

Tattler

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Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways

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A Note from the Editors

In a previous edition of *The Tattler* (July 2005) a proposal to form an Asia Pacific Shorebird Group was suggested by Phil Straw; (Editor, *The Tattler*), Lew Young; Hong Kong, Weiting Liu; Taiwan, Doug Watkins; Wetlands International – Oceania, and Yuri Gerasimov; Russia. Since then the proposal has been put to three shorebird meetings/workshops - in Tainan (Taiwan), Nelson (New Zealand) and Krabi (Thailand) - as well as being discussed between individuals via the Internet. So far more than one hundred people have put their names down to be part of the new group/network. Taking into the consideration that many of these people represent potential partner groups, the number of people who will be involved will be much greater. The main interest has come from researchers, wetland managers and conservationists who can see the advantage of a network of shorebird/waterbird specialists across the Asia Pacific.

The precise structure of the group will be worked out over the coming months. However in the meantime everyone agrees there is a need for effective communication across the region in the form of a newsletter (printed and electronic versions) easily accessible to all. Rather than creating an entirely new newsletter it was suggested that *The Tattler* should be extended to cover the region. This is a logical move, however it is appropriate to give a new look to the newsletter as it will be fulfilling a new function. We

hope you like the new look - a new layout and slight name change. The new name, *Tattler: Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways*, reflects the new role of the newsletter in covering the three flyways -; Central Asian and Indian, East Asian-Australasian and Western Pacific Flyways. From this edition (January 2006) *Tattler* will be available in Chinese as well as English. We hope that other language versions will be available soon (any volunteers to translate?).

We hope you find this edition of *Tattler* interesting. As you will see from the contents, it includes the results of some interesting studies and findings in the Asia Pacific region.

We have avoided any lengthy discussions about the H5N1 strain of Avian Flu as this could take up a newsletter in itself, anyway we are sure you have read enough about the subject even if you are in the remotest part of the world. On page 11 you will see, what we hope will be the first in a series about important shorebird sites in the Asia Pacific region, on Chongming Island, Shanghai. The Island will also be the site of one of China's largest and most ambitious development projects, including an 'eco' city. This will be a big challenge to demonstrate whether development can go hand in hand with environmental enhancement. Another site of international importance that is not faring well as a result of development is Saemangeum in South Korea. Only lengthy fights in the highest courts in the land is likely to decide the fate of thousands of shorebirds. A team of scientists and volunteers will at least monitor the results of this massive development project with the help of South Korean and overseas researchers.

A lot of time and effort has been put into catching, banding and colour marking shorebirds with leg flags and a variety of coloured bands. This potentially provides invaluable information about the major migration routes and staging areas of shorebirds. However this only happens if we have a network of observers throughout the region to report colour band or flag sightings. It doesn't matter how many times you see the same colour flags, all sightings are important. If you do not have a local coordinator to report sightings to email them to mintons@ozemail.com.au (or send details to the editors of *Tattler*), and you will receive full details about who banded the bird and where it was banded/flagged.

The editors welcome articles of interest about shorebirds in the Asia Pacific region; they should be sent in either English or Chinese (preferable simplified characters) to tattler@avifaunaresearch.com

Phil Straw, Editor; Chih Ying Lee, Assistant Editor

Shorebird Monitoring Program, South Korea:

A study on the Impacts of Reclamation on Shorebirds.

The west coast of South Korea supports large numbers of migratory shorebirds that spend a significant part of the non-breeding season in Australia and New Zealand. However, many of the most important sites for shorebirds have been altered by estuary barrages and by conversion of tidal-flat into land for development projects. The most important shorebird site in South Korea identified to date is the Saemangeum estuarine system. This was once part of an enormous three-river system, but is now rather smaller, though still including two free-flowing rivers and over 40 000 ha of tidal-flats and shallow seas.

