

Briefing Paper for Site Managers

Benefits and Expectations of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Site Network

The East Asian – Australasian Flyway Site Network is a non-legal, collaborative project involving over 90 sites across thirteen countries. The Flyway Site Network has been operating since 1996 and it is now supported by the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership.

The Flyway Site Network represents a unique opportunity for Site Managers in the Flyway to work together to achieve more effective conservation and protection of migratory waterbirds. The Network provides for internationally important sites to be included in a broad-based conservation arrangement across the Flyway. Through the Flyway Site Network, national governments, site managers and local stakeholders can work cooperatively to achieve positive conservation outcomes to protect migratory waterbirds.

The conservation of migratory waterbirds is dependent on the appropriate management of a comprehensive network of internationally important sites. Increasing the number of sites in the Network will enhance its overall effectiveness.

Inclusion of sites in the Network will attract benefits for and expectations on managers of those sites. The benefits and expectations that can apply to Site Managers are outlined in the following sections.

Benefits of being part of the Site Network

For Site Managers, participation in the Flyway Site Network brings a range of benefits of direct value to the work of Site Managers and a set of benefits for the long term ecological values of their sites. The benefits include:

1. Recognition through engagement in a highly regarded international initiative that has operated for over 10 years.

The Flyway Site Network has been operating since 1996 and provides the primary foundation for implementation of international cooperative efforts to conserve migratory waterbirds in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.

2. International recognition for important sites for migratory waterbirds.

Being part of the Flyway Site Network will bestow national and international recognition on sites and provide status for the Site Managers as managers of specially declared areas of migratory waterbird importance.

3. Recognition of the contribution each site can make to the Flyway framework.

As part of this initiative Site Managers will be recognized nationally and internationally for their commitment to cooperation in migratory waterbird conservation. Each site will be able to contribute to maintenance and enhancement of the Site Network as well as having opportunities to promote the particular features and aspects of their own sites.

4. Provision of a mechanism to engage with other site managers in delivering flyway conservation outcomes.

Through their participation in the Flyway Site Network, Site Managers will be able to engage with other Site Managers to share experience, knowledge and understanding of techniques for

migratory waterbird conservation. This will contribute to improved delivery of local and broader-based flyway conservation outcomes.

5. Access for collaborative research on shared species with other sites in the Network.

Participation in the network will give Site Managers unique opportunities for collaborative research with other sites. There is a strong need for better information and knowledge on waterbird species in the Flyway, particularly for shared species. Participation in the Flyway Site Network will both encourage and facilitate such exchanges and collaborative efforts between Site Managers.

6. Increased local awareness about the importance of the site

Site managers will be well-placed to use international recognition of their site to raise local awareness about the importance of sites. Local awareness about sites and their importance for migratory waterbirds is crucial to achieving local ownership of and commitment to maintaining the values of the sites.

7. Provides a model to encourage greater community engagement in migratory waterbird conservation efforts.

Participation of a site in the Flyway Site Network provides an opportunity for encouraging greater local participation in conservation activities at the site. Local communities can contribute substantial effort and support for conservation and protection of the site. Community engagement in site conservation and sustainable management is essential if sites are to be managed in harmony with the values of both the environment and broader community needs.

8. Increased opportunities to access international and national funding.

Being part of the Flyway Site Network will open up greater opportunities for Site Managers to seek national and international funding to support conservation measures for their sites. Sites that are part of this recognised international initiative will be attractive to funding institutions that seek returns on their investments through sustainable conservation management outcomes.

9. Access to a broader base of information and knowledge on migratory waterbirds conservation.

The Flyway Site Network provides a mechanism for developing broader and more effective information and knowledge bases to assist Site Managers. This mechanism will give Site Managers opportunities for information, knowledge and practical experience that might not otherwise be available.

10. Access to capacity development opportunities.

The Flyway Site Network provides a mechanism for the development and implementation of capacity building projects by National Governments and non-government organisations. The focus of such projects is on site management and conservation techniques, education and communication, waterbird research and monitoring skills.

Expectations for the management of Flyway Network Sites

As well as the benefits Site Managers will experience in participating in the Flyway Site Network there are some accompanying expectations in relation to management of the sites. The expectations of managers of Network Sites include:

1. Preparation of nomination information for the site.

Site Managers will need to prepare the relevant information required for the nomination of the site to the Flyway Network. A nomination template is available and Flyway Partnership Secretariat is available to assist in preparation of the documentation.

2. Management of the site to maintain its waterbird values.

Site Managers are expected to ensure that the waterbird values of their site are maintained and enhanced where possible. Recognising that waterbird values are one of the range of management objectives for a site, managers are expected to encourage the adoption of sustainable land use practises at the site with the range of stakeholders including local communities, industries and governments. Opportunities to work with other Site Managers in the conservation of shared species will also be an important aspect of the management of the site.

3. Promote local recognition of the importance of the site for migratory waterbirds.

All important sites for migratory waterbirds are impacted by the activities of the local community, whether within or adjacent to the site. Improving site management is dependent on gaining local recognition of the role and importance of the site. Site Managers are therefore expected to use the Flyway Site Network status to promote local recognition of the site.

4. Strengthen community support for the management of the site.

Strong local community support greatly assists in achieving conservation outcomes for the site. The Site Manager is expected to actively seek local community support. Site dedication ceremonies and specific site based activities that encourage local involvement are effective ways of engaging and strengthening local community participation in conservation of the site.

5. Exchange information and expertise on site management with other Flyway Site Network managers.

Exchanges of information and expertise on site management will enhance the opportunities for all Site Managers to improve the conservation outcomes on their sites. The Network will increasingly provide a valuable reservoir of knowledge and experience that can assist all managers in their management of the sites.

6. Promote the nomination of other internationally important sites to enhance the Flyway Site Network.

The Flyway Site Managers are very well placed to promote and advocate the nomination of other important sites to the Network. Additional sites will enhance the effectiveness of the Flyway Site Network and build on the strengths that it already has. Additionally, the more the Network grows the greater will its importance will be acknowledged and opportunities for support be increased.

Conclusion

Development of a comprehensive network of internationally important sites is essential for the conservation for migratory waterbirds. Site Managers have a critical role as they provide the driving force for achieving management and conservation outcomes at their sites. The Flyway Site Network offers Site Managers a range of benefits for a minimum of expectations. It is an excellent mechanism to increase recognition and support for waterbird conservation at many levels throughout the Flyway.