

Second Meeting of the Partners
Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway
Beijing, China 13-14 November 2007

Paper 1.5

**PARTNERSHIP FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS
AND THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF THEIR HABITATS
IN THE EAST ASIAN – AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY**
Bogor, Indonesia, 6 – 9 November 2006

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST MEETING OF PARTNERS

The Launch and First Meeting of the Partners in the Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway were held in Bogor, Indonesia on 6 – 9 November 2006. The meetings were kindly hosted by the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation from the Ministry of Forestry, Government of Indonesia.

The Partnership Launch and First Meeting of the Partners were attended by representatives from the Governments of Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Thailand and the United States, and representatives from the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the Australasian Wader Studies Group, Birdlife International, International Crane Foundation, Japan Association for Wild Geese Protection, Wetlands International, Wild Bird Society of Japan and WWF. Apologies were received from the Governments of China and Cambodia, the IUCN and UNEP.

The Launch of the Partnership, on 6 November, was a highly successful and celebratory event. Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, United States, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Australasian Wader Studies Group, the International Crane Foundation, Wetlands International and the WWF endorsed the Partnership text, after agreeing to the editorial changes proposed by the Governments of Australia and the United States, and Wetlands International. The IUCN conveyed their written endorsement to the secretariat. Birdlife International provided endorsement of the Partnership at the close of the meeting.

At the first Meeting of Partners, Partners elected Australia as the Chair of the Partnership for the first two years and the Republic of Korea as the interim Vice Chair of the Partnership for the first year.

Partners agreed to hold Meetings of the Partners annually, at least for the first five years of the Partnership.

Partners adopted the arrangements for the nomination of sites to the Flyway Site Network, and for transition of sites from the site networks for cranes, shorebirds and Anatidae established under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Strategy.

Partners had a fruitful discussion on the draft Implementation Strategy and adopted the Strategy. Partners outlined a broad range of activities which will be implemented in 2007 to progress the outcomes identified in the Implementation Strategy.

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Partners agreed that a Secretariat was essential to administer the Partnership and agreed the priority Terms of Reference for the Secretariat and the budget required.

Partners agreed that Australia would continue to serve as interim Secretariat until an ongoing Secretariat is appointed by the governments funding the administration of the Partnership. The Governments of Australia, the Republic of Korea, Japan and the United States of America committed funds to support the operation of the Secretariat.

Partners agreed to the continuation of the Working Groups for Shorebirds, Anatidae and Cranes established under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Strategy, with amended Terms of Reference aligned to the objectives of the Partnership. The Working Groups were asked to draft their revised Terms of Reference and provide them to the second Meeting of Partners for consideration.

Partners welcomed the Avian Influenza Working Group established under the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee as a Working Group under the Partnership.

Partners established a task group to develop a Communications Plan for the Partnership by the end of 2007.

Following careful consideration, the Partnership agreed to include four families of seabirds in appendix III of the Partnership and agreed to consider a proposal for formation of a Seabird Working Group at its next meeting.

Partners formed a task group to develop a reporting template to assist Partners in the preparation of annual reports on progress in implementing the Partnership. The Partners emphasised that the reporting should be focussed on collecting information to demonstrate the achievements of the Partnership while not imposing unduly on the Partners.

The Partners agreed to meet again in late 2007. The Chair undertook to approach China and Singapore as potential hosts for the meeting.

The Chair thanked all the participants for their enthusiastic engagement in discussions during the meeting. The Chair conveyed his appreciation to the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation from the Ministry of Forestry, Government of Indonesia, for hosting the meeting, and to Wetlands International and the Wild Bird Society of Japan for their excellent support of the meeting. The Chair also thanks the Governments of Japan and Australia for their financial support of the meeting.

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**REPORT OF THE MEETING TO
FINALISE THE PARTNERSHIP TEXT**

Bogor, Indonesia, 6 November 2006

Agenda Item 1: Welcome speeches

1. Mr Andrew McNee, from Australia, as Chair of the Partnership Working Group, opened the meeting and invited participants to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item 2: Self Introductions by participants

2. Each participant introduced themselves as the representative of their country or organisation.

Agenda Item 3: Overview/ Scene Setting presentation

3. Mr Jason Ferris, from Australia, on behalf of the Secretariat to the Working Group, presented an overview of the developments to date.

Agenda Item 4: Agenda for the First Meeting of Partners

4. The meeting agreed the agenda as drafted.

Agenda Item 5: Partnership Text – presentation and agreement

5. The Chair noted that editorial changes to the Partnership text were invited at the conclusion of the Canberra meeting of the Working Group. Proposals for amendments to the Partnership text were received from the United States, Australia and Wetlands International.

6. United States of America

Para 3.6 ‘Government Partners are entitled to remove a site from the Flyway Site Network and inform the Secretariat of their decision’

Para 8.7 ‘Partners may withdraw membership at any time and are encouraged to provide advance notice.’

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7. Australia

Para 4.1 ‘The Partners will encourage communication, education and public awareness activities across the Flyway on migratory waterbirds, conservation and sustainable use of migratory waterbird sites.’

Para 9.2 ‘The Partners will elect a Chair and Vice Chair for a term of 2 years.’

Para 9.3 ‘The Partners will establish a Secretariat to facilitate the effective communication and coordination of the Partnership and to coordinate activities across the Flyway. The Partners are encouraged to support and provide resources to the Secretariat.’

Para 9.4 ‘The Partners will consider the nature of the Secretariat and develop and adopt Terms of Reference.’

8. Wetlands International

Appendix IV, criterion b.

- i. A staging site should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 0.25% individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbirds on migration.
- ii. A staging site should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 5,000 or more waterbirds at one time during migration.

9. These changes were accepted by the meeting.

Proposal to include additional seabird families in the Partnership

10. The representative of Birdlife International proposed that the Partnership be broadened to include seabirds. The representatives of Russia and the United States of America supported the proposal in principle, but sought clarification on which families of seabirds were proposed for inclusion.