This area too has been targeted for reclamation. The Saemangeum reclamation project, initiated in 1991, has, however, been delayed by a series of postponements during its long and increasingly controversial history. The last delay was forced on the project by a mid-level court decision in February 2005, that called for immediate suspension of work on the outer sea-wall while due consideration was given to environmental concerns (most especially relating to water pollution) and legal process (as the government has accepted there is no clear end use for any land created by the reclamation). The court, however, was under intense pressure to permit the continuation of the reclamation and announced on 21 December 2005 that work should be allowed to restart - as long as it somehow balanced the needs of environment and development. Local media report that seawall construction will resume in March 2006; with only 10% of the 33-km long wall remaining unbuilt, reclamation proponents claim that it will be completed sometime in 2007. While it is generally accepted that the project will finish sooner or later, those still challenging the reclamation immediately submitted an appeal, demanding that construction be delayed until the Supreme Court hears their case. To this background, informal and initial discussions have already taken place in order that data gathered during the Monitoring Program can be passed on to those involved in the court case, so that Saemangeum's outstanding international importance to biodiversity can be better assessed. This whole court process might also take on an extra context as South Korea will host the next conference of the Ramsar Convention, in autumn 2008.

In mid 2005, we wrote articles in *The Tattler* and the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* proposing a shorebird monitoring project focussed on Saemangeum, and inviting expressions of interest from potential participants. The response has been good, and we have about 10 "foreign" shorebird experts prepared to join the fieldwork program in 2006, on the understanding that they pay their way to Korea (though it is hoped we can cover their costs while there). Discussions also proceed with a similar number of Korean researchers and bird counters who may be able to participate. There may be a few drop-outs along the way,

but with the response we have had, we can be confident that the first expedition will go ahead. We are currently in the process of having the project formally approved as a research project of the Australasian Wader Studies Group of Birds Australia, and are setting up the first expedition, in April/May 2006. We are actively looking to find ways to incorporate the research into survey work already being conducted in South Korea at other key shorebird sites.

The broad intention of the monitoring program is to document the effects of the reclamation work on shorebird populations. About 90% of the sea-wall has already been constructed, and the resultant hydrological changes may already have had profound effects on local shorebird ecology. If the sea-wall is completed we need to know what effect it has on shorebird populations. On our first expedition we will be concentrating on fundamentals:

(1) repeated shorebird counts to find out how many shorebirds use the Saemangeum system on northwards migration at any one time, and exactly what habitats they use there; (2) estimation of turnover rates at the site (crucial in calculation of the number of shorebirds using the area through a migration season), partly through analysis of the repeated counts, and partly through systematic searches for colour-marked birds and migratory departures; (3) baseline counts on other shorebird sites on the west coast of Korea, so we can assess if Saemangeum birds are displaced there if the sea-wall is completed. We would welcome suggestions on additional lines of research that could be undertaken if we have the resources to take them on without compromising the fundamental population surveys.

We hope to have a full-strength team in place counting shorebirds from 12 April to 10 May, with skeleton teams initiating fieldwork by 1 April, and continuing lower intensity counts if possible until the end of May. [Precise plans are contingent on funding. We are seeking about \$US20,000 to cover the costs of local transport, accommodation and food; some money has already been raised, further grant applications have been submitted, and still more are in preparation. There is also a fund-raising event in preparation: Birdwatch Day for Saemangeum. Information on this event can be found at: <http://www.birdskorea.org/worldbwday.asp>

Discussions and planning of this shorebird research program have been evolving quickly of late, and the information in this article may soon be out of date. We plan to start posting updates on the project on the Birds Korea website (<http://www.birdskorea.org>), and will use the forum on that website as a means of quickly releasing information on important developments. We would be happy to answer questions that any readers might have, and would like to stress that we still have a place (and a need) for volunteer assistance. If you can help in any way we would be very glad to hear from you.

Danny Rogers (drogers@melbpc.org.au) and Phil Battley (philbattley@quicksilver.net.nz) (AWSG); Nial Moores (spoonbillkorea@yahoo.com) and Kim Su-Kyung (Birds Korea)

The Importance of the Gulf of Thailand for Shorebirds

The Inner Gulf of Thailand, extending roughly 100 km east and west of the city of Bangkok, is one of the largest river deltas in SE Asia, comprising roughly 235 km² of offshore mudflats, and c. 500 km² of prawn-ponds, salt pans and coastal flats, together with c. 100 sq km of secondary, regenerating mangroves. Around 50 species of shorebirds regularly occur in the gulf, with at least 18 species occurring in internationally important concentrations. These include the globally threatened Spoon-billed Sandpiper (10–20 may winter) and Nordmann's Greenshank (40–70 wintering), and the near-threatened Asian Dowitcher, whose single-day counts of 500–700 in April suggest much of the world population may pass through on spring and autumn passage.

