

香港觀鳥會

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

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2013 Black-faced Spoonbill Results of Synchronized Global Census

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
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Black-faced Spoonbill is a threatened bird species of global concern. It mainly inhabits East Asia. Over the last decade, the number of Black-faced Spoonbills had shown an upward trend with a record total of 2,725 birds this year, accounting for an increase of 1.2% from last year.

Mr. YU Yat-tung, Research Manager of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, says “The rise in the number of Black-faced Spoonbill is not significant this year and the total number remains steady. While numbers have dropped in Hong Kong, there is a continuing increase in both the number and proportion of the global population wintering in Taiwan. This is the result of Taiwan’s efforts in wetland conservation. However, we have been emphasizing in recent years that it is indeed a crisis for a large number of Black-faced Spoonbills to aggregate in a single location. It is uncertain why the number of Black-faced Spoonbill recorded in Hong Kong and Shenzhen has fallen in three consecutive years. In Hong Kong, conservation work for Black-faced Spoonbill has been implemented for some time to its maturity, but the number of Black-faced Spoonbill drops continuously. On the other hand, the number recorded in mainland China has been increasing. It is probably because the Black-faced Spoonbills, which originally traveled to Hong Kong, have recently changed their wintering habits.”

In addition to being a well-known star creature of the wetland in the eyes of the public in Hong Kong, the Black-faced Spoonbill is also a globally threatened species. To conserve this rare species, numerous conservation intermediaries and governments in the region have collaborated to conserve the habitats of Black-faced Spoonbill and to undertake various studies since 1990s. A conservation action plan of Black-faced Spoonbill was inaugurated in 1995 with revisions and updates made in 2010. Emphasis is on the establishment of more conservation areas, commissioning more detailed surveys in their breeding grounds and strengthening regional collaboration.

At present, habitat destruction and deterioration remain as the biggest threat to the survival of Black-faced Spoonbill. Development projects have been undertaken in many coastal areas, such as in South Korea, Macau, Fujian, Zhejiang and Hainan. Illegal poaching activities are still observed in some locations. For instance, a total of 5 Black-faced Spoonbills were found and confiscated in a restaurant in northern Vietnam in December 2010. The Deep Bay area in Hong Kong is under huge pressure for development. As such, the conservation of Black-faced Spoonbill still has a long way to go to assure the future of the species.

Since 2003, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society has coordinated the global population census of Black-faced Spoonbill. This year's census was held on 11-13 January 2013 with the participation of over 100 volunteers, recording a total of 2,725 Black-faced Spoonbills, 32 more than last year's total of 2,693 birds (a rise of 1.2%), reaching a new population high. In this census, Taiwan remained the largest wintering site for Black-faced Spoonbill with 1,593 birds recorded. While the numbers recorded in mainland China and Taiwan increased, those in Deep Bay area (between Shenzhen and Hong Kong) and Japan plummeted. A summary of the census results is appended below:

- A total of 2,725 birds were recorded in 2013 census, which is 32 birds more than 2,693 birds recorded in 2012, a rise of 1.2%, also an increase of 48.2% from 1,839 birds as recorded in 2011;
- The largest wintering population with 1,624 birds was found in Taiwan, accounting for 59.6% of the global population, 62 birds higher than the total in 2012, accounting for a rise of 4%, also a rise of 94.7% from 834 birds in 2011;
- Hong Kong and Shenzhen recorded 351 birds in total, which is 42 birds fewer than 393 birds in 2012, accounting for a fall of 10.7%, also 60 birds fewer than that in 2011, accounting for a fall of 14.6%;
- A rise in the number by 10.7% was noted in coastal area of mainland China, from 328 birds in 2012 to 363 birds in this year, a rise of 83.3% from 198 birds recorded in 2011;
- Increases were observed in mainland China, Taiwan and Vietnam, while decreases were noted in Deep Bay, Macau, Japan and South Korea.

Locations included in this census include South Korea, Japan, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Taiwan, Kong Kong & Shenzhen, Macau, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia.

