



*Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Shorebirds
in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway: 2001-2005*

Shorebird Working Group



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Foreword

The Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway: 2001-2005 (the Shorebird Action Plan) is a result of successful international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. The Commonwealth Government of Australia is pleased to have supported the Shorebird Action Plan since 1998 and the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network since 1996 and is encouraged by the wide ranging support that has been received to successfully progress the objectives of the Plan.

The Shorebird Action Plan does not sit under any international legal framework, but rather relies upon Governments and Non-government organisations working in partnership to conserve migratory shorebirds and their habitats in our Flyway. As well as providing a broader plan for action in the Asia-Pacific, the Shorebird Action Plan is also enabling the Commonwealth Government of Australia to meet its obligations under the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, the China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and Convention on Migratory Species.

The Commonwealth Government is continuing to contribute to implementing the Plan with funds provided under the Natural Heritage Trust and through national legislative protection for migratory waterbirds under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

MARK BUTZ

Director, Wetlands Section,

Department of the Environment and Heritage

(Environment Australia) Australia

The species in the group known as shorebirds, carry out some of the longest migration of all the species of waterbirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. As a result, the survival of these shorebirds is dependent upon the close cooperation from all the countries in the flyway where they pass through on migration, breed or spend the non-breeding season. However, these countries differ immensely from each

other, such as in terms of their cultural background, economic development, political stability and expertise in conservation.

The Shorebird Action Plan: 2001-2005 recognises the difficulties that many of the countries in the flyway face in their efforts to protect shorebirds and their wetland habitats. As a result, the Action Plan lists a series of actions to address these difficulties. These include:

- providing training programs to site managers so that they can be more effective in their work;
- improving information exchange between site managers and shorebird conservationists across the flyway;
- initiating model projects based on sites (i.e. the Bohai Sea) and shorebird species (i.e. Dunlin); and
- improve the scientific base for future work on shorebird conservation.

Improving the quality of our work over the next 5 years will be especially important, and will proceed with efforts to increase the number of sites and countries in the network.

The Shorebird Working Group is deeply grateful to all the countries and organisations in the flyway who have contributed so much of their resources in supporting shorebird conservation in the flyway during the period of the last Action Plan. The Australian Department of Environment and Heritage is to be acknowledged especially, because much of the work would not have been possible without their financial and other support for the Network.

We look forward to working closely with you all in the next 5 years.

LEW YOUNG

Chair, Shorebird Working Group



Action Plan

for the Conservation

of Migratory Shorebirds in
the East Asian-Australasian
Flyway: 2001-2005

A component of the
Asia-Pacific Migratory
Waterbird Conservation
Strategy: 2001-2005

1. Background

In the East Asian-Australasian Flyway there are over 65 populations of migratory shorebirds with a combined minimum population total of 4 million. This includes 11 species of special conservation concern. The migratory behaviour of these shorebirds means that each year they move through a number of countries. Consequently their conservation is dependent on international cooperation.

Recognition of the need for international cooperation lead to the development and endorsement of an Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 1996-2000 and the linked Asia-Pacific Shorebird Action Plan: 1998-2000. These initiatives have been reviewed and this Action Plan is based on their success.

The Strategy recognises three major flyways for shorebirds in the Asia-Pacific and calls for conservation action on a flyway basis. It identifies the development of networks of internationally important sites as a primary implementation mechanism for conservation actions. The further development of the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network will provide:

- international recognition for important sites;
- a focus for public awareness and education activities;
- an international framework for public awareness and education, training and research activities; and
- an integrated conservation model for Governments and funding bodies.



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During the first period of the Shorebird Action Plan initiatives focused on: development of the East Asian-Australasian Site Network; supporting the Network; and increasing the information base on migratory shorebirds. The Network now has 29 sites in 9 countries (00as at December 2000). Implementation of the Action Plan was coordinated by a Shorebird Flyway Officer, engaged by Wetlands International with funding from the Australian Government.

Two international consultative committees (the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee and the Shorebird Working Group) were established to oversee the implementation of conservation initiatives for migratory shorebirds.

This Action Plan draws from the key elements of the updated Strategy.

TIME FRAME:

This Action Plan covers the period
January 2001 - December 2005.

