



Draft Decision 8 - Maintaining up-to-date Population Estimates and Trends of Migratory Waterbird Populations for the EAAFP

Submitted by the Philippines, Shorebird Working Group, BirdLife International and Wetlands International with input from the EAAFP Secretariat



ELEVENTH MEETING OF PARTNERS TO THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EAST ASIAN – AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY
Meeanjin/Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, 12-17 March 2023

Background

- Objective 3 of our EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-2028 prioritises the need to ***“Enhance flyway research and monitoring activities, build knowledge and promote exchange of information on waterbirds and their habitats”***.

Key Result Area 3.2 states “Conservation status reviews for waterbird populations are produced and updated to set and adapt priorities for action”

Two Indicators:

3.2.1 Data on population estimates, trends and distributions is maintained by the Partnership, and

3.2.2 Two updates have been produced and published by 2028.

- Decision 7.4, calls for the EAAFP to use the “Waterbird Population Estimates” (WPE) process to: (a) provide updated information on waterbird population sizes and trends, and (b) provide the basis for deriving the EAAF Flyway Site Network thresholds (1%).
- Decision 10.12 includes two different actions:
 1. adopted a systematic process to produce and maintain up-to-date information on waterbird population estimates, trends and 1% thresholds through the **preparation of a periodic EAAF Conservation Status Review (CSR)**.
 2. called on the Monitoring Task Force to **develop standardised guidance required for development and implementation of comprehensive national waterbird monitoring programmes**.

Background - 1. The CSR production

- EAAFP Secretariat contracted Wetlands International in early 2021 to coordinate the CSR1 production; with financial resources from the Secretariat & Norwegian Environmental Agency. In kind resources from Wetlands International.
- The CSR1 was produced in close coordination with the EAAFP Science Unit/Secretariat - extensive consultation with the Technical Sub-committee, Partners, Working Groups, Task Forces and other experts. Preparation undertaken in close consultation with all stakeholders – webinars in April 2021, May and August 2022.
- The EAAFP Technical Sub-Committee reviewed & approved the technical CSR1 Summary Report for use by the Partnership in July 2022, as reported by the Chair of the Technical Sub-committee.
- The Summary Report is publicly accessible on the EAAFP (<https://www.eaaflyway.net/csr-1-launch/>) and Wetlands International websites (<https://www.wetlands.org/eaaf-conservation-status-review1/>)
- These latest results are actively being used by the Partnership for designation of Flyway Network Sites, the Regional Flyway Initiative and other purposes.

Summary of CSR1 size and trend estimates

In relation to the CSR

CSR1 provides latest information on 276 EAAF biogeographic populations of 216 migratory waterbird species:

- 34 (16%) populations belong to species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021 and a further 25 (12%) are of Near Threatened species => high proportion of threatened and near threatened species.
- Size estimates and 1% thresholds for 248 (90%) populations;
- 22 (8%) have population size estimates and 1% thresholds for the first time (since the WPE5 in 2012);
- 32 (12%) of 1% thresholds are lower and 57 (21%) are higher than previous assessments (WPE5);
- 159 populations with a known trend, of which 67 (42%) are decreasing and only 43 (27%) are increasing, with 48 (30%) stable or fluctuating; trends could not be assessed for 118 (43%) populations;
- Boundary maps for all biogeographic populations have been produced for the first time.

Access to CSR1 information



Species information

Common name Bar-tailed Godwit Scientific

Population size

Publication	Start year	End year	Minimum	Maximum
EAAFP CSR 1	2020	2020	126000	126000
WPE 5	2007	2009	133000	133000

Population 1% level

Publication	Yearset	1 percent
EAAFP CSR 1	2021	1300
WPE 5	2012	1300
WPE 4	2006	1600
WPE 3	2002	1700
WPE 2	1994	3300
WPE 1	1994	3300

WPE 2	1987	1989	INC	No quality asse
WPE 1	1987	1989	INC	No quality asse

References

- R35 - Bamford, M.J., Watkins, D.G., Bancroft, W. Tischler, G and Wahl, J. (2008). Migratory Shorebirds of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Population Estimates and Important Sites. Wetlands International - Oceania.
- R36 - Bamford, M.J., Watkins, D.G., Bancroft, W. Tischler, G and Wahl, J. (in prep, 2006). Migratory Shorebirds of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Population Estimates and Important Sites. Wetlands International - Oceania.
- R473 - Morrison, R.I.G., McCaffery, B.J., Skagen, S., Andres, B., Page, G., Jones, S., and Gill, R.E. 2005. Population estimates of North American shorebirds, 2005. Draft MS.

