



World Migratory Bird Day 2013

A message from the Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway

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Birds have been migrating from their breeding grounds in the north to more hospitable climates in the south during the austral summer for millennia, long before humans divided this area up into the political entities that now constitute the countries of the Flyways. They have evolved to take advantage of the variety of habitats and seasonality of conditions that they have encountered over many generations. That the waterbirds of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway now migrate from Alaska and Russia through China and the countries of Southeast Asia to Australia and New Zealand does not concern them. They have no use for political boundaries. What does concern them is that the network of sites they have traditionally depended on for safety, food, breeding and moulting is changing rapidly and usually for the worse. Areas of inter-tidal coastal flats of East Asia have undergone a steep and continuing decline in recent decades, threatening the migration routes of migratory shorebirds. Loss of freshwater wetlands to urbanization and agriculture means waterfowl, cranes and others have fewer options for breeding and migratory stopovers. Some species have been able to adapt and even thrive, but for most it is an increasingly perilous journey.

Since the conservation of migratory birds is now an international issue, it requires an international response. The Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway (EAAFP) encompasses 22 countries, of which 15 are full partners and others will soon join. It is appropriate that the theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2013 is Networking. EAAFP represents a network of governments, non-government organizations, scientists, site managers and citizens that, together, can harness their knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm to conserve and protect not only migratory waterbirds but also the critical network of breeding, non-breeding and stop-over sites that the birds depend on for continuing their migration into the future.