

Neotropical Waterbird Census in French Guiana

Year 2025



Black-necked Stilt © M. Yufon

With the financial support of



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Regional coordination

Olivier Claessens



GEPOG



Wetlands
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In short...

February 2025 census

- **48** monitored sites
- **26** mobilized observers
- **65** counted species
- **108,164** counted waterbirds
Including 92,178 shorebirds (80,041 Semipalmated Sandpipers)

The evolution of mangroves on traditionally monitored mudflats results in a steady decline in the number of shorebirds counted. Contrary to the general trend, species such as the Semipalmated Plover and the Red Knot are recording record numbers.

Nearly 3,000 Scarlet Ibises have been counted in Kourou and Mana and the American Flamingo has made its debut in the rankings.

July 2025 census

- **46** monitored sites
- **23** mobilized observers
- **72** counted species
- **63,491** counted waterbirds
Including 19,941 shorebirds (14,594 Semipalmated Sandpipers)

The drastic decline in shorebird populations is offset by better counts of egrets and ibises at roosts. The Cayenne coastline, now hidden by mangroves and perhaps less favorable to birds, has been surpassed by Pointe Liberté. The Black-necked Stilt (breeding bird) is showing record numbers in the rice fields of Mana. A Grey Heron, two Glossy Ibises and two Marbled Godwits have been added to the counts.

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GEPOG
431 route d'Attila Cabassou
97354 Rémire-Montjoly
www.gepog.org
association@gepog.org

Background

Waterbird counts in French Guiana were relaunched by GEPOG in 2022, following an initial attempt in the 1990s (Piolain 2022). They are part of the international Neotropical Waterbird Census (NWC) program, a variation of the 'Wetlands counts' for the South American continent. GEPOG's involvement in this program responds in particular to the need to monitor migratory and wintering populations of shorebirds, which are a particularly threatened and rapidly declining group of birds (Bird Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada 2024, North American Bird Conservation Initiative 2025). The Guiana coastline is a region of prime importance for the accommodation of these migratory birds on a continental level.

This is the fourth annual report on waterbird censuses in French Guiana, in their "modern" version (Claessens 2023). We refer to the previous report (Claessens 2024) and the initial report (Piolain 2022) for a more comprehensive overview of French Guiana, the situation of waterbirds in the territory, and the context in which these censuses were set up.

Census dates and sites

Census sessions 2025

Waterbird census in French Guiana follows the protocol defined at continental level in terms of dates and frequency. Two sessions are held each year:

- In February between the 1st and 3rd weekend.
- In July between the 1st and 3rd weekend.

In 2025, these sessions took place between February 1st and 16th and between July 5th and 20th. For practical reasons, three sites were monitored this year with a 1-2 days difference: July 30th and January 31st for Lac Orchidée at the CSG and for the islands of Grand and Petit-Connétable, and July 21st for Grand-Connétable Island. This minimal difference has no impact on the results, especially since the numbers concerned are marginal for most species and the only species well represented on the Grand-Connétable Island are virtually absent elsewhere.

As in previous years, coordinated counts were organized simultaneously in nearby, interconnected sites: on the coast of Cayenne Island (February 1st and 2nd, July 5th and 6th) and in the rice fields of Mana (February 10th, July 12th).

In 2025, counts were initiated at roosts for egrets and ibises in Cayenne and in the rice fields of Mana. As expected, these counts are much more accurate and comprehensive than counts of birds scattered throughout the day. Conducted from a high vantage point, they compensate for the lack of visibility on the mudflats during traditional counts. However, the distance and fading light often make it impossible to distinguish between species.

Monitored sites

A total of **51 sites were monitored in 2025**. They are spread all along the coast, from Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni to Rémire-Montjoly and the Grand-Connétable Island. A number of non-coastal sites are also monitored: Pripris de Yiyi (Sinnamary), lakes of Kourou, pastures and quarry at the Route de Guatemala (Kourou), Leblond marshes (Cayenne), lagoons of Larivot and Concorde (Matoury), and the Kaw marshland (Régina). Although these sites are of secondary importance in terms of numbers, they allow us to include non-migratory or freshwater species that are not, or only to a limited extent, considered at coastal sites.

Most sites have been monitored every year since 2022. This continuity is essential for comparing results and identifying long-term trends. In 2025, only one new site was added: the western portion of the ‘beach of Pointe Liberté’ in Macouria. However, several sites that are usually monitored could not be monitored during one or both sessions in 2025, in particular plots 8, 9, 10 and 19 of the Mana rice fields. The most limiting factor, however, is linked to the development of mangrove forest along the entire Cayenne coastline, which has already made counting difficult in 2024 and virtually impossible in 2025. The numbers recorded at these sites reflect what is visible, rather than the birds present that sometimes gather in very large numbers behind trees. Counting from a high observation point at the roost helps to overcome this problem, at least for egrets and ibises.

48 sites were monitored in February and 46 sites in July; 43 sites out of a total of 51 were monitored during both sessions. Among the sites with more than 500 counted waterbirds, the western section of Pointe Liberté (Macouria) was included in the July count. Only two other sites among those monitored during a single session exceeded 200 birds.