11. The representative of Australia noted that there is a limited number of seabird species which migrate entirely within the Flyway and expressed concern that inclusion of seabirds may represent a broadening of the geographic scope of the Partnership.

12. The representative of Wetlands International noted that the Partnership has a strong focus on the conservation of important sites. The inclusion of seabirds would require modification to the criteria used to identify these sites. The representative of Birdlife International advised that the same set of criteria were used for waterbirds and seabirds in the Important Bird Areas programme. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat expressed a view that site based activities may not adequately address the conservation needs of seabirds and that

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threat based approaches which addressed issues such as fisheries by-catch may need to be included in the Partnership. The representative of Birdlife International noted that there were already families (e.g. Gaviidae) included in the Partnership for which a site based approach was not the most effective conservation approach.

13. With the agreement of the meeting, the Chair deferred further discussion of this proposal to the First Meeting of Partners. The representative of Birdlife International undertook to facilitate discussion on which families of seabirds should be included in the Partnership and any amendments to the Partnership text that may be required.

Conflict resolution

14. The Chair proposed that paragraph 8.5 of the Partnership text be amended to remove the onus on the Partnership meeting to act as a conflict resolution mechanism in the event of a disagreement regarding an application for membership of the Partnership. The proposed change was:

‘Partners will be advised of application for membership out of session. If no issues are raised within one month, the applicant will be added to the list of Partners.’

15. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat noted that removal of this text leaves the process for resolving objections unclear. The representative of Wetlands International supported removal of the text, stating that the proposed approach encourages resolution of such issues outside the meeting and suggesting that if issues could not be satisfactorily resolved outside of a Meeting of Partners, they could be brought to a meeting.

16. The meeting agreed to delete the text.

Agreement to proceed with launch of the Partnership

17. The meeting agreed that the Partnership text incorporating the amendments described above should be launched for endorsement.

Official Launch

18. The Launch of the Partnership was a highly successful and celebratory event. Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, United States, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Australasian Wader Studies Group, the International Crane Foundation, Wetlands International and the WWF endorsed the Partnership text. The IUCN conveyed their written endorsement to the secretariat.

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19. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) made a statement to the meeting which broadly reflected the conclusions of the CMS Standing Committee at its 31st Meeting (September 2006) - namely the acknowledgement that the Partnership could fulfill the conditions of a non-binding agreement under Article IV of the Convention on Migratory Species and could be recognized by the relevant CMS member States as such.

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REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF PARTNERS

Bogor, Indonesia, 7 – 9 November 2006

Agenda Item 1.1: Welcome, Introductions, Apologies

1. The Chair of the Partnership Working Group, Mr Andrew McNee, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Mr McNee expressed gratitude to the Government of Indonesia for their generous hospitality in hosting the inaugural Meeting of Partners. He congratulated the governments and organisations who had endorsed the Partnership at its launch the previous evening.
2. Partners that attended the meeting included representatives of the Governments of Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore and the United States, and representatives from the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, the Australasian Wader Studies Group, the International Crane Foundation, Wetlands International and WWF.
3. Apologies from the IUCN, UNEP, and the Government of Cambodia were recorded. During the meeting, apologies from the Government of China were received and recorded.
4. Observers from governments and organisations which had not yet endorsed the Partnership, including the Governments of India and Thailand, the Japanese Association for Wild Geese Protection, the Wild Bird Society of Japan and Birdlife International, were invited to participate in the meeting. Birdlife International provided endorsement of the Partnership at the close of the meeting.

Agenda Item 1.2: Appointment of rapporteur

5. The representative of Australia was invited to continue in the role of interim Secretariat and to take a record of the meeting. The representatives of the Australasian Wader Studies Group and WWF agreed to assist in recording the meeting.

Agenda Item 2.1: Election of Chair and Vice Chair

6. The meeting agreed that the Partnership should be chaired by a government partner, as recommended in Agenda Paper 2.1. The meeting noted the need for the Partnership to provide for new government Partners to fill the roles of Chair and Vice

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Chair and agreed that the position of Chair should be filled for a two year period, with the Vice Chair position filled on an interim basis for the first year.

7. Mr McNee invited Mr Douglas Hykle from the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat to conduct an election. Mr Hykle called for nominations to the position of Chair for a two-year term and interim Vice Chair for a one-year term. The meeting elected Mr McNee (Australia) as the inaugural Chair of the Partnership, following a nomination from Japan, seconded by the USA. The meeting elected Mr Hong Jeong-Kee (Republic of Korea) as the interim Vice Chair, following a nomination from Japan seconded by the USA. Both countries accepted the nominations.

Agenda Item 2.2: Agree draft agenda

8. The meeting agreed to add two items to the agenda:
 - 2.8 Transfer of issues from the 11th meeting of the Asia – Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee to the Partnership.
 - 3.6 Inclusion of Seabird Families in Appendix III to the Partnership.
9. The agenda was adopted without further amendment.

Agenda Item 2.3: Decide on arrangements for Meetings of Partners

10. The meeting agreed to a proposal from the representative of the United States to include an additional item in the Terms of Reference, viz: approve an annual budget for the Secretariat.
11. The meeting also agreed to remove the reference to countries from paragraph E in agenda paper 2.3 to allow for non-government organisations to host Partnership meetings.

Agenda Item 2.4: Terms of Reference for the Secretariat

12. The meeting discussed its expectations of the Partnership Secretariat and agreed a number of changes to the draft Terms of Reference for the Secretariat provided in agenda paper 2.4. The updated Terms of Reference are at [Attachment A](#).
13. The representative of the International Crane Foundation proposed that the Secretariat provide ‘administrative’ rather than ‘logistic’ support for the meetings of the Partners. This change was supported by the meeting.
14. The representative of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat emphasised the important role of the Partnership Secretariat in promoting communication across flyway initiatives, which was supported by the meeting.

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15. The representative of the United States proposed an additional role for the Secretariat relating to preparation of an annual budget. He also proposed that representation of the Partnership in international fora be undertaken by the Chair of the Partnership rather than the Secretariat.

