

Proposal for a Southeast Asia Network in the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership

Rationale

In recent years, the geographical focus for migratory waterbirds in the Flyway has been in North East Asia, particularly the Yellow Sea for shorebirds, in light of precipitous declines at staging sites in this area. Furthermore, most species of migratory Anatidae and cranes are largely restricted to the northern part of the Flyway. Yet South East Asia is also an important but threatened area for many species of smaller shorebirds, including the critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper. In addition, recent increases in the breeding populations of colonially-breeding waterbirds, such as storks, pelicans and darters, have led to increasingly regular migratory patterns across national boundaries.

Given the ecological connectedness of countries and sites in SE Asia, shared species and populations, as well as common pressures and threats, it is proposed to explore the possibility and interest in creating a Southeast Asia Network in the EAAFP for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in SE Asia.

Why a network?

The Partners from SEA feel that a network will allow them to focus their energies to working together as they share similar issues as well as possibly similar bird species. Once a clearer way of working or agenda is developed then perhaps this can lead to a working group or task force. The SEA partners who were at an informal meeting to discuss this felt that formalizing this can come at a later stage as needed.

Representatives of ASEAN Member States including Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam and representatives from BirdLife International and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity attended the MOP 8 of the EAAFP and recognized the need to highlight the relevance of intertidal habitats and wetlands in the Southeast Asian Region to the survival of migratory shorebirds, the corresponding skills that site managers need to acquire to be able to manage these habitats appropriately and the skills that would enable site managers to communicate the relevance of these sites to the ecology and economy of the ASEAN Member States.

Proposed Membership

ASEAN Member States (AMS), ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) & Birdlife

The interest to organize a Southeast Asia Network was assessed at the EAAFP MOP 8 and all those present supported the concept and recommended that the formation of the network be acknowledged as part of the documentation of the EAAFP MOP 8.

Terms of Reference of the Southeast Asia Network:

Planning

- Incorporate migratory waterbirds into the agenda of the ASEAN Working Groups on Coastal and Marine Environments (AWGCME) and Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (AWGNCB), as well as other relevant ASEAN forums
- Include migratory waterbird conservation into regional plans, e.g. Greater Mekong Subregion Initiative and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

Information Sharing

- Improve information management (data organization, sharing and dissemination of information)

Capacity Building

- Identify training and capacity building needs of site managers in SE Asia
- Improve regional skills and survey techniques for monitoring of species, habitats and sites on migratory birds in SE Asia

CEPA

- Design and Undertake shared CEPA initiatives

Site – based Collaboration and Monitoring

- Improve protection of migratory waterbird habitats, e.g. through ASEAN Heritage Parks
- Joint monitoring activities

Resource Mobilization

- Mobilize resources to enable joint actions.

Meetings

- Hold regular meetings to share experience on migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the region

Support for translations

- Support translation of key information documents into languages of countries of SE Asia

The MOP recommended to include Bangladesh in the membership of the Network