Mission Statement

To achieve the conservation of migratory shorebirds and their habitats in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway through a network of appropriately managed sites that are of international importance for migratory shorebirds.

2. Priority Actions

2.1 Development of the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network

It is estimated that the East Asian-Australasian Flyway has more than 400 sites of international importance for migratory shorebirds. As at the end of 2000 the Network included 8% of these sites.

The objective of the Plan is to develop the Network to include at least 25% of the sites known to be of international importance to migratory shorebirds. This gives a target of having 100 sites in the Network by the end of 2005. The geographic coverage of the Network will also be broadened to include all countries in the flyway.

Action 1

Obtain the nomination of at least 25% of the sites of international importance for the Network (to give a total of 100 sites in the Network).

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies, Governments, Shorebird Working Group]

Action 2

Obtain the nomination of at least one site in all countries with sites of international importance for the Network. Remaining countries to be included are USA (Alaska), Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Thailand, Mongolia, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Governments, Non-government Organisations]

Action 3

Ensure adequate planning and fundraising for the development of the Network. Conduct annual reviews of the implementation of the Action Plan in the flyway and prepare an annual workplan.

[Wetlands International, Shorebird Working Group, Shorebird Flyway Officer, Non-government Organisations]

2.2 Appropriate Management of Network Sites

Supporting the implementation of appropriate habitat and species management (wise use of wetland resources as defined by the Ramsar Convention) at each Network site is the highest priority of the Action Plan. This will be achieved by improving site management skills, building community awareness and empowering local communities to be involved in site management.



Shorebird Action Plan □

Action 4

Provide access for site managers and staff to training in species monitoring, wetland management, management planning, public awareness and education programs and project management. The target will be for each site to have competence in these 5 themes by the end of 2005.

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies, Governments, Non-government Organisations]

Action 5

Provide a range of tools and programs to promote public awareness and education activities on shorebirds. The target will be to have 50% of Network sites conducting awareness and education programs or involved in activities developed and promoted under the Action Plan.

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies, Non-government Organisations]

Action 6

Conduct dedication ceremonies at new Network sites that involve the site management agency, Government and local community representatives.

[Site Management Bodies, Shorebird Flyway Officer, Non-government Organisations]

Action 7

Provide management planning information to all Network sites to promote the development of management plans.

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies]

Action 8

Develop a special program of activities to address the ongoing loss and degradation of shorebird habitat in the Yellow Sea (including the Bohai Sea).

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, applicable Governments, Non-government Organisations, Site Management Bodies]

Action 9

Implement a model "flyway management approach" project for Dunlin *Calidris alpina*; a species for which a significant number of Network sites act as key staging and non-breeding areas.

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies]

Action 10

Enhance the exchange of information on shorebird conservation and habitat management between site managers, researchers and Non-government organisations. This will include the use of existing publications (eg. *The Stilt and Tattler*), wetland newsletters, e-mail and web sites.

[Non-government Organisations, Site Management Bodies, Shorebird Flyway Officer]

2.3 Increasing the Information Base on Migratory Shorebirds

On-going survey, monitoring and research work on shorebirds and their habitats is needed to ensure that the Network is achieving conservation of migratory shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Action 11

Support implementation of statistically robust methodologies to monitor shorebird populations in priority countries (Australia, New Zealand and Japan).

[Non-government Organisations, Site Management Bodies, Governments, Shorebird Flyway Officer]

Action 12

Develop and implement projects to identify internationally important sites for:

- shorebirds in countries where knowledge is incomplete, notably the Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea; and
- endangered species (Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* and Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*).

[Non-government Organisations, Governments, Shorebird Flyway Officer]



Action 13

Support existing and initiate new projects on shorebird migration with a special focus on the use of colour leg flags. Seek to maximise community involvement in these projects through reporting and analysis of sightings of colour flagged birds.

[Non-government Organisations, Governments, Shorebird Flyway Officer]

Action 14

Develop a database to collate shorebird counts in the flyway. Compile and publish an up-date of the population estimates of shorebirds and inventory of internationally important sites in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Assess the adequacy of the Network to conserve species.

