

# Neotropical Waterbird Census in French Guiana

2022 Report

February 5<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>

July 2<sup>nd</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>



Short-billed Dowitcher – © Simon Boivin

*With the financial support of*



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*The GEPOG team would like to thank all the partners and observers mentioned above for their enthusiastic participation in this first year of monitoring!*



Birders in action in Mana polder in July 2022. © Alice Bello

## Abstract

**Keywords :** French Guiana, waterbirds, shorebirds, Wetlands International, counts

In 2022, the GEPOG relaunched French Guiana's participation in the Wetlands International waterbird counts, using the South American monitoring protocol named the Neotropical Waterbird Census (NWC). More than ten years after the first phase of implementation of this survey in French Guiana, it seemed essential to implement it again, given that French Guiana's coastline is an important area for hosting certain species of waterbirds, particularly shorebirds and larids.

Thanks to the motivation of 37 birders and the support of 5 organizations, the 2022 census was a great success: 170,980 birds counted in February and 81,478 in July, for a total of 78 species. 43 sites were monitored, 35 of them during both sessions. At each session, two simultaneous counts of groups of nearby sites also provided the opportunity to create social links between the observers. The strong participation in the surveys and the good representation of the numbers of waterbirds surveyed were highly encouraging for the continuation of monitoring in French Guiana.

## Résumé (FR)

**Mots clés :** Guyane, oiseaux d'eau, limicoles, Wetlands International, comptages

En 2022, le GEPOG a relancé la participation de la Guyane aux comptages internationaux « Wetlands » des oiseaux d'eau, *via* leur déclinaison sud-américaine nommée Neotropical Waterbird Census (NWC). Plus de dix ans après une première phase de mise en œuvre de ce protocole en Guyane, l'implémenter à nouveau semblait essentiel tant la région est une zone d'importance pour l'accueil de nombreuses espèces d'oiseaux d'eau, notamment de laro-limicoles.

Grâce à la motivation de 37 observateurs et l'appui de 5 structures, cette édition 2022 a été un franc succès : 170.980 oiseaux comptés en février, 81.478 en juillet, pour un total de 78 espèces. 43 sites ont été suivis dont 35 au cours des deux sessions. A chaque session, deux comptages concertés ont permis de suivre simultanément des ensembles de sites proches, ce qui a également permis de créer du lien entre observateurs. La dynamique participative observée autour des comptages et la bonne représentativité des effectifs d'oiseaux d'eau relevés sont de bon augure pour la pérennisation du suivi en Guyane.

*This report is also available in French – please click [here](#) to download the French version.*



# General presentation

French Guiana is a French territory with an area of nearly 84,000 square kilometers, located on the northeast coast of South America, between Suriname and the state of Amapá in Brazil. It is subject to a very humid equatorial climate, without marked seasonality (alternation of two rainy seasons and two dry seasons), and is 97% covered by an equatorial forest occupying the entirety of the lateritic highlands of the Guiana Shield. The remaining 3% is a coastal plain extending for just over 330 kilometers between the mouths of the Maroni (west) and Oyapock (east) Rivers (Fig. 1). The wetlands of French Guiana are thus essentially located near the coast, with the interior hosting only artificial water bodies (gold panning and purification basins and the Petit-Saut reservoir) - in addition to a dense and complex network of watercourses of variable sizes and associated riparian wetlands. On the coastal plain, the wetlands are mainly represented by freshwater or brackish marshes, often densely vegetated and difficult to access.