Notes

- NS9719 - Schuckard et al. (2021) provide the latest estimate based on a comprehensive population wide assessment in NZ and AU. Various assessments made in the last decade, including Andres et al. (2012) estimate the population (80,000-120,000) and Studds et al. (2017) indicated population is around 115,000 individuals based on analysis from 1993 and 2012.
- NS6592 - Substantial rate and period of decline, well documented across flyway but no new estimate published. WPE5 estimate is much lower than for WPE4 (some experts suggest an even lower estimate) and is derived from preliminary analysis pending outcome of ongoing comprehensive analysis by University of Queensland.
- NS727 - Morrison et al. (2005) estimated 150,000. Bamford et al. in press 2006 adjusted to 155,000. Gill & McCaffery 1999 counted 94,000 staging in W Alaska in Sep 1997.
- NT2 - Various assessments of population trends over the last decades indicate a decline. Conklin et al. (2016) reported a declining trend between 1995-2012 in NZ, where the bulk of the population occurs. However the same study also reports a stabilisation of the population since the low point of 2004. Studds et al (2017) indicate a declining trend between 1993-2012 in AU with high certainty based on statistical analyses, supported by Clemens et al (2020) reporting a decline with high certainty. Surveys in AU & NZ in 2019/2020 suggest the declining trend may still be ongoing (Schuckard et al. 2020).
- R700 - Wilson JR. 2001. Victoria Wader Surveys. January and February 2001. Australasian Wader Studies Group Report. Birds Australia, Melbourne.
- R1902 - Clemens R, Rogers D, Melville DS, Carey M, Garnett ST (2020) Anadyr Bar-tailed Godwit Limosa lapponica anadyrensis, Alaskan Bar-tailed Godwit L. l. baueri and Yakutian Bar-tailed Godwit L. l. menzbieri. In The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2020. (Eds ST Garnett and GB Baker) pp. 267-271. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne.
- R1945 - Conklin JR, Lok T, Melville DS, Riegen AC, Schuckard R, Piersma T, Battley PF (2016) Declining adult survival of New Zealand Bar-tailed Godwits during 2005-2012 despite apparent population stability. Emu 116,147-157.

CSR1 – gaps and response

- CSR1 identifies major gaps & limitations in knowledge to address these major gaps, including:
 - a. Majority of population size estimates and trends are unknown or of low quality
 - Species congregating in the non-breeding period
 - Species congregating at communal roosting sites in the non-breeding period
 - Colonially nesting species that are dispersed in the non-breeding period
 - Species that congregate away from wetlands
 - Species that congregate offshore
 - b. The distribution and definition of most biogeographic populations is poorly understood
 - c. There has been limited feedback/accessibility to information in the CSR1 consultation
- 8 seabird families - Alcidae, Oceanitidae, Procellariidae, Stercorariidae, Phaethontidae, Hydrobatidae, Sulidae & Fregatidae are not in CSR1. Biogeographic population size and trend estimates and population boundaries need to be defined to enable them to be included in future CSR editions.

Hampering availability of quality information for Partners to prioritize, designate network sites, assess progress in implement of conservation action, etc.

Response: Need to prioritise periodic CSR preparation with CSR2 to be completed by 2026.

11th Meeting of the Partners invited to adopt this draft decision, including to:

In relation to the CSR

1. *Agrees* that the latest population size, trend estimates and 1% thresholds from the CSR process as available through the WPP are used by the Partnership, including for future EAAF Flyway Network Site designations;
2. *Requests* Wetlands International (as per Decision 10.12) to coordinate preparation of a proposal and budget for the CSR2 to be developed in consultation with the Technical sub-Committee, Science Unit, Anatidae-, Shorebird-, Crane-, Seabird- and Black-faced Spoonbill Working Groups, Scaly-sided Merganser-, Spoon-billed Sandpiper-, Far Eastern Curlew- and Waterbird Monitoring Task Forces, other expert networks and Partners;
3. *Further requests* the Seabird Working Group as a priority to propose the delineation, size and trend estimates of biogeographic populations of 8 families of seabirds, namely Alcidae, Oceanitidae, Procellariidae, Stercorariidae, Phaethontidae, Hydrobatidae, Sulidae, & Fregatidae in time for inclusion to CSR2;
4. *Encourages* the Secretariat to prioritise, facilitate and resource the periodic preparation of the CSRs through the Secretariat budget, starting with preparation of CSR2 for completion by 2026;
5. *Calls* on Partners and the Secretariat to contribute resources to support maintenance and updates of the Waterbird Populations Portal to improve delivery of information and support the work of the Partnership;

Background - 2. Strengthening Monitoring

- **KRA 3.1** “National monitoring systems to assess the status of migratory waterbirds and their habitats are established, maintained and further enhanced” - with two Indicators :
 - 3.1.1 A standardized monitoring methodology for migratory waterbirds and their habitat is developed and used in nationally coordinated monitoring programmes.
 - 3.1.2 All country partners have nationally-coordinated monitoring programs in place,
- **Decision 10.12** called on the Monitoring Task Force to **develop standardised guidance required for development and implementation of comprehensive national waterbird monitoring programmes.**
- **Decision 7.6** called for reporting on status of Network sites, including current and future threats to the sites and its migratory waterbirds.

Response: Consider developing and implementing of a long – term cooperative flyway-wide integrated monitoring and analysis framework linked to national programmes for :

1. Waterbird population size estimates
2. Waterbird population trend estimates
3. Monitoring status of FNS and other important wetlands for migratory waterbirds.