

Title During a workshop held on Saturday, March 2, 2013 in Tunis by Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux? (AAO) 1 in the presence of its national and international partners, a new identification guide to waterbirds in Arabic language was presented to the public. The 60 participants of the event, representatives of institutions and organizations working for biodiversity and natural habitats, agreed that this beautiful book will fill a need in the field of the conservation of waterbirds and wetlands in the North of Africa, the one to dispose of working tools in Arabic language. The publication of this guide was conducted in partnership between AAO and the National Office for Hunting and Wildlife in France, the ONCFS<sup>2</sup> with the financial support of the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy<sup>3</sup> and the MAVA Foundation. During their opening speeches representatives of the Tunisian Ministry of the Environment, Mr. Boubaker Houman, and the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, Mrs. Marianne Courouble, emphasized on the importance of this particular book in the context of the implementation of the *African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)*, for which Tunisia and France are signatories. At the same occasion the representative of the Directorate General of Forests, Mr. Habib Abid, recalled that waterbirds are among the indicators and the beneficiaries of the designation of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar convention and that in Tunisia 40 sites are now recognized by the convention.



Participants at the workshop ©AAO

Richly illustrated, the small pocket guide allows the identification of 200 waterbird species recorded in the region from the North of Sudan to Mauritania, passing through Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Each species is presented with its vernacular Arabic names used in the 7 countries, drawings and texts of identification, a map of distribution as well as information on its status in the region. Between authors, designers, translators, national experts, GIS experts and graphic designers, more than 20 people have contributed to this work. This guide particularly aims to stimulate the International Waterbird Census in the region and is a contribution to the implementation of the AEWA and in particular the African Initiative which aims to promote this agreement on the African continent.

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**1 Association « Les Amis des Oiseaux »** is a Tunisian NGO which works since more than 35 years studying, monitoring and conserving of biodiversity in general, birds and their habitats in particular, and international level [www.aao.org.tn](http://www.aao.org.tn) & <http://www.facebook.com/AAO.tn>



**2 French Game and Wildlife Agency** is a public institution whose mission is to study, research

and experiment conservation, restoration and management of wildlife and its habitats. [www.oncfs.gouv.fr](http://www.oncfs.gouv.fr)



**3 French Ministry of Ecology** aims by its policy to stop loss of biodiversity. It brings in particular financial support to many conservation programmes of waterbirds and wetlands in France and around the world.

[www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr](http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr)



**4 MAVA Foundation** funds projects in three priority

areas: Mediterranean Basin, Alps and coastal zone of West Africa, with the aim of preserving representative and typical species and ecosystems of these regions. [www.fr.mava-foundation.org](http://www.fr.mava-foundation.org)