Fig. 2. Mana polder. © PRZHT

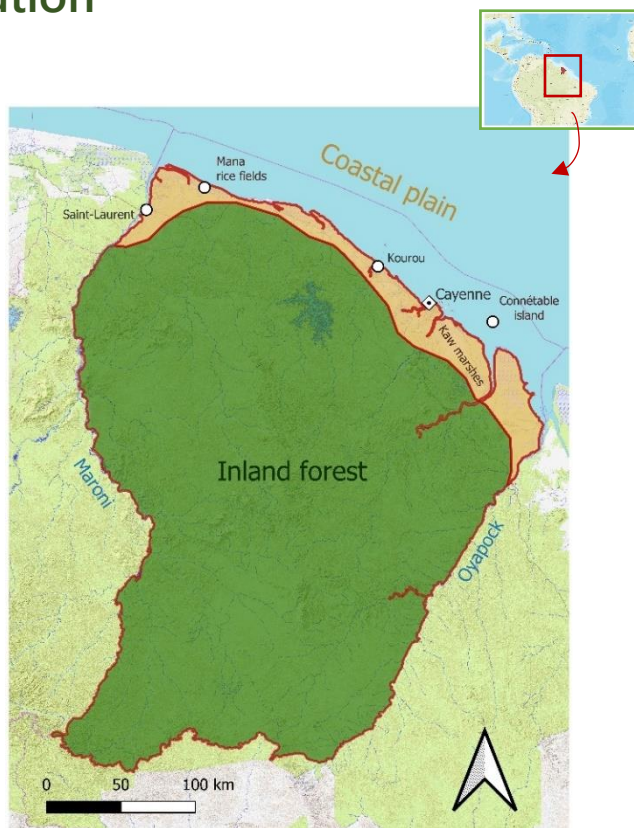


Fig. 1. French Guiana global map. © J. Piolain - GEPOG

Two areas of particular importance stand out from the others on the coast: the Kaw-Roura marshes, east of Cayenne, vast grassy or wooded swamps that are home to important breeding colonies of ardeids and other species (ducks, cormorants, anhingas, rails, etc.); and the former Mana rice fields (Fig. 2), an artificial polder landscape with some sectors that are particularly attractive for shorebirds, waders, ducks, and larids.

The potential of French Guiana for welcoming waterbirds is reflected above all by the attractiveness of its coasts, essentially composed of vast mudflats coupled with a dynamic network of mangroves considered among the best preserved in the world; areas of rocky or sandy coastline are very rare. The coastline benefits from the constant influx of silt carried by the Amazon River, which the currents deposit in the form of vast mud banks all along the coasts of the Guianan Shield. These very spacious and productive mudflats, located at the interface of the coastal and maritime migration routes of Nearctic shorebirds, make French Guiana and the surrounding areas a migratory crossroads of continental importance for North American shorebirds, and one of the main wintering areas on earth for some species, in particular the Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*, which is observed there in groups of up to 100,000 individuals (Fig. 3). The mangroves are home to several mixed colonies of coastal herons, Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber* and Roseate Spoonbills *Platalea ajaja*.



Fig. 3. Gathering of Semipalmated Sandpipers on a resting place at high tide. © Michel Giraud-Audine



Fig. 4. Nesting Cayenne Terns *Thalasseus scandiavensis eurygnathus*. The Connétable island shelters one third of the world population of this distinctive subspecies.

© Pierre-Yves Le Bail

French Guiana also hosts the only seabird colony located on the 3,000 kilometers of coastline separating the mouths of the Orinoco and Amazon rivers: Connétable Island, where the large mixed colony of Cayenne Terns *Thalasseus scandiavensis eurygnathus* (Fig. 4) and Royal Terns *Thalasseus maximus* often approaches the 10,000 pairs, as well as 2,000 pairs of Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificiens*, 800 pairs of Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*, around 200 pairs of Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* and a few pairs of Sooty Terns *Onychoprion fuscatus*. Apart from frigatebirds, the colony is active only from April to August.

The wetlands of French Guiana are generally considered to be in good conservation status. The human population remains low (< 300,000 inhabitants), which limits the anthropic pressures on the aquatic environments, and the coastal line is largely non-urbanized (Fig. 5). The wetlands have



Fig. 5. The coastline of French Guiana is globally in a very good state of conservation: on its vast mudflats flourishes one of the best preserved mangroves in the world. © GEPOG

The importance of the wetlands of French Guiana is recognized through 3 RAMSAR sites (Basse Mana, Estuary of the Sinnamary River, Kaw Marshes (fig. 6)) and terrestrial and marine ZNIEFF\* of type I and II. It is agreed that several portions of the coastline could be recognized as sites of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), similar to what has been established in neighboring Suriname; for example, the Mana polder and the associated coastline could exceed the thresholds of regional importance for 12 species of shorebirds, the international thresholds for 4 species and the threshold of global importance for the Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*.