Red Knots (*Calidris canutus*), Mana, 08/02/2025 © L. Eprendre

Observers

The two sessions in 2025 involved a total of **35 observers and companions**. Waterbird censuses are included in the events calendar offered to GEPOG members, which enabled a dozen beginners to take part by accompanying an experienced observer in charge of the count. Four organizations were involved.

Our sincere thanks for their participation go to:

- Maison de la Nature de Montsinéry, the Amana National Nature Reserve, the Grand-Connétable Island National Nature Reserve, the Kaw-Roura National Nature Reserve;
- Michaël Arlandis, Béatrice and François Berthelot, Pauline Bottero, Grégory Cantaloube, Olivier Claessens (GEPOG), Alex Greene, Lilian Eprendre, Léa François (GEPOG), Thibaut Ferrieux, Roland Jantot, Laurent Kelle, Cristina Marquès Ferri (RNKR), Camille Mauvisseau, Todor Mishev, Laure Molinier (MNS), Elie Monin (GEPOG), Geoffrey Monchaux-Lefèvre (RNNGC), Solenne Monchaux-Lefèvre, Fabienne Ourmiah, Julien Piolain, Etienne Plaine, Christian Pomier, Gwendal Quimbre, Elven Remérand, Vincent Rufay, Aurélie Saintes, Mélodie Schmidt, Gabriel Siong (RNA), Quentin Uriot, Sylvain Uriot, Maxime Vildieu, Alexandre Vinot, Ronald Wongsopawiro (RNA).



Counting water birds on the coast of the rice fields (Mana), 12/07/2025 © O. Claessens

Results

February census: general results

As a direct result of the difficulties in observation due to the growth of mangroves on the Cayenne coastline, the total number of waterbirds counted during both sessions in 2025 is significantly lower than in 2024. In February, the total number counted was **108,164**, a decrease of 24% compared to February 2024. The difference is mainly due to the Semipalmated Sandpiper (-29,000).

65 species of waterbirds were observed in February. Despite the overall decline in numbers, shorebirds still account for 85% of the birds counted. Egrets and herons accounted for more than half of the other species (slightly more than in other years), followed by frigatebirds, skimmers and larids (terns and gulls) (figure 1).

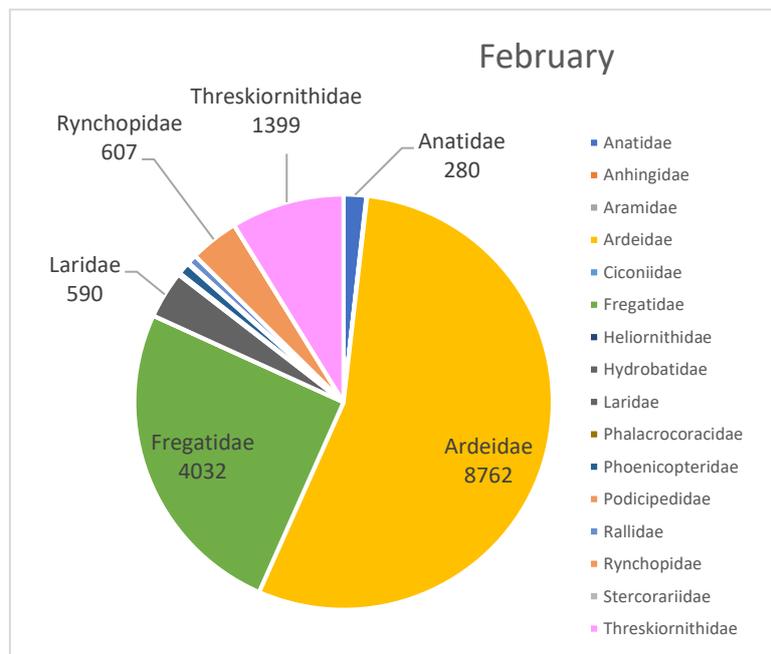


Figure 1 : Taxonomic composition of waterbirds counted in February 2025, excluding shorebirds.

July census : general results

The decline was confirmed in July, with only **63,491 waterbirds** counted, 8,000 less than in July 2024. This decrease in numbers, despite improved counting of egrets and ibises at roosts, underlines the drastic decline in shorebirds, which are now almost absent in Cayenne (-38% compared to July 2024). However, the ratio between July and February numbers is within the norm and even better than last year.

72 species were observed in July. Shorebirds now account for only 31% of total numbers, surpassed by terns and gulls on Grand-Connétable Island.