This Society would like to take this opportunity to thank all regional organizations and volunteers for their participation in the census, contributing to the smooth conduct of this census throughout all years and therefore better conservation of Black-faced Spoonbill in the region. We are also indebted to Schmidt Marketing (HK) Ltd for sponsoring part of the expenses incurred.

Appendix 1 : Results of different locations in 2013 Census

地區 Place	No. in 2011 (% to total)	No. in 2012 (% to total)	No. in 2013 (% to total)	Trend (against 2012)
台灣 Taiwan	834 (45.4%)	1,562 (58.0%)	1,624 (59.6%)	62 birds more (+4.0%)
香港和深圳 (后海灣) Hong Kong & Shenzhen (Deep Bay)	411 (22.3%)	393 (14.6%)	351 (12.9%)	42 birds less (-10.7%)
中國大陸 Mainland China (浙江、福建、廣東、海南、 上海)	198 (10.8%)	328 (12.2%)	363 (13.3%)	35 birds more (+10.7%)
日本 Japan	270 (14.7%)	284 (10.5%)	277 (10.2%)	7 birds less (-2.5%)
越南 Vietnam	49 (2.7%)	35 (1.3%)	39 (1.4%)	4 birds more (+11.4%)
澳門 Macao	49 (2.7%)	51 (1.9%)	48 (1.8%)	3 birds less (-5.9%)
南韓 South Korea	26 (1.4%)	40 (1.5%)	23 (0.8%)	17 birds less (-42.5%)
菲律賓 The Philippines	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1* (0.04%)	1 bird more
泰國 Thailand	1 (0.1%)	2* (0.1%)	1* (0.04%)	1 bird less (-50%)
柬埔寨 Cambodia	1 (0.1%)	2* (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 birds less (-100%)
總數 Total	1,839	2,693	2,725	32birds more (1.2%)

Note: * Not included in the total as the toll was not taken on the survey date.