Fig. 6. The Kaw-Roura marshes are one of the 3 RAMSAR sites of French Guiana. They are home to the world's largest colony of Agami Heron *Agamia agami*. © Olivier Claessens - GEPOG

\*Zone of ecological, faunistic and floristic interest

In order to study waterbirds, and for the practice of ornithology in general, French Guiana can rely on a relatively rich ornithological community considering the size of its territory and its population in the context of South America. The few dozens of ornithologists who compose this community, who come almost exclusively from metropolitan France, are structured around GEPOG, a non-profit organization founded in 1993 which conducts various bird conservation projects in French Guiana. GEPOG also manages the online citizen science platform [Faune-Guyane](#) (Fig. 7), which has gathered more than one million observation data on the fauna of French Guiana, and can be publicly consulted by anyone.



Fig. 7. The management of the census protocol and data was done via GEPOG's database [Faune-Guyane](#). © GEPOG

In 2021, GEPOG took advantage of the implementation of conservation projects targeting shorebirds to re-launch French Guiana's participation in the Neotropical Waterbird Census, a local variation of the international "Wetlands" waterbird counts, starting in February 2022. GEPOG had already joined the protocol between 2009 and 2012, but the momentum had quickly faded after that. The widespread interest generated by the 2022 season, and its support through dedicated funding, should allow GEPOG to continue to participate in the following years.



# February counts

## General information

In 2022, the first session of Wetlands counts took place from February 5<sup>th</sup> to February 20<sup>th</sup>. The period was marked by record rainfall, more than twice the seasonal average due to an ongoing "La Niña" episode (Fig. 8). These rains complicated the task of the observers, especially during the "simultaneous count" on Cayenne Island, which was partially postponed to the next day due to heavy rainfall, but all the defined sites were finally surveyed without any significant problems.

## Key figures

- 40 sites monitored
- 23 birders involved
- 170,980 birds counted including 153,603 Semipalmated Sandpipers
- 73 species identified

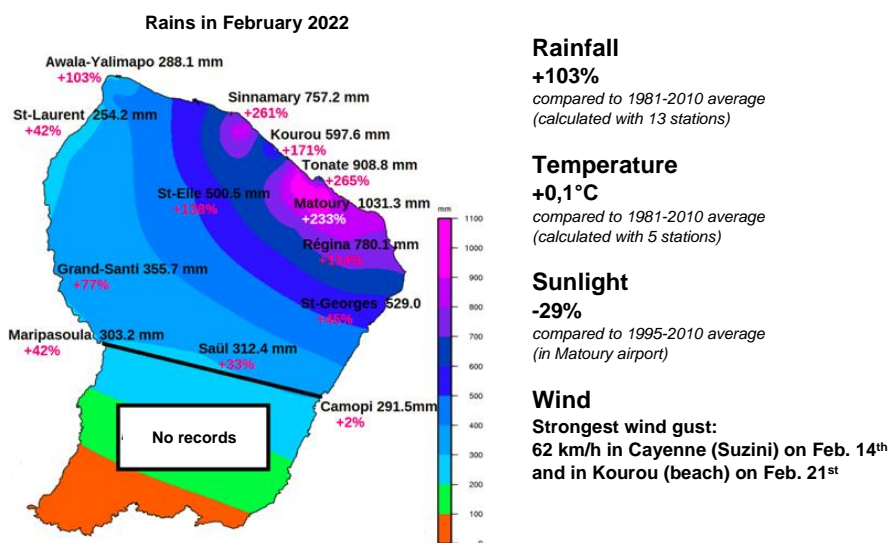


Fig. 8. The rainfall in February 2022 was exceptionally high, which may have complicated the counts.  
© Météo-France Guyane

Despite the heavy rains this first session went well overall. 23 observers shared the monitoring of 40 sites spread from the Surinamese border to the Kaw marshes, notably during two " simultaneous counts": on the Mana polder on February 12-13 and on the island of Cayenne on February 19-20.

The results of the session exceeded expectations: 170,980 birds belonging to 73 species were counted. However, these counts remain only partially representative of the numbers actually present in French Guiana due to the complete inaccessibility of a large part of the coastline to observers.