16. The representative of Australia suggested that the Secretariat Terms of Reference might be better presented in three themes - administration/coordination, promotion and Partnership activities. He also proposed that the reference to the Secretariat being staffed by one full time officer be removed from the preamble to the Terms of Reference. These suggestions were supported by the meeting.

Agenda Item 2.5: Funding arrangements for Partnership activities and administration

17. The Chair invited interested Partners to participate in a group charged with refining the Terms of Reference for the Secretariat and determining the budget required to deliver the services described in the first year of the Partnership. The representative of the United States undertook to facilitate this group. The representatives of Australia, Japan, Wetlands International, and WWF agreed to participate.

18. The group was asked to look at different options for the Secretariat depending on differing levels of resources, and make recommendations on a minimum budget required for core functions. The budget was limited to Secretariat functions only, and did not include other elements of the Partnership such as advisory committees or working groups.

19. Later in the meeting, the budget and Secretariat group reported its findings, and the Partnership agreed as follows:

The Secretariat is important to the success of the Partnership and the first priority for the Partnership should be to fund the basic tasks of the Secretariat (see below) at a cost of \$75,000 - \$100,000 US or approximately one full time person. The Partnership needs to take responsibility for the security of funding for the Secretariat. This funding will come from national government Partner voluntary contributions. Funding will be based on a calendar year (January through December) with the first budget year being 2007. In preparing the budget there needs to be recognition that funding is appropriated annually by governments in the Flyway on varying fiscal years so the capacity for funding to be delivered simultaneously is limited. In selecting the Secretariat there needs to be consideration of an organisations ability to receive funds and be accountable for their expenditure.

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Basic Tasks of the Secretariat

- Communication between Partners and across flyways (2p/m)
- Administrative support to Meetings of Partners (2p/m)
 - Preparation (where appropriate) and dissemination of meeting papers
 - Liaison with host country/organisation
- Encourage Partners to implement annual work plans of the strategic plan (1p/m)
- Manage the Partnership website (1p/m)
- Encourage and support Partners to nominate sites (1p/m)
- Maintain a list of sites (1p/m)
- Support the Chair and Vice Chair, including support to the Chair in promoting the Partnership (1p/m)
- Receive endorsements of the Partnership and maintain a list of endorsed Partners
- Support advisory bodies
- Prepare the annual Partnership budget and work plan
- Prepare annual and quarterly reports with an overview of the Partnership activities

20. The group advised the meeting that they had identified a number of other budget elements which should be considered secondary to the funding of the basic tasks of the Secretariat. They include:

- Web site construction and maintenance
- Meetings of Partners
- Operation of Working Groups
- Preparation of Partnership documents e.g. Communications plan
- Liaison work of the Chair

21. In the light of the Secretariat's anticipated workload in relation to operational matters, the Partnership agreed that it was not realistic to expect the Secretariat to have time to devote to fundraising.

22. The meeting identified a need to develop a priority setting framework for determining funding allocations to project activities. The meeting was advised of approaches used in other arrangements. For example in the Africa – Europe Waterbird Agreement, projects are listed with an estimate of costs. In the Convention on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, projects can only be brought forward if they have a sponsor country. The meeting commented that only including projects which had been funded in the work plan would not be viable for the Partnership.

23. The Chair invited countries to indicate their contributions to the Secretariat budget.

24. The representative of the United States voiced enthusiastic support for the Partnership. He advised that the United States had committed funding of \$100,000US

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for the Avian Influenza Working Group and associated projects, \$50,000 - 60,000US for projects on migratory shorebirds, and \$10,000US for the Secretariat.

25. The representative of Australia committed \$40,000US for the Secretariat and noted that Australia would also provide funding in 2007 for development of the Partnership website and other communications plan activities along with project funding.
26. The representative of Japan was not able to commit to a specific level of support as the fiscal year in Japan does not commence until April, and the budget was still being negotiated with the Finance Ministry. He provided an indicative level of support to the Secretariat of 1.5M Yen = \$12-\$13,000 US.
27. The representative of the Republic of Korea indicated that the Korean Government is considering contributions to the Partnership in the order of \$20,000US, but had not reached a decision on where the funding would be directed. He indicated that some of this funding may be available for the Secretariat.
28. The representative of Russia advised that further discussion was required with the Ministry about a potential contribution to the Secretariat. He foreshadowed difficulties with Russia contributing to the Secretariat, as the Partnership is not a legal agreement. He noted that other opportunities exist for project contributions.
29. The representative of Singapore advised that Singapore's contribution would be in-kind through hosting meetings and providing logistical support. A financial contribution to the Secretariat would require more discussion.
30. The representative of the Philippines indicated that they could contribute in-kind services and staff time to the Partnership.
31. The representative of the United States suggested that the Chair write to national government Partners seeking official confirmation of contributions. This suggestion was supported by the meeting, and the Chair asked that national governments, and the Australian government in particular, assist with administering the Partnership by contributing to the budget.
32. The meeting recommended that capacity to consider in-kind contributions be discussed further among the contributors to the budget.
33. The meeting agreed that the hosting arrangements for the Secretariat should be discussed between the contributing governments outside the meeting.

