# East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership

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## EAAFP Documents

- Draft Minutes for Sixth Meeting of Partners
- Implementation Strategy 2012-2016

## EAAFP Publication

- First Report of Global Interflyway Network - Outcomes of the 2011 Global Waterbird Flyways Workshop to Promote Exchange of Good Practice and Lessons Learnt

## Scientific Articles update

- Contrasting extreme long-distance migration patterns in bar-tailed godwits *Limosa lapponica*
- Impacts of wind on individual migration schedules of New Zealand bar-tailed godwits
- Contour-feather moult of Bar-tailed Godwits (*Limosa lapponica baueri*) in New Zealand and the northern hemisphere reveals multiple strategies by sex and breeding region
- Geographic Variation in Morphology of Alaska-Breeding Bar-Tailed Godwits (*Limosa Lapponica*) is not Maintained on Their Nonbreeding Grounds in New Zealand
- Breeding latitude drives individual schedules in a trans-hemispheric migrant bird

## EAAFP Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force update

- EAAFP SBS Task Force Newsletter for August 2012
- Video of Bangladesh Spoon-billed Sandpiper Conservation Project
- Minutes of EAAFP SBS TF Workshop in Palembang, Indonesia on March 2012
- Report of Myanmar Survey in February 2012

## Reference

- Critical Site Network - Conservation of Internationally Important Sites for Waterbirds in the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement Area

Nordmann's Greenshank © Mendis Tan

## Partnership News

### Protecting Asia's flyways – the Birdfair chose to support BirdLife International's Flyway Programme for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway:

As Global Sponsor of BirdLife International's Flyways Programme, the British Birdwatching Fair is this year raising funds to support conservation in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. The Fair has a long history of funding global conservation projects. Since the first Birdfair in 1989, Rutland Water's annual August event has raised more than £2.5 million for a variety of bird

Spike Millington presenting EAAFP introduction at the Birdfair, UK © Carina Stover

conservation projects around the globe. With some 11 per cent of the world's migratory birds classified on the IUCN Red List as Globally Threatened or Near Threatened, in 2011 the Birdfair chose to support BirdLife International's Flyway Programme for its next three years, with 2012 dedicated to Asia. The future project aims to take conservation action at intertidal wetlands that are critical for migrating waders, to improve the availability of data on the bird populations that use the flyway, and to raise awareness throughout the region of the threats to migratory birds and the value of coastal wetlands to people.

## Building Capacity for Shorebird Research and Conservation in Mongolia – the 2012 Workshop and Expedition:

Mongolia is strategically located on the inland route for shorebirds migrating between non-breeding grounds in Australia and southern Asia and breeding areas in Asian tundra, taiga and steppe regions. However, knowledge of the shorebird populations that use this route, the numbers involved, key dates and important sites is sparse. Furthermore, in-country capacity and resources to undertake research and conservation projects are limited. Recently, a collaborative project was initiated to address these needs and ultimately assist Mongolia in managing shorebird populations and habitats throughout its jurisdiction. Proposed by Wetlands International on behalf of the National University of Mongolia and with endorsement of the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism, the project meets five Key Result Areas of the EAAFP Implementation Strategy 2012-16. Drawing on contributions from the Ministry of Environment Korea, the EAAFP Secretariat allocated a small grant to facilitate the first phase of the project.

Handover of leg flags for Mongolia ©Roger Jaensch

During 10-15 August 2012, a team of five trainers from among the EAAFP Partners (three from Australia/AWSG and two from South Korea) conducted a workshop in Ulaanbaatar and a short expedition to Dashinchilen Tsagaan wetlands, central Mongolia. With excellent logistical support from the Mongolian Ornithological Society and led by Dr Sundev Gombobaatar, seven trainees (mostly postgrad students) received desk and field training on migratory shorebirds – their ecology, threats to survival, counting methods and techniques for trapping, marking and recording biometric data. Twenty mist nets were deployed in shallow lakeshore and marsh habitats at Dashinchilen Tsagaan. A start-up set of engraved leg flags was presented to the Mongolian team: the protocol for Mongolia is blue over green. A small sample of 24 shorebirds comprising 10 species was trapped, leg-flagged and fully processed – an ideal scenario for training, with supervised students handling birds as diverse as snipe, sandpipers and stints. Plumage features revealed that most birds were juveniles. More than half of the flagged birds were of species that regularly reach Australia, such as Wood Sandpiper.

