



## World Wetlands Day 2010 at Estavayer-le-lac, Swizerland

It is 20 years since the Grande Cariçaie wetland on the shores of Lac de Neuchatel in Switzerland was declared a Ramsar Site (under the name Rive Sud du lac de Neuchâtel) and so a good opportunity for a double celebration – La Grande Cariçaie's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary AND World Wetlands Day. With funding and in-kind assistance from the Swiss Federal Government, the Ramsar Secretariat, the local and regional Tourist Boards, the Champ-Pittet and La Sauge wetland centres, and the Archeological Service of Fribourg, the activities on February 2<sup>nd</sup> were planned and managed by staff from the management group of the Grande Cariçaie.

During the day, 13 classes of schoolchildren, ranging in age from 8-13, came to the La Prillaz centre in the medieval town of Estavayer-le-lac (close to La Grande Cariçaie), and were engaged in various hands-on activities throughout the day. A game requiring a steady hand illustrated the challenges frogs face living near urban areas and crossing busy roads kept students amused as did a simple game demonstrating that leaf litter provides an excellent environment for a wide range of small animals. A role play game had students looking at the development of tourism in the area from the perspective of the local Tourist Office, the management group for the Grande Cariçaie, and the local organizers for recreational activities in the area. Students found their hearing challenged identifying the calls of frogs and their imagination challenged in playing the bird migration game, looking at the flyways between Africa and Europe and the many trails birds face in making such hazardous journeys. Ramsar staff were on hand to entertain and enlighten students with a floor-sized version of the Ramsar game produced especially for this occasion. This game was originally produced by Ramsar Secretariat through the Danone Fund for Water. These were just some of the diverse activities that maintained the active engagement of the students throughout the day.

In the early evening, members of the public were welcomed at the centre and a broad range of materials on the natural environment of both local and global interest were made available. Following this, some brief opening statements by the préfet M. Chardonens, the syndic M. Bachmann and Nathalie Rizzotti from the Ramsar Secretariat launched the second part of the day. M. Seydina Issa Sylla from Senegal, former President of Wetlands International in Africa and former National Parks Conservator, made a presentation on birds' migration between Europe and Africa and showed how we all live in a "small village" and how we are connected from the North to the South. He explained why wetlands protection needs to be coordinated to be a success and coherent. An aperitif allowed time for the audience to interact with the speakers. The evening ended with the projection of the movie "Darwin's nightmare". This movie shows the consequences of Nile Perch's introduction in Lake Victoria in East Africa.

*Present from the Ramsar Secretariat: Sandra Hails, Catherine Loetscher, Montse Riera, and Nathalie Rizzotti*  
*Photos by Sandra Hails, Denis Landenbergue, and Christophe Nédic*

**Ramsar's game produced in a floor-sized version was used with great success with the 13 school groups who took part in the celebration at the La Prillaz centre**



**Learning about the area's archeology from an expert from Fribourg's Archeological Service**





Simulating the game of chance in a frog's daily life as it crosses a road cutting through its home area!



Playing the bird migration game





### Rounding up the role-play game in developing tourism in the local area



### Learning about the language of frogs!



Members of the public visiting the centre in the evening to learn more about the local wetland environment



.... They also learned more about wetlands in Africa through guest speaker M. Seydina Issa Sylla





And here are a few more pics of the 'first outing' for our Ramsar game – plenty of enthusiasm from the players!







