



Decision 9

Developing an EAAFP Sister Site Program

Submitted by the Government of Australia

Summary

In accordance with Paragraph 3 of the Partnership document, Partners are encouraged to support the development of an East Asian – Australasian Flyway Waterbird Site Network (Flyway Site Network) to ensure a chain of internationally important sites are managed to support the survival of migratory waterbirds in the flyway.

The Partnership document also encourages Partners to cooperate to build expertise across the Flyway Site Network including promoting sustainable development management techniques, developing and implementing management plans, monitoring of waterbirds, promoting awareness and public education, and research formulation.

To assist flyway-wide collaborative activities at Flyway Sites, the Partnership has developed a Sister Site Program. A Sister Site arrangement between existing or potential sites can be one mechanism to encourage collaboration between site managers to share knowledge, increase capacity and promote awareness of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.

This Decision (Annex 1) seeks to encourage the further development of the EAAFP Sister Site Program and invites Partners to consider establishing new Sister Site relationships.

1. In accordance with Paragraph 3 of the Partnership document, Partners are encouraged to support the development of an East Asian – Australasian Flyway Waterbird Site Network (Flyway Site Network) to ensure a chain of internationally important sites are managed to support the survival of migratory waterbirds in the flyway.
2. The Flyway Site Network not only identifies and includes sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds but also aims to link those sites through sharing information and capacity building.
3. The Flyway Site Network can provide a useful mechanism for developing broader and more effective information and knowledge bases to assist site managers. This mechanism gives site managers opportunities for information, knowledge and practical experience that might not otherwise be available. Being part of the Flyway Site Network can also open up greater opportunities for site managers to seek funding to support conservation measures for their sites.

4. Participation 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.
5. To improve the protection and management of important sites, a number of communities, site managers and Partners have entered into site twinning or sister site arrangements. Currently, the EAAFP recognises eight Sister Site arrangements and other collaborative activities involving the Flyway Network (**Appendix 1**).
6. The EAAFP Sister Site Program brings together Flyway Network sites in different countries that share migratory waterbird species to encourage increased awareness of their shared species and link sites through collaborative activities to promote the conservation of these birds.
7. The EAAFP Sister Site Program is designed to offer enhanced opportunities to be engaged with other sites in the Flyway Site Network, to conduct collaborative research, undertake monitoring on shared species and exchange information and experience, which is critical for site managers and decision makers to reinforce conservation action.
8. Capacity building is an important element of sister site relationships and exchange visits can help site managers learn new and innovative approaches to different aspects of site management, from visitor centre development, education, cultural experience and/or participatory wetland management techniques.

Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary Sister Site

9. The Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (AIBS) [EAAF131], located in southern Australia close to the city of Adelaide, joined the Flyway Site Network in 2016.
10. AIBS, also known as the Sapphire Coast, is a highly productive and ecologically significant ecosystem. The mosaic of marine, coastal, inland and man-made habitats provide important feeding and roosting areas for migratory waterbirds, particularly shorebirds. These habitats include: expansive tidal flats, mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, tidal saltmarshes, salt evaporation pans, artificial stormwater detention wetlands and effluent water treatment ponds and a seasonal freshwater lake.
11. The AIBS area supports nationally and internationally significant numbers of migratory and resident shorebirds. At least 52 shorebird species, including 37 migratory species, have been recorded in the AIBS area.
12. The AIBS regularly supports nationally significant numbers of two globally endangered (IUCN Red List) species, Far Eastern Curlew and Great Knot. Both species are listed as critically endangered under Australian national environmental law. The AIBS regularly supports internationally significant (>1%) populations of two migratory shorebirds, Red Knot and Red-necked Stint.

13. Since joining the Flyway Site Network, the management authority has expressed a desire to develop a sister site arrangement with other site managers in the Flyway.
14. In June 2017, the South Australian Department for Environment and Water, engaged The Nature Conservancy to provide information and advice concerning the status of the AIBS as a conservation area for migratory shorebirds and for establishing EAAF sister site partnerships to promote the site and further its conservation mission (**Appendix 2**).
15. The report provides an overview of the shorebird diversity at the AIBS as well as the context of the EAAF and examples of similar flyway-based conservation work in other hemispheres to provide more context and areas to look for additional conservation ideas.
16. The report reviewed the science regarding the value of AIBS as a site on the flyway, identified sites to potentially establish agreements with AIBS and generated an action plan for promoting and establishing the role of the AIBS in the flyway.
17. The report made three key recommendations:
 - a. AIBS should engage other sites in the flyway to provide opportunities for shared learning (sister sites).
 - b. Consider the set of recommended sites for partnership (Table 8 in the report), along with some of each sites' biological and partnership-related attributes.
 - c. Continue engaging in the EAAFP, actively participate in implementation of the Australia Government's *Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds* including expanding shorebird conservation research and include cultural exchange and learning opportunities within sister site partnerships.
18. With the support of the EAAFP Secretariat, the AIBS seeks to negotiate with interested Partners to progress a Sister Site arrangement during the intersessional period.

