

# Briefing Paper for Site Managers



## Benefits and Expectations of the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Site Network

The Flyway Site Network has been operating since 1996 and it is now supported by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). The Network is a voluntary, collaborative programme of 136 sites across seventeen countries. Many sites are recognised at the national level, (as Nature Reserves, National Parks, and Wildlife Reserves, etc.), although such designations are not essential for Flyway Site status. As of May 2017, 79 Flyway Network Sites also enjoy international status as Ramsar Sites while an additional 700 sites would qualify as Flyway Network Sites to further consolidate this international network and secure the future of over 50 million migratory waterbirds.

The Flyway Site Network represents a unique opportunity for Site Managers in the Flyway to work together nationally and internationally to achieve more effective conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats. The Network provides for internationally important sites to be included in a broad-based conservation arrangement across the Flyway. Through the Flyway Site Network, national and local governments, Site Managers and other stakeholders can work cooperatively to achieve positive conservation outcomes to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats.

The conservation of migratory waterbirds is dependent on the appropriate management of a comprehensive network of internationally important sites. Increasing the number of sites in the Network will enhance its overall effectiveness.

Inclusion of sites in the Network will attract benefits for and expectations of Site Managers of those sites. The benefits and expectations that can apply to Site Managers are outlined in the following sections.

### Flyway Network Sites and Ramsar Sites

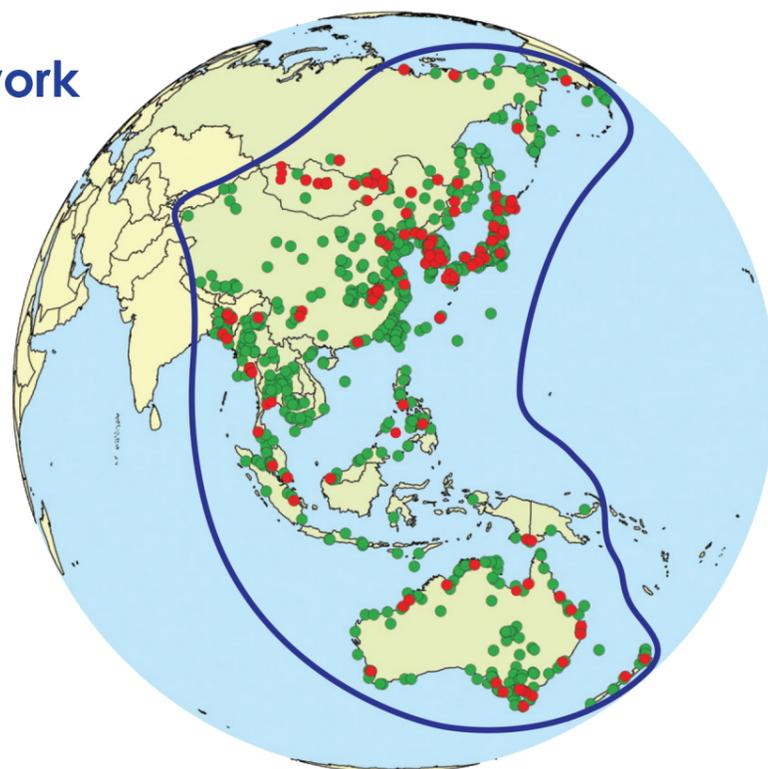
Ramsar Sites and EAAFP Flyway Network Sites (FNS) aim to protect important wetland habitats. The EAAFP focuses on the importance of the site for migratory waterbirds as part of a critical network of sites that migratory bird populations depend on. In contrast, the Ramsar focus is on 'wise use', identifying all wetlands of international importance according to broader biodiversity criteria (such as birds, plants, fish, ecological communities) while taking into account the needs of local people and the many ecosystem services the site provides. Three of EAAFP's criteria for nomination are based on Ramsar criteria, but the FNS also includes sites important as stop-over areas for migratory birds. Currently, 79 of 136 Flyway Network Sites are also Ramsar Sites, although the boundaries may not be exactly the same.

## Benefits of being part of the Flyway Site Network

For Site Managers, participation in the Flyway Site Network brings a range of benefits of direct value to the work of Site Managers and a set of benefits for the long term ecological values of their sites. The benefits include:

### 1. International and national recognition as important sites for migratory waterbirds.

In operation since 1996, the Flyway Site Network is recognised internationally for its cooperative efforts to conserve migratory waterbirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Being part of the Flyway Site Network will bestow international and national recognition on sites as specially declared areas of migratory waterbird importance.