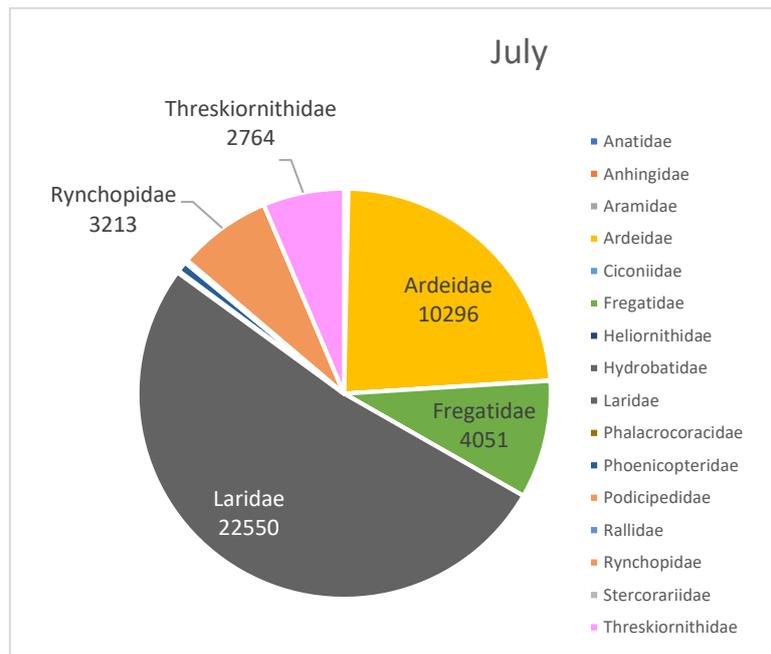


Figure 2 : Taxonomic composition of waterbirds counted in July 2025, excluding shorebirds.

In both sessions combined, **171,655 waterbirds** were counted in 2025, compared to 213,613 in 2024 and 252,416 in 2022 (we will disregard the 2023 figure, which is likely to be inaccurate). This result reflects a significant and continuous decline in the number of waterbirds observed at the monitored sites. We should refrain from interpreting this result as a decline in bird populations, particularly shorebirds, as the loss of several major counting sites due to changes in the mangrove forest plays a major role in this apparent decline.

Specific results

- [Anatidae](#)

2025 was another poor year for ducks. No anatidae were seen in February in the Savanes Sarcelles and only 12 during the July session, while 550 White-cheeked Pintails were counted during an overflight in April. This abundance was confirmed in February, when 216 **White-cheeked Pintails** were counted in the Mana rice fields. The **Muscovy duck** was observed mainly in the Kaw marshes (21 individuals in February, 26 in July), while the **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** was noted in small numbers at several sites. As for wintering species, they were virtually absent again this year; only one **Lesser Scaup** and 24 **Blue-winged Teals** were observed in February. This is a far cry from the hundreds of teals recorded in some years in the Savanes Sarcelles or in the rice fields of Mana.

- [Ardeidae](#)

The number of herons counted totaled 8,762 individuals in February and 10,296 in July. While the February count was similar to that of 2024, the July count was a record high, thanks to the large numbers counted at the Cayenne roost (1,462 egrets) and in the Mana rice fields (5,332 egrets). The

Little Blue Heron appears to be twice as abundant as the Snowy Egret and ten times more abundant than the Tricolored Egret. However, the majority of egrets remain undetermined to species, making these proportions uncertain.

With 134 birds counted in July, including 71 in the Kaw Marshes, the **Striated Heron** did not reach its record number from the previous year, confirming the exceptionality of that record.

The rarity of the year was a **Grey Heron**, an accidental species native to Europe, present in Kourou since January (first for French Guiana) and still reported during the July counts. In July, a **Capped Heron**, a species usually confined to the rapids of inland rivers was surprisingly observed at the Larivot lagoon basins (Matoury).



Capped Heron (*Pilherodia pileatus*), Matoury, 6/07/2025 © E. Remerand

- [Fregatidae](#)

As with the Laughing Gull and nesting terns, the numbers of **Magnificent Frigatebirds** correspond mainly to those in the breeding colony at the Grand-Connétable Island Nature Reserve, where they are present all year round. However, the numbers recorded are very approximate.

- [Laridae](#)

The numbers of **Laughing Gulls**, which are increasing slightly, and those of **Sooty Terns**, **Royal Terns**, **Cayenne Terns** and **Brown Noddies** mainly reflect those of the colony of the Grand-Connétable Island Nature Reserve. These species are virtually absent from the colony in February and are in full breeding season in early July.

The **Yellow-billed Tern** population has halved since 2024. The populations of the **Gull-billed Tern**, **Common Tern** and **Large-billed Tern** are not at all representative of the abundance of these species.

- [Shorebirds](#)

As outlined in this report, increasingly difficult counting conditions on the Cayenne coastline due to mangrove growth are leading to a steady decline in shorebirds. Overall, their numbers have fallen by 28% compared to last year (-25% in February, -39% in July). This decline primarily affects the **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, which still represents the overwhelming majority of shorebirds observed on the Guiana coast (90% on average over the two sessions). The **Stilt Sandpiper**, the **Willet** and the **Hudsonian Whimbrel** follow the same trend in both sessions. The **Greater Yellowlegs** was not very abundant in February, while the July count was particularly poor for the **Short-billed Dowitcher**, the **Lesser Yellowlegs** and the **Red Knot**.

In this general context, the record numbers of the **Semipalmated Plover** (over 3,100) and the **Red Knot** (over 1,000) in February, mainly on the Mana coastline, are noteworthy and make this area extremely important for the conservation of these species.

The **Black-necked Stilt** continues its spectacular increase with 153 birds counted in February and 318 birds counted in July, almost all of them in the rice fields of Mana where it breeds. There, 34 nests were counted on July 1st.

On a more anecdotal note: a **Pied Lapwing** that had been staying in Cayenne since May was wise enough to remain until the waterbird census in July. Much rarer sightings were made in July, when two **Marbled Godwits** were spotted in the rice fields of Mana, after this species had been observed for the first time in French Guiana in December 2024 (Lesterhuis *et al.* 2025).



Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*), rice fields of Mana, 01/07/2025 © G. Cantaloube

- [Phoenicopteridae](#)

A non-breeding visitor, the **American Flamingo** has become increasingly common in French Guiana in recent years, with sightings along the coast and even in the rice fields of Mana, which had never been observed before. It appeared for the first time this year in the NWC, with 150 birds in February and 352 in July.

- [Rallidae](#)

Rails did not appear in unusual numbers this year, except for the **Azure Gallinule** (37 in the Kaw marshes in February). The usual discretion of the species makes this number difficult to compare with previous years. The **Common Gallinule**, meanwhile, returned to more typical numbers. Despite the development of the mangrove and a targeted search, the Rufous-necked Wood-Rail and the Mangrove Rail were not spotted. Two **Yellow-breasted Crakes** in July in Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni were the only rarities in this family.

- [Rynchopidae](#)

The **Black Skimmer** was present in significant numbers during both sessions. While July numbers (~3,200 birds) were consistent with previous years, February numbers were significantly lower. Distinguishing between subspecies remains difficult and inconsistent, making it impossible to interpret these variations.

- [Threskiornitidae](#)

Bird counts upon arrival at roosting sites in Cayenne and in the rice fields of Mana provide a more accurate picture of the **Scarlet Ibis** population: there were around 1,800 in Mana and over 1,000 in Kourou in February (before the breeding season). In July, almost 2,000 were counted in Mana and 500 in Cayenne, resulting in a total of 2,741 that month across all sites. Once again, two **Glossy Ibises** were present in July in the rice fields of Mana.



Pied Lapwing (*Hoploxypterus cayanus*), Cayenne, 06/07/2025 © S. Monchaux-Lefèvre

Results by location

Changes in the distribution of birds by monitored sites are shown in figure 3. Compared to the previous year (see Claessens 2024), Mana has taken over the first place from Cayenne. The number has also significantly declined in Kourou, while Macouria has been added due to the counts at Pointe Liberté. The decline in numbers in Cayenne continues in July.

Once again, it is important to emphasize that this distribution refers to the number of birds at the monitored sites and not to the birds across all of French Guiana or even the entire coastline.

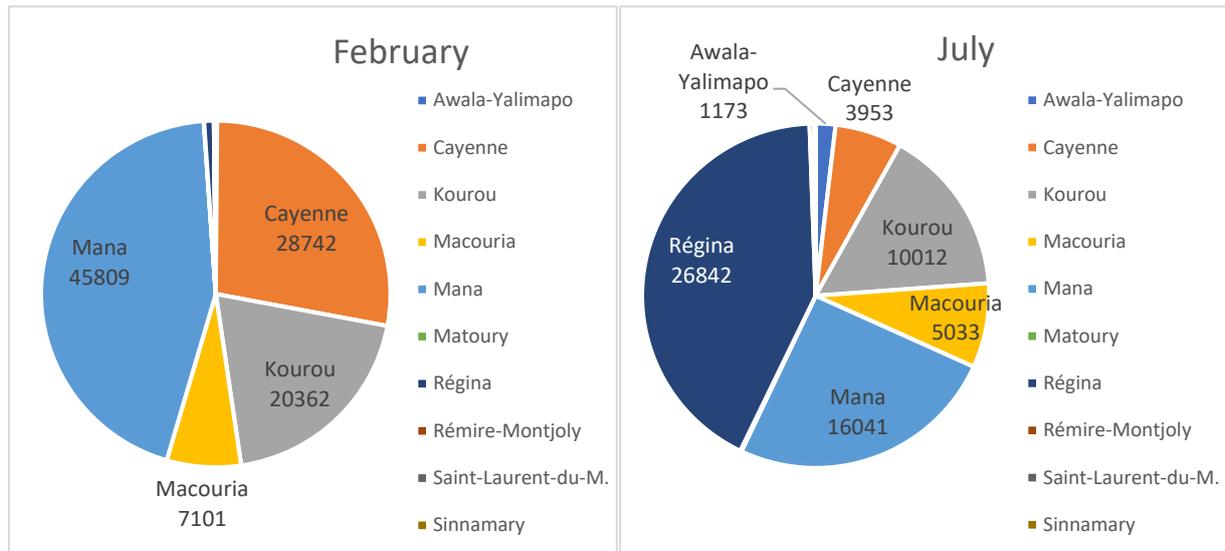


Figure 3 : Distribution of waterbirds by geographical sectors during the two NWC sessions in 2025.

Coastal sites continue to host almost all of the waterbirds counted as part of the NWC, while freshwater sites seem more incidental. Inland wetlands (marshes, lagoons, wet savannas, ponds, and canals) are nonetheless important for certain species that rarely or never visit coastal mudflats: grebes, rails, gallinules, Wattled Jacana, Striated Heron....

Apart from the Grand-Connétable Island, which hosts different species and does not face the same hazards as the coastal sites, there are only 2 sites, where more than 20,000 birds over the two seasons have been counted (table 1). Both are rice field plots in Mana. The coastal sites of Kourou, which surpassed the island of Grand-Connétable in 2024, are now only in 3rd and 4th place. The top site in Cayenne has fallen to 6th place (thanks to the egret roost) and does not reach 12,000 birds.

