

Partnership for the EAST ASIAN - AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY



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Invitation to Meeting for the EAAFP Partners at Ramsar COP11:

The EAAFP secretariat is pleased to invite you to the Meeting for the EAAFP Partners at Ramsar COP11 on 5 July 2012. Its time and venue is scheduled to at 17:30 - 19:30 and the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest, Romania. The agenda of the meeting will be to develop new nominations of Flyway Site Network with Government Partners and report their national activities on CEPA. The secretariat will also separately meet Potential Partners to discuss on joining EAAFP.

Please confirm your attendance at communication@eaaflyway.net by 15 June, so that we can prepare all materials for attendees. All participants for Ramsar COP11 will need to pre-register via online pre-registration through the Ramsar website, no later than 12 June 2012.



EAAFP welcomes Spike Millington as new Chief Executive:

Spike Millington took up the post of Chief Executive Officer of EAAFP Secretariat as of 16th May 2012. Spike has a lifelong interest in birds and their conservation, dating back to his childhood in England. He spent the last year in Washington helping USAID develop its global biodiversity strategy. For the previous ten years he lived in Asia, first in the Philippines and then in China. From 2001-2003, he worked at the Asian Development Bank to develop the China-GEF Partnership to Combat Land Degradation in Dryland Areas, GEF's first long-term programme in land degradation. From 2006-2010 he was UNDP Chief

Technical Advisor for the EU-China Biodiversity Programme, based in the Ministry of Environmental Protection in Beijing, where he was responsible for policy and institutional strengthening, as well as technical support to field projects and awareness raising activities. From 1985-1998 he lived in Africa working on natural resources and biodiversity conservation programmes, including protecting endangered Mountain Gorillas in Rwanda, coordinating the environmental policy and institutional component of Madagascar's pioneer Environmental Action Plan and advising the Ethiopian government on its National Conservation Strategy. He is currently a member of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management and has worked with many national and international conservation NGOs, as well as national governments. As he is experienced in leading and working with multidisciplinary teams in complex environmental programs involving donor and partner coordination, the Partnership is looking forward to working with Spike in his new role at the Secretariat.

Birding and Ecotourism having a positive economic impact on the local economy:

WWF-Hong Kong recently introduced a new wetland management ambassador programme for local youngsters. The "Wetlander" programme brings children aged 8 to 18 together to undertake learning activities in a variety of wetland habitats. The three-day programme includes a series of interactive activities and field visits carried out at wetland sites including the Mai Po Nature Reserve, Ting Kok, Tai O and Nam San Wai. Towards the end of the programme, children are encouraged to undertake simple nature interpretation by applying what they have learned in the programme to their family members. During the site visit, the tour creates business for the local community by making use of local transportation and dining out in small local restaurants. For instance, the site visit to Tai O is organized jointly with the Tai O Community Resources Centre which is run by local residents.



Wetlander on local ferry at Nam San Wai (left) Children enjoying birdwatching inside Mai Po Nature Reserve (right) © WWF-Hong Kong

“It is a perfect match”, WWF-Hong Kong Mai Po Centre Manager, Mathew Cheng said. “The Wetlander sets a workable example of eco-tourism that meets the objective of using wetland resources for educational purposes whilst having a positive economic impact on the local economy”.

Last year, WWF-Hong Kong acquired sponsorship from Operation Santa Claus (<http://osc.scmp.com>) to run 10 Wetlander programmes for children from unstable family backgrounds living in small group homes. “Wetland habitats are deteriorating and disappearing rapidly because of human development so we hope to show the children why we need to preserve the habitats” Cheng said. WWF-Hong Kong also used the sponsorship fund to build a viewing platform above a lily pond (which will serve as an outdoor classroom), to upgrade ventilation systems within bird hides and to buy a telescope to help spot the 350+ species of birds that flock to the wetlands every year. [Reported by Maipo Center, WWF-Hong Kong](#)

* [UNEP Press Release: Bird Watching Can Help Eco-Tourism Fly High in a Green Economy](#)

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, SINGAPORE:

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in Singapore joined the EAA Flyway Site Network as its 73th site on 20 June 2002. The site is Singapore’s first network site and hosts appreciable numbers of migratory shorebirds during the northern winter. Shorebirds have been counted regularly at the wetland since 1990 providing information on the abundance, species composition and population trends.