Flyway Site Network

Site Managers will be recognized internationally and nationally for their contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of the Flyway Site Network and will have opportunities to promote the particular features and aspects of their own site at both international and national levels.

## **2. Provision of a mechanism to engage with other site managers in delivering Flyway conservation outcomes.**

Through their participation in the Flyway Site Network, Site Managers are able to engage with other Site Managers to share experience, knowledge, and understanding of techniques (e.g. through the EAAFP newsletter, social media, and capacity-building workshops), and take part in collaborative research on shared species for migratory waterbird conservation. This will contribute to improved delivery of local and broader-based Flyway conservation outcomes.

### **Sister Site Partnerships**

**The Firth of Thames [EAAF019], New Zealand and the Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve [EAAF043], China**, have been sister sites since a memorandum was signed in April 2004 between Pūkorokoro Miranda Naturalists' Trust (PMNT) and Yalu Jiang. Since then, PMNT members have regularly assisted Yalu Jiang reserve staff with shorebird surveys during migration. Ten years of this data published in April 2014 has documented the high importance of Yalu Jiang as a stopover site. So too have the regular public awareness activities in the region such as bird festivals, seminars and school visits, lifting the profile of shorebirds among local communities. Visits by Chinese and New Zealand diplomats have also contributed to improved awareness. In March 2016 a 15-year Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the two countries calling for joint efforts to protect migratory shorebirds and their habitats, particularly at Yalu Jiang and on the Luannan Coast.

**Singapore's Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR) [EAAF073] and the Geum River Estuary [EAAF100] in the Republic of Korea** are sister sites and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the CEO of National Parks Board of Singapore and the Mayor of Seocheon County in 2012, to protect habitats of the migratory shorebirds they share and promote cooperation and exchange. In addition to the visit of Seocheon County government officials, several workshops have been held to explore management and communication ideas and learn from international best practices including SBWR. Singapore students from SBWR visited the Geum River Estuary with Seocheon students to learn how important these two sites are to protect the shorebirds they share, and what are their roles to help their shorebirds complete their journey as part of Singapore's Sister Wetland Affiliations Program.

## **3. Increased opportunity to develop local awareness about the importance of the site.**

Site Managers will be well-placed to use international recognition of their site to raise local awareness about the importance of sites. Local awareness about sites and their importance for migratory waterbirds is crucial to achieving local ownership of and commitment to maintaining the values of the sites.

## **4. Increased opportunity for greater community engagement in migratory waterbird conservation efforts.**

Participation of a site in an international network of sites provides an opportunity for encouraging greater local participation in conservation activities at the site. Successful community engagement in site conservation and sustainable management will encourage site management in harmony with the values of both the environment and broader community needs.

## **5. Increased opportunities to access international and national funding.**

Being part of the Flyway Site Network will open up greater opportunities for Site Managers to seek national and international funding to support conservation measures for their sites. Sites that are part of this recognised international initiative will be attractive to funding institutions that seek returns on their investments through sustainable conservation management outcomes.

## **6. Access to a broader base of information and knowledge on migratory waterbirds conservation.**

The Flyway Site Network provides a mechanism for developing broader and more effective information and knowledge bases to assist Site Managers. This mechanism will give Site Managers opportunities for sharing information, knowledge and practical experience that might not otherwise be available.

## **7. Access to capacity development opportunities.**

The Flyway Site Network provides a mechanism for the development and implementation of capacity building projects, such as site manager workshops at national and international levels supported by international organisations, National Governments and non-governmental organisations. The focus of such projects is on site management and conservation techniques, education and communication, waterbird research and monitoring skills.

### **Site Manager Workshops**

The EAAFP, together with the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia, has been supporting a series of site manager workshops, including information sharing, training and capacity building. These workshops may be international and held in English or national and held in the local language. The topics covered include monitoring, sustainable financing and CEPA, as well as filling out Flyway Site Network Site Information Sheet (SIS) forms. Recent national workshops have been held in Vietnam, Mongolia and Korea and international workshops in the Philippines and Indonesia.

## **Expectations for the management of Flyway Network Sites**

As well as the benefits Site Managers will experience in participating in the Flyway Site Network, there are some accompanying expectations in relation to management of the sites. Site Managers are expected to work collaboratively with their designated National Focal Point and to seek his/her assistance and advice as necessary in site management and to communicate and cooperate with Site Managers across the Flyway when opportunities arise. The expectations of managers of Network Sites include:

### **1. Updating the information sheet for each East Asian-Australasian Flyway Network Site.**

Site Managers, in collaboration with the National Focal Point, are requested to update every six years the information sheet prepared at the time of nomination of the site to the Flyway Site Network. The original nomination sheet and any subsequent updates are available on the EAAFP website.