Decision:

Partners at the 10th Meeting of the Partners are requested to adopt the Draft Decision (Annex 1).

Annex 1

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Recalling, in accordance with Paragraph 3 of the Partnership document, Partners are encouraged to support the development of an East Asian – Australasian Flyway Waterbird Site Network (Flyway Site Network) to ensure a chain of internationally important sites are managed to support the survival of migratory waterbirds in the flyway,

Recalling further, in accordance with Paragraph 6(1) of the Partnership document, Partners are encouraged to cooperate to build expertise across the Flyway Site Network including promoting sustainable development management techniques, developing and implementing management plans, monitoring of waterbirds, promoting awareness and public education, and research formulation,

Acknowledging the EAAFP Sister Site Program and its efforts to bring together Flyway Network Sites in different countries that share species to encourage increased awareness of their shared migratory waterbirds and link sites through collaborative activities to promote the conservation of these birds and their habitats,

Recognizing that a number of Partners, site managers and local communities have developed Sister Site arrangements and other collaborative activities which operate on a regular basis and *encourages* them to continue to engage in this activity,

Further recognizing the need to further encourage the development of new Sister Site arrangements as a mechanism to promote flyway wide collaborative activities that contribute to the objectives of the Partnership,

Acknowledging the resource constraints of site managers and Partners and their capacity to establish and participate in Sister Site arrangements,

*The 10th Meeting of the Partners
of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership:*

1. *Acknowledges* existing Sister Site arrangements and other collaborative activities involving Flyway Site Network site in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway at **Annex 2**;
2. *Encourages* Partners to consider establishing new Sister Site arrangements when there are shared species, habitats, management or educational situations and to provide resources for their ongoing operation;
3. *Further encourages* working groups, task forces, and the Technical Sub-Committee to facilitate relationships between sites;

4. *Further encourages* Partners and site managers with existing Sister Site arrangements to promote their work and report on outcomes of their arrangements at subsequent Meeting of the Partners, the EAAFP newsletter, the EAAFP website and social media platforms;
5. *Invites* Partners to nominate suitable sites that wish to join the EAAFP Sister Site Program;
6. *Notes* the consultant's report at **Annex 3** and *invites* the Secretariat, the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary [EAAF131] management authority and interested Partners to progress an EAAFP Sister Site arrangement during the intersessional period;
7. *Instructs* the Secretariat to review the existing EAAFP Sister Site Program in consultation with Partners and site managers, and report on outcomes of the review at the 11th Meeting of the Partners;
8. *Further instructs* the Secretariat develop guidelines, in consultation with Partners and site managers, on the EAAFP Sister Site Program and seek their adoption at the 11th Meeting of the Partners;
9. *Further instructs* the Secretariat, to provide additional information on the EAAFP Sister Site Program to Partners including, but not limited to: case studies of existing arrangements, benefits and expectations of entering into a Sister Site arrangement, and draft proforma Sister Site Memorandum of Understanding including clauses;
10. *Further instructs* the Secretariat, subject to available resources, to support the establishment and operation of EAAFP Sister Site arrangements by providing CEPA materials, hosting workshops and capacity building training sessions; and
11. *Requests* Partners and the Secretariat report on their progress to establish and maintain Sister Site arrangements and other collaborative activities through their regular reports.

Annex 2

Existing sister site arrangements and other collaborative activities involving Network sites in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway

Number	Country	Local government or management authority	Site name	Country	Local government or management authority	Site name
1	China	Dandong City	Yalujiang National Nature Reserve	New Zealand	Pukorokoro Miranda Naturalist Trust	Firth of Thames
2	Republic of Korea	Changwon City	Junam Reservoir	Japan	Osaki City, Miyagi Prefecture	Kejo-numa
3	China	Qiqihar City	Zhalong National Nature Reserve	Republic of Korea	Goyang City	Janghang Wetland Protected area
4	Australia	Brisbane City	Moreton Bay, Boondall wetlands	Japan	Narashino City Chiba prefecture	Yatsu-higata
5	Australia	Newcastle City	Hunter River Estuary Wetlands	Japan	Kushiro City, Hokkaido	Kushiro Wetland
6	Republic of Korea	Suncheon City	Suncheon Bay	Japan	Izumi City, Kagoshima Prefecture	Arasaki
7	Japan	Nagoya City	Fujimae Tidal Flat	Australia	Greater Geelong City	Swan Bay Tidal Flats
8	Republic of Korea	Seocheon County	Yubudo Tidal Flat	Singapore	National Parks Board of Singapore	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve
9	China	Shanghai City	Chongming Dongtan National Nature Reserve	Singapore	National Parks Board, Singapore	Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve

Source: <http://eaaflyway.net/about-us/the-flyway/flyway-site-network/sister-sites/>