

**COMMUNICATING THE EAST ASIAN-AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY PARTNERSHIP
REPORT FROM THE CEPA WORKSHOP, 8TH MEETING OF THE PARTNERS, JANUARY 2015**



The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) includes representatives from Governments, Intergovernmental Organisations, International and National NGOs, as well as scientists/researchers working within recognised research institutions. A Secretariat (six permanent staff and, currently, two interns) manages the day-to-day activities of the Partnership. The Partners play different roles in implementation and Working Groups and Task Forces are formed to provide technical support to assist the Partnership in implementation. Representatives of the

Partners come together for regular Meetings of the Partners (MOPs) to assess implementation and plan future work.

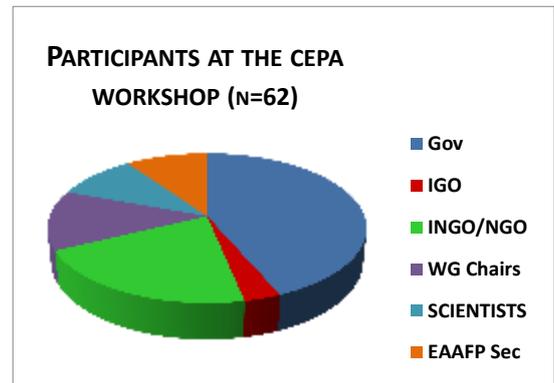
The CEPA Working Group used the opportunity at MOP8 in January 2015 to run a two-hour workshop with all participants. Using individual and group questions the workshop assessed how implementers viewed communication and information sharing, and transfer of knowledge and management skills across the EAAFP from international, to national, site and local community level, and the perceived needs by the different implementers. The overall aim was to identify strengths and weaknesses and suggest solutions for the future to improve the effectiveness of the flyway partnership. While the CEPA Working Group and the Secretariat will use these results directly in their communications planning, the results will create better understanding among the Partners of the diversity of roles and focus areas across the Partnership.

All questions are recorded in the [Appendix](#) to this report. The detailed responses are recorded in an [Annex](#) as a separate document and there is a one-page [summary report](#). Both are available [here](#)

THE INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

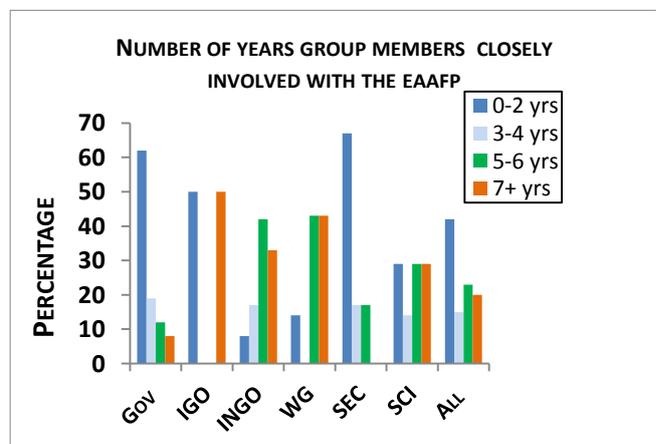
(Note: (a) the individual questions have been re-ordered to facilitate the discussion of these results; (b) in the context of this analysis the term ‘implementers’ refers to the groups identified below)

Participants were divided into implementer groups including Government (Gov), Intergovernmental Organisations (IGO), International NGOs (INGO), Working Group Chairs, Scientists, and the EAAFP Secretariat. Participants used coloured stickers reflecting their role to respond to posted questions on aspects of their role in implementation as well as their key role within the Partnership.



Number of years of involvement in the EAAFP and the amount of time available to implementers (Questions 1 and 2)

Two questions looked at the implementers, the number of years they have been involved with the EAAFP and the amount of time they have to pursue EAAFP work. Overall 43% of the participants have been working with the EAAFP for 5 years or more and will likely have attended several MOPs and have considerable experience of the evolving actions and directions of the Partnership; an almost equal percentage of 42% of those participating had only two years or less experience with the Partnership.



Government partners and the Secretariat recorded the highest proportion of staff with only two years or less experience. For the Government partners this is perhaps a little higher than the reality since two countries came to the MOP with relatively large delegations, but even accounting for this bias there was a clear indication that government implementers have a much shorter-term experience with the Partnership than other implementers. This underlines the need to ensure that newcomers can easily find online the key information

about the Partnership, what it is, how it functions, key work areas etc. Reviewing the website to assess the accessibility of key partnership information would be helpful, as would the production of a brief leaflet about Partnership basics suitable for translation, printing, download and online use.

