



Decision 11

Amendment to Appendix III of the Partnership Document

Submitted by the Australian Government with the support of the Seabird Working Group

Summary

In accordance with Paragraph 9(7) of the Partnership document, Partners may amend the migratory waterbird taxonomic groups listed on Appendix III.

A review of Appendix III indicates that three seabird families are eligible to be included: Fregatidae (Frigatebirds), Sulidae (Gannets and Boobies) and Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds). The review also noted the recent taxonomic split of Oceanitidae (storm petrels) into two families: Oceanitidae (Austral storm petrels) and Hydrobatidae (northern storm petrels) and noted that Appendix III should be updated accordingly.

The addition of these three families to Appendix III would align with existing bilateral and multilateral frameworks in the region and further support the transboundary conservation of these highly mobile species.

Crucially, the addition of Fregatidae would complement a recent decision by the Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS/COP12/DOC.25.1.11) to include Christmas Island Frigatebird (*Fregata andrewsi*) on Appendix I. The inclusion of this family would facilitate the cooperation of range states to support conservation efforts of this critically endangered species.

The Seabird Working Group strongly endorses this proposal and has indicated its willingness to begin implementing this resolution immediately.

The 10th Meeting of the Partners is requested to adopt the Draft Decision, and to approve the amended Terms of Reference of the Seabird Working Group.

1. The Partnership document lists taxonomic groups covered by the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership in Appendix III.
2. In accordance with Paragraph 9(7), Partners may amend the taxonomic groups listed by consensus including adding to, or removing migratory waterbird groups from Appendix III. Appendix III currently lists the following taxonomic groups at the family level:

| Taxonomic Group | English Name |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Gaviidae | Divers/Loons |
| Podicipedidae | Grebes |
| Phalacrocoracidae | Cormorants |
| Procellariidae | Shearwaters and petrels |

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Oceanitidae | Storm Petrels |
| Pelecanidae | Pelicans |
| Ardeidae | Herons, Egrets and Bitterns |
| Ciconiidae | Storks |
| Threskiornithidae | Ibises and Spoonbills |
| Anatidae | Swans, Geese and Ducks |
| Gruidae | Cranes |
| Rallidae | Rails, Gallinules and Coots |
| Helionithidae | Finfoots |
| Jacanidae | Jacanas |
| Haematopodidae | Oystercatchers |
| Recurvirostridae | Stilts and Avocet |
| Glareolidae | Pratincoles |
| Charadriidae | Plovers |
| Scolopacidae | Sandpipers |
| Laridae | Gulls, Terns and Skimmers |
| Stercorariidae | Skuas |
| Alcidae | Auks |

3. At the 9th Meeting of the Partners, the Seabird Working Group agreed to review the species listed under their Terms of Reference and Appendix III of the Partnership document to identify any gaps relating to seabird species. The Seabird Working Group agreed to bring forward any recommendations to the 10th Meeting of the Partners.
4. The review follows on from the work undertaken by the Seabird Working Group, prior to the 7th Meeting of the Partner (MoP7) in Alaska, United States of America, where Partners agreed to include the three families (Fregatidae, Sulidae and Phaethontidae) in the scope of the Seabird Working Group (MoP7 Item 3.4.1 for reference). This decision facilitated the Seabird Working Group's species prioritisation process, which was also endorsed at the meeting.
5. A review of Appendix III by the Seabird Working Group identified three seabird families that are eligible to be included in Appendix III - Fregatidae (Frigatebirds), Sulidae (Gannets and Boobies) and Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds) at **Annex 1**. Ten species from the three families occur in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway and meet the definition of migratory waterbird as outlined in Appendix II of the Partnership document, whereby a significant proportion cyclically and predicably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries.
6. The inclusion of Fregatidae, Sulidae and Phaethontidae on Appendix III will facilitate an opportunity to expand the Flyway Site Network and allow range states to work cooperatively under the Partnership framework to pursue conservation outcomes.
7. The Seabird Working Group currently considers approximately 121 species under its Terms of Reference. As a result of the MoP7 decision, a further 10 species from Fregatidae, Sulidae and Phaethontidae are also considered under the scope of the Seabird Working Group but are not formally a part of its Terms of Reference. The additional 10 species do not represent a significant increase in the working group's work load.