In spite of its importance as a wintering and staging area for shorebirds, the Inner Gulf (first listed as a Wetland of International Importance by IUCN; Scott, 1989) has received relatively little attention in recent years. A few hundred shorebirds were ringed in the gulf, in collaboration with the Thai government's Wildlife Conservation Division, by David Melville in 1980–1981, and by Jonathan Starks under the *Interwader* Programme in the mid-1980s. Results of some recent shorebird and land-use surveys in the gulf were collated by Wetlands International (Eftermeijer and Jukmongkol, 1999).

Since September 2000, with partial support from The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (U.K.) we have mist-netted and ringed small numbers of shorebirds in the Inner Gulf. The predominant shorebird ringed was Long-toed Stint (~100 birds), with smaller numbers of 15 other species. Most birds were ringed at the royally sponsored Laem Phak Bia Environmental Research and Development Project, Phetchaburi, roughly 100 km south-west of Bangkok. Water treatment lagoons at this site are planted with widely spaced, low stature mangrove trees that serve to break up the outline of mist-nets, facilitating mist-net capture of waders during daylight hours. However, by concentrating on a sewage farm, we have failed to catch those species most closely associated with the offshore mudflat habitat that, at high tide, come onshore to roost on the more extensive areas of traditional prawn-capture ponds and salt-pans.

Since September 2005 we have started to mist-net and leg-flag shorebirds at night on the more extensive salt-pans and traditional prawn-ponds habitat. We have been assisted by volunteers from the BirdLife partner, the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST) (whom we trained to handle birds in previous years), and shorebird enthusiasts from a local conservation group. Species ringed and leg-flagged so far have been mostly Lesser Sand Plovers, Broad-billed Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints and Marsh Sandpipers, but we plan to expand activities across a wider range of species, hopefully including the Asian Dowitcher.

With the increasing number of local birdwatchers a few leg-flagged shorebirds from elsewhere are now being detected. In the past year, three leg-flagged Red-necked Stints (from Hokkaido, Taiwan and Australia) and one SE Australian-ringed Curlew Sandpiper have been detected from the Inner Gulf. Excitingly, in November 2005, a leg-flagged Spoon-billed Sandpiper, ringed in South Chukotka was also seen. In addition, through mobilizing BCST volunteers, and with the assistance of the government's Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Conservation, we have managed to count shorebirds along the gulf shoreline for the Asian Midwinter Waterfowl Census during January 2005. We hope to repeat this in succeeding years, and additionally increase shorebird counting so that it is carried out year-round.

One of the objectives of current work, besides collecting information relevant to the conservation of birds along the flyway, is to focus increased conservation interest on the gulf within Thai government agencies. Inadequate zoning legislation, urban and industrial sprawl, organic and heavy metal pollution, and coastal erosion are all major threats to the integrity of Thailand's most important coastal wetland (Manopawitr and Round, 2004). Two students at King Mongkut's University of Technology, Thonburi, will carry out M.Sc. dissertations on habitat use and foraging of shorebirds commencing this winter.

Due to Thailand's rather strict wildlife protection legislation it has, in the past, been rather difficult for ringers to obtain permission to catch and mark birds. However, the Wildlife Research Division of the Thai government is giving more attention to bird ringing as a component of wildlife monitoring, and there is now the prospect of overseas volunteer ringers being allowed to assist government officials in this work.

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Alaska Shorebird Studies 2005

In a recent publication, *Alaska Shorebird Group Summary of Shorebird Studies for 2005*, reports were provided on 33 projects that have been carried out in Alaska; they involved 68 researchers from four US Government agencies, ten US and overseas universities, and four non-government organisations. One of these projects with special relevance to the Asia Pacific Flyways was the international 'Beringian Shorebird Expedition' sponsored by the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat. This expedition involved over two dozen researchers from eleven countries who worked on migration studies of Bar-tailed Godwit, Rock Sandpiper, Dunlin, and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. The expedition was completed successfully despite being hampered by survey and re-supply aircraft flights being postponed by poor visibility from the largest fires recorded in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and by high tides and storms (the worst in 50 years). Some results of this expedition are reported below.