### **2. Managing the site to maintain its waterbird and ecosystem functions.**

Site Managers are expected to ensure that the waterbird and ecosystem functions of their site are maintained and enhanced where possible through adequate monitoring and management of the site. Recognising that there will be a range of management objectives for any site, managers are expected to encourage the adoption of sustainable land use practises at the site with the range of stakeholders including local communities, industries and governments. Opportunities to work with other Site Managers in the conservation of shared species will also be an important aspect of the management of the site.

### **3. Promoting local recognition of the importance of the site for migratory waterbirds.**

All important sites for migratory waterbirds are impacted by the activities of the local community, whether within or adjacent to the site. Improving site management is dependent on gaining local recognition of the role and importance of the site. Site Managers are therefore expected to use the Flyway Site Network status to promote local recognition of the site using local communication channels as well as the EAAFP newsletter, website, etc.

### **4. Strengthening community support for the management of the site.**

Strong local community support greatly assists in achieving conservation outcomes for the site. The Site Manager is expected to actively seek local community support. Site dedication ceremonies and specific site-based activities that encourage local involvement are effective ways of engaging and strengthening local community participation in the conservation of the site.

### **5. Exchanging information and expertise on site management with other Flyway Network Site Managers.**

Exchanging information and expertise on site management will enhance the opportunities for all Site Managers to improve conservation outcomes at their sites. The Network will increasingly provide a valuable reservoir of knowledge and experience that can assist all managers in their management of the sites. Site Managers are encouraged to exchange information and expertise through EAAFP's newsletter and online social networking services, through Site Manager national and international workshops, and through the development of Site Manager networks (see point 7 above).

## Site Manager Networks in Japan

Japan has set up a structure to help Site Managers keep in touch with each other and share experiences in managing their flyway sites. Three Site Manager networks were first set up under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, the management structure that preceded the EAAFP. Today, these well-tested networks continue covering Anatidae (20 sites), Shorebirds (12 sites) and Cranes (7 sites). Some sites belong to more than one network depending on the species that visit. The networks also include interested NGOs. Each network publishes and disseminates newsletters, shares information through their mailing list, holds meetings that share information and exchange opinions and experiences on managing their migratory species. <http://www.eaaflyway.net/a-presentation-on-japans-national-partnership/>

### 6. Promoting the nomination of other internationally important sites to enhance the Flyway Site Network.

Flyway Site Managers are well placed to work collaboratively with the National Focal Point and relevant national and international NGOs to promote and advocate the nomination of other important sites to the Network. Additional sites will enhance the effectiveness of the Flyway Site Network and build on the strengths that it already has. Additionally, the more the Network grows the greater will its importance be acknowledged and opportunities for support be increased.

## Conclusion

Development of a comprehensive network of internationally important sites that are well managed is essential for the conservation of migratory waterbirds. Site Managers, working in collaboration with their National Focal Points, with their counterparts across the Flyway as well as supportive NGOs and INGOs, have a critical role in providing the on-the-ground driving force for achieving management and conservation outcomes at their sites.

Each site on the Flyway Site Network plays an important individual role in the maintenance and enhancement of the Network conferring national and international recognition of Site Managers for their contribution to sustaining the Network. The Network provides a mechanism for Site Managers to engage with each other in delivering Flyway conservation outcomes both within their country and across the Network improving each Manager's breadth of knowledge and information on migratory waterbird conservation. As an internationally recognised site, Site Managers have an increased opportunity to improve local awareness of their site and the important role the site plays in the bigger picture, recognising that greater community engagement potentially brings benefits to both the communities and the site, and that a wider community across 22 countries is also working to save the same birds as they complete their annual journeys.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE EAAFP AND THE FLYWAY SITE NETWORK:

Visit the EAAFP website: <http://www.eaaflyway.net>

 <https://www.facebook.com/eaafp>;  <https://twitter.com/eaafp>;  <http://www.weibo.com/eaafp>

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<http://www.eaaflyway.net/news-events/eaafp-newsletters/>

Contact the EAAFP Secretariat: [secretariat@eaaflyway.net](mailto:secretariat@eaaflyway.net) Last update: May 2017