On the important question relating to the amount of time available to work on EAAFP issues, almost 40% of all implementer groups have only 10% or less of their working time available for EAAFP work and most had 30% or less. Of particular interest is that the government implementers fared worst on this question with over half of the respondents reporting 10% or less of their time for flyway work comparing unfavourably with the INGOs, Working Group Chairs and the scientists who collectively only had 17% of people in this category.

This disparity in time available to the different implementer groups for flyway work illustrates the variation in implementation capacity across the Partnership. While there is little that can be done to re-dress the imbalance, it is a reminder of the need to prioritise the key actions required from Government partners and ensure that the new representatives are quickly and efficiently informed of their roles. Additionally, governments should consider enhancing implementation capacity by investing more time in establishing effective national partnerships that include Government representatives, NGOs, scientists, site managers, local interest groups, and other key stakeholders.

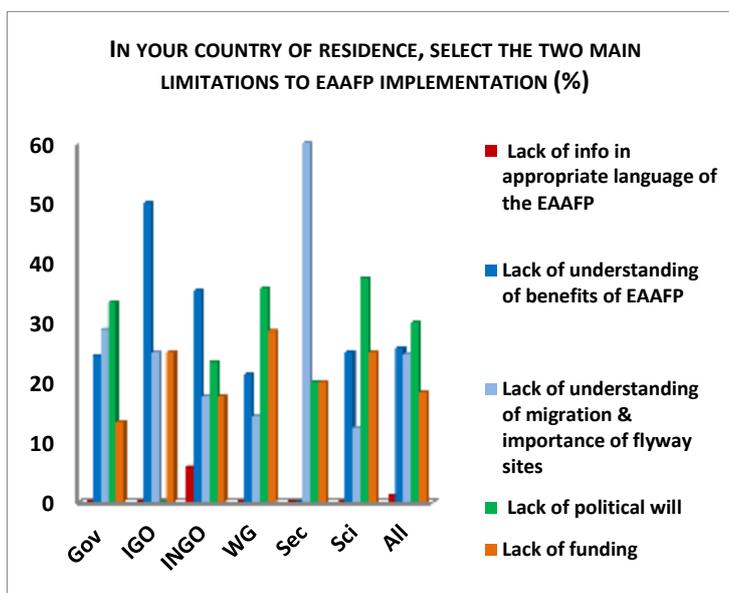
Who do implementers work mostly with in their flyway activities and who do they feel they ought to cooperate with but don't have the time (Questions 3 and 4)

Predictably, the different EAAF Partner groups were working most often with the Secretariat and National Government Focal Points and thereafter there was more diversity in responses depending upon each participant's role. Common to all groups was the lack of significant interaction between the implementers and the local site managers, communities, birdwatcher groups and the general public – the people 'on the ground'. Partners selected the three most important groups that they *did not* have enough time to work with as: *Other relevant Government agencies; National Government Focal Points; and Site managers*. It is notable that they did not identify local groups (local communities, local ecologists, local birdwatchers or the general public) as ones that they feel they should work with but do not have time. Only the WG Chairs, the Secretariat and to a lesser extent the Governments identified Site managers as a priority group they did not have time to work with.

These results highlight the need to make certain that mechanisms are in place to involve the people 'on the ground' and that the findings, recommendations and decisions of the EAAFP are translated into action at the local level. The results reinforce the important role that *national partnerships* play in ensuring implementation at the local level through working with local groups.

The two main limitations to EAAFP implementation in participants' country of residence (Q11)

Of the five options offered, *Lack of information in an appropriate language of the EAAFP* was not rated at all by almost all participants. Participants selected *Lack of political will* most often with *Lack of understanding of migration & importance of flyway sites* and *Lack of understanding of the EAAFP benefits* quite closely behind but results did show significant differences among the groups. It is likely that improved understanding of the benefits of the EAAFP together with better understanding of migration and the importance of flyway sites will lead to a heightened political will. The need to review the Flyway benefits document is already on the CEPA WG workplan. With input, especially from Government partners, this information could be used to influence national decision-makers to support the EAAF.



Training courses: Planning and delivery; Regional vs national courses, Course content (Questions 12, 13, 14)

Almost 50% of participants are involved in the planning and management of training courses for site managers. Asked about the topics to be covered in a basic training course about the flyway the 30 people responding

identified *Migratory bird information*, *Technical site management*, and *Communication with local communities* as the most important subject areas to be included. While two groups identified *Participatory skills* as important, comments by several participants suggested that at least some participants had not understood these terms. This indicates that the importance of participatory management skills should be included in basic training courses. The Secretariat is currently developing appropriate training materials for site managers and will take these results into account; the CEPA WG is available to give help and advice as necessary.