## Summary of species recorded

The lack of continuous data prevents us from drawing many conclusions concerning the global numbers of birds counted, because no comparison is possible with reference data. Nevertheless, we can be certain that the numbers are particularly high for Magnificent Frigatebirds *Fregata magnificens* nesting on the island of Grand-Connétable, with more than 2,000 pairs counted a few months before the counts.

The analysis of opportunistic data transmitted to the Faune-Guyane database in previous years shows that Anatidae numbers appear to be quite high in 2022, especially for Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* (N = 630, with several thousand individuals recorded during a flyover in January). In terms of shorebirds, high numbers compared to previous years were noted for Short-billed Dowitcher

*Limnodromus griseus* (N = 1051) and Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (N = 461). A group of 122 individuals of Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus* was noted at Mana, an exceptional number for this species which normally does not winter or winters very little in French Guiana. On the other hand, the scores were very low for Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (N = 288), Red Knot *Calidris canutus* (N = 19) (Fig. 9), Sanderling *Calidris alba* (N = 9) and Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia* (N = 1). On the larid side, we note above all good numbers of Cayenne Terns *Thalasseus scandiavicus eurygnathus* (N = 750), which may correspond to early arrivals in the vicinity of the Grand-Connétable colony.



Fig. 9. Red Knots numbers were particularly low in French Guiana during the winter of 2021-2022, for the 3rd consecutive year, an alarming signal for the conservation of this species, which is quickly declining on a continental scale. © Simon Boivin

Finally, we note that these counts allowed the discovery of several rarities, primarily:

- 2 American Wigeons *Mareca americana* and 3 Lesser Scaups *Aythya affinis* in the Mana polder;
- A Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* at the Pointe des Amandiers (Cayenne);
- A Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* in Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni.

## Summary of the sites monitored

### • Cayenne and Rémire-Montjoly coastline

46,074 waterbirds belonging to 32 species were observed on Cayenne Island coastline, including 39,207 Semipalmated Sandpipers. The counts were marked by low numbers of Scarlet Ibis and several species of shorebirds (Semipalmated Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Red Knot...), while larids were much more abundant than last year. The birds were very unevenly distributed over the area: large numbers in central Cayenne, almost empty coastline elsewhere.



### • Mana polder

67,983 individuals of 47 species were counted on the Mana polder: 7,965 in the plots and 60,018 on the associated shoreline, including 60,000 Semipalmated Sandpipers. The numbers of ardeids and larids remained modest; those of Anatidae and shorebirds were high, with a good diversity of species.

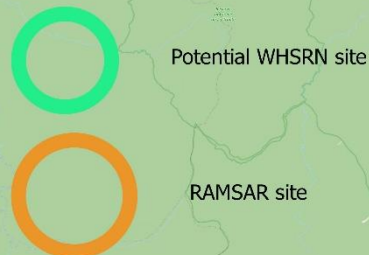
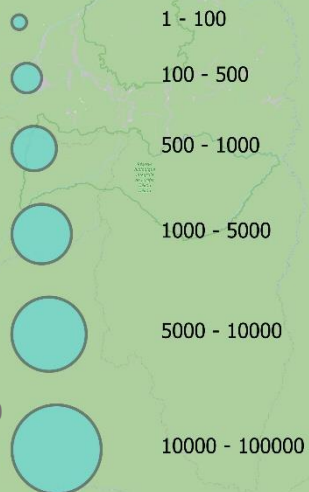
### • Kourou river estuary

53,782 waterbirds of 28 species were counted on the Kourou estuary, including 51,500 Semipalmated Sandpipers. Apart from impressive groups of this species, numbers were low for all other groups: ardeids, other shorebirds (except for the Black-bellied Plover and Semipalmated Plover) and especially larids (almost zero individuals).

### • Connétable island

The counts were carried out during a period of low activity on Connétable island: only Magnificent Frigatebirds breed in February. A number of 2,000 individuals was estimated, corresponding to the breeding population; the fraction of non-breeding birds wandering around the colony is impossible to evaluate.

### Waterbirds numbers in February



### • Kaw marshes

Bird numbers were low along the defined transects. A total of 334 individuals were counted, including 130 Wattled Jacanas *Jacana jacana* (39%) and 115 Great Egrets *Ardea alba* (34%). The coverage of the site remains very partial: these numbers are not at all representative of the numbers actually present in the area (>600 km<sup>2</sup>).

