

East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership SEABIRD WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. 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. 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 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 EAAF-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 EAAF 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 an EAAF-Seabird WG that would focus on the Partnership's goals and objectives in a seabird context. This Terms of Reference responds to the need to form a Seabird Working Group.

II. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

A. 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 flyway.

B. 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 exchanging seabird information of mutual interest to scientists and managers in the EAAF.
5. To facilitate harmonizing objectives, field methods and data analyses 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 package of cooperative seabird activities or initiatives for the EAAF Partnership Annual Work Plan.

III. TAXONOMIC GROUPS OF SEABIRDS

The taxonomic groups of seabirds included in the work of the EAAF Partnership, and focus of its Seabird Working Group at this time are listed below. Other groups of seabirds can be added in the future with the approval of the Partnership.

Gaviidae	Divers/Loons
Phalacrocoracidae	Cormorants
Laridae	Gulls

Procellariidae	Shearwaters/Petrels
Oceanitidae	Storm-Petrels
Stercorariidae	Skuas
Alcidae	Auks
Sternidae	Terns/Noddies
Sulidae	Boobies/Gannets
Frigatidae	Frigatebirds
Diomedeidae	Albatross (3 Northern Hemisphere species)

IV ADMINISTRATION

A. Membership

The EAAF-Seabird WG complements other international seabird working groups of governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

The EAAF-Seabird WG membership is comprised of representatives from each of the Partners. The membership represents the range of organizations and geographic areas important to seabird research, management, education, and conservation in the EAAF. Participation in EAAF-Seabird WG meetings, however, is open to all seabird experts interested in EAAF seabirds. Decision-making within the EAAF-Seabird WG is advisory to the Partnership.

B. Leadership

The EAAF-Seabird WG is administered by a Chair. The Chair will be designated by the Seabird WG. The Chair is 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 the Partnership, the Partnership 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 Partnership's Secretariat. The Chair also coordinates the work of the EAAF-Seabird WG between meetings.

C. Meetings

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

D. Expenses

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