Agenda Item 2.6: Establish Secretariat

34. This item was deferred pending discussion between the Partners providing funding for the Secretariat.

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Agenda Item 2.7: Determine arrangements for the Flyway Site Network

35. The meeting discussed the approach to the nomination of Flyway Network Sites outlined in agenda paper 2.7.
36. In response to a question from the representative of Birdlife International, the representative of Wetlands International confirmed that the primary responsibility for approaching potential new sites and encouraging them to join the Network rests with the Partners, although the Secretariat may have a role if that was appropriate in a particular country.
37. In response to a question from the representative from Russia, the meeting agreed that sites could not be included in the Network unless they had endorsement of the national government of the country concerned.
38. The meeting agreed to develop activities that assist national government Partners to establish national Partnerships (recommendation 1 in agenda paper 2.7).
39. The meeting discussed the Technical Expert Panel which would assist with the documentation and review of site nomination documents, which was the topic of recommendation 2. The representative of Japan expressed concern that the Partnership Technical Advisory Group had not been established and that this group would have a role in determining the membership of the expert panel for the Site Network.
40. The representative of Wetlands International advised the meeting that the intention was for the Partnership to call on a range of individual experts that could interpret data for a particular site, and provide advice on the importance of sites. The panel was not considered to be a body that needed to meet. The members would work individually and would need a good geographic spread. With this clarification, the representative of Japan suggested that recommendation 2 be amended as follows:
- “Flyway Partners seek advice and/or establish an international panel of waterbird experts who are willing to assist with the documentation and review of sites to be nominated for the Flyway Site Network.”
41. The Chair invited views on the mechanism for identifying experts to participate in the panel. The representative of Russia advised that there are expert panels already in existence under organisations such as Wetlands International and Birdlife International and questioned the need for a new group. The representative of Birdlife International advised that the Important Bird Area criteria are almost identical to those of the Flyway Site Network and that the same people would be involved in assessing whether a site meets criteria.
42. Wetlands International offered to develop a list of experts who are prepared to assist with the Site Network. The Chair suggested that the list could then be maintained by the Secretariat.

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43. The representative of Russia asked about the future of the working groups established under the Action Plans for Cranes, Anatidae and Shorebirds. The Chair advised that this issue was to be discussed later in the agenda. The meeting agreed to defer further discussion of the expert panel until after the discussion on the working groups.
44. The meeting adopted the eight step process for nomination of a site described in agenda paper 2.7 (recommendation 3).
45. The meeting noted that the criteria for the Flyway Site Network are detailed in Appendix IV of the Partnership text (recommendation 4). The representative of the United States noted that Appendix IV to the Partnership text may have to be amended if seabirds are included in the Partnership.
46. The meeting discussed recommendation 5 relating to the site information sheets. The representative of Japan noted that under the Asia - Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy different site information sheets were used for each of the species group networks. The representative of Wetlands International agreed that there were some differences between sheets in the former site network and expressed a need to work up a standard sheet for all waterbirds for use in the Flyway Site Network.
47. The representative of Birdlife International expressed concern about the difficulty of compiling a detailed information sheet. It was suggested that a practical approach be taken to site documentation to make it less onerous for site managers to complete. The representative of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat noted that some elements of the information sheet could be optional. He suggested that the Flyway Site information sheet be based on the Ramsar Information Sheet, as many Flyway sites are Ramsar sites, and others may become Ramsar sites in the future.
48. The representative of Wetlands International outlined some of the limitations of basing the site information sheet on a Ramsar Information Sheet because it uses a free text based approach. The Partnership could try to categorise the fields in the sheet more to allow for aggregation of data and searching.
49. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat noted that the same discussion was underway in the Central Asian Flyway. He suggested that the two flyways should seek to harmonise.
50. The meeting agreed an amended recommendation 5: “The Partnership endorses a standardised Site Information Sheet, based on a simplified version of the Ramsar Information Sheet as the documentation to be used for the nomination of new sites to the Flyway Site Network.”
51. The representative of the Wild Bird Society of Japan asked if existing site information sheets would need to be updated to the new format, noting that there were translation issues involved in undertaking an update. The representative of Wetlands International expressed a view that it would be good to update the sheets, and that

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government Partners would be best placed to decide on how that update was undertaken. The Chair invited the representative of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat to comment on updating of Ramsar Information Sheets. The representative of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat advised that Ramsar Information Sheets are updated on a six-year cycle with the Secretariat providing parties with reminders of when updates are due. He noted that many of the Flyway Site Network sites are Ramsar sites and have up-to-date Ramsar Information Sheets which could be edited relatively easily now that the Partners had agreed to base the Flyway information sheet on the Ramsar example.

52. The representative of Russia asked if the Partnership had a clear list of obligations on a site and national governments when joining the Network. The representative of Wetlands International advised that under the Action Plans for Cranes, Anatidae and Shorebirds there had not been firm regulations or commitments on sites. Instead the networks had encouraged sites to participate in conservation activities at flyway and national level. The representative of Russia noted that he needed to be able to convince government agencies at the local and national level about obligations attached to site nomination. Without a clear statement of obligations there is a risk of sites in Russia being withdrawn from the Network and limitations on the development of the Network. The representative of Wetlands International agreed that a concise statement of obligations would be helpful. The Chair asked Wetlands International to lead the drafting of this statement and to present the draft at the second Meeting of Partners.

53. The representative of the United States, expressed a view that at the minimum the Partnership should expect national governments to report on activities at sites. The representative of Birdlife International supported the suggestion. He noted that in the past there had been concern about reporting obligations deterring sites from joining the Network, but in the Partnership context a reporting mechanism was seen as a useful way of demonstrating commitment. The representative of Australia supported reporting on Network activities as a mechanism for improving communication across the Network and adding value. The Chair noted that there was a need to make the information usable and accessible, but deferred further discussion on reporting to agenda item 3.5.

54. The representative of Wetlands International expressed a view that it was important to develop an agreed population estimate for the waterbirds in Appendix III of the Partnership text on which to base assessment of site importance against the numerical criteria. The representative of Wetlands International proposed an additional recommendation be inserted following recommendation 5. The proposed text of the recommendation was “Partners are to develop an agreed list of Flyway species with their population estimates to support completion of the Site Information Sheets drawing on the *Waterbird Population Estimates*”. The representative of Bird Life International supported the recommendation and called for alignment between the Partnership process and that being undertaken for Important Bird Areas. Wetlands International agreed to develop the list and provide it to the second Meeting of Partners.

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55. The representative of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat noted that the Ramsar Information Sheets are updated on a six-year cycle, using updated versions of Waterbird Population Estimates. The Flyway Network Site information sheet update process could parallel this. The representative of Wetlands International noted that the Ramsar Convention updates its population estimates every nine years based on the Waterbird Population Estimates report prepared by Wetlands International.