0 15 30 km 11



# July counts

## General information

The second session of the 2022 Wetlands counts took place from July 2<sup>nd</sup> and July 17<sup>th</sup>. This period followed the end of the rainy season and a marked "La Niña" episode in French Guiana: the weather conditions corresponded to seasonal norms (Fig. 10), and a drop in water levels occurred at many sites; bird numbers were slightly lower than in February overall.

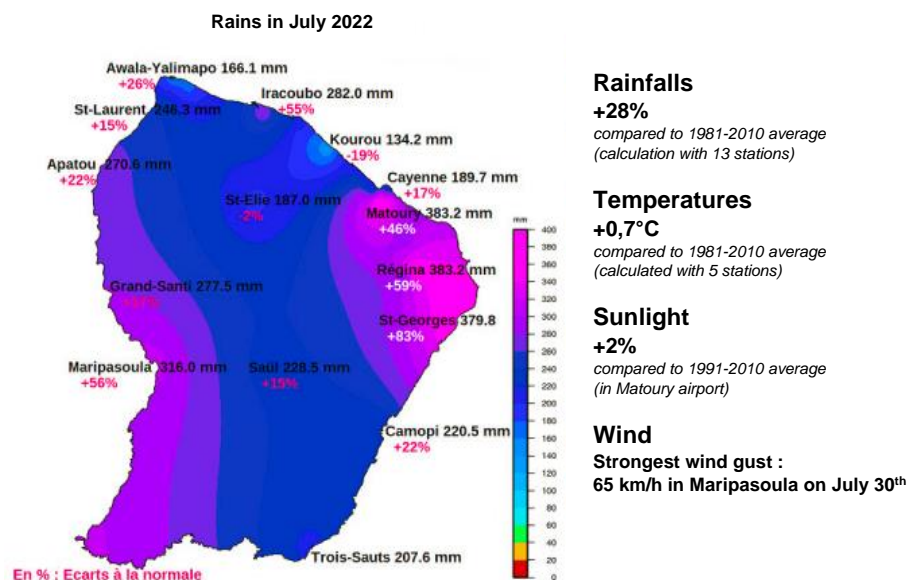


Fig. 10. The weather in July was rather mild, and in line with seasonal norms, which facilitated the counting process. © Météo-France Guyane

## Key figures

- 38 sites monitored
- 23 birders involved
- 81,478 birds counted including 42,774 Semipalmated Sandpipers
- 58 species identified

As in February, the counts took place under good conditions; however, great difficulties of access were encountered on the Mana polder, the drop in water levels complicating access by canoe but not allowing surveys on foot. Sites had to be abandoned in this sector. In total, 23 observers were mobilized to follow 38 different sites, more or less the same as in February.

During this session, 58 species were encountered for a total of 81,478 individuals, which is half of the numbers recorded in February. These numbers are higher than expected, and can be explained by a high abundance of shorebirds for the season and high activity on the Grand-Connétable colony.

## Summary of species recorded

As with the February session, it is difficult to draw conclusions on the numbers recorded in the absence of a baseline. Nevertheless, the numbers of larids are particularly significant this year, in connection with the dynamic of the colony of Grand-Connétable. Compared to February, notable increases are noted for the Yellow-billed Tern *Sternula superciliaris*, while the numbers of Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* remain similar, at levels that appear to be average. The Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex*, on the other hand, was not very abundant.

For shorebirds, the decrease in numbers due to the return of North American migrants was not as important as expected: with 44,513 birds counted compared to 158,234 in February, the summer numbers still represent 28% of those counted in winter. Two species of North American shorebirds have even increased compared to the February count: the Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus* (+46.9%) and the Red Knot *Calidris canutus* (+36.8%). The Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* decreased by only 27.5%. These three species have in common that they have low numbers in French Guiana, and winter only marginally in the area. Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris* shows a strong increase (10-fold increase in numbers), which was expected for this species which appears on the coast of French Guiana mainly from March to August. All these trends will be confirmed after a few years of monitoring.

For the other groups, we note a significant increase in the numbers of ardeids, which is surprising for this group that is considered sedentary in French Guiana. Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* doubled and Great Egret *Ardea alba* numbers tripled. This could be linked to a higher activity on the breeding colonies. For the Anatidae, the disappearance of the Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* was not compensated by the doubling of the numbers of the Whith-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis*.