Good news, bad news, and great news: satellite-tagged Bar-tailed Godwits

As a prelude to the 2005 Beringian Shorebird Expedition to Alaska and studies of long-distance migrant waders, nine Bar-tailed Godwits were captured on their nests in early June on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (YKD). Five females had new 22-g satellite transmitters (PTTs) surgically implanted in their abdominal cavities while four males had conventional, but long-lived VHF radios implanted under the skin on their backs. Each bird was marked with a black leg flag with a unique alpha/numeric code. This work was viewed foremost as a test to see if 1) shorebirds could adapt to the surgical implant procedure, and 2) a long-distance migrant like the godwit could prepare for, and complete, its migration while carrying an implanted PTT. At the time of capture this represented only the third time that a PTT had been used on a shorebird and the first time one had been implanted in a shorebird.

The PTTs were programmed to report for a brief period once every eight days until mid-August and then for an 8-hour period daily through early October.

The good news: all birds departed the nesting area and moved to intertidal flats along the coast where eight of the nine birds were eventually detected as far as 200 km from their capture sites. One highly nomadic female with a PTT flew from the YKD to the Alaska Peninsula and back—a roundtrip of 1,000 km—over a 10-day period in early August.

The bad news: between 25 June and 18 August all PTTs stopped reporting signals.

The great news: to date four of the nine marked godwits are known to have completed their migration. Three were seen in New Zealand and one in Queensland, including different PTT-marked birds at each location. A fifth bird was possibly seen in northern Queensland but this has yet to be confirmed. The first of the marked birds was reported

from Manukau Harbour, New Zealand, on 19 September with the most recent coming from Christchurch on 17 December. Interestingly, even some paired godwits—like some humans—take separate vacations. Two birds (C8 and C9) were captured at the same nest, yet the male was seen in Queensland and the female in New Zealand.

The birds demonstrated, and the manufacturer has acknowledged, that the failure of the PTTs was not due to mortality of the birds but to technical problems with batteries. In 2006, a suite of Beringian-trained biologists will return to sites in western Alaska with plans to capture more nesting godwits and outfit them with both re-designed implantable PTTs and 9.5 g solar PTTs. On behalf of *Beringia 2005*, a hearty THANKS to the keen eyes in the southern hemisphere.

Bob Gill (robert_gill@usgs.gov)



Bar-tailed Godwit carrying a satellite transmitter fitted in Alaska with leg flag 'B1', photographed in New Zealand.

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS FOR ALASKAN GODWIT STUDY

Alaska-breeding Bar-tailed Godwits perform one of the most spectacular bird migrations in the world. After nesting in northern and western Alaska, they depart from staging grounds along the coast of the Bering Sea and apparently fly non-stop 11,000 kilometres to New Zealand. Recent data suggest this population may be declining rapidly but the cause of the decline is unknown.

In 2006 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be conducting a study of breeding Bar-tailed Godwits on Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is looking for 3-6 volunteers to assist with this study. Fieldwork will occur from late April through mid-July at a remote field site that also supports populations of Emperor Geese, Sabine's Gulls, Eastern Yellow Wagtails, and other tundra-dwelling species. Once volunteers arrive in Bethel, the refuge will cover all expenses associated with fieldwork. Depending on funding, travel to Bethel may be covered as well. **Applicants should submit a letter of interest and a CV no later than 28 February 2006. Applications and/or questions can be directed to:**

Brian J. McCaffery, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 346, Bethel, AK 99559
Phone: (907) 543-1014, Fax: (907) 543-4413
e-mail: brian_mccaffery@fws.gov

Russian Shorebird Expedition to Northern Chukotka.

A collaborative expedition to the northern Chukotsk Peninsula (Belyaka Spit, northern Koliuchinskaya Gulf; 67° 6' N; 174° 44' W) was undertaken by the Vertebrate Department of the Moscow State University and Wrangel Island State Natural Reserve. Three researchers studied the biology of 22 wader species from 20 May till 22 August 2005. 204 birds (including 38 Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*) were colour-banded with the pale-blue flag (on the left tibia for adults and on the right tibia for chicks). Other colour rings for individual recognition were also applied in some cases.