Flyway Network Site Certificates

56. The meeting discussed the proposed approach to Site Network certificates. The representative of WWF noted that the proposal suggests A3 format, whereas Ramsar and existing sheets are A4. He asked if this was because of the need for additional room for local language. The representative of Birdlife International supported use of national language. The use of English gives a good international feeling, but is not meaningful to the local people. Therefore an A3 format may be required to provide for bilingual texts. The meeting agreed to recommendation 6 in agenda paper 2.7.

57. The representative of Wetlands International noted that the new certificates should identify species and populations for which the site was important. The list of Flyway Site species would therefore be required before new site certificates could be issued. As an interim step it was proposed that all existing sites should be issued with a certificate based on the species for which they were originally nominated in line with agreed transitional arrangements. The meeting agreed to a small team of Partners working with the Secretariat to develop the site certificate design, to enable the new certificates to be issued by the end of February 2007.

Transitional Guidelines for the Flyway Site Network

58. The representative of Russia questioned the responsibility for advising the national governments and existing network sites of the change to the site network from three species group networks to a single waterbirds network. The representative of Australia reminded the meeting that the Chair of the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee wrote to all sites after the 10th meeting of the committee advising them of the changes and inviting them to participate in the Flyway Site Network, and to respond to the Partnership Secretariat accordingly.

59. In response to recommendation 1 in the transitional guidelines section of agenda paper 2.7, the Chair invited Partners to report on sites in their jurisdiction for which participation in the Flyway Site Network had been confirmed.

60. The representative of Japan indicated that all existing sites have confirmed their participation and that this is reflected in their letter of endorsement.

61. The representative of Russia noted that there are nine sites in Russia and that discussions with the Ministry regarding their involvement in the Network were continuing. The Ministry had asked for information on expected procedures. The

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representative of Birdlife International indicated that there are three sites in Russian Far East that are keen to join the Site Network.

62. The representative of the Republic of Korea indicated that they have six sites and would not be transferring one site (Tonggin). They are working on nominating two more sites.

63. The representative of Thailand informed the meeting their site would continue to be involved. Thailand is investigating nomination of more sites in the Gulf of Thailand, but this was a lengthy process.

64. The representative of Philippines advised that their two sites would continue to meet the criteria and would continue in the Network.

65. The representative of Indonesia informed the meeting that their one site would continue in new the Network.

66. The representative of Singapore advised they had approval to transfer Sungei Buloh to the Network.

67. The representative of Australia advised that the Australian Government has written to the government of each of the States and Territories, which have constitutional responsibility for management of most sites in Australia. At the date of the meeting there had been some replies all of which were positive and no issues were anticipated.

Other network issues

68. The representative of Wetlands International noted that the agenda documents relating to the Site Network do not cover prioritisation of new sites or post-nomination activities. The Chair asked Wetlands International to incorporate these issues into the document on obligations for sites and countries. The meeting suggested that this document should also include benefits of participation for a site and country, and benefits for the Partnership in having a site in the Network. The representative of Russia stated that a document which captures benefits and obligations would be useful for securing government endorsement and managing expectations. The representative of Wetlands International suggested that the document be framed as guidelines to reflect the non-legal status of the Partnership. Interested Partners were invited to discuss this paper further with Wetlands International out of session.

Agenda Item 2.8: Transfer of issues from the 11th meeting of the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee to the Partnership

69. The meeting reviewed and accepted the recommendations from the 11th meeting of the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee ([see Attachment B](#)).

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Agenda Item 3.1: Agree on approach to developing/finalising the Partnership Implementation Strategy

Presentation of the Draft Implementation Strategy

70. Mr Doug Watkins from Wetlands International provided an overview of the draft Implementation Strategy.

Response from Partners to Draft Implementation Strategy

71. The representative of Russia questioned whether the priority should be placed on the quantity of sites in the Network or on activities at sites, i.e. do we want a large number or a sustainable level of activities? The representative of Birdlife International agreed that this was an important point. In the former Crane network the highest priority was placed on active engagement in network activities. In developing the Flyway Site Network the Partners need to be aware of capacity for activities and ensure effective implementation in order to encourage participation. The representative of Wetlands International commented that the Site Network is a tool for promoting the international importance of sites and gaining recognition. It is good to have a strong program of activities, but recognition is the key. There is a need to include an outcome in the Implementation Strategy which expresses a target for active implementation.

72. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat suggested that further work was required on developing indicators of performance.

73. The representative of the United States supported the Strategy in its current format. He suggested that section 5 and the two appendices be deleted as administrative arrangements are outside the scope of the strategic plan. The Chair agreed.

74. The representative of the Ramsar Convention Secretariat supported the Strategy, noting that it aligned with the Ramsar strategic plan.

75. The representative of Japan supported the Strategy while noting that Network Sites do need to have demonstrated benefit with site specific activity, and roles and responsibilities of national Partners are also important.

76. The representative of the International Crane Foundation stated that the technical framework has been well thought out and supported it. He supported deletion of section 5. He also expressed a view that it could be challenging for some governments to translate the Strategy into actions.

77. The representative of India supported the Strategy.

78. The representative of Birdlife International felt that the Strategy was generally good but expressed concern about the work plan and responsibility for implementation.

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79. The representative of the Australasian Wader Studies Group stated that it is an effective strategic document. He felt the difficulty would be in distilling it into an annual work plan and linking to funding.

80. The representative of The Philippines supported the Strategy.

81. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat supported the proposal to remove Section 5, and noted the lack of profile of fund raising in the document, particularly for Partnership support. The representative of the United States supported this proposal.

82. The representative of Wetlands International advised that moving from the Strategy to the work plan would be difficult without prioritisation to guide funders.

83. The representative of WWF stated that the proof of the document will be in converting to fundable actions. There may be a need for work plans for the Partnership and for each Partner.

