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Description automatically generatedEast Atlantic Flyway Youth Forum 2024**

**Participatory science (aka citizen science)**

* **Dates:** 14 & 15 September 2024
* **Location:** Virtual event
* **Objective 2024:** Understand the opportunities and challenges of citizen science projects
* **Organizers:** Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (through Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative), Migratory Birds for People, Youth Engaged in Wetlands
* **Language:** English, French (simultaneous interpretation)
* **Target audience:** Youth (18-30 years old) who are living along the flyway and already active or interested in wetland and/or migratory waterbird conservation
* **Main Contacts:**

**Common Wadden Sea Secretariat:** Kristine Meise, Programme Officer for Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative [wsfi@waddensea-secretariat.org](mailto:wsfi@waddensea-secretariat.org)

**Migratory Birds for People:** Connor Walsh, International Engagement Officer at the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust[wli@wwt.org.uk](mailto:wli@wwt.org.uk)

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Background

Young people along the East Atlantic Flyway have a clear vision for their role in flyway conservation ([Call for Action, 2022](https://flyway.waddensea-worldheritage.org/resources/east-atlantic-flyway-youth-forum-declaration-call-action)) and show a lot of commitment in implementing activities for the benefit of coastal wetlands and migratory waterbirds. The East Atlantic Flyway Youth Forum (EAFYF) is establishing itself as an annual activity to connect young wetland and bird conservationists and to help them develop a useful skillset for their ongoing involvement in flyway conservation. It focuses on topics that have been identified to be of key interest to young conservationists, especially from a flyway perspective.

The conservation of migratory birds and coastal wetlands requires close collaboration with a multitude of different stakeholders which actions can directly or indirectly / positively or negatively affect the birds and their habitats. Jointly, we need to find solutions to minimise or avoid activities with negative environmental effects, while promoting activities with a positive impact on the environment and local livelihoods. Different methodologies are being used to facilitate active participation of stakeholders in conservation processes.

The term ‘citizen science’ is used for projects which engage the general public in research activities to generate new knowledge or develop a better understanding of ongoing processes. Besides the collection of specific data, this may also involve the definition of research questions, co-design of investigations and selection of data applications, or collaboratively solving complex problems. Due to the participatory approach, this has a high potential to increase the general awareness of the public for specific conservation issues.

The aim of the East Atlantic Flyway Youth Forum 2024 is to introduce young people to the general principles of citizen science and specific considerations that should be given to the needs and wishes of the target groups, which is an essential step for the successful development and implementation of citizen science projects. Ongoing citizen science projects at the local and global level will be introduced, to inspire youth to actively contribute or even initiate upscaling at the local level.

In general, the forum will follow the outline of last events, providing training, peer learning and networking opportunities. In 2024, four key training elements are planned:

* Introduction to the [10 principles of citizen science](https://www.ecsa.ngo/10-principles/) and the resulting opportunities and challenges.
* Key requirements to increase the success of your citizen science project.
* Considerations for the active engagement of citizen scientists.
* Peer-learning: Youth participants showcase ongoing citizen science projects, showing possible levels of engagement.

The forum will be open to young people aged 18 – 30 from coastal countries along the East Atlantic Flyway. Any youth with a particular interest in flyway conservation is encouraged to apply, but priority will be given to applicants who have some experiences in the different aspects of flyway conservation (research, management, communication, education, and so on), participated in previous years, or currently have plans to participate in and or upscale existing citizen science projects.