The main objective was reactivation of monitoring of a local population of the endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper. This population is the second largest breeding population within the whole of its breeding range. A base for population monitoring was previously set up in the area as a result of research performed there during 1986-88 and 2002 when population size and productivity were estimated. This year we repeated spring counts of displaying males in the coastal zone. Breeding pairs at a control study plot were counted and kept under observation to the end of season. Comparison of the 2005 survey results with data from previous years shows that the population continues to decrease and the decline appears to be accelerating. Low breeding success was caused by high natural predation in 2005. These results indicate the critical situation of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper at the northern part of the breeding range.

Flagged bird sightings. Two Red Knots *Calidris canutus* with colour bands from North Island (New Zealand) and Chongming Dao were observed at Belyaka Spit. Red Knots occasionally breed at the area but the observed knots were not breeding. Most probably one bird was a failed breeder (seen on 28th June); the another Red Knot was observed on 27th July in a flock with other adults and juveniles. These are the first recoveries of Red Knots banded on the East Asian – Australasian Flyway and observed on their breeding grounds (Clive Minton, pers. comm.; also see *The Tattler* 45). Although we observed many shorebirds, we did not observe any more waders banded on the non-breeding range. Red Knots are some of the rarest shorebirds in our study area (around 70 – 100 migrant/vagrant birds observed during 3 months). It was therefore surprising to see to overseas-flagged birds.

Interesting observations. The first case of breeding by the American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* in Russia and the Palearctic was recorded. A plover nest with a complete clutch of eggs was found on 21st of June. Later an American Golden Plover (presumably male) and Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* (presumably female) were caught, photographed and ringed on the nest. All diagnostic features of the species were obvious. Size and coloration of eggs were more characteristic of the Grey Plover. Unfortunately the clutch was predated, thus the phenotype of what would probably have been hybrid chicks remains unknown. We expect that blood samples taken from these birds will be processed soon and sex of both birds will be identified.

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Arctic Breeding Success as Seen in Australia

At the time of writing we are half way through the November/March monitoring of the apparent breeding success of waders in the 2005 Northern Hemisphere summer. The “% juvenile” figures to date from wader catches in Victoria and in NW Australia are used to give a preliminary indication of breeding success for each species/population as indicated below.

Victoria

Overall it appears to have been a good year for breeding in 2005 for most of the waders which spend the non-breeding season in Victoria. Curlew Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit and Red Knot appear to have had an especially good breeding year. This is particularly welcome given that all three of these species have been showing population declines, partly as a result of below average breeding success in recent years. Amazingly, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers also had another good breeding year - the third consecutive one, though the 2005 figure was not quite at the record level of the previous two years. This has really helped consolidate the improved population level after a period of low populations in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Red-necked Stint, in contrast, appears to have had a poor breeding year in 2005. This is the second poor year in a row, and the 2005 figure seems likely to finish up even lower than that of 2004. Not surprisingly, the population appears to be declining to more normal levels after the recent peak, which followed four very good breeding seasons in a period of only six years.

No data are yet available to judge the breeding success of Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling in 2005.

North-West Australia

The overall 2005 breeding season was good/very good for all the wader populations which spend the non-breeding season in NW Australia, with the sole exception of Greater Sand Plover. Red Knot and Curlew Sandpiper appear to have had an extremely good breeding season. Great Knot, Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone and even Red-necked Stint all had average, or slightly above average, breeding success in 2005. The Red-necked Stints in North-West Australia therefore apparently experienced a different breeding success from those in Victoria.

There were only 9.6% juveniles in the total catch of Greater Sand Plovers. This is the lowest figure ever recorded for this species in NWA and well below the average of 24% for the last seven years. Clearly breeding conditions were markedly unfavourable for them in 2005.

The final results for the '05/'06 monitoring season in Victoria and NW Australia will be reported in the next edition of *Tattler*.

Clive Minton
Australasian Wader Studies Group
mintons@ozemail.com.au

NW Australia Expedition 2005

The latest Expedition to NW Australia, held from November 12th to December 3rd, was a great success with all the main objectives being achieved.