Wood Sandpiper © Roger Jaensch

Counting revealed over 12,000 waterbirds (57 species including 33 shorebird species) in this wetland system with high numbers of Spotted Redshank (2500, well over the 1% threshold), Black-tailed Godwit, Pacific Golden Plover and Pied Avocet. Several species mainly associated with coastal habitats, such as turnstones and phalaropes, were present in small numbers. This IBA-listed site also supports breeding by globally threatened White-naped Crane and Swan Goose.

Whereas it seems certain that some of the shorebirds at Dashinchilen Tsagaan (e.g. Little Curlew) will migrate to Australasia, it is not yet clear as to which shorebirds will use the EAA Flyway and which will use the Central Asian Flyway, in the non-breeding period. As more shorebirds are leg-flagged and then re-sighted farther south, the answers may emerge. Subject to securing funds, a follow-up training expedition to this site is proposed for the northward migration and breeding period in May 2013 and anexpedition to eastern Mongolia is also being considered.

## EAAFP Meeting and Side Events at Ramsar COP11 to Raise Awareness of EAAFP Activities:

Spike Millington presenting EAAFP introduction to Ramsar delegates © EAAFP

The EAAFP meeting was held to introduce the EAAFP activities to Ramsar delegates from the EAAF regions, and to identify enhanced opportunities for cooperation with Ramsar. Eighty participants attended the meeting. It was chaired by Srey Sunleang of Cambodia, EAAFP Chair, with opening remarks given by Yeon-chul Yoo of South Korea, Chairman of the Standing Committee of Ramsar. Following introductions, Spike Millington, Chief Executive of EAAFP, provided an introduction to EAAFP and links to Ramsar process. Lew Young, Ramsar Regional Representative for Asia-Oceania further identified linkages between Ramsar and EAAFP. There were presentations highlighting national partnerships and country-led activities by Lei Guangchun of China, Agus Sutito of Indonesia and Nobuhoko Kishimoto of Japan. In the following days, several side events were held to introduce the Global Interflyway Network report – outcomes of the 2011 Global Waterbird Flyways Workshop held in Seosan City - and to highlight the importance of East Asian tidal flats in the context of EAAFP, the latter co-hosted by EAAFP, Wetlands International and BirdLife International.

EAAFP had fruitful discussions with potential partners, notably Malaysia, Viet Nam, Myanmar and North Korea with regard to joining the EAAFP. Especially, an international workshop to raise awareness of EAAFP among North Korea government decision-makers is proposed in Pyeongyang in spring 2013. The co-funding (50%) for this workshop has been committed by the Swiss Government and additional sources of funding were discussed with Ramsar, BirdLife International, Wetlands International and Ramsar RRC-EA. The EAAFP will continue to follow up on these meetings with corresponding countries.

## Launch of the GIN Report was held jointly with the Publication of the Fifth Edition of the Waterbird Population Estimates at Ramsar COP11:

With the generous support of Seosan City, Republic of Korea, the government of Switzerland and the Secretariat of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), an international workshop to review good practice in international initiatives for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and other species was convened by the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), BirdLife International, Wetlands International and the EAAFP Secretariat in October 2011. It was attended by 35 representatives and observers from 14 international organisations and seven Korean organisations.

Presentation to Olivier Biber, the governmental Swiss Federal Office, from Spike Millington, EAAFP at Ramsar COP11 © EAAFP

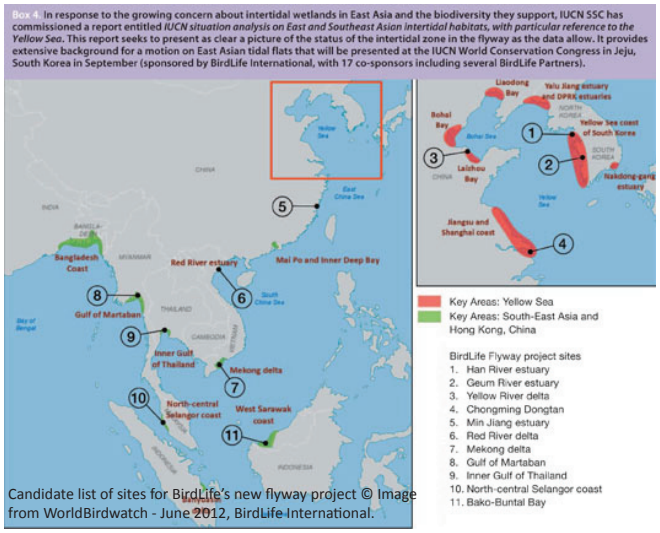
The workshop was the first to bring together these flyway initiatives so as to share lessons learned from these different approaches, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and so provide a more global view of our flyway conservation efforts thus far. The workshop agreed to establish an open and inclusive network of flyway-scale initiatives (the "Global Interflyway Network" (GIN) to facilitate future networking, sharing of knowledge and approaches, and improving collaboration and synergies between the increasing number of flyway conservation initiatives across the world.