84. The representative of Singapore supported the Strategy, and called for links to funding and priorities.

85. The representative of Russia supported the Strategy and applauded its implementation focus. He stated that there was a need for some serious action in this part of the world, with the Flyway being under such great development pressure.

86. The representative of the Republic of Korea noted that there were issues in his country regarding development pressure and supported the Strategy's emphasis on the importance of protecting and conserving sites.

87. The representative of Australia supported the plan, noting that it had been tested against the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds which was the framework for shorebird conservation in Australia.

88. The Strategy was accepted with the amendments suggested above. The amended Strategy is at Attachment C.

Develop Work plan for 1st year

89. Mr Doug Watkins from Wetlands International provided an introduction to the work plan template. The template was designed to assist Partners in connecting national activities with the Strategy, and identifying opportunities for collaboration.

90. Mr Carlo Custodio from The Philippines provided a presentation on template response from his country.

91. The meeting thanked Mr Custodio for the presentation. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat called for each country to prepare a similar response to the template. He suggested that each partner look at the bullet points in the template and nominate activities which relate to the bullet points. This

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approach has been used in developing planning documents in Convention on Migratory Species Memoranda of Understanding. As a starting point he suggested that we look at the thirteen outcomes and identify what countries can do over the next year.

92. The Chair suggested that the templates be completed overnight and brought to the discussion on the second day of the meeting to identify common issues and potential areas for collaboration. He suggested that the bullet points be numbered to allow tracking.

93. The following morning the meeting undertook a detailed discussion on activities under the work plan. The outcomes of this discussion are in Attachment D.

94. A group was formed to discuss how to progress the work plan. The representatives of Wetlands International, the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat and the International Crane Foundation agreed to participate in the group.

95. Later in the meeting the group presented its recommendations to the meeting. The recommendations were designed to position the Partnership to consider these issues at the second meeting. The recommendations were:

- That the Secretariat be asked to edit and format the consolidated work plan document
- That it be circulated to Partners to check it is comprehensive
- That they be asked to respond by the end of January 2007
- That a volunteer coordinator be appointed for each of the Communication, Education and Public Awareness, Science, Capacity Building and Sustainable Development work plan themes.
- Volunteer coordinators are to consult widely on how to progress items and bring forward a proposal to the second Meeting of Partners. The proposal should identify the role for working groups in the delivery of the work plan.
- In the interim the coordinators should progress high priority and urgent activities with potential funding bodies to allow interim work to proceed.

96. In response to the recommendation for volunteer coordinators for work plan themes the following coordinators were appointed:

- Communication, Education and Public Awareness– WWF (Lew Young)
- Science – this theme would be largely addressed by the Species Working Groups, and the Avian Influenza Working Group (Taej Mundkur is contact point). Birdlife International will lead on species outside the existing species groups and form a collective position on science issues. The representative of Wetlands International stated that science is a key foundation of the

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Partnership's work and offered to cooperate with Birdlife International on this.

- Capacity Building/Sustainable Development – Wetlands International (Doug Watkins). The representative of Russia expressed interest in sustainable development issues, noting the range of different pressures across the Flyway in this area.

Agenda Item 3.2: Establish Advisory Groups and Working Groups

97. Chair introduced agenda paper 3.2.

98. The meeting agreed to the continuation of the Avian Influenza Working Group. The representative of the United States supported its continuation as it addresses a significant need to coordinate activities around the issue of highly pathogenic avian influenza. He noted that this issue would need to be managed in the long term. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat asked for Terms of Reference for the group. The representative of Wetlands International advised that the priorities were outlined in the original proposal to the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee at its tenth meeting in Krabi, Thailand. Wetlands International agreed to prepare a revised Terms of Reference and provide it to the Partners for review.

99. The representative of Australia reminded the group that the Canberra meeting of the Working Group charged with drafting the Partnership documents had not reached an agreement on the continuation of Species Working Groups. The representative of Birdlife International expressed an impression that there was support for continuation of the groups from the Canberra meeting.

100. The representative of Japan supported the recommendation that the Species Working Groups be invited to continue as an interim arrangement under the Partnership with amended Terms of Reference, and requested that future arrangements should be discussed at the next meeting.

101. The representative of the International Crane Foundation supported the continuation of the Crane Working Group as a permanent working group of the Partnership.

102. The representative of Wetlands International outlined an approach where three types of groups were possible – waterbird expert groups (cross representational or species based), thematic groups (strategic planning advice on cross cutting issues linked to the objectives of the Partnership), and activity based groups established to develop and implement activities.

103. The representative of the United States stated that the working groups had proven their value in the previous framework and have continuing value and

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importance to the Partnership. He endorsed the continuation of the working groups as a fixture of the Partnership.

104. The representative of WWF cautioned the meeting, noting that this was a critical juncture with the change in framework. The most important thing is to focus on the objectives of the Partnership to avoid the real risk of the Partnership being a morphing of old ideas and failing to reach its potential.

105. The representative of Russia indicated that the Ministry of Natural Resources is happy with the Crane and Anatidae Working Groups. He felt that they were a good thing and could continue as a good thing. It was also noted that effort and resources should be put into forming new groups. Time will show how successful new groups can be. The representative of Russia advised that they would not support cancelling existing groups.

106. The Chair reflected the views of the meeting that it was logical for there to be continuity between the Flyway initiatives and to recognise existing groups. The activities of existing groups should continue in the Partnership with a process implemented to guide groups in reshaping their arrangements to fit under the Partnership objectives. He invited the former working groups to review their Terms of Reference and provide them for consideration at the next meeting of the Partnership.

107. The representative of Birdlife International supported the Chair's summary. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat also supported the Chair's summary and proposed an amendment to the recommendation in paper 3.2 that "the Shorebird, Crane and Anatidae Working Groups be invited to continue under the Partnership and are asked to provide amended Terms of Reference to the second Meeting of Partners." This amendment was supported by the meeting.

108. The representative of WWF suggested that proposals for further working groups also be brought to the second Meeting of Partners.

