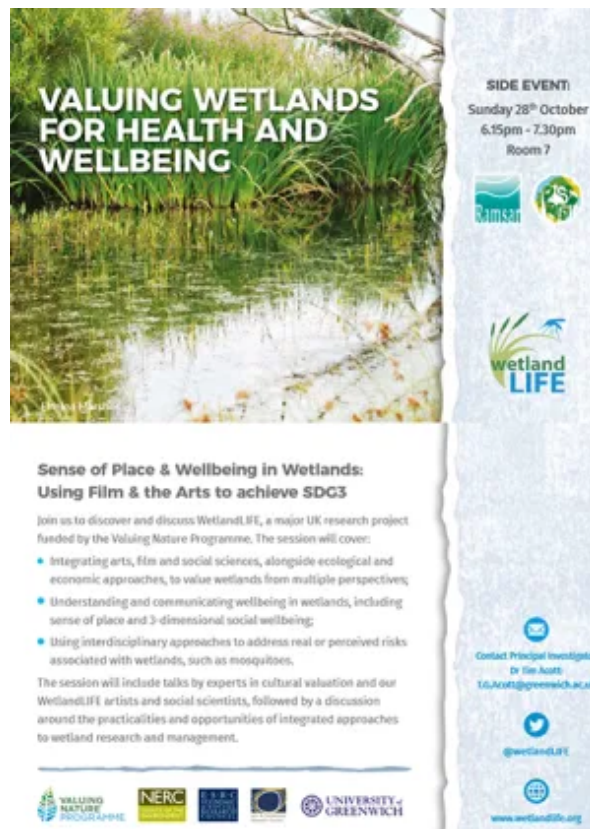
If you were to ask any wetland expert what is the conference to attend for connecting to global wetlands networks, it will most likely be the Ramsar Convention COP (Conference of Parties). It's like the wetlands version of the UN Climate Change Conference which happens each year (typically making the news), as delegates from governments and other organisations from across the world gather to discuss and make decisions on the issues facing wetlands. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands may not be quite as well-known, but it is the oldest of all the modern global intergovernmental environmental agreements, adopted in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar (coming into force in 1975), with an impressive 170 Contracting Parties.

The Ramsar Convention states its mission as,

“the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.”

It provides a framework for wetland management and protection at a global to local scale, including the designation of protected “Ramsar sites”. Every three years, the COP – the decision-making body made up of the governments that are the Contracting Parties to the Convention – meets in a different country, to assess progress and to make decisions about how to improve the processes and implementation of the Convention. The most recent COP (COP13) met in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, from 21st-29th October 2018.

It's the first time I've been to a COP, but for a long while I've been curious about how they work and what's involved. What I did know was that the Ramsar COP13 offered a unique and significant opportunity for [WetlandLIFE](#) to internationalise our impact and to make important new connections. WetlandLIFE is a three year multi-institutional research project funded by the [Valuing Nature Programme](#), exploring narratives and values around wetlands, particularly from a health and wellbeing perspective, and also the role of mosquitoes within this. Our research is focused in England, but our interdisciplinary approaches and findings have far broader applicability. So, I applied for a competitive place to host a “side event” at the conference. Held at lunchtimes and in the evenings of the COP, in between the plenary discussions, these side events provide an opportunity for organisations to present and discuss ideas and projects to the most relevant and global audience of wetland practitioners and experts that you could ask for.



We had been allocated a 75 minute slot on the penultimate day of COP13, for our session titled, 'Sense of Place & Wellbeing in Wetlands: Using Film and the Arts to achieve SDG3'. After arriving a few days early to navigate the COP and attend other side events (and of course, to promote our own!), I was joined by a small team, comprised of two of our WetlandLIFE artists, Victoria Leslie and Kerry Morrison; [Chris Fremantle](#) – a researcher, artist and cultural historian and advisor to WetlandLIFE; and Dave Pritchard – a freelance environmental consultant with extensive experience of the Ramsar Convention, who is also Coordinator of the [Ramsar Culture Network](#).

Together, our aim was to exemplify and discuss ways that the arts, humanities and social sciences can be used either individually or alongside other disciplines to work towards [Sustainable Development Goal 3](#) – Good Health and Wellbeing – for wetlands, particularly through sharing our experiences from WetlandLIFE. I introduced our audience to Community Voice Method, a social sciences approach which uses filmed interviews as a way of bringing together different experiences and perspectives in an engaging way. When we screen our short films in the spring, they will act as a catalyst for further discourse and deliberation on wetland values and management. Our artists also introduced their work, from poetry and creative writing, to mosquito caravans and bird hides as creative hubs, as ways to both understand and create value and connectivity around wetlands and nature.