Appendix 2 : Statistical Diagrams

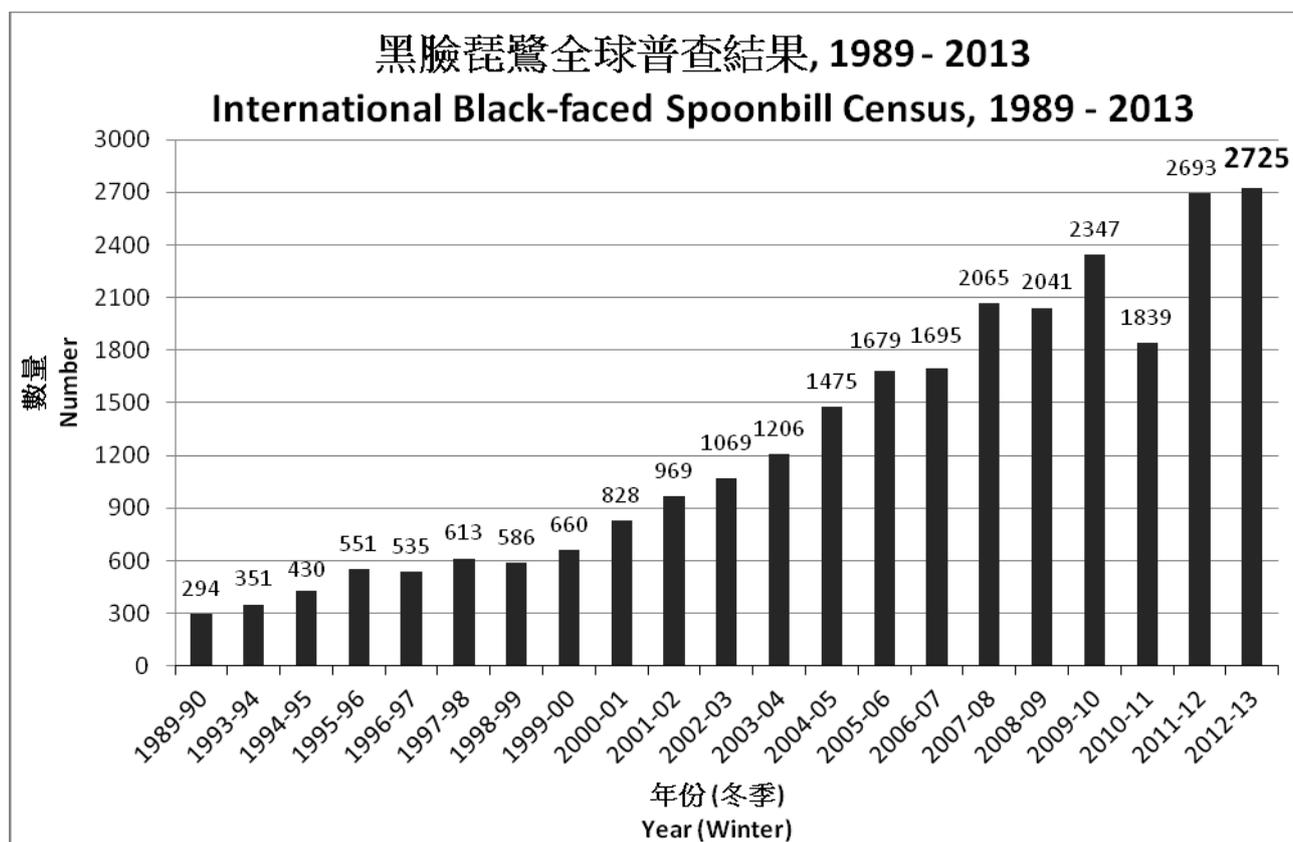


Diagram 1 : Numbers of wintering Black-faced Spoonbill in the world from 1989-90 to 2012-13