The workshop report, entitled "Waterbird Flyway Initiatives: Outcomes of the 2011 Global Waterbirds Flyways Workshop" was launched at a special side-event at the Eleventh Convention of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention in Bucharest, Romania on 8 July 2012. Spike Millington, Chief Executive of EAAFP introduced the report and Nicola Crockford, of RSPB, the Birdlife partner in UK, provided a summary of the main outcomes of the workshop. This was followed by a presentation of the report to Olivier Biber, representative of the Swiss Government, the principal funder of the workshop.

The launch of the "GIN report" was held jointly with the publication of the fifth edition of the Waterbird Population Estimates, which collates all the latest information on distribution, status and population trends of 2,304 populations of 871 species of waterbird from 32 families. This review is a result of ongoing collaborative efforts of tens of thousands of waterbird counters around the world and the Waterbird Specialist Group network convened by Wetlands International jointly with the IUCN Species Survival Commission.

## Flyway Project of Rio Tinto – BirdLife International – Wetlands International to Conserve Intertidal Habitats, valued in billions or even trillions of dollars:

Rio Tinto recently joined the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and established a project in collaboration with BirdLife International and



Candidate list of sites for BirdLife's new flyway project © Image from WorldBirdwatch - June 2012, BirdLife International.

Wetlands International, both EAAFP Partnersin 2011. The project planning meetings were held in Thailand and South Korea in February 2012 to consider how to make the most effective use of the new resources available, to build upon the on-going activities both at selected sites and at the flyway level. During these meetings, 11 sites in South Korea, China, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Myanmar were chosen for inclusion in the project, because they are both of critical importance for migratory waterbirds (as confirmed by the IUCN situation analysis) and also places where BirdLife organisations have the capacity to implement conservation activities.The project will be implemented by the BirdLife Asia Partnership and aims to take conservation action at intertidal wetlands that are critical for migrating waders, to improve the availability of data on the bird population that use the flyway, and to raise awareness throughout the region of the threats to migratory birds and the value of coastal wetlands to people.

One of the key activities at the project sites will be to mobilise local communities for the protection and management of wetland habitats. This will be done by establishing and building the capacity of Local Conservation Groups (LCGs), site-based groups of local stakeholders, often comprising volunteers, which will support the efforts of protected area managers and local government agencies. LCGs have already been established at some project sites in Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. For example, the LCG at Bako-

Buntal Bay in Malaysia includes restaurant owners and tour operators, village committee representatives and members of the Malaysian Nature Society's Kuching branch, who work together towards better management of the bay for wildlife and livelihoods. The Flyways project will help guide the activities of the LCGs at the project sites where they have already been established, and will set up new LCGs at the other sites.

## World Migratory Bird Day Celebration with EAAFP Partners

**Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve – Singapore Invites Public Visitors to World Migratory Bird Day Celebration:** On 12 May 2012, over 300 visitors passed through the gates of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and viewed the Migratory shorebird species photograph exhibition, learnt from the talks about SBWR and shorebird conservation programme and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, National Parks Board Singapore, celebrated World Migratory Bird Day with a photo exhibition, talks and free guided walks for public visitors. Public visitors were welcomed by an exhibition about migratory shorebirds seen at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR). [Read More]

David Lee giving a lecture on [illegible] SBWR © Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve Singapore

**Mongolia government Celebrated World Migratory Bird Day at Khurkh Khuiten Valley on 14-19 May 2012:** Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia celebrated World Migratory Bird Day by holding two events in Khurkh Khuiten Valley which joined EAA Flyway Network Site in 2003. The Khurkh Khuiten Valley is internationally important crane habitat such as Demoiselle Crane (*Grus virgo*), Eurasian Crane (*Grus grus*) and White-naped Crane (*Grus vipio*). Mongolia government invited Onon Balj National Park, Mongolia University, Mongolia Ornithological Society, WWF Mongolia, Schools of respective administrative unites of Khentii and Dornod Provinces and local school children. [Read More]