Our session was well attended, with representation from at least 12 countries in our audience, from the Middle East, Africa, The Americas, Europe and Asia, and we were fortunate to count two members of the Ramsar Secretariat amongst them. I think it would be fair to say we were prepared to justify our approaches of using the arts, imagining our audience to be potentially sceptical about its value for practical wetland management. The response, however, was much to the contrary.

The enthusiasm for our approaches was clear and came from all sides. Paraphrasing a few comments from the discussion,

“for many years Ramsar has tried to convince people to save wetlands based on wildlife; then they tried economic values. But this [arts and culture] works. Getting people to think about how they value wetlands is what's needed,”

and, “Until we can translate cultural values into resolutions we are going to struggle, and this is at the core,”

and quite enthusiastically, “We need to multiply this project [WetlandLIFE] everywhere!”

What became apparent from the discussions was that far from cultural values (and approaches of tapping into those) being considered a luxury afforded only to university projects such as ours, they are recognised as having a crucial role to play in Ramsar, because despite the many successes, wetlands across the globe continue to be degraded and destroyed, and new approaches are required. The idea of tapping into the hearts of people – communities, and indeed decision-makers –

through creative and visual approaches may be part of what's needed to help protect these hugely important, but often overlooked, ecosystems.

The experiences we gained from hosting our session at the Ramsar COP has been reassuring and motivating. We are keen now to build upon this momentum, with plans to take forward the discussions this year with key organisations and networks including Defra and the Ramsar Culture Network. We will be thinking about how cultural values and approaches can be better embedded into the Convention, and from our perspective, how WetlandLIFE can contribute to this, with the hope that somehow we can make a difference on the international stage.



Flamingoes feeding on the Ras Al Khor wetlands in Dubai, UAE. Photo: Adriana Ford

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Dr Adriana Ford is a Research Fellow in Environmental Social Sciences at the University of Greenwich, and Coordinator of the Greenwich Maritime Centre.

Please email [a.ford@gre.ac.uk](mailto:a.ford@gre.ac.uk) for more information, and download the presentation [Presentation Ramsar COP13 WetlandLIFE](#)

Adriana works on various aspects of the human dimensions of environmental management and conservation, including human-nature relationships, cultural values, wellbeing, and sustainable development. She is currently working on [WetlandLIFE](#), an interdisciplinary [Valuing Nature](#) project exploring the values of wetlands from a health and wellbeing perspective. She has also worked on projects exploring linkages between small-scale fisheries and responsible tourism, and has a broad interest in marine and coastal environments through her role in the Greenwich Maritime Centre.

Prior to Greenwich, Adriana worked as a teaching and research fellow at University of York, where she was also awarded her PhD on invasive species management in Australia. Adriana has also worked in Tanzania for a sustainable forestry initiative, and has an MSc from Imperial College London, and a BA(Hons) from the University of Cambridge.

# **WetlandLIFE**

## **Call for Artists**

published 7 June 2017



Fenlake Meadows. Photo: Tim Acott

The WetlandLIFE [Research Team](#) are looking for artists whose work can contribute to our knowledge and appreciation of wetlands and mosquitoes. By this we mean artworks, in any medium, that seek to influence our awareness, understanding, attitudes, emotions, values or behaviour towards them, and the ecological and social interactions that have brought them into being. This might be done by communicating the findings of researchers about wetlands and mosquitoes to new audiences, challenging how we think about them, or changing how we feel about them – perhaps helping us connect with them in new ways.

This is an exciting opportunity for artists to work alongside local communities and a diverse team of environmental researchers to show how art can influence how we value nature and ecosystem services. The focus of work will be on the Somerset Levels, Humber Levels and Thames Estuary, although reference will also be made to a broad range of inland and marine wetlands across England to capture the diversity of these places.

We are offering three bursaries of £5,000 each (total of £15,000). Artists can apply for the total amount – and create work that relates to the project's three case study sites or to wetlands in general – or for one bursary worth £5000 – perhaps focusing specifically on one of the sites. We welcome applications from consortiums of artists working together to address all three sites. The bursaries cover the artist(s) fees, accommodation and travel, and all costs associated with the production and display of the artworks.

Artworks by the successful artist/s will be included in a final touring exhibition, planned in early/mid 2019, which will visit each of the three case study sites.

The full brief is available on the [WetlandLIFE website](#).

WetlandLIFE is one of the projects funded through the multi-Research Council [Valuing Nature Programme](#).