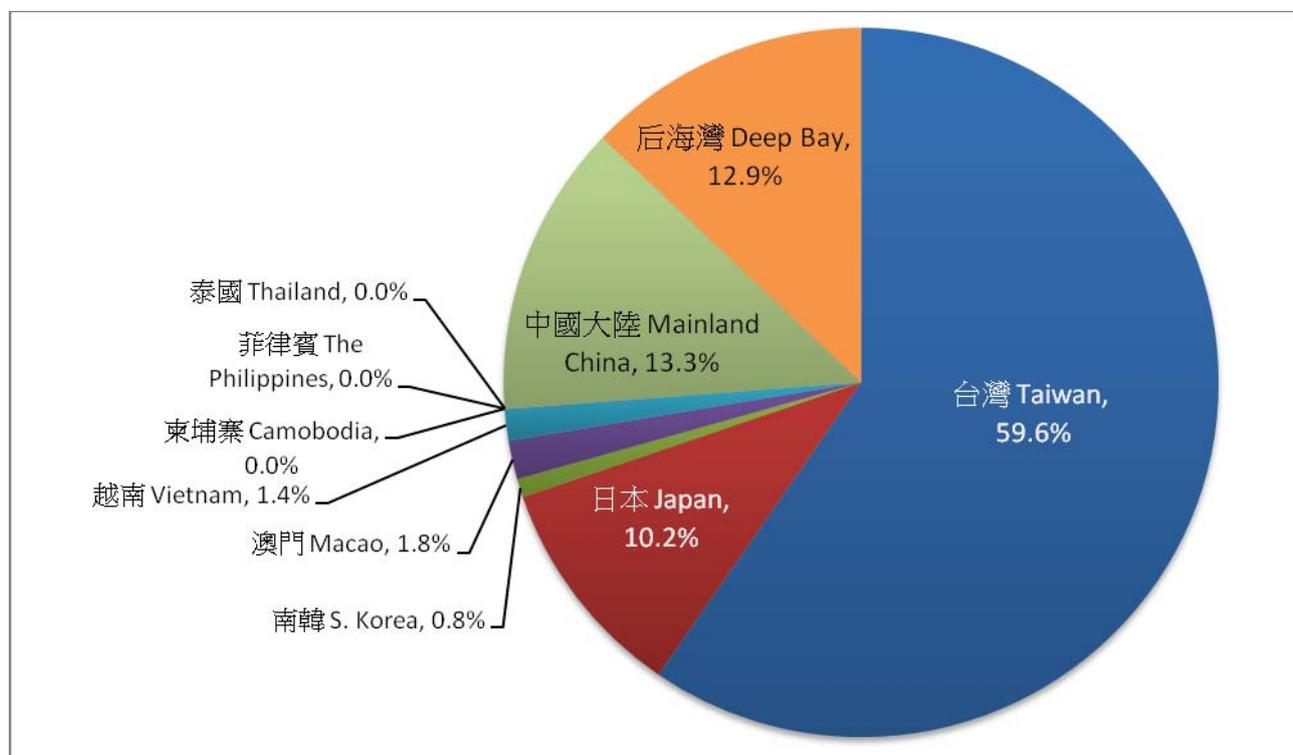


Diagram 2 : Proportion of wintering Black-faced Spoonbill at different locations to the global total in 2013 Global Synchronized Census

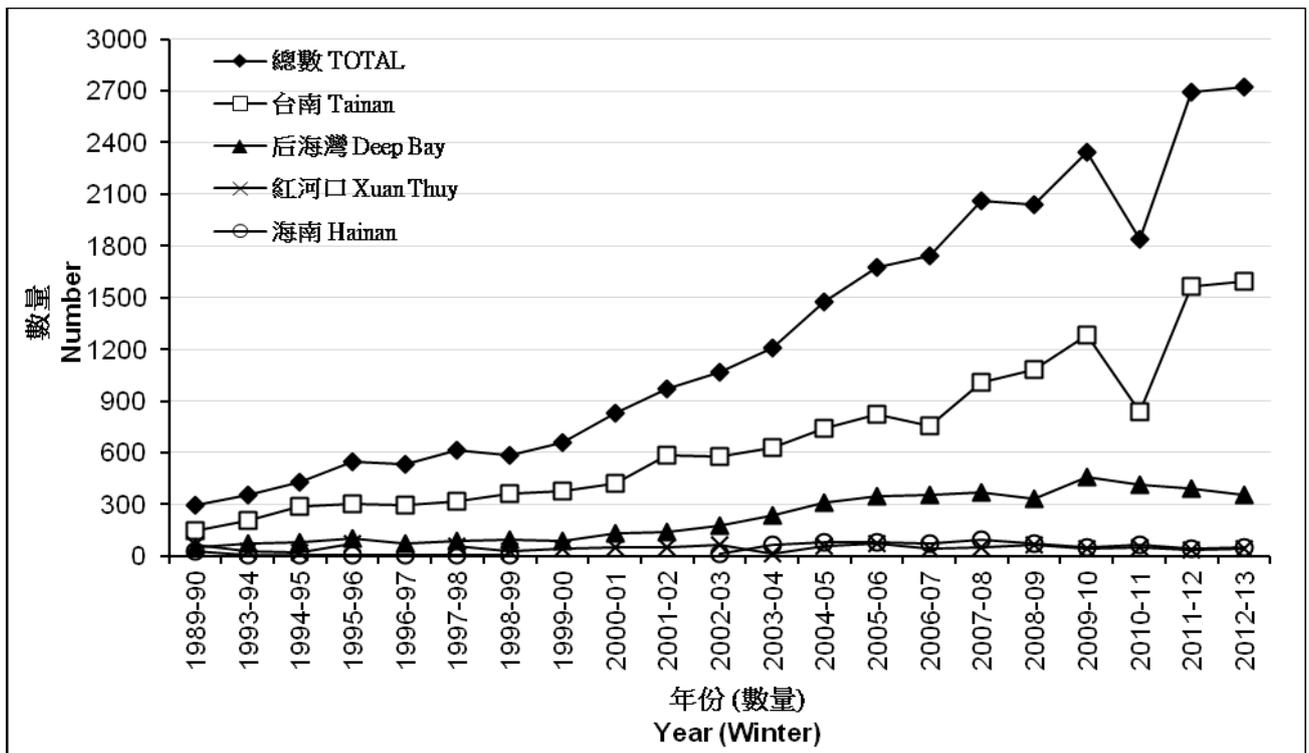


Diagram 3 : A comparison of the trends of the known global population of Black-faced Spoonbill from the synchronized census and the populations at four main wintering locations (Tainan of Taiwan, Deep Bay of Hong Kong & Shenzhen, Hainan and Red River Delta of Vietnam)