For rarities, we note the presence of a Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* in Cayenne (same individual as in February) and two Little Wood-Rails *Aramides mangle* on the Pointe des Roches in Kourou (fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Previously considered endemic to Brazil, the Little Wood-Rail is among the rarities detected during these counts. © Roland Jantot

## Summary of the sites monitored

### • Cayenne and Rémire-Montjoly coastline

20,857 waterbirds of 30 species were observed on Cayenne Island, including 16,501 Semipalmated Sandpipers *Calidris pusilla*. A notable decrease compared to February, linked to the departure of a large part of the shorebirds. All the species noted in winter are still present, but in small numbers. Remarkable numbers of Yellow-billed Terns were also noted, in a context of strong presence of larids.

### • Connétable island

Breeding numbers were high this year on Grand-Connétable island, especially for terns, following the construction of a dedicated platform: 8,825 pairs of Cayenne Tern and 1,827 of Royal Tern. The other species are in the average of the last years (880 pairs of Laughing Gull, 133 of Brown Noddy, 31 of Sooty Terns) except for the frigatebirds, for which the number of birds is low during the "small breeding season".

### • Mana polder

5,840 waterbirds of 40 species were counted on the Mana polder, a sharp decrease from February due to the absence of Semipalmated Sandpipers *Calidris pusilla* (empty shoreline, high tide). High numbers of herons, Wood Storks *Mycteria americana* and White-cheeked Pintails *Anas bahamensis* were noted. On the other hand, the numbers were unusually low for larids.

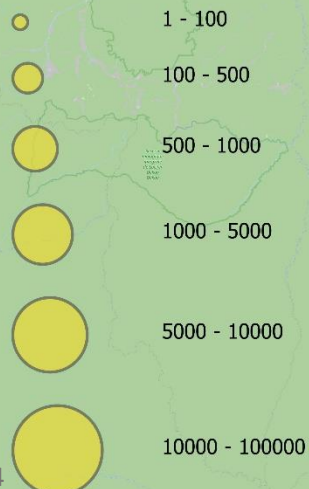
### • Kourou river estuary

Numbers of waterbirds remain very high in this area, with 29,694 birds counted belonging to 28 species. Numbers of Semipalmated Sandpiper are impressive for the season (25,500 birds counted); to a lesser extent, Semipalmated Plover is also abundant. Herons, Yellow-billed Terns and Black Skimmers complete the picture.

### • Kaw marshes

Numbers are still low on the defined transect, with 314 birds counted. This time there were fewer Wattled Jacanas (N = 74, 23%) but more Great Egrets (N = 124, 39%). No significant movement of birds appears to have occurred since February.

### Waterbirds numbers in July



Potential WHSRN site



RAMSAR site



0 15 30 km



## Summary table by species

Species	Feb.	July	Change between feb. – july	Trend feb. – jul.	Trend reliability*
Least Grebe	1	2			
Pied-billed Grebe	14	3			
Neotropic Cormorant	9	30			
Anhinga	12	8			
Leach's Storm-Petrel	1	0			
Magnificent frigatebird	2008	1011	-49.65%	↓	0
Least Bittern	1	2			
Black-crowned Night-Heron	129	15			
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	33	73			
Striated Heron	42	73			
Cattle Egret	182	45			
Cocoi Heron	45	38	-15.56%	=	1
Great Egret	322	988	+206.83%	↑	1
Tricolored Heron	329	429	+30.40%	=	1
Little Egret	9	5			
Snowy Egret	1466	3076			
Little Blue Heron	3522	3140			
Wood Stork	0	76			
Scarlet Ibis	472	371			
Green Ibis	3	1			
Roseate Spoonbill	42	13			
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	107	130			
Muscovy Duck	32	17			
White-cheeked Pintail	244	469			
American Wigeon	2	0			
Blue-winged Teal	630	0			
Lesser Scaup	3	0			
Masked Duck	2	0			
Mangrove Rail	0	4			
Gray-cowled Wood-Rail	1	1			
Little Wood-Rail	0	2			
Russet-crowned Crake	1	1			
Gray-breasted Crake	0	1			
Common Gallinule	20	13			
Purple Gallinule	9	18			
Azure Gallinule	7	2			
Sungrebe	5	0			
Wattled Jacana	336	236			
Black-necked Stilt	166	86			