Fregatidae

8. Frigatebirds are long-lived, medium-sized to large tropical seabirds. They occur throughout all tropical oceans and are strictly marine species. They feed in both inshore and pelagic waters, mostly taking flying fish or squid or by piracy from other seabirds such as boobies.
9. Frigatebirds make regular post-breeding movements into surrounding ocean crossing numerous national jurisdictions, returning to breed at the same location the following season. For example, Christmas Island Frigatebirds make regular movements away from their only known breeding site (Christmas Island, Australia) to the Indo-Malay Archipelago over the Sunda Shelf to South China Sea, Andaman Sea, Gulf of Thailand, Sulu Sea and off the coast of south-west Sulawesi.
10. There are five species of frigatebird, all in the genus *Fregata*, three of which are present in the EAAF:
 - a. Lesser Frigatebird (*Fregata ariel*)
 - b. Great Frigatebird (*Fregata minor*)
 - c. Christmas Island Frigatebird (*Fregata andrewsi*)

Sulidae

11. Gannets and boobies are large seabirds occurring in all oceans except the North Pacific and Southern Ocean. Typically, boobies are found in temperate and tropical oceans. Gannets are typical of temperate-zone seas and may reach the tropics on migration.
12. Gannets and boobies are strictly marine seabirds, feeding in both inshore and offshore marine environments. They nest in large colonies on islands, sometimes on undisturbed mainland sites, on cliffs, rock stacks or on flat sandy cays. Abbott's Booby (*Papasula abbotti*) nests are entirely arboreal.
13. Adults are considered migratory. Juvenile and immature birds display dispersive characteristics, travelling 1000s of kilometres away from the breeding site. Abbott's Booby is confined to breeding on Christmas Island, Australia with long-distance movements recorded throughout the Indian and western Pacific Oceans. The species formerly bred on several islands in the West Indian Ocean and fossil remains have been found in the Solomon Islands. In April 2007, a female Abbott's Booby was identified on Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, and represents the first documented record of the species in the western central Pacific Ocean. The species has also been recorded in the Banda Sea (Indonesia) and Chagos Archipelago.
14. There are ten species of gannet and boobies, five of which are present in the EAAF:
 - a. Abbott's Booby (*Papasula abbotti*)
 - b. Australasian Gannet (*Morus serrator*)
 - c. Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*)
 - d. Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)
 - e. Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*)

Phaethontidae

15. Tropicbirds are medium-sized, highly aerial seabirds distributed throughout the tropics and subtropics. Tropicbirds are essentially pelagic and can be seen far from land, feeding on a range of fish and squid.
16. At-sea tropicbirds are solitary or in pairs. They breed in loose colonies where terrain is suitable. Pair-bonds are monogamous, and long-term pairs are more likely to be successful in their breeding attempt. Pairs usually return to the same nest site each year.
17. Tropicbirds are considered migratory, with juveniles dispersing widely. Frequent observations at both the breeding grounds and at-sea suggest a trans-equatorial migration, possibly following warm currents. For example, a Red-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon rubricauda*) banded in Singapore, was recovered near Mauritius.
18. There are three species of tropicbird, all in the genus *Phaethon*, two of which are present in the EAAF:
 - a. Red-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon rubricauda*)
 - b. White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*)
19. The addition of these three seabird families to Appendix III would align with existing bilateral and multilateral frameworks in the region and strengthen support for the conservation of these highly mobile species. For example, all the above mentioned species, except Abbott's Booby and Australasian Gannet, are listed on one or more bilateral migratory bird agreements between Australia, Japan, China and the Republic of Korea.
20. While it is acknowledged that there are some seabirds (much like a number of cranes, shorebirds and other Appendix III species) that move outside the arbitrary EAAF map boundary, it is important to note that the Partnership document clearly defines the scope of the 'East Asian – Australasian Flyway' in Appendix II, which outlines the area of the Flyway in which the Partnership operates. This definition allows for the inclusion of species that, from time to time, move outside the borders of the arbitrary EAAF boundary and is consistent with MoP9 decision 9 – *Definition of Migratory Populations*.
21. Crucially, the addition of Fregatidae would also complement a recent decision (UNEP/CMS/COP12/DOC.25.1.11) to include Christmas Island Frigatebird (*Fregata andrewsi*) on Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species. The inclusion of this family on Appendix III of the Partnership text would facilitate the cooperative action between all range states to support conservation efforts, particularly Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Oceanitinae and Hydrobatidae

22. As a result of a taxonomic revision within the order Procellariiformes, there are now two storm petrel families: Oceanitinae and Hydrobatidae.
23. Oceanitidae (Austral storm petrels) are found in all oceans, although only White-faced Storm Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*) and Wilson's Storm Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) are predominately found in the northern hemisphere on migration.

24. Hydrobatidae (northern storm petrels) are generally found in the northern hemisphere and a number migrate south, including Matsudaira's Storm Petrel (*Oceanodroma matsudairae*) and Swinhoe's Storm Petrel (*O. monorhis*). Leach's Storm Petrel have recently been confirmed breeding in New Zealand.