109. The representative of Wetlands International suggested that the Partnership needs to establish new advisory groups for Communication, Education and Public Awareness (Objective 2), Science (Objective 3) and Capacity Building (Objective 4). He expressed a view that the Communication, Education and Public Awareness group was a particularly high priority. The representative of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat supported further discussion of potential new groups, but suggested that the Partnership would need Terms of Reference for the groups in order to discuss them fully. He also saw value in allowing some time for further Partners to endorse before fixing the group structure. The representative of Australia supported the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat suggestion adding that the Partnership needs to be aware of resource implications at the time a group is proposed.

110. The Chair reflected that the Partnership needs to consider the Terms of Reference for any proposed groups to ensure that they are well integrated with the Partnership objectives. The Partnership also needs to consider the resources required to ensure that the group is sustainable. He acknowledged the thematic groups

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suggested by the meeting and invited Partners to consider these further and draft proposals for the next meeting.

111. The representative of Wetlands International suggested that teams of Partners could carry issues forward in the interim. This was supported by the meeting. The coordinators of work plan themes agreed to earlier in the meeting were invited to undertake this coordination role, pending the formation of groups.

112. The recommendation regarding formation of a Technical Advisory Group was held over for further discussion.

Agenda Item 3.3: Communication Plan

113. Mr Phil Straw advised the meeting on the development of the Asia-Pacific Shorebird Network and provided a description of the network. The network was initiated by the Australasian Wader Studies Group working with their colleagues in China and New Zealand. It is a communication network across the East Asian Australasian, Central Asian and Central Pacific Flyways, which aims to link people on the ground undertaking migratory shorebird conservation activities. Mr Straw advised that he expected to have a website for the network operating in December 2006.

114. The representative of Australia expressed interest in the shorebird network and called on Partners to consider how this and other communication activities can be utilised to contribute to the Partnership.

115. The Chair invited interested Partners to participate in a group which will develop a draft Communications Plan for consideration at the second Meeting of Partners. The meeting agreed that it is important to produce an effective communications plan early in the Partnership. The WWF volunteered to lead the group. Singapore, The Philippines and Wetlands International agreed to participate in the group.

Agenda Item 3.4: Building the Partnership

116. The meeting considered two logo options prepared by a professional graphic designer under contract to the interim Secretariat with funding from the Australia Government. The meeting expressed a strong preference for the first option, but did not note consensus, with some Partners expressing concern that option 1 did not include a representation of people as per option 2. The Secretariat undertook to have a revised version of the logo prepared which incorporated the representation of people from option 2 into option 1.

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Agenda Item 3.5: Reporting arrangements

117. The meeting considered agenda paper 3.5 regarding Partnership reporting arrangements. The meeting agreed to the proposal to develop a template for reporting, noting that the template needs to be clear about the purpose of the information being collected.

118. The representative of WWF raised the issue of dissemination of the reports and suggested that a website would be the best way to distribute the reports. She asked that the report format be kept concise.

119. The representative of Wetlands International suggested that the reporting approach should consider approaches which have been trialled under the Crane, Anatidae and Shorebird Action Plans.

120. The Chair asked interested Partners to participate in a group to progress development of the reporting template. The representatives of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat, Ramsar Convention Secretariat and Wetlands International offered to participate in the group. The Convention on Migratory Species offered to make available various existing CMS reporting templates that might serve as models to follow.

121. The representative of the International Crane Foundation asked about the process for reporting on activities of the Secretariat and the Partnership as a whole. The interim Secretariat advised that the reporting template is for Partners to complete which would be aggregated up to a Partnership report by the Secretariat. The representative of the United States suggested that the Secretariat should provide quarterly reports in addition to an annual report tabled at the Meeting of Partners.

Agenda Item 3.6: Inclusion of Seabird Families in Appendix III to the Partnership

122. The representative of Birdlife International provided a brief document with a proposal to include six families of seabirds in the Partnership. They were Shearwaters, Storm-Petrels, Skuas, Auks, Albatrosses and Giant Petrels.

123. The representative of Wetlands International expressed concern about the proposal undermining the flyway approach. He suggested that the Partnership confine its interest to those species which stay within the Flyway during their whole migration, and which can be effectively conserved by action by Partners in this Flyway. He suggested that the inclusion of seabirds would require a detailed analysis of species or populations which migrate within the Flyway. He advised that the Africa-Eurasia Waterbird Agreement had undertaken a similar analysis and had developed a criteria for inclusion where species must spend 75% of their annual life cycle in the Flyway in order to be included. They also undertook extensive planning to ensure that all the

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threats acting on the birds were adequately addressed. This process took three years and considerable resources.

124. The representative of the United States argued against the range-wide approach saying that there are common populations within the Flyway, also common species which are the subject of conservation action by one or more Partners. He supported the inclusion of these species suggesting that there is value in the Partnership acting as a mechanism for sharing ideas.

125. The representative of Russia asked whether there was a more appropriate level for the taxonomic groups which would allow for a narrower focus on species within the Flyway.

126. The representative of WWF asked how adding seabirds would strengthen the Partnership.

127. The representative of Australia argued strongly for a range-wide approach, stating that the proponents of including seabirds in the Partnership had not provided an adequate supporting rationale.

128. The representatives of the Australasian Wader Studies Group voiced concerns about the viability of a site based approach to the conservation of the families concerned. Pelagic species would require a different approach to conservation. They also expressed concern noting that it was difficult to see how seabirds fitted into the framework at this late stage. He suggested that inclusion of seabirds would require extensive redrafting of the Partnership and might take some of the focus and resources away from the species already included.

129. The representative of Birdlife International countered by saying that there should not be a need to revisit the whole document. Seabirds should be included in Appendix III. He acknowledged that the families proposed included some far-ocean species. It is possible to work with local communities in site based approaches.

130. The representative of the United States noted that in the Western Hemisphere seabirds are included in waterbirds. He also directed the meetings attention to Appendix III which includes some families considered to be seabirds.