Black-bellied Plover	200	44	-78.00%	↓	2
Semipalmated Plover	407	295	-27.52%	=	1
Wilson's Plover	1	0			
Collared Plover	4	54			
Pantanal Snipe	2	0			
Short-billed Dowitcher	1051	242			
Whimbrel	32	47			
Spotted Sandpiper	134	15	-88.81%	↓	3
Greater Yellowlegs	1185	449	-62.11%	↓	3
Lesser Yellowlegs	461	72	-84.38%	↓	3
Solitary Sandpiper	31	0	-100.00%	↓	3
Willet	82	39	-52.44%	↓	3
Ruddy Turnstone	288	131	-54.51%	↓	3
Red Knot	19	26	+36.84%	↑	0
Sanderling	9	3			
Semipalmated Sandpiper	153603	42774			
Least Sandpiper	104	0			
Stilt Sandpiper	122	0			
Laughing Gull	357	1904			
Black-headed Gull	1	1			
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	0			
Sooty Tern	0	31			
Yellow-billed Tern	320	1305			
Large-billed Tern	19	34			
Gull-billed Tern	198	91	-54.04%	↓	2
Common Tern	44	54	+18.52%	=	0
Cabot's Tern	5	0			
Cayenne Tern	765	17857			
Royal Tern	79	3761			
Black Tern	7	0			
Brown Noddy	1	266			
Black Skimmer	1225	1580	+28.98%	=	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170962</b>	<b>81454</b>	<b>-52.36%</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>3</b>

\*The trend reliability indicator reflects the relevance of the trend indicated between the counts of February and July (increase, decrease, stagnation), *i.e.* whether it accurately represents the real change in numbers that occurred or not. A score of 0 indicates an unreliable trend, a score of 3 means that the trend given is very likely to be representative of reality.

This indicator takes into account for each species what is known about its ecology (well-known seasonal presence or not), its detectability, and whether the sites monitored overlap with significant populations or not.

Trend analyses were not performed for species with numbers consistently below 30 individuals.

## Summary table by site

Area	Site name	February				July			
		Numbers		Species		Numbers		Species	
		Nb.	% tot.	Nb.	% tot.	Nb.	% tot.	Nb.	% tot.
AWALA	Hattes beach and point	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Pointe Isère mudflats	0	0%	0	0%	158	0%	4	7%
MANA	Mana polder: plot 8	469	0%	14	19%	0	0%	0	0%
	Mana polder: plot 10	2233	1%	20	27%	2241	3%	30	52%
	Mana polder: plot 11	2174	1%	25	34%	3277	4%	29	50%
	Mana polder: plot 12	2876	2%	35	48%	214	0%	13	22%
	Mana polder: plot 20	164	0%	8	11%	0	0%	0	0%
	Mana polder: small plots	49	0%	7	10%	39	0%	12	21%
	Mana polder: coastline	60018	35%	7	10%	69	0%	10	17%
	Fatima sewage ponds	36	0%	5	7%	25	0%	5	9%
ST-LAURENT	Roche-Bleue Point	172	0%	5	7%	2	0%	2	3%
	La Charbonnière	0	0%	0	0%	15	0%	1	2%
SINNAMARY	Yiyi marshes	21	0%	9	12%	21	0%	6	10%
KOUROU	Grazing lands of Guatemala	51	0%	3	4%	93	0%	14	24%
	Flooded career of Guatemala	65	0%	14	19%	0	0%	0	0%
	Bois-Chaudat lake	27	0%	4	5%	41	0%	7	12%
	Marie-Claire lake	8	0%	4	5%	1	0%	1	2%
	Bois-Diable lake	41	0%	8	11%	23	0%	8	14%
	Orchidée lake (CSG)	12	0%	5	7%	7	0%	2	3%
	Kourou river estuary	51884	30%	18	25%	29250	36%	24	41%
	Pointe des Roches: east	1355	1%	21	29%	308	0%	17	29%
	Pointe des Roches: north	543	0%	10	14%	136	0%	9	16%
MACOURIA	Matiti wetlands	46	0%	13	18%	0	0%	0	0%
ÎLE DE CAYENNE	Cayenne old harbour	25216	15%	30	41%	1013	1%	23	40%
	Hospital cove	5063	3%	10	14%	5009	6%	10	17%
	Amandiers point and Nadeau cove	4182	2%	21	29%	5562	7%	20	34%
	Buzaré point and Méret cove	6652	4%	19	26%	5519	7%	15	26%
	Chaton cove	4739	3%	20	27%	2310	3%	11	19%