A total of 2916 waders of 24 species and 2037 terns of 8 species were caught. These covered the full spectrum of shore dwelling species and enabled a good assessment to be made of what appears to have been a most successful breeding season in 2005 for these populations (see separate article). Another pleasing feature was the marking of a further 1000 waders at Broome with individual alphanumeric yellow flags. This brings to a total of 2,300, the engraved flags applied in the first year of the "survival rate measurement" project.

Particularly pleasing individual species totals were 30 Whimbrel, 41 Greenshank and 12 Marsh Sandpiper (birds rarely caught in such numbers in NW Australia). In contrast only 7 Little Curlew and 6 Oriental Plover were caught, partly because the drier than normal conditions meant that populations of these species in the coastal regions of NWA were lower than normal.

Three Great Knot and one Bar-tailed Godwit carrying Chinese bands were captured. One of these was a bird originally banded in NW Australia and subsequently recaptured at Chongming Dao in early April 2005. Over 30 birds flagged elsewhere, mostly in China, were also seen. But the highlight of the flag sightings was a Roseate Tern flagged in Taiwan. This is the first indication ever that Roseate Terns from the Northern Hemisphere breeding populations visit NW Australia.

Further progress was made in collecting feathers from the different age groups of each species for subsequent stable isotope analysis.

Clive Minton
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NW Australia Expedition 2006.

The next AWSG Wader Study Expedition to North-west Australia will take place from the 4th to 25th November 2006. The Expedition will spend half the time based at Broome Bird Observatory and the other half based at Anna Plains Station, Eighty Mile Beach. A team of 22 people, preferably each staying for the full 3 week period, is required. Please contact Clive Minton <mintons@ozemail.com.au> for full details and to register an interest in participating. Please do this now, even if you are not yet completely certain that you are able to come, as places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Clive Minton
Australasian Wader Studies Group
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Help Preserve Australian Important Shorebird Areas

Do you remember those days in February when, as part of the AWSG population monitoring project, you stared intently through your telescope to get a better look at some of those magnificent migratory shorebirds despite the bugs trying to get between your eyeball and the eyepiece, or the 40-degree heat? Help us protect migratory shorebirds by telling us more about what you saw and where.

Birds Australia is currently working with the Australian Government to identify criteria that might be used to identify migratory shorebird sites of national significance. As many of you know, considerable effort has been put into identifying migratory shorebird sites of international significance, but many seemingly important sites have been left out. We hope this project might provide the Government with meaningful criteria for the identification and protection of additional migratory shorebird sites that are "significant" at the national level.

For over 25 years volunteers for the AWSG have gathered count information and we will be using this to identify potential minimum threshold numbers of migratory shorebirds that would qualify a site to be considered of national significance. Currently, all of those counts are entered as a point location. Part of this project will be to draw boundaries on 1:100,000 maps in a GIS around the important migratory shorebird habitat.

As a part of that process we are hoping that you can provide us with information on feeding and roosting locations. Please, if you know of important migratory feeding or roosting locations, let me know. I will send you a map and a data sheet so that you can draw a boundary around the feeding or roosting area, and tell us a little about it. (For example, the habitat type is it used at high tide etc.) Contact me regarding what minimum criteria will be considered important.

The Government will be putting together a management plan for migratory shorebirds. The more data we can provide on feeding and roosting locations the more likely that a given area will be considered important for shorebirds when management and planning activities are conducted. Given that migratory shorebirds are now listed under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, we feel that providing this information should result in better conservation outcomes for the birds.

Also, in order to complete this project we first have to come up with a working definition of a migratory shorebird site, and we need to draw boundaries around each site (a site may include many feeding and roosting areas). For this project we are focusing on mapping sites for which the AWSG has data from at least 5 independent counts over 3 or more years. We have been contacting AWSG volunteers to help us with site mapping at these areas, but we have not been able to find people to help with all areas. So, if you are familiar with the shorebird use of an area that you know has been counted regularly for the AWSG, please contact me. I'll let you know what additional help we need for the area regarding site mapping.

Finally, I would like to thank those of you who are already helping with this project, and encourage those of you whom we have not already contacted, to help. If you have any questions or would like to help please contact me.

This project is funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust.