Sungei Buloh was once dominated by mangroves. But, by the 1980s, the site had been identified for development into an intensive agro-tech farming area, and the once luxuriant mangroves had mostly been cleared in order to make way for prawn farms.

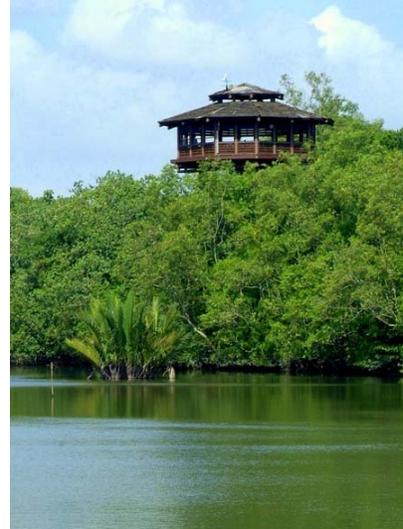
Location of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in Singapore © EAAFP 2012

These plans ground to a halt in 1986, when bird watchers from the Singapore branch of the Malayan Nature Society stumbled upon Sungei Buloh and witnessed an extraordinary diversity of birds there. Their report on the site prompted top government officials to personally visit Sungei Buloh, and they too were impressed by the abundant flora and fauna they saw. It was thus with the support of the top echelons of Singapore’s government that Sungei Buloh was saved.

After a S\$8.5 million transformation, and with the involvement of experts from the Malayan Nature Society, the Jurong Bird Park, the Wildfowl Trust’s Wetland Advisory Service, the Asian Wetland Bureau and the World Wide Fund for Nature, Sungei Buloh Nature Park was declared open on 6 December 1993 by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.

The years that followed the opening were filled with events and activities for schools, children, researchers and many families. They joined in activities organised to promote conservation, education, recreation and research in Sungei Buloh.

The park's management also developed a volunteer programme, whereby a group of dedicated volunteers would engage the visitors with their nature guiding skills, photography and painting, as well as research. The park also began collaborating with corporations that understand the importance of the environment and the need to help protect and conserve our natural heritage.



Bird hide, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve Center © Mendis Tan

In 2002, Sungei Buloh was officially gazetted as Singapore's first post-independence nature reserve, and the 130 hectare wetland was renamed Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR). SBWR was also identified as Singapore's entry to the ASEAN Heritage Park programme in 2003, and is one of 27 parks in the ASEAN member states to be declared as a heritage park and a national protected area. SBWR became a member of the East Asian Australasian Shorebird Site Network. SBWR was also recognised as an important site for migratory shorebirds by Wetlands International. The number of bird species recorded has increased from 212 species in 2003, to 230 species as of the time of writing (Dec 2011), and the bird ringing programme has also accumulated large amounts of biometric data on a variety of bird species.



Whole view of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (left) Shorebirds of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (right) © Mendis Tan

*Reported by Mendis Tan (mendis_tan@nparks.gov.sg) National Parks Board

■ [Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve \(http://www.sbwr.org.sg/\)](http://www.sbwr.org.sg/)

*Reference: Waterbirds Around The World. 2007. by G.C. Boere, C.A. Galbraith and D.A. Stroud

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.

The purpose of the event was (1) to generate awareness on the importance of Bako-Buntal Bay as an IBA/potential Flyway Network site, and (2) to cement foundation for future flyway conservation work at the bay.



Yeap (MNS) presenting the EAA Flyway poster to Dr Hazland as a token of appreciation (left) © Malaysian Nature Society

Press image for enlargement, the local newspaper of Malaysia (right)

The event began with a trip onto the Bako-Buntal Bay mudflats at low tide with the village headman and several honorary wardens of Kampung Bako, one of the important villages located within the Bako-Buntal Bay. Led by an experienced MNS birder, the villagers were given a briefing on the types of migratory waterbirds (including globally threatened species such as the Chinese Egret) and shown birds through telescopes. A local news reporter also interviewed the village headman on his views about the site while a colouring competition for kids was held back at the village.