	Montjoyeux point	10	0%	5	7%	356	0%	10	17%
	Dupont islands	24	0%	4	5%	423	1%	15	26%
	Montabo cove	145	0%	12	16%	173	0%	8	14%
	Bourda cove	6	0%	3	4%	47	0%	8	14%
	Gosselin beach	17	0%	6	8%	70	0%	6	10%
	Mahury point and Dégrad des Cannes navy base	14	0%	5	7%	371	0%	11	19%
	Dégrad des Cannes marina	6	0%	4	5%	4	0%	3	5%
	Petit-Connétable island	23	0%	3	4%	4	0%	1	2%
	Grand-Connétable island	2051	1%	8	11%	24290	30%	8	14%
	Leblond marshes	37	0%	9	12%	4	0%	3	5%
	Laussat canal	143	0%	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%
	Larivot sewage ponds	74	0%	7	10%	89	0%	2	3%
REGINA	Kaw marshes - Méziac	148	0%	8	11%	187	0%	7	12%
	Kaw marshes - Maripas	160	0%	9	12%	84	0%	8	14%
	Kaw marshes - Riché	26	0%	6	8%	43	0%	6	10%
TOTAL		170980		73		81478		58	

Global sites:

Site name	February				July			
	Numbers		Species		Numbers		Species	
	Nb.	% tot.	Nb.	% tot.	Nb.	% tot.	Nb.	% tot.
Kaw marshes	334	0%	9	12%	314	0%	8	14%
Connétable island	2074	1%	8	11%	24294	30%	8	14%
Cayenne and Rémire coastline	46074	27%	32	44%	20857	26%	30	52%
Kourou river estuary	53782	31%	28	38%	29694	36%	28	48%
Mana polder	67983	40%	47	64%	5840	7%	40	69%



## Conclusion

This new edition of the Wetlands counts in French Guiana was overall a great success. All indicators are positive: sites monitored, numbers of birds, species encountered, birders involved: these beginnings are a good omen for the coming years of monitoring. These results also open new perspectives for the conservation of waterbirds in French Guiana: for example, in view of the numbers of shorebirds recorded on these sites, the Mana polder, the Kourou River estuary and the coasts of Cayenne Island would be eligible to join the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), within which they would be considered of international importance.

Nevertheless, a major challenge lies in the sustainability of the counts in the years to come. GEPOG must continue its efforts to mobilize observers within a local context where the high turnover of scientists complicates the establishment of a long-term network of birders.

The complexity also lies in the nature and dynamics of the sites monitored during the counts. Some sites can quickly become inaccessible, or change very quickly and lose their attractiveness to birds. This is the case, for example, for the beaches of Cayenne, which will be transformed into a vast mangrove in the next two to three years, or for the Mana polder, where overgrowth and changes in water levels have recently made access to the site completely or almost impossible.

In addition to these difficulties, the representativeness of the counts on certain sites monitored raises questions. Great efforts and means would be necessary to follow in a truly representative way some sites that are difficult to access (Mana polders, Kaw marshes), where the figures obtained following the counts are absolutely not a reflection of the numbers really present in the area. Moreover, it would be extremely interesting to count birds in new areas recognized as being of international importance for waterfowl (notably the mouths of the Sinnamary and Iracoubo rivers), but the inaccessibility of these sites raises questions about the possibility of counting them every two years over the long term. Aerial monitoring would be mandatory, which seems difficult to replicate without significant funding.

However, even if there are many ways for improvement, all the observers and partners involved in the Wetlands counts can fully congratulate themselves on the results obtained for this first session. The GEPOG team would like to thank once again all the participants of this 2022 session! See you next year!





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