131. The representative of Russia noted that different countries use different approaches to defining seabirds. In the northern end of the Flyway, there are seabird nesting sites in important wetlands. Some of these sites support millions of seabirds. He supported an approach of excluding pelagic species while providing wetland and coastal species which are important to local communities.

132. The representative of Birdlife International stated that many species do not have a long migration and would fit within the Flyway. He argued against looking at the seabirds on a species by species basis, stating that some waterbirds in the families currently included do not breed or aggregate on wetlands. He expressed a view that the seabird families proposed would not compete for funding.

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133. The representative of Japan suggested that the meeting determine some guiding principles such as most of the life cycle of certain species is undertaken in the Flyway. It was then up to Partners to decide if they wish to carry out activities for a particular species. He did not support detailed analysis of which species should be in the appendix.

134. The representative of Wetlands International suggested an alternative guiding principle relating to the return on investment, arguing that in a range-wide approach the Partnership needed to cover the range of the species to guarantee investment by Partners.

135. The Chair summarised that there were significant views for and against the inclusion of seabirds and that there was a need to capture the views of both sides and assess the options and costs. He invited a group of interested Partners to work through the proposal and report back to the meeting. Birdlife International undertook to coordinate this group.

136. Later in the meeting the representative of Birdlife International reported on outcomes of the Seabirds group. He advised that the group supported the proposed inclusion of the seabird families, noting that most of the species in the families were coastal species and did not have pelagic ranges. The group recommended no changes to the Partnership text, stating that the seabirds would fit under existing references to waterbirds included in the text. The group acknowledged the limited resources available for Partnership activities and stated that the support of the Partnership Secretariat would not be required for seabird activities. The group advised that there are other global initiatives addressing seabird by-catch and did not propose that this issue would be considered by the Partnership.

137. The representative of Russia, who had participated in the group, stated that the group had a full exchange of ideas of the benefits and potential problems. He suggested that fisheries and by-catch issues should be explicitly excluded in the Partnership text.

138. The representative of Wetlands International who also participated in the group stated that Birdlife International's report reflected the outcome of the group discussion accurately. He reinforced the point about the species of interest being the coastal species. He noted that fisheries issues could be a heavy draw on the resources of the Partnership, and cautioned that if the Partnership wants to address the full range of species conservation issues for the seabirds it would require a significant expansion of the fora that the Partnership must operate in.

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139. After further discussion the meeting agreed to include four families of seabirds in Appendix III and to amend the title of Appendix III to “Taxonomic groups of waterbirds migrating within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway”. The families added to the appendix were:

Procellariidae Shearwaters

Oceanitidae Storm-Petrels

Stercorariidae Skuas

Alcidae Auks

140. The representative of Birdlife International offered to lead the development of the proposal for a Seabird Working Group to be tabled at the second Meeting of Partners.

Other Business

141. During the meeting, a fax was received from the Government of China outlining China’s position on several issues relating to the Partnership. These issues were not discussed by the meeting. Apologies from China were recorded.

142. The representative of the Wild Bird Society of Japan distributed the 2007 Work Plan of the Anatidae Working Group. The representative of Birdlife International undertook to revise the Crane Working Group Terms of Reference. The Secretariat offered to assist in assuring some consistency across these documents.

143. The representative of Birdlife International provided Birdlife International’s letter of endorsement of the Partnership which was warmly welcomed by the meeting.

Closing remarks

144. The Chair thanked all participants in the meeting for their contributions, noting that the meeting had provided a strong base for the future work of the Partnership. He expressed his gratitude for the participants attention given the somewhat dry nature of the meeting agenda.

145. Mr McNee left the meeting, and Mr Jason Ferris of Australia took the Chair. He thanked the Indonesian government for being such welcoming and generous hosts, providing the excellent meeting venue and logistical support. Mr Ferris also thanked the Wetlands International offices in Indonesia, Oceania and India, and the Wild Bird Society of Japan for their administrative support to the meeting. He acknowledged the funding provided by the Governments of Australia and Japan for the meeting and expressed gratitude to the participants that were able to meet their own travel costs. He reiterated Mr McNee’s thanks to all the participants for their input into the meetings.

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146. The representative of the United States thanked Australia for their support of the development of the Partnership. The representative of Wetlands International thanked Mr McNee for chairing the meeting.

Next Meeting

147. The Partnership tasked the Secretariat with seeking a host for the second Meeting of Partners. China (Wetland Park in Hong Kong) and Singapore were identified as potential hosts.

148. The second Meeting of Partners is likely to be held in October 2007.

Meeting Close

Attachments

- A. Secretariat Terms of Reference
- B. Recommendations of the 11th Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee to the 1st Meeting of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership
- C. Partnership Implementation Strategy
- D. Flyway Partnership Work Plan

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Attachment B

**Recommendations of the 11th Meeting of the
Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee to the
1st Meeting of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership**

Background

The 11th Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee (MWCC) was held on 6 November 2006 in Bogor. The following recommendations from the meeting are of direct relevance to the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Partnership.

Recommendations

1. The MWCC commends the Asian Waterbird Census and its 2007-2015 Regional Strategy to the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership and the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan as a programme that can provide critical support for implementation of the conservation of migratory waterbirds and management and sustainable use of their habitats.
2. The MWCC calls on the EAAF Partnership and the CMS Secretariat to:
 - (a) establish linkages between the coordinating bodies of these initiatives to ensure continued inter-flyway cooperation.
 - (b) report in their Meeting of Partners on inter-flyway cooperation for shared populations and common conservation issues.
3. The MWCC encourages EAAF partner agencies and organisations to continue to promote opportunities for cross-flyway cooperation and interaction with adjacent flyways (in Africa-Eurasia and the Americas).
4. The *Asia-Pacific Working Group on Migratory Waterbirds and Avian Influenza (MWAI-WG)* established under the MWCC be accepted as a Working Group of the EAAF Partnership and CAF Action Plan.
5. MWCC member countries and organisations are encouraged to endorse the Partnership at its launch or as soon as possible thereafter.