It should be noted that most of the coastal sites, which host shorebirds during migration stopovers or wintering, are particularly important in February, while Grand-Connétable Island reaches its peak numbers in July after the breeding season. In this context, it should be mentioned that the decrease in numbers within the plots of the Mana rice fields in July is particularly pronounced, while those counted along the edges of the rice fields increase. This can be seen as an effect of the changing nature of the plots due to seawater inflows (caused by the erosion of dikes) and their invasion by mangroves, making these plots less favorable for shorebirds.

Table 1 : General overview of NWC counts by site in 2025.
Highlighted sites are new in 2025.

Site	Municipality	February	July	Total
Grand Connétable	Régina	4,868	25,642	30,510
Rizières de Mana - casier 11	Mana	26,323	21	26,344
Rizières de Mana - casier 12	Mana	15,365	6,116	21481
Plage des bois flottés	Kourou	9,284	4,467	13,751
Estuaire du Kourou	Macouria	7,440	4,326	11,766
Pointe Buzaré et anse Méret	Cayenne	11,431	143	11,574
Pointe Liberté	Macouria	7,099	2,552	9,651
Savanes Sarcelles	Mana	1,284	7,509	8,793
Anse de l'Hôpital	Cayenne	8,585	1	8,586
Pointe et anse de Chaton	Cayenne	3,982	3,296	7,278
Pointe des Amandiers et Anse Nadeau	Cayenne	4,232	15	4,247
Littoral des rizières	Mana	1,322	2,360	3,682
Grande plage	Kourou	2,587	391	2,978
Pointe Liberté - partie Ouest	Macouria		2,481	2,481
Rizières de Mana - pré-casiers 10-13	Mana	1,304	4	1,308
Pointe Isère	Awala-Yalimapo	93	1,173	1,266
Vasière de l'Ecole de voile	Kourou	590	353	943
Estuaire de la rivière de Kaw	Régina	501	337	838
Vieux Port de Cayenne	Cayenne	349	311	660
Petit Connétable	Régina	3	416	419
Rivière de Kaw - secteur Méziac	Régina	182	207	389
Pointes Pollux et de l'Etat Major	Kourou	338		338
Rivière de Kaw - secteur Maripas	Régina	172	153	325
Pointe des Roches	Kourou	13	277	290
Rizières de Mana - casier 19	Mana	211		211
Rivière de Kaw - secteur Riché	Régina	68	87	155
Plage de Montjoly	Rémire-Montjoly	14	130	144
Pointe du Mahury et base navale	Rémire-Montjoly	8	129	137
Marais Leblond	Cayenne	70	66	136
Lac de Bois-Diable	Kourou	32	87	119
Marais de la crique Fouillée	Cayenne	55	58	113
Guatemala - Grandes Pâtures	Kourou	34	59	93
Anse de Bourda	Cayenne	24	63	87
Pointe de la Roche Bleue	Saint-Laurent	62	8	70
Bassins de lagunage de Fatima	Saint-Laurent	36	31	67
Bassins de lagunage de Concorde	Matoury	36	30	66
Pripris de Yiyi	Sinnamary	25	30	55
Lac de Bois-Chaudat	Kourou	33	17	50
Bassins de lagunage du Larivot	Matoury		50	50
La Charbonnière	Saint-Laurent	19	19	38
Plage des Hattes	Awala-Yalimapo	34		34
Guatemala - carrière de sable	Macouria	9	24	33
Rizières de Mana - casier 10	Mana		31	31
CSG – Lac Orchidée	Kourou	10	6	16
Dégrad des Cannes	Rémire-Montjoly	13	2	15
Salines de Montjoly	Rémire-Montjoly	6	7	13
Pointe de Montjoyeux	Cayenne	11		11
Lac Marie-Claire	Kourou	2	5	7

Anse de Montabo	Cayenne	3		3
Guatemala - étang du pK 38	Macouria	2	0	2
Plages de Rémire et de Gosselin	Rémire-Montjoly	0	1	1
Total		103,283	63,491	171,655



Yellow-breasted Crake (*Porzana flaviventer*), Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, 07/07/2025
© G. Cantaloube

The geographical distribution of waterbirds across all sites during the two counting sessions is shown in figure 4. It should be remembered that this does not represent the overall distribution of all the waterbirds present in French Guiana, but only those present on the monitored sites.