Robert Clemens,
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415 Riversdale Rd, Hawthorn East,
VIC 3123; phone: Toll free 1300 730 075
(Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday)

Coorong Wader Survey 2006

The AWSG is planning to again undertake a survey of waders in the Coorong over the period 3 to 7 February 2006. This will be carried out with the support of the South East Region of the South Australia Department of Environment and Heritage. The survey will cover the total area of the Coorong, a complex waterway which stretches for over 100kms and includes the mouth of the Murray River. We will again be assisted by local fishers who contribute their local knowledge and boat transport. This complex has suffered considerable stress resulting from the drought and reduced natural flows from the Murray River which is having an impact on the biodiversity of the area. One of the objectives of our team is to determine the habitat usage and distribution of migratory and resident waders along the length of the complex. This is the seventh consecutive year we have undertaken this survey and it is essential that regular counts such as these be maintained to provide land managers with appropriate planning information.

The Coorong is in a highly degraded state as a result of allocation of more than three quarters of the river flows to irrigators by various government departments over past years. Most of this extraction takes place before the river reaches the state of South Australia. In an effort to restore environmental qualities, a target of 500 gigalitres was set by the Murray Darling Ministerial Council under the Living Murray initiative. The water was to come from improving water efficiency measures, saving an estimated 240 gigalitres. The remaining 260 gigalitres would have to come from buying water from irrigators and farmers who are willing to sell their water entitlements. Conservationists were disappointed that the MDMC deferred, yet again, any decision until April 2006. Conservationists are also concerned that the setting of water efficiency practices will take a long time, meaning considerable delays before any improvement can occur in the river. The severely stressed ecosystems of the Coorong may not have that time to spare.

Buying water remains the most cost effective and efficient way to return real water to the Murray and the Coorong, according to Don Henry, Executive Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation. This is backed up by many government ministers and expert scientists.

To understand how desperate the need is, it's worth having a closer look at the Coorong wetlands which rely on the Murray River flows. Studies have revealed that pelicans have not bred in the Coorong for four years yet the Coorong was once Australia's largest permanent breeding colony for pelicans. The water of this internationally recognised wetland is now three times saltier than sea water. Twelve species of native fish are locally extinct and the count of migratory waders has dropped to 50,000 from 150,000 in the 1980s. Numbers of Curlew Sandpiper have plummeted from 40,000 to just 2000 birds.

For any further information on the February count please contact Ken Gosbell (ken@gosbell.id.au).

Mysterious Banded Stilt Breeding Event

The Banded Stilt is one of the world's most mysterious shorebirds; it seems to breed in significant numbers only after cyclonic rains in the vicinity of large salt lakes on inland Australia. Once the right conditions occur, thousands of Banded Stilts arrive at a recently flooded lake within 10 to 12 days of a rain event, travelling a thousand kilometres or more, apparently knowing exactly where to go. It appears that such an event may have happened recently at the Coorong, in South Australia.

It is broadly acknowledged that the health of the Coorong has been deteriorating in recent years due to lack of fresh water flows and constriction of the Murray Mouth. One of the impacts of this has been the substantial increase in salinity of the water in the southern lagoon. In July 2005 approximately 100,000 Banded Stilt were recorded by Maureen Christie and members of Birds SE saw a similar number in October. These stilts were assumed to be feeding on the massively increased population of brine shrimp that was developing in the hypersaline lagoon. Late in 2005 there were indications that a breeding event might occur and in mid-January 2006 this was confirmed with the observation by Pam Gillan, David Dadd and Chris Thompson, Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) of approximately 240 chicks in several crèches on the water. At the time of writing the nesting colony had not been located. This is thought to be a unique event in the Coorong; there are no previous known records of Banded Stilt breeding in coastal locations in the southeast of South Australia. Field surveys of the movements of adults and chicks are continuing in order to document more fully this unusual event.

Ken Gosbell

Shorebirds in Vanuatu: observations wanted

Vanuatu is in the Western Pacific Flyway and, as with much of this Flyway, very little is known about shorebirds in this island nation because very few birdwatchers visit Vanuatu and even fewer take an interest in waders. Basic information about shorebirds, such as major sites, species present, numbers, seasonality and migration, is poorly known but progress is being made in filling these gaps through the development of a new website and a bird atlas project.