Children showing the Mongolian Bird Book ©Mongolia

**Australia government Celebrated World Migratory Bird Day by Hosting a Special Presentation:** On 15 May the Australian Government celebrated World Migratory Bird Day by hosting a special lunchtime presentation in Canberra from Dr. Richard Fuller of the University of Queensland. Dr. Fuller presented results from research (partly funded by the Australian Government through an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant) that confirmed rapid declines in Australia's migratory bird populations, appearing mainly as a result of loss of key migration stopover habitat, which is likely to be further exacerbated by climate change effects such as sea level rise. [Read More]

**The National University of Mongolia and Mongolian Ornithological Society Celebrates World Migratory Bird Day 2012 in Ulaanbaatar on 11-13 May 2012:** The National University of Mongolia

Competition of Bird identification during the event at the pond © National University of Mongolia & Mongolian Ornithological Society

and Mongolian Ornithological Society (MOS) organised several small events to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day in collaboration with the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia and Natural History Museum of Mongolia, EAAFP Secretariat, UNEP/CMS Secretariat and Steppe Forward on 11-13 May 2012. More than 60 participants belonging to 20 institutes and organizations were participated in the events at the National University of Mongolia and attended three different interesting lectures; WMBD history and future development, Migratory birds of Mongolia and the National Bird for Mongolia. [Read More]

**World Wetlands Day & World Migratory Bird Day 2012 Celebration at Bako-Buntal Bay, Malaysia:** The Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) organised an event, World Wetlands Day (WWD) & World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2012, in collaboration with Kampung Bako's Village Security and Development Committee on 11-12 February 2012 with support from the Ministry of Environment of Japan and BirdLife Asia Division. The event was attended by well over 50 people. [Read More]

Yeap (MNS) presenting the EAA Flyway poster to a local constituent © Malaysian Nature Society

## Related News

### Welcome to the Waterbird Population Estimates Online Database:

The Waterbird Population Estimates (WPE) online database has recentlybeendeveloped by Wetlands International with the support of Environment Canada and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.The WPE online database provides current and historic estimates, trends and 1% thresholds for over 800 waterbird species and 2300 biogeographic population worldwide. The online database makes it easy to obtain information on the status of waterbird species, providing a comprehensive basis for management and decision making. All previous editions of the WPE series are included, and the latest Conservation Status Reports for the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement.

The main objectives of these series has been to: (a) identify wetlands of international importance through the application of the 1 % threshold criteria under the Ramsar Convention; (b) identify priorities for conservation and research to maintain global waterbird biodiversity; (c) identify gaps in knowledge of the world's waterbird populations; (d) support the development of three global conventions – the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Convention on Biological Diversity; (e) support the development of regional/flyway initiatives, including the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) under the Convention on Migratory Species; the Convention on the Conservation of European Flora and Fauna (Berne Convention); the East Asian – Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Partnership; the European Union Birds Directive; and the Western Hemisphere Shorebird

Reserve Network (WHSRN). [Go to visit]

## Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (CRIMBI) and its Partners Have Designed a 10-year Project to Protect Western Sandpipers:

Each spring, millions of Western Sandpipers depart beaches from as far away as Peru, French Guiana, Mexico, and the Caribbean to migrate to tundra nesting grounds in western Alaska.The Copper River Delta in the Chugach National Forest and the Stikine River Delta in the Tongass National Forest are key refueling stops along this great migratory route. Many millions of birds arrive in May to quickly find the food that will fuel flights north.The sheer number of birds—numbers that are actually declining—that depend on the food and safety provided by these delta mudflats confirms the need for their careful management. But protecting these birds in Alaska will be futile without similar efforts abroad. Conservation of migratory birds that span many borders depends on international cooperation. Because of that need, Forest Service International Programs and Ducks Unlimited started the Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (CRIMBI) in 2001. Now, CRIMBI and its partners have designed a 10-year project to combine solid scientific investigation, community engagement, governance development, threat assessment, and conservation action.

The Pacific Flyway countries of Canada, USA, Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru are already implementing the project. The project—one of the leading efforts of Wings Across the Americas—will catalyze a survey of the numbers of Western Sandpipers to track range-wide trends and pinpoint causes of change in North, Central, and South America. The project will also engage organizations and individuals to participate following a standard online data protocol and will build a strong voice for international conservation. The results of the project will help to protect and restore important habitat throughout the range of Western Sandpipers to benefit that species and many other shorebirds. Initial activities of the project are to train observers to census Western Sandpipers and other shorebirds to help determine causes of population declines locally, regionally, and globally and to design interventions to reverse declines and secure stable or increasing populations.