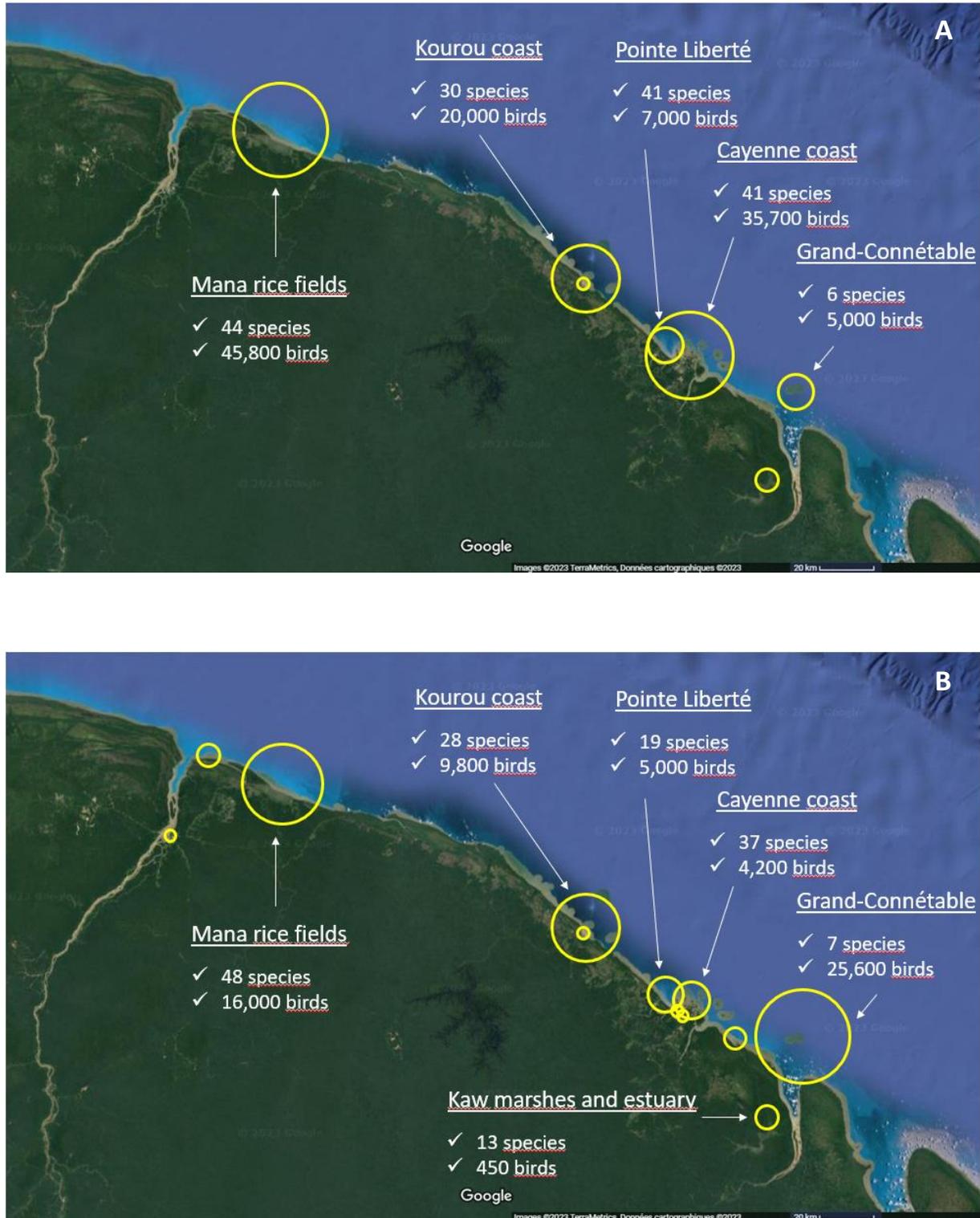


Figure 4 : Distribution of waterbirds counted during the two 2025 sessions. A : February ; B : July. The numbers are rounded. Only sites with more than 50 birds are indicated.

Balance sheet by location

Municipality	Site name	Counts		% counts		Number of species	
		February	July	February	July	February	July
Awala-Yalimapo	Plage des Hattes	34		0%	0%	5	0
	Pointe Isère	93	1,173	0%	2%	12	21
Cayenne	Anse de Bourda	24	63	0%	0%	6	12
	Anse de l'Hôpital	8,585	1	8%	0%	18	1
	Anse de Montabo	3		0%	0%	3	0
	Marais de la crique Fouillée	55	58	0%	0%	12	7
	Marais Leblond	70	66	0%	0%	15	10
	Pointe Buzaré et anse Méret	11,431	143	11%	0%	14	4
	Pointe de Montjoyeux	11		0%	0%	1	0
	Pointe des Amandiers et Anse Nadeau	4,232	15	4%	0%	19	5
	Pointe et anse de Chaton	3,982	3,296	4%	5%	18	24
	Vieux Port de Cayenne	349	311	0%	0%	24	13
Kourou	CSG - Lac Orchidée	10	6	0%	0%	6	2
	Estuaire du Kourou	7,440	4,326	7%	7%	15	14
	Grande plage	2,587	391	2%	1%	12	9
	Guatemala - carrière de sable	9	24	0%	0%	6	6
	Guatemala - Grandes Pâtures	34	59	0%	0%	6	7
	Lac de Bois-Chaudat	33	17	0%	0%	5	6
	Lac de Bois-Diable	32	87	0%	0%	10	9
	Lac Marie-Claire	2	5	0%	0%	1	2
	Plage des bois flottés	9,284	4,467	9%	7%	7	20
	Pointe des Roches	13	277	0%	0%	5	11
	Pointes Pollux et de l'Etat Major	338		0%	0%	14	0
	Vasière de l'Ecole de voile	590	353	1%	1%	11	11
Macouria	Guatemala - étang du pK 38	2	0	0%	0%	2	0
	Pointe Liberté - partie Ouest		2,481	0%	4%	0	12
	Pointe Liberté	7,099	2,552	7%	4%	16	19
Mana	Littoral des rizières	1,322	2,360	1%	4%	12	26
	Rizières de Mana - casier 10		31	0%	0%	0	9
	Rizières de Mana - casier 11	26,323	21	24%	0%	22	8
	Rizières de Mana - casier 12	15,365	6,116	14%	10%	30	38
	Rizières de Mana - casier 19	211		0%	0%	18	0
	Rizières de Mana - pré-casiers 10-13	1,304	4	1%	0%	20	3
	Savanes Sarcelles	1,284	7,509	1%	12%	20	13
Matoury	Bassins de lagunage de Concorde	36	30	0%	0%	6	5
	Bassins de lagunage du Larivot		50	0%	0%	0	4
Régina	Estuaire de la rivière de Kaw	501	337	0%	1%	17	20
	Grand Connétable	4,868	25,642	5%	40%	6	7
	Petit Connétable	3	416	0%	1%	1	7
	Rivière de Kaw - secteur Maripas	172	153	0%	0%	10	12
	Rivière de Kaw - secteur Méziac	182	207	0%	0%	12	10
	Rivière de Kaw - secteur Riché	68	87	0%	0%	10	9