The participants agreed the training focus should be at regional and national level and on average they agreed that training courses should be a *Mix of regional and national workshops but most at national level*. Given the limited funding available it would be useful to look more into this issue of the correct balance since there are some significant differences between groups on the balance between regional and national workshops. It is suggested that participants at regional level should be encouraged to act as organizers and/or facilitators at national level to reinforce linkages between regional and national networks

Two areas of implementation most critical to increase the EAAFP impact across the flyway (Question 15)

The groups were relatively consistent in their choices selecting *Improved management of existing FSN sites* (FNS) and *Improved monitoring of bird populations across the flyway* as the two critical implementation areas. Five out of six groups identified the *Designation of more sites to the FSN* as the least critical implementation area.

While the results do not preclude new FNS designations they suggest that consolidating what we have through improved management of existing sites is the top priority and new designations should be focussed on key sites to sustain the flyway. Effective methods for sharing monitoring data as well as developing and sharing standardised monitoring methods across the flyway will be useful in increasing EAAFP impact.

How often implementers visit the EAAFP website and three areas of information they would like to see better addressed (Questions 5 and 6)

While all participants are visiting the website at some time during the year, 62% visiting at least once a month, almost 40% are not visiting often - at best several times a year. This underlines the need to use other forms of communication with Partners to keep them informed of developments (see next section).

Participants were fairly consistent in their choice of areas to be better addressed on the website selecting *Activities of working groups* followed by *Activities of the EAAF partners*. *Site management issues for site managers* was an area of importance to the Scientists and the Secretariat. It is evident that current information on the work of Working Groups (and also Task Forces) is not consistent in the depth and breadth of information available. A more rigorous updating of this information is essential to keep Partners and visitors to the website informed of on-going work.

In the group discussion on new communications channels for the Partnership (see Question 2B) it was suggested that developing special areas on the web for youth, the birdwatching community, and the general public would be helpful to improve communication about the flyway to the broader community. It is important to remember the significant role that birdwatchers play in gathering information on migratory birds.

Receiving, reading and forwarding the EAAFP newsletter (Questions 7, 8, 9, 10)

The EAAF newsletter is open to subscription to anyone interested in the flyway; with currently 1,400 subscribers there are many subscribers who are not formal partners of the EAAF. It is a key communication tool for the Partnership keeping the diverse implementers in touch with flyway activities. The results show that:

About 80% of participants receive the newsletter directly from the Secretariat via email.

About 50% of the recipients read the newsletter *always* or *almost always*

About 50% *sometimes*, *rarely* or *never* read it.

Most who *never* read do so because of lack of time, not lack of interest

About 70% of recipients forward the newsletter to colleagues, *always* or *sometimes*

It is reassuring for the Secretariat that non-reading of the newsletter is mainly because of lack of time rather than content and it suggests that perhaps some people would respond better to a quicker access to news. Since the workshop, the Secretariat has replaced the quarterly newsletter with the e-newsletter *Monthly Updates*,

similar in structure to its predecessor but appearing monthly rather than quarterly with the news items embedded in an email and hotlinked to the online stories.

As a key communication channel for the Partnership it would be useful to automatically add the emails of newly appointed government focal points and all working group and task force members to the newsletter list while continuing to give all other interested people an opportunity to subscribe online. Is the newsletter alone enough to sustain good communication among Partners and beyond? At the moment there is not an interactive email system that allows people to share and comment on news within the network; while requiring more Secretariat time to manage this it may be worth considering. Similarly a renewed effort to encourage more people to follow the EAAFP on Facebook (currently about 1000 'likes') Twitter (currently about 100 followers) would offer closer contact with the flyway and its activities better suited to people who prefer this kind of communication and could drive more people to the website.

GROUP SESSION 1. This continued the discussion on the newsletter identifying topics participants would like to see in the newsletter.

Although asked to prioritise responses not all groups complied so the results show grouped lists but not priorities. Participants particularly favoured three subject areas (see Annex X for full listing):

Reporting/Information sharing: including the need for updates on partner activities, dates of relevant conferences and meetings, and activities of Working Groups and Task forces.

Monitoring and Research: topics that keep the Partners informed of advances in knowledge and understanding about the flyway, information on migratory routes, results of bird-ringing studies, spotlights on key research progress etc.

News 'stories' about the flyway focused on success/good news stories about successful conservation, ringed birds and local communities, 'follow this bird' migration tracking stories of interest to partners and a broader readership.

The fourth key area of interest was **Informing and working with policy-makers**, an area that the Partnership could further develop for use at national and local levels.

