

**East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership
Black-faced Spoonbill Working Group/Task Force**

Terms of Reference

I. Background

The Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor* is endemic to eastern Asia. It breeds mainly along the western coast of the Korean Peninsula and the southern coast of Liaoning Province, China. A small breeding population is also found in south-eastern Russia. All breeding grounds are along the coast. In winter, majority of the Black-faced Spoonbills are found also in coastal areas of China (south-eastern Mainland, Taiwan, Hainan, Hong Kong and Macau), Korea (Jeju Island), Japan (mainly Kyushu and Okinawa), and Vietnam. It has also been recorded in the Philippines, Cambodia and Thailand.

The conservation issue of the Black-faced Spoonbill was first raised in the late 1980s, when the main wintering ground at Qigu (Chiku), Tainan of Taiwan was scheduled to be reclaimed to become an industrial estate. BirdLife International responded to the request of Taiwanese conservationists and supported the compilation of the first Action Plan to the Conservation of the Black-faced Spoonbills (published in 1995). In 1996 and 1997 two international workshops were held in Beijing and Tokyo respectively, an informal network was formed. Annual census of Black-faced Spoonbill is done every year, and the color-banding scheme has also been well coordinated.

In 2010, the second edition of the International Action Plan was published under the auspice of the Convention of Migratory Species. It was launched at an international workshop in Fukuoka on 5 March 2010.

Because of joint international efforts, Qigu was saved from development and the site has become a national park with good education programme and civil society participation. However, throughout the range of the Black-faced Spoonbill it is still facing threats related to the development of tidal flats and pressure due to economic development. International cooperation is still much needed for the protection of this species.

Range of the Black-faced Spoonbill: southeastern Russia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, China (including Mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau), and Vietnam are main distribution area. Marginal range includes the Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand and potentially Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia (although old records in these countries were likely to be of the closely related Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia* of Australasia). The Black-faced Spoonbill found mostly in coastal areas but there are also inland records in China.

II. Goal and objectives

A. Goal of Working Group

To encourage international cooperation on conservation of the Black-faced Spoonbill and tidal flats to ensure the long-term survival of Black-faced Spoonbill in tidal flats through the establishment of a cooperating unit of globally important sites and a network of conservationists under the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership.

B. Objectives for the Working Group

1. To preserve important breeding, staging and wintering habitats for the Black-faced Spoonbill.
2. To encourage joint and coordinated management efforts between Flyway Network sites and reserves in all distributed regions.
3. To promote exchange of information between different countries and agencies.
4. To maintain and share a database on the Black-faced Spoonbill information and important sites.
5. To carry out studies and research on the Black-faced Spoonbill conservation.
6. To carry out studies and promote the sustainable use of wetlands, particularly tidal areas, in the region.
7. To promote communication, public awareness and education in the region.

III. Administration

A. Membership

The Working Group will consist of major distribution regions, with representatives from both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Members of the Working Group may be changed upon the discussion and recommendation of the Working Group members.

B. Chairing / Coordination arrangement

The Working Group will have a Chair to represent the Working Group at the EAAFP meetings of partners and other international meetings. The Chair will also be responsible to plan for fundraising and advocacy, with the support from the other members of the Black-faced Spoonbill Working Group. The Chair will be nominated by consensus of the Working Group members.

The Working Group has to nominate a Coordinator to promote good communication amongst the members of the Working Group, the Network Sites, the EAAFP Secretariat and other organizations. The Coordinator will also take the lead in the implementation of the projects with support from other members of the Working Group.

C. Meetings

Preferably the Working Group would meet annually, in conjunction to regional meetings and workshops. Non-members of the Working Group are also welcomed to join the meeting of the Working Group.

The Working Group will also maintain active and close discussions, by use of e-mail, Internet communication, telephone and other traditional communication methods.

D. Financing

The Working Group will determine a budget and raise the necessary funds for activities. It is expected that countries and organizations participating in the Flyway Partnership will provide assistance with fund-raising.

IV. Priority action / task list

Action Plan

| http://www.cms.int/publications/TechSeries/ts22_black_faced_spoonbill.pdf

To be determined at the next formal meeting of the Black-faced Spoonbill Working Group