Remire-Montjoly	Dégrad des Cannes	13	2	0%	0%	3	2
	Plage de Montjoly	14	130	0%	0%	5	6
	Plages de Rémire et de Gosselin	0	1	0%	0%	0	1
	Pointe du Mahury et base navale	8	129	0%	0%	4	13
	Salines de Montjoly	6	7	0%	0%	3	3
Saint-Laurent-du-M.	Bassins de lagunage de Fatima	36	31	0%	0%	7	6
	La Charbonnière	19	19	0%	0%	10	5
	Pointe de la Roche Bleue	62	8	0%	0%	8	2
Sinnamary	Pripris de Yiyi	25	30	0%	0%	7	7
Total		108,164	63,491	100%	100%	72	71

Summary table by species

Family	Species name	Latin name	February	July
Anatidae	White-cheeked Pintail	Anas bahamensis	216	62
	Muscovy Duck	Cairina moschata	36	35
	Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Dendrocygna autumnalis	3	30
	Lesser Scaup	Aythya affinis	1	
	Blue-winged Teal	Spatula discors	24	
Total Anatidae			280	127
Anhingidae	Anhinga	Anhinga anhinga	7	15
Total Anhingidae			7	15
Aramidae	Limpkin	Aramus guarauna	2	3
Total Aramidae			2	3
Ardeidae	Little Blue Heron	Egretta caerulea	3,563	1,709
	Little Blue Heron ad. / Tricolored Heron	Egretta caerulea ad. / tricolor	15	52
	Aigrette bleue imm / Little Egret	Egretta thula / caerulea imm.	2,281	1,478
	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	2	0
	Egret (not identified)	Egretta sp.	1	5,782
	Snowy Egret	Egretta thula	1,827	411
	Tricolored Heron	Egretta tricolor	327	192
	Black-crowned Night-Heron	Nycticorax nycticorax	79	35
	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Nyctanassa violacea	62	111
	Pinnated Bittern	Botaurus pinnatus		1
	Great blue heron	Ardea herodias		0
	Great Egret	Ardea alba	313	287
	Grey heron	Ardea cinerea	1	
	Cocoi Heron	Ardea cocoi	37	43
	Capped Heron	Pilherodius pileatus		1
	Cattle Egret	Ardea ibis	190	57
	Striated Heron	Butorides striata	55	134
Rufescent Tiger-Heron	Tigrisoma lineatum		1	
Least Bittern	Botaurus exilis	9	2	
Total Ardeidae			8,762	10,296
Charadriidae	Collared Plover	Anarhynchus collaris	23	140
	Wilson's Plover	Anarhynchus wilsonia		2
	Semipalmated Plover	Charadrius semipalmatus	3,113	1,700
	Plover (Pluvialis) (not identified)	Pluvialis sp.		1
	Black-bellied Plover	Pluvialis squatarola	267	43
	Pied Lapwing	Hoploxypterus cayanus		1
Total Charadriidae			3,403	1,887
Ciconiidae	Wood Stork	Mycteria americana		10
Total Ciconiidae				10
Fregatidae	Magnificent Frigatebird	Fregata magnificens	4,032	4,051
Total Fregatidae			4,032	4,051
Jacanidae	Wattled Jacana	Jacana jacana	312	284
Total Jacanidae			312	284
Laridae	Laughing Gull	Leucophaeus atricilla	225	1,980
	Brown Noddy	Anous stolidus		200
	Least Tern	Sternula antillarum		1

