

East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership

SHOREBIRD WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference (*October 2008*)

1. Introduction

Each year millions of shorebirds migrate between their breeding areas in the Russian Far East, northern China and Alaska to as far south as Australia and New Zealand. To complete this remarkable migration of up to 13,000 km, shorebirds are dependent on a variety of habitats from breeding areas to non breeding areas through intermediate staging sites. These staging sites are particularly important for feeding and the replenishment of energy reserves that enable them to successfully complete their migration in order to breed. The successful conservation of migratory shorebirds therefore requires a coordinated international approach. The East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership has agreed to such an approach for all waterbirds and their habitats for the benefit of people and biodiversity within the Flyway.

Shorebird populations around the world are declining. In the East Asian-Australasian Flyway a disproportionate number of shorebird species have been classified as threatened and the shorebirds using this flyway are under increasing threat from habitat loss. The Partnership acknowledges that international collaboration and cooperation is essential if its goal of conservation is to be achieved.

Under the former Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategies (1996 – 2000; 2001 - 2006), the Shorebird Working Group was established to implement the Shorebird Action Plans. This was effective in facilitating the collaboration of researchers, site managers and governments within the Flyway. A Shorebird Site Network of 48 sites was established and coordinated by a Flyway Officer. These Network sites will form a key component of the Partnership Flyway Site Network.

At the Second Meeting of Partners in November 2007, the concept of Working Groups was endorsed and a template developed for the preparation of Terms of Reference for each Group. The following sets out the Terms of Reference for the Shorebird Working Group.

2. Goal

To promote, facilitate and coordinate shorebird conservation, management, education and research activities within the EAAF and to improve communication between shorebird specialists and managers in the flyway.

3. Taxonomic and geographic scope

The Working Group covers the taxonomic groups of shorebirds migrating within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway including:

- Jacanidae (Jacanas)
- Haematopodidae (Oystercatcher)
- Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocet)
- Glareolidae (Pratincoles)
- Plovers (Charadriidae)
- Scolopacidae (Sandpipers)

4. Objectives

- To assist EAAF countries develop flyway network sites for shorebirds (Partnership Objective 1).

- To promote a network of shorebird expertise with a capacity to offer sound advice relating to management, education and research activities for the conservation of shorebirds and their habitats (Partnership Objective 3).
- To provide a forum for exchanging information on shorebirds between scientists and managers in the EAAF (Partnership Objective 3).
- To support and advise the Partnership in the development of collaborative activities, including research, education and public awareness plans, that promote shorebird conservation (Partnership Objectives 2, 3 and 4).
- To identify current and emerging shorebird conservation, management, research and public outreach issues and opportunities in the EAAF (Partnership Objective 2).
- To promote the collaboration and dissemination of information on shorebird related activities with national and regional shorebird groups including other flyways. (Partnership Objectives 2 and 3).
- To identify priority shorebird species and populations of conservation concern and propose response options for consideration of the Flyway Partnership. (Partnership Objective 5).
- To identify priority areas for shorebirds in the EAAF and propose strategies for the conservation and sustainable management of the sites. (Partnership Objectives 1, 3 and 5)
- To report to the Flyway Partnership on the activities of the Shorebird Working Group. (Partnership Objective 3).
- To develop an integrated plan of cooperative shorebird activities or initiatives for the EAAF Partnership Annual Work Plan. (Partnership Objectives 3 and 5).

5. Membership

- The membership of the EAAF Shorebird Working Group comprises one representative from each of the Partners.
- The membership represents the range of organizations, expertise and geographic areas important to shorebird research, management, education and conservation in the EAAF
- Participation in EAAF Shorebird Working Group meetings will be open to all shorebird experts interested in EAAF shorebirds.
- The Chair is responsible for inviting representatives from the Partners.

6. Chairing/coordination

The EAAF Shorebird Working Group is administered by a Chair. The Chair is designated by the Shorebird Working Group. The Chair serves for a two year term and may be renewed at the discretion of the EAAF Shorebird Working Group representatives.

The Chair, in consultation with the EAAF Partnership Secretariat, is responsible for scheduling and facilitating meetings, preparing and distributing materials prior to meetings, and completing appropriate records of meetings. Materials and records are also provided to the Partnership, the Partnership Secretariat, and all attendees within 90 days of completed meetings. Meeting agendas are developed by the Chair in consultation with other Shorebird Working Group representatives and the Partnership Secretariat. The Chair also coordinates the work of the Group between meetings.

7. Meetings

- The EAAF Shorebird Working group may meet annually or as often as necessary to fulfill its objectives and approved action plans.
- The Chair in consultation with other Shorebird Working Group representatives will determine the timing and location of meetings.
- The Host Partner is responsible for providing logistical support for face-to face meetings.
- Email discussion will be used for communication between Group members inter-sessionally.

8. Financing

Unless there is prior arrangement, EAAF Shorebird Working Group representatives and other attendees are responsible for their own travel and associated expenses.