[Non-government Organisations, Shorebird Flyway Officer]

3. Implementation

The Action Plan has been developed to make the maximum use of existing organisational structures and activities. Successful implementation requires cooperative action between Government agencies, site management bodies and Non-government organisations.

3.1 Key Personnel & Agencies

Shorebird Flyway Officer

Implementation of the Action Plan will be coordinated by a Shorebird Flyway Officer. The Officer will be responsible for the development of the Network, promoting appropriate management of Network sites and supporting shorebird research.

National Government Agencies

These agencies are responsible, at the national level, for endorsing nominations of sites to join the Network and providing funding for site management and research on shorebirds. It is anticipated that

they will provide in-principle support and, where possible, funding for new activities associated with implementation of the Action Plan.

Site Management Bodies

It is the day-to-day management of internationally important sites that determines the future of shorebird populations. Site management bodies need to have access to training opportunities, up-to-date knowledge and resources for appropriate site management.

Non-government Organisations

National and regional shorebird specialist groups exist in the Russian Federation, USA, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. International organisations such as Wetlands International, BirdLife International and World Wide Fund for Nature are also involved in shorebird conservation in the region. National NGO's involved in nature protection, bird and wetland conservation also will have an important role. These organisations perform a vital role in activities such as monitoring, research, public awareness and the exchange of information. All of these organisations are invited to be fully involved in implementation of the Action Plan.

3.2 Review & Consultation Mechanisms

Shorebird Working Group

A consultative committee has been formed consisting of eight members drawn from Government and Non-government organisations from across the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. The Shorebird Working Group has developed this Action Plan and will: monitor/review its implementation; assist to identify and secure resources; review the annual workplan of the Flyway Officer; provide advice and assistance to the Flyway Officer; promote the Action Plan; and establish links with related activities. It will meet at least annually and report to the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee.



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Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee

The Committee has 16 members drawn from representatives of Governments, the Ramsar Bureau, the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, a development assistance agency, international Non-government organisations, three technical Working Groups and Wetlands International Specialist Groups. The Committee oversees the implementation of the Strategy and receives reports from the Working Groups.

The Committee reports to the Council of Wetlands International - Asia-Pacific.

3.3 Linkages to Major Regional and Global Initiatives

The Action Plan is a component of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 2001-2005. It links to a number of other initiatives, such as the Convention on Wetlands Strategic Plan 1997-2002 and bilateral agreements for the conservation of migratory birds. Complementary activities occurring in other parts of the world for shorebird conservation are the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, United States Shorebird Conservation Plan and the Canadian Shorebird Plan.

4. Resource Implications

This Action Plan outlines a targeted program of activities for the 2001-2005 period. An indicative budget has been developed to emphasise the relative priorities of the different actions and to guide fundraising activities.

In the East Asian-Australasian Flyway it is anticipated that a minimum of approximately USD 2 million is needed to implement the Action Plan. Approximately 15% of this relates to developing the Network, 60% to supporting the Network sites and 25% to increasing the information base on shorebirds.

The major proposed expenditure is providing training to staff at Network sites (25% of total budget). Wetlands International - Asia Pacific is prepared to take overall responsibility for coordination of fundraising. It looks forward to working with national Government agencies, development assistance bodies, Non-government organisations and site management bodies to ensure the successful implementation of the Action Plan.

Table: Indicative Budget for Implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Shorebirds in East Asian-Australasian Flyway: 2001-2005

NO.	ACTION	SUB-TOTAL (USD)	%
Building the Network			
1	Seek nomination of new sites	140,000	
2	Involvement of additional countries	20,000	
3	Program review, development & funding	120,000	
		280,000	14
Supporting the Network			
4	Training activities	500,000	
5	Awareness tools and activities	140,000	
6	Dedication ceremonies	85,000	
7	Management Planning	140,000	
8	Critical regions in the flyway	110,000	
9	"Flyway management approach"	110,000	
10	Increased communication	135,000	
		1,220,000	62
Enhancing Shorebird Information			
11	Population monitoring	110,000	
12	Identification of internationally important sites	170,000	
13	Migration Research projects	85,000	
14	Species/Site Status Overview Project	110,000	
		475,000	24
	Total (5 years)	1,975,000	