	Large-billed Tern	Phaetusa simplex	31	11
	Yellow-billed Tern	Sternula superciliaris	276	469
	Sterne caugek	Thalasseus (sandvicensis) acufflavids		1
	Cayenne Tern	Thalasseus (sandvicensis) eurygnathus	2	16,137
	Sooty Tern	Onychoprion fuscatus	1	35
	Gull-billed Tern	Gelochelidon nilotica	9	20
	Common Tern	Sterna hirundo	18	20
	Royal Tern	Thalasseus maximus	28	3,671
	Sterninae sp.	Sterninae sp.		5
Total Laridae			590	22,550
Phalacrocoracidae	Neotropic Cormorant	Phalacrocorax brasilianus	24	66
Total Phalacrocoracidae			24	66
Phoenicopteridae	American Flamingo	Phoenicopterus ruber	150	352
Total Phoenicopteridae			150	352
Podicipedidae	Pied-billed Grebe	Podilymbus podiceps	3	5
	Least Grebe	Tachybaptus dominicus	13	23
Total Podicipedidae			16	28
Rallidae	Common Gallinule	Gallinula galeata	37	14
	Yellow-breasted Crake	Porzana flaviventer		2
	Gray-cowled Wood-Rail	Aramides cajaneus	3	3
	Gray-breasted Crake	Laterallus exilis	13	20
	Mangrove Rail	Rallus longirostris	6	11
	Russet-crowned Crake	Anurolimnas viridis	4	7
	Ash-throated Crake	Mustelirallus albicollis	2	1
	Azure Gallinule	Porphyrio flavirostris	37	11
	Purple Gallinule	Porphyrio martinica	14	6
Total Rallidae			116	75
Recurvirostridae	Black-necked Stilt	Himantopus mexicanus	153	318
Total Recurvirostridae			153	318
Rynchopidae	Black Skimmer	Rynchops niger	603	3213
	Black Skimmer intercedens	Rynchops niger intercedens	1	
	Black Skimmer niger	Rynchops niger niger	3	
Total Rynchopidae			607	3,213
Scolopacidae	Bar-tailed Godwit	Limosa fedoa		2
	Stilt Sandpiper	Calidris himantopus	1,085	98
	Sandpiper (not identified)	Calidris sp.		550
	Red Knot	Calidris canutus	1,003	262
	Least Sandpiper	Calidris minutilla	135	
	Sanderling	Calidris alba	136	15
	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Calidris pusilla	80,041	14,594
	Short-billed Dowitcher	Limnodromus griseus	4312	735
	Pantanal Snipe	Gallinago paraguaiae		1
	Greater Yellowlegs	Tringa melanoleuca	229	587
	Spotted Sandpiper	Actitis macularius	49	22
	Sandpiper (not identified) (Tringa)	Tringa sp.	131	218
	Willet	Tringa semipalmata	64	48
	Solitary Sandpiper	Tringa solitaria	17	
	Hudsonian whimbrel	Numenius hudsonicus	95	62
	Lesser Yellowlegs	Tringa flavipes	755	48
	Ruddy Turnstone	Arenaria interpres	258	210
Total Scolopacidae			88,310	17,452

Stercorariidae	Pomarine Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	1	
Total Stercorariidae			1	
Threskiornithidae	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>		2
	Scarlet Ibis	<i>Eudocimus ruber</i>	1,368	2,741
	Green Ibis	<i>Mesembrinibis cayennensis</i>	5	3
	Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Platalea ajaja</i>	26	18
Total Threskiornithidae			1,399	2,764
Total			108,164	63,491

Conclusion

The Neotropical Waterbird Census in French Guiana was resumed 4 years ago and now takes place regularly. It is coordinated by GEPOG and financed annually as part of the association's projects. It can now rely on about twenty regular observers. The number of sites included in the monitoring program is increasing slightly, but more importantly, the sites designated as priority sites in 2022 continue to be visited at each session despite the uncertainties and difficulties of the counts. Unfortunately, other areas of the Guianese coast, which are known to host large numbers of shorebirds, remain completely out of reach within the framework of these counts.

More than anywhere else in the world, coastal dynamics with constantly changing mudflats that permanently alter the distribution of birds along the coast, and the rapid development of mangroves that hinder observation, make monitoring extremely difficult. These challenges and uncertainties make any attempt to interpret observed population changes risky. All of this could eventually discourage observers. Nevertheless, it is essential to maintain long-term efforts: French Guiana remains an important area for migratory shorebirds and must be included in assessments at continental level.

In this context, the involvement of protected areas in the monitoring process is particularly appreciated. We once again thank the Kaw-Roura Nature Reserve, the Grand-Connétable Island and Amana Reserves, as well as the 'Maison de la Nature' of Sinnamary for their participation. The monitoring of the former rice fields of Mana will take on its full meaning once this major site is restored and its ecological management is effective.

As expected, the year 2025 was marked by a sharp decline in the numbers of shorebirds counted at the usual sites. It cannot be ruled out that these sites, where mudflats are already old in terms of their natural cycle, have become less favorable to shorebirds. Similarly, an actual decline in populations observed at continental level may add to observation difficulties, complicating the identification of the exact causes. In any case, this apparent decrease was partially offset by the inclusion of a new counting site (the 'Pointe Liberté' in Macouria), which in turn has become highly favorable. Other coastal sites are doing well, illustrating the movements of birds according to coastal dynamics and the importance of considering a wide variety of sites. The remarkable numbers of Red Knots and Semipalmated Plovers give French Guiana an important international role in the conservation of these threatened species. Finally, as every year, a few rarities have spiced up the counts for lucky observers: Lesser Scaup, Grey Heron, Capped Heron, Glossy Ibis, Marbled Godwit, Pied Lapwing, and Yellow-breasted Crake.

Thank you again to all observers who participated in the waterbird counts of this year. See you in February 2026 for the next counts!

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