GROUP SESSION 2. This session looked at other communication channels the EAAFP Secretariat should use to maximise impact between the Secretariat and (A) Partners (B) the wider world

As in Group session 1, all groups did not prioritise their responses and the results are simply lists although grouping responses does give some indication of priority interest areas. While asked about 'other' communication channels, respondents also suggested additions/modifications to current channels as well as procedural suggestions. All responses are recorded in Annex X and are worthy of further study since they identify a number of helpful suggestions for future consideration. There is no doubt, however, that with limited funding and human capacity at the Secretariat these suggestions would have to be revisited to identify priorities and assess the financial implications of managing new communication channels.

(A) Secretariat - Partners: New channels included: using Blogs for different Partner groups; Listerve/email groups that permit two-way conversations; workshops; articles in popular science and nature magazines; Secretariat developed and managed networks with the diverse implementers (MEAs; Chairs WG/TF; Government contacts; Site managers and media).

(B) Secretariat – wider world: the suggestions were varied but could be helpfully divided into ideas targeting three groups: (i) the general public; (ii) NGOs, special interest groups, universities; (iii) youth. Suggestions included, for example, hold skype conferences and webinars on topics of special interest; create a special area for youth; produce more handouts on flyway issues.

Appendix

Individual questions

- Q1 How many years have you been closely involved with the EAAFP and its MOP?
0-2 years; 3-4 years; 5-6 years; 7+ years
- Q2 How much time of your working life do you spend engaged on EAAFP work or in work that is directly relevant to EAAFP implementation: *10%; 20%; 50%; 70%; 100%*
- Q3 Who do you work mostly with on flyway implementation? (Select top 3): *EAAFP Secretariat; National Govt EAAFP Focal Points; Other relevant Gov Agencies; Local Gov Implementers; Scientists; INGO/NGO Mig. Bird Experts; INGO/NGO generally; Site managers; Local communities; Local birdwatchers; Other locals; General public*
- Q4 Are there groups of people that you feel you should work with but simply don't have the time? Select one group that you think is the most important from the list below: *EAAFP Secretariat; National Govt EAAFP Focal Points; Other relevant Gov Agencies; Local Gov Implementers; Scientists; INGO/NGO Mig. Bird Experts; INGO/NGO general conservationists; Site managers; Local communities; Local birdwatchers; Other locals; General public*
- Q5 How often do you visit the EAAFPs website? *At least once a week; Once a month; Several times a year; Once a year; Never*
- Q6 Select three areas of information that you would like to see better addressed on the EAAFP website. *Activities of the EAAFP Secretariat; Activities of the EAAFP Partners; Activities of the working groups; Site management issues for site managers; Information for wetland education centres*
- Q7 Do you receive the EAAFP newsletter by email directly from the Secretariat? *Yes; No*
- Q8 If you receive the newsletter do you forward it to other colleagues? *Always, Sometimes, Never*
- Q9 If you receive the newsletter, do you read it? *Always; Almost always; Sometimes; Rarely; Never*
- Q10 If you do not read the newsletter, why not? *The articles are not of much interest; I don't have time; Both of the above*
- Q11 In your country of residence please select the two main limitations to EAAFP implementation from the list below? *Lack of info in appropriate language of the EAAFP; Lack of understanding of benefits of EAAFP; Lack of understanding of migration & importance of flyway sites; Lack of political will; Lack of funding*
- Q12 Are you involved in planning and delivering training courses for site managers?
- Q13 If you answered yes to Q12 please select the THREE most important subject areas that should be covered in a basic training course: *EAAFP specific information – what it is, how it works etc.; Migratory bird information – flyways, species, key sites etc.; Technical site management skills; Bird ringing skills; Communication with local community skills; Participatory skills; Other...*
- Q14 How is site manager training for flyway issues best carried out? Select ONE. *At national level in local language; At regional level in English; Mix of national and regional, most national; Mix of national and regional, most regional*
- Q15 Select 2 areas of implementation that you feel are the MOST critical to help the Flyway partnership increase its impact across the flyway: *Designate mores sites to FSN; Improved management of existing FSN sites; Improved knowledge on migration across the flyway; Improved monitoring of bird populations across the flyway; More workshops, training courses, meetings*

Group Questions

Group Question 1

What topics would you like to see in the newsletter? Discuss within your group and prioritise your options

Group question 2

What other communication channels should the EAAFP Secretariat use to maximise impact? Discuss options and again prioritise.

(A) Between the Secretariat and the Partner (internal communication)

(B) Between the Secretariat and the wider world (NGOs, schools, wetland centres, general public, universities etc.)