Next steps for the Seabird Working Group

25. The Seabird Working Group strongly supports the proposal to amend Appendix III of the Partnership document to include three additional seabird families: Fregatidae (Frigatebirds), Sulidae (Gannets and Boobies) and Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds). As such, the Seabird Working Group have amended its Terms of Reference to reflect the addition of these seabird families so work can begin immediately on implementing this resolution at **Attachment 2**.

26. It is recommended that the Seabird Working Group in collaboration with the Technical Sub-Committee be tasked with considering activities that could be implemented under the EAAF banner that would be of benefit to the additional seabird families. Prioritised activities could include, but are not limited to, identifying key sites to be included in the Flyway Site Network, hosting workshops with range states to progress conservation activities, developing conservation action plans and working with local communities to raise awareness of seabirds in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.

27. Consultation with Partners and the Secretariat occurred between 3 April and 25 May 2018. All comments received were considered and incorporated where appropriate.

Decision:

The 10th Meeting of the Partners is requested to:

- adopt the Draft Decision (Annex 1), and to;
- Approve the amended Terms of Reference of the Seabird Working Group (Annex 2).

Annex 1

Decision 11

Amendment to Appendix III of the Partnership Document

Submitted by the Australian Government with the support of the Seabird Working Group

Recalling, in accordance with Paragraph 9(7) of the Partnership document, Partners may amend the migratory waterbird taxonomic groups listed in Appendix III by consensus.

Noting with appreciation the ongoing intersessional work of the EAAFP Seabird Working Group and their demonstrated commitment to the conservation of EAAF seabirds.

Recognising that migratory seabirds are an important taxonomic group in the EAAF, many of which are under threat from a range of issues, including habitat loss, invasive species, climate change and illegal hunting.

Highlighting that three seabird families, Fregatidae, Sulidae and Phaethontidae, are not covered by Appendix III but do migrate within the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.

Recognising that by including Fregatidae, Sulidae and Phaethontidae in Appendix III, Partners and the Seabird Working Group will have a mandate to pursue conservation actions for relevant species, particularly species of concern such as the Christmas Island Frigatebird which is listed as critically endangered under IUCN Red List criteria.

Noting that the EAAFP Seabird Working Group are fully supportive of this proposal.

The 10th Meeting of the Partners

of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership:

1. *Agrees* to amend the Partnership document Appendix III to include Fregatidae, Sulidae and Phaethontidae at **Attachment 1**;
2. *Agrees* to amend the Partnership document Appendix III to recognise the taxonomic split of Oceanitidae and Hydrobatidae at **Attachment 1**;
3. *Instructs* the Secretariat to update the Partnership document to reflect the decision of Partners and make it available on the EAAFP website as a matter of priority;
4. *Invites* the EAAFP Seabird Working Group to advise Partners on conservation and management priorities for migratory seabirds at the 11th Meeting of the Partners;
5. *Encourages* all Ranges States, Partners and other stakeholders to consider options for international and national conservation actions to support species in the families Fregatidae, Sulidae and Phaethontidae as a matter of priority;
6. *Agrees* to adopted revised Terms of Reference of the EAAFP Seabird Working Group at **Attachment 2**;
7. *Encourages* Partners to provide technical and/or financial assistance to support the activities of the Seabird Working Group;
8. *Invites* the Seabird Working Group consider options to coordinate conservation actions for Fregatidae, Sulidae and Phaethontidae in the EAAF;
9. *Invites* the Seabird Working Group to report on progress at the 11th Meeting of the Partners.

Attachment 1**Appendix III – Taxonomic groups of waterbirds migrating within the East Asian – Australasian Flyway**

| Taxonomic Group | English Name |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Anatidae | Swans, geese and ducks |
| Podicipedidae | Grebes |
| Phaethontidae | Tropicbirds |
| Heliornithidae | Finfoots |
| Rallidae | Rails, gallinules and coots |
| Gruidae | Cranes |
| Gaviidae | Divers/Loons |
| Hydrobatidae | Northern storm petrels |
| Oceanitidae | Austral storm petrels |
| Procellariidae | Shearwaters and petrels |
| Ciconiidae | Storks |
| Threskiornithidae | Ibises and spoonbills |
| Ardeidae | Hérons, egrets and bitterns |
| Pelecanidae | Pelicans |
| Fregatidae | Frigatebirds |
| Sulidae | Gannets and boobies |
| Phalacrocoracidae | Cormorants and shags |
| Haematopodidae | Oystercatchers |
| Recurvirostridae | Stilts and avocet |
| Charadriidae | Plovers |
| Jacanidae | Jacanas |
| Scolopacidae | Sandpipers |
| Glareolidae | Pratincoles |
| Laridae | Gulls, terns and skimmers |
| Stercorariidae | Skuas and jaegers |
| Alcidae | Auks, murres and puffins |

Attachment 2

East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership SEABIRD WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

Marine and coastal ecosystems are socio-economically and biologically important features in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway (EAAF). Populations of seabirds in the EAAF region are large and diverse, and many are under threat. The EAAF countries have many common seabird species and often share the same populations. The EAAF countries also share common population and habitat threats in marine and coastal ecosystems that seabirds depend on for their survival. Consequently, there is a joint and equal responsibility for the conservation of seabirds in the EAAF.