A workshop to promote this initiative was recently held in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico. Participation in this workshop included 41 individuals from 29 institutions. The result of this workshop was the completion of a monitoring protocol that will be used at 11 important shorebird sites in Northwest Mexico. The protocol was developed by the Grupo de Aves delNoroeste ("GANO"), a collective working group of shorebird biologists in Northwest Mexico. [Read More]

## EAS Congress 2012 held at Changwon, South Korea on 9-13 July 2012: International Cooperation and Careful Planning of Coastal States are Highly Demanded:

The EAS Congress 2012 was led by the Partnership in Environmental Management for the Seas of Eas Asia (PEMSEA), the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs (MLTM) of RO Korea and Changwon City with the support of GEF, UNDP and UNOPS. The meeting was held in Changwon, Republic of Korea on 9-13 July 2012 with 1000 participants from 25 countries and 23 regional and international oragnisations all over the world.With the theme, "Building a Blue Economy: Strategy, Opportunities and Partnerships in the Seas of East Asia", the opening ceremony highlighted the progress and achievements in governance if regional/subregional seas within the framework of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).Furthermore, on-the-ground

Mr. Lim Liang Jim of the Singapore National Parks Board, presenting the National IUCM Program © Minseon Kim

achievements in Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) approach, and the remaining challenges and opportunities in building a blue economy in the East Asian Seas region were also covered.

The keynote speakers emphasized that the key to balancing growth and environment in the process of developing a diverse array of coastal and maritime industries and economic opportunities, is international cooperation and careful planning of coastal states. Changwon Mayor Park stressed the importance of collaboration among countries and stakeholders to deal with the problems of the oceans and he also underlined that the conference would serve a venue for sharing of best practices and strategies.The EAAFP Secretariat, represented by Minseon Kim, the Public Information Officer, participated in several workshops, especially Subtheme 3: Securing Ecosystem Services through Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management (ICM)and listened courteously to the ICM lessons and the best practices seeking benefits for both migratory waterbirds and people.

Subtheme 3 Workshop 3 on "Consolidation and Replication of ICM Good Practices and Lessons Learned" included as a series of presentations on the implementation of ICM in various sites and countries. The workshop aimed to determine the lessons learned in ICM about replication and consolidation in order to achieve the target of ICM coverage of 20 percent of the region's coastline by 2015, as agreed by PEMSEA countries. Integrated Urban Coastal Management's (IUCM) process facilitates Singapore's coastal management by enhancing the coordination of governmental stakeholders, and coherence in governance, policies and processes. Mr. Lim Liang Jim of the Singapore National Parks Board stressed the three necessary principles with which the National IUCM Program is based: authority, efficiency, and transparency. He emphasized that the IUCM allows the different agencies and stakeholders to talk to one another while allowing the different sectors to perform specific tasks.

## New Website for the Entire Team of Spoon-billed Sandpipers:

A new website for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper project has now been opened since last June 2012 and the website is kindly hosted by WWT. The project is supported by WWT, RSPB and Save our Species, with additional financial contributions and support from the EAAFP, BirdLife International, CMS, AWSG-Birds Australia, Heritage Expeditions, the BBC Wildlife Fund, Avios, the Olive Herbert Charitable Trust, the Oriental Bird Club, British Airways Communities & Conservation Scheme, Swarovski Optik and many generous individuals. [Go to visit]

saving the spoon-billed sandpiper

## A Wide Goose Chase through the Literature:

The Ramsar Convention COP11 is coming up in next month, July, - time for Wetlands International to finish off the latest fifth edition of the Waterbird Population estimates. Brant is a rare winter visitor to the ROK with only one recorded nationwide in the 2011 winter bird census (MoE Korea and NIBR 2011). It therefore seems to be a species on which little time needs to be spent by Korean organizations. However, it used to be less rare here. It was described by Austin (1948) as probably an "uncommon winter visitor" rather than a rarity. A read of Park (2002) reveals that a flock of 138 Brant were found in the far southwest in 1974, and that 700 were seen in early 1984 at one site in the southeast. [Read More]

Brant, East Coast © Robin Newlin