Subsequently, the group headed back to the village for the official opening of the event by the VIPs (including a local political party) at the village community house. Yeap Chin Aik (MNS Head of Conservation) presented an overview on wetlands, waterbirds and importance of the bay to migratory shorebirds to participants. He said this Bako-Buntal Bay had been listed as one of the Important Bird Areas (IBA) in Malaysia by BirdLife International and there were 22 IBA sites identified in Sarawak. Every year, more than 10,000 of waterbirds of at least 32 species from the northern hemisphere will escape winter to Bako-Buntal Bay to feed and rest.

He also mentioned that current conservation activities such as annual waterbird census, capacity building, advocacy and outreach programmes, mangrove replanting as well as environmental education

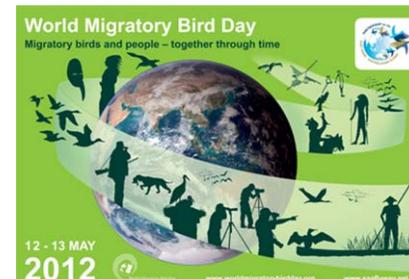
activities by both government and non-governmental organizations would ensure the bird's survival for posterity. [Download the Malaysia's WMBD report](#)

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day 2012:

World Migratory Bird Day is a global, annual awareness campaign to promote the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats worldwide. According to WMBD team in Germany, over 140 events have already registered for World Migratory Bird Day 2012. Join the celebration by organising bird-watching events, educational programmes, lectures, competitions and other public events. It is not too late to order WMBD materials to support your event. EAAFP still have posters. Also, its design CD for your local translated poster and Information Flyer can be sent anytime when you request.

For more information please visit/contact the following information:

- EAAFP Secretariat, Ms. Minseon Kim,
min-seon.kim@eaaflyway.net
- UNEP/CMS Secretariat: Mr. Sean Wright,
contact@worldmigratorybirdday.org



WMBD Poster for EAAF region © EAAFP and UNEP/CMS & UNEP/AEWA

Sixth Meeting of Partners (MoP6) of EAAFP held in Palembang, Indonesia:

On 19-22 March 2012, the Sixth Meeting of Partners (MoP6) of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership was successfully held in Palembang, South Sumatra, with 70 international and 30 domestic participants. The meeting was attended by 26 Partners out of 27, three potential governmental Partners, 30 technical advisors and domestic experts.

Minister of Forestry of Indonesia, Governor of Sumatra and Head of Banyuasin District welcomed all participants and opened the meeting. This was the second MoP in Indonesia. The Partnership was launched from the first Meeting of Partners in Bogor, Indonesia, November 2006. The Chair of the EAAFP expressed the Partnership's gratitude to the national, provincial and local governments of Indonesia for hosting this sixth MoP and acknowledged the preparation work of the hosting team and EAAFP Secretariat. This meeting marked the acceptance of three new Partners (Mongolia, New Zealand and Rio Tinto) and the designation of Sembilang National Park, Indonesia. There were presentations from new

Partners on their plans and activities for the Partnership, and from governmental Partners on new Network sites since MoP5.

Meetings of existing Working Groups (Anatidae, Shorebird, Seabird, CEPA and AI) and Task Forces (Monitoring, Colour marking, Yellow Sea and Spoon-billed Sandpiper) occurred during side event sessions, and representatives of each session reported their work since last MoP5 back to all. Also, the most laborious task, the new Implementation Strategy 2012-16, was carefully reviewed and approved by all Partners for the next term.



Partner Representatives at the 6th Meeting of Partners, March 2012 (left), Participants watching shorebirds, seabirds and migratory/resident waterbird species on the boat (right) © 2012 Partnership for EAAF.