Traditionally, conservation, management, education, and research activities for seabirds in the EAAF have been poorly coordinated in terms of common direction, concerns, field methods, reporting and information exchange. The formation of the EAAF Partnership Seabird Working Group (Seabird WG) is recognition that seabird conservation, management, education, and research activities can most effectively be achieved and harmonized by a multilateral approach of all countries in the EAAF. The Seabird WG will ensure that scientists and managers interested in seabirds will have a common forum to promote, facilitate and coordinate conservation, management, education, and research activities of mutual concern in the flyway.

Like shorebirds, cranes, and Anatidae, seabirds are a key component of the Partnership. As such, the Partnership's first meeting in 2006 agreed to add several families of seabirds to the list of waterbirds covered under the auspices of the Partnership. The Partnership also agreed to consider the formation of a Seabird WG that would focus on the Partnership's goals and objectives in a seabird context. These Terms of Reference responds to the need to form a Seabird Working Group.

GOAL

To promote, facilitate, coordinate, and harmonize seabird conservation, management, education, and research activities within the EAAF, and to improve communication between seabird scientists and managers in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify current and emerging seabird conservation, management, research, monitoring, and public outreach issues and opportunities in the EAAF, and corresponding information and coordination needs.
2. To identify priority seabird species, populations and habitats of conservation concern in the EAAF.
3. To assist EAAF countries develop Flyway Network Sites for seabirds.
4. To facilitate the exchanging of seabird information of mutual interest to scientists and managers in the EAAF.
5. To facilitate harmonizing objectives, field methods, data analyses and data management for similar studies of seabirds in the EAAF.

6. To facilitate development of collaborative research, education and management projects and conservation plans for seabirds of mutual concern in the EAAF.
7. To promote conservation initiatives for EAAF seabirds.
8. To coordinate EAAF Seabird WG initiatives with other seabird groups.
9. To develop an integrated portfolio of cooperative seabird activities or initiatives for the EAAF Partnership Work Plan.

TAXONOMIC GROUPS OF SEABIRDS

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Phaethontidae | Tropicbirds |
| Gaviidae | Divers and loons |
| Hydrobatidae | Northern storm petrels |
| Oceanitidae | Austral storm petrels |
| Procellariidae | Shearwaters and petrels |
| Fregatidae | Frigatebirds |
| Pelecanidae | Pelicans |
| Sulidae | Gannets and boobies |
| Phalacrocoracidae | Cormorants and shags |
| Laridae | Gulls, terns and skimmers |
| Stercorariidae | Skuas and jaegers |
| Alcidae | Auks, murrens and puffins |

ADMINISTRATION

Membership

The Seabird Working Group complements other international seabird working groups, government and non-governmental organizations. The Seabird WG membership is comprised of representatives from Partners and interested stakeholders.

The membership should strive to represent the range of organizations and geographic areas important to seabird research, management, education, and conservation in the EAAF. Participation in EAAF Seabird WG meetings is open to all seabird experts interested in EAAF seabirds. Decision-making within the EAAF Seabird WG is advisory to the Partnership.

Leadership

The EAAF Seabird WG is administered by a Chair and one or more Coordinators. The Chair and Coordinator(s) will be elected by the Seabird WG. The Chair and Coordinator(s) are elected for a two-year term and can be renewed at the discretion of the EAAF Seabird WG representatives.

The Chair, in consultation with the EAAF Partnership Secretariat, is responsible for scheduling and facilitating meetings, preparing and distributing materials prior to meetings, and completing appropriate records of meetings. Materials and records are also provided to Partners, the Secretariat, and all attendees within 90 days of completed meetings. Meeting agendas are developed by the Chair in consultation with other EAAF Seabird WG representatives and the Secretariat. The Chair also coordinates the work of the EAAF Seabird WG between meetings. The Coordinators assist the Chair in the operation of the working group.

Meetings

The EAAF Seabird WG will meet at least annually or as often as necessary to fulfil its objectives and approve action items. The Chair, in consultation with other EAAF Seabird WG representatives, will determine the timing, method (face-to-face or teleconference) and location of meetings. The host Partner is responsible for meeting logistical arrangements.

Expenses

Unless there is prior agreement, EAAF Seabird WG representatives and other meeting attendees are responsible for their travel expenses.