TENTH MEETING OF PARTNERS TO THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EAST ASIAN – AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY  
Changjiang, PR China, 10-14 December 2018

**Discussion Paper**

**Effectiveness of the EAAFP**

**Working Groups and Task Forces**

Discussion topic: How can we make Working Groups (WG) and Task Forces (TF) more effective within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Partnership.

Discussion leaders: Rick Lanctot (United States), Richard Hearn (Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust), and Bruce McKinlay (New Zealand)

Background: There are currently 7 WGs and 7 TFs that are part of the EAAF Partnership. The success of the EAAF Partnership in many ways reflects the success of the WGs and TFs. However, the WGs and TFs vary tremendously in how they work, what they accomplish, and how they interact with the EAAF Partnership Secretariat. Numerous people commented recently to the Secretariat that improvements were needed (see bottom section of this document). We plan to lead a discussion on this topic at the upcoming MoP10 with a goal of improving the effectiveness of WGs and TFs, and providing simple guidance for how they should operate.

Process:

1. Introduction of topic during EAAF MoP opening meeting, afternoon, 10 December 2018
2. Meeting of Chairs of WGs and TFs, and all other interested parties, during an evening period, 10 or 11 December to discuss topic
3. Oral report back to EAAF Partnership formal meeting, afternoon, 12 December 2018
4. Written bulleted form report back to EAAF Partnership Secretariat, afternoon, 14 December 2018

Potential Subjects to discuss:

1. What should the role of the WGs and TFs be? What is their current role?
2. What would an effective WG and TF do?
3. What support does the EAAF Partnership Secretariat currently provide (e.g., small grants, support for meetings) and what do WGs and TFs want from the EAAF Partnership secretariat?
4. How should the WGs and TFs operate? Perhaps simple guidelines are needed.
   1. When should a WG or TF form and when should they be considered no longer active? How do they shut down?
   2. What role should the Chair/Facilitator play in the operation of the WG or TF (e.g., administration of small grant awards)?
   3. How should the Chair/Facilitator communicate with their members and the EAAF Partnership Secretariat?
5. How are the WGs and TFs supposed to interact? Should TFs ‘report’ to their respective WGs. For example, should the Baer’s Pochard TF and the Scaly-sided merganser TF report to the Anatidae WG, while the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Far Eastern Curlew TFs report to the Shorebird WG?
6. Should the WGs and TFs have work plans, and if so, how frequently should they be updated? How will success in implementing them be evaluated and reported out?
7. Should and how do the WGs and TFs priorities overlap with the EAAF Partnership strategic plan?
8. Can we develop best practices, based on contributions from all WG and TF chairs/Facilitators and other interested parties, to be more effective?

Proposed Products:

1. Oral presentation of discussion
2. Final report of discussion that includes summary of overall findings, and if possible, a best practices guideline to be shared with all current and future WG and TF chairs/facilitators.

Comments provided to Secretariat prior to MoP10 by 31 Partners, WGs and TFs:

* The EAAFP Secretariat should “…put more focus on the work of the WGs and TFs such as by providing dedicated time at MoP10 for their meetings, having a separate reporting template for WGs and TFs to future MoPs, improve communication, etc.”.
* It was suggested that WGs and TFs:
* should have a simple plan that outlines their upcoming intersessional work, and priorities attached to those activities. These tasks can be included in the EAAF Partnership’s intersessional work plan. Species focused Task Forces could prioritise and report against their Single Species Action Plan (if one has been developed and adopted);
* need financial and organisational assistance from the Secretariat and Partners to advance their intersessional work;
* would benefit from the support of the Technical Committee to advance their intersessional work;
* would benefit from having a standard reporting template, different to the Partner reporting template that seeks to highlight key achievements/activities undertaking in the previous intersessional period.
* There should be more communication within the Partnership, such as between the Secretariat and the WGs and TFs.