With the generous host of Indonesia, a full day field trip was made to the Sembilang National Park famous for its extensive intertidal mudflats and mangroves. Sembilang National Park has been designated as the 108th EAAF Network site on the basis of its international importance for migratory waterbirds. The site is the country's second network site after Wasur National Park in Papua. This status gives the park the recognition of a crucial wetland for migratory waterbirds. During the trip, participants observed big population of vulnerable Milky Stork (*Mycteria cinerea*), Lesser Adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*), Nordmann's Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*), Chinese Egret (*Egretta eulophotes*) and many other migratory and resident waterbird species. A large number of Asian Dowitcher (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*) was also observed and the species for which this area are of critical importance.

Gulf of Martaban in Myanmar hosts the largest remaining population of wintering Spoon-billed Sandpiper:

Conservationists from ArcCona, BTO, RSPB and WWT from the UK joined the BirdLife partner in Myanmar, BANCA for a training workshop and survey of Spoon-billed Sandpiper in the Gulf of Martaban (Mottama). The field survey as well as a training course was accompanied by members of the SBS Task

Force from Japan, Bangladesh and China, who shared their knowledge and experience with the survey team.

The team of 12 scientists had over 100 sightings of Spoon-billed Sandpipers during the four days of surveys of their prime habitat in the upper estuary. In February another team of British scientists repeated the survey with similar results. A full analyses of the count data is needed before to be certain, but first indications give hope that the work already done by BANCA to reduce hunting may be having a positive affect. A Japanese – Burmese Benthos team took soil samples for analyses of potential food items of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper.



Members surveying at Gulf of Martaban © Christoph Zöckler

In addition 4-8 birds have been observed at Ahlat at the Salween River mouth in the south of the Gulf which confirms that this area is also an important wintering area. The most positive news comes from separate field surveys at Nan Thar in the Arakhan region, where a total of 25 SBS were observed on 20 January compared to 22 the year before and only 14 the year before that. This increase follows the cessation of hunting following the Task Forces' intervention three years ago and the start of ecotourism in the area to supplement livelihoods of the local people. It is fortunate that BANCA together with [Bird Holidays](#) is offering tours to visit this beautiful little island next winter again. People who join the tour will not only see Spoon-billed sandpiper in winter, the globally endangered Nordmann's Greenshank and roosting Bar-headed Geese amongst many others; they will actively support the local community by their visit, who stopped the hunting of birds on the island. These results are encouraging, demonstrating that early interventions and the mitigation work on the hunting issue have shown affect. Even more encouraging has been the workshop on World Wetland Day (2 Feb.) in Nay Pyi Daw, the Myanmar capital, hosted by the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry on behalf of the Ramsar designation of the Gulf of Martaban and other sites important for the Spoon-billed sandpiper. Several members of the Task Force and BANCA presented and highlighted the importance of the Gulf of Martaban and the ministry outlined a roadmap for protection. Further meetings and close cooperation between BANCA and the ministry are planned to increase the number of Ramsar sites and protected area coverage, including other coastal sites, such as Nan Thar Island. For more information, please

contact to: Christoph Zöckler cz@arccona.com

Cranes Calling - a regional cooperation workshop for conservation of the Black-necked Crane (BNC):

Cranes Calling, a regional cooperation workshop for conservation of the Black-necked Crane (BNC), was held on April 2011 in New Delhi, India. The workshop was attended by 81 participants from India and Bhutan including representatives of BirdLife International, Wetlands International and UNESCO, and was organized by WWF-India, Ministry of Environment and Forest of India, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN).

The key objectives of the workshop were to facilitate knowledge-sharing and information exchange among conservation experts on the Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis*, to use the species as a vehicle for international cooperation between India, China and Bhutan and to explore the opportunities of community exchange programmes among these countries.

The Black-necked Crane breeds in the high altitude wetlands of the Tibetan Plateau (China) Eastern Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir and Gurudongmar Lake in Sikkim (India). The species winters in lower altitudes in Tibetan Plateau, Yunan and Guizhou (China), Phobjika and Bumdeling (Bhutan) and Sangti, Zimithang valleys in Arunachal Pradesh (India). The species has strong cultural, spiritual and religious links to the local people in the region. The total global population of the species is estimated to be about 11,000 individuals and it is listed as a globally 'Vulnerable' species by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



- [Download the MISTNET - Volume 12, No2 April-June 2011 \(7.83MB\)](#)