Vanuatu Birds Online <http://www.positiveearth.org/vanbirds/> aims to record the distribution of Vanuatu's birds and to promote their conservation. After only two years of data collection there has already been progress in the area of shorebirds. We have count data from several locations including some new sites. We have enough recent records of Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii* (previously unreported) to indicate it is a regular non-breeding visitor.

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New Zealand Colour-banded waders on the move

With northward migration looming, it's time to keep an eye out for colour-banded Bar-tailed Godwits, Red Knots and Ruddy Turnstones wherever you are on the flyway. In New Zealand, these species have been banded with a combination of four colour-bands (two on each tarsus; colours are dark blue, red, yellow or white) and one white flag. On most birds the flag is on the tibia, but on some it's on the tarsus along with the bands. If you see such a bird, it is important to record where the flag is – for example on the left tarsus, above the bands. An equivalent scheme has also started up recently in North-West Australia, on Bar-tailed Godwit, Great Knot and Red Knot, but there a yellow flag was used instead of a white flag.

While the focus for these studies is the survival and movements of these species on the non-breeding grounds, the pool of individually marked birds is yielding excellent information about site use throughout the flyway, particularly for Bar-tailed Godwits. Last season colour-banded godwits were seen (and photographed) at several sites in South Korea, in China, Japan and Alaska, while a turnstone was photographed in South Korea and a knot was recaptured at Chongming Dao in China. We fully expect an even better return this year! In New Zealand godwits will start migrating north at the start of the second week of March, and they could be in Asia by mid-March if they fly directly there. To date, the earliest record of a marked godwit is 29 March (in Japan), and we encourage ornithologists to keep an eye out as early as mid-March. Good counts and band checks in March would greatly help our understanding of how far godwits migrate in a single flight.

More information on the colour-banding scheme, including photographs of marked birds, can be found on www.nzshorebirds.com. Please forward any sightings of colour-banded birds to us at the addresses below. Many thanks and good spotting!

*Phil Battley, University of Otago, New Zealand
(philbattley@quicksilver.net.nz)*

David Melville, Ornithological Society of New Zealand (david.melville@xtra.co.nz)

Avian Flu Testing in Australia

Over the last three months, large numbers of waders caught for banding, in Victoria by the Victorian Wader Study Group, and in NW Australia by the recent AWSG Expedition, have been monitored by veterinary experts for evidence of 'bird flu'.

Over 1000 waders had cloacal swabs taken in Victoria by the World Health Organisation/Department of Primary Industries veterinary teams. Testing so far has revealed no evidence of the presence of any active 'flu virus.

In NW Australia, 500 waders were tested in November by both cloacal swabs and blood samples. Again, testing so far has revealed no active 'flu viruses and only an extremely low incidence of antibodies from previous exposure to various strains of 'flu. None of these was the highly pathogenic

H5N1 virus which is currently causing concern around the world. This testing in NW Australia was carried out by John Curran and his team from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service. Monitoring in NW Australia over a 25 year period has shown an extremely low incidence of any form of avian-borne disease in migratory (and non-migratory) waders. In contrast John's team found that 70% of the 300 Plumed Whistling Ducks which were cannon netted and tested at Kununurra, (also in NW Australia), carried antibodies from previous exposure to various 'flu viruses (but not H5N1). We are fortunate in Australia that migratory ducks and geese from Asia and Siberia do not migrate here!

At this stage it would appear that the probability of the H5N1 virus reaching Australia via a migratory wader is extremely low. But the situation should be continually monitored. The next potential risk period would be September /October 2006 i.e. the next southward migration season.

Clive Minton

[Small scale trapping of shorebirds is being carried out specifically for testing for avian diseases in New South Wales by Dr Phil Hansbro at the Hunter Medical Research Institute, Newcastle with the help of members of the NSW Wader Study Group. This program will be expanded during 2006.] *Ed.*

continued from page 7/

In September 2005 a Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*, with a colour leg flag banded in Japan, was spotted on the island of Efate; this is probably the first shorebird leg flag sighting ever reported from Vanuatu.

Because there have been so few studies on the birds of Vanuatu, each field trip has the potential to discover something new. Anyone interested in shorebirds and Vanuatu, and especially those willing to observe and contribute, is invited to contact us at Vanuatu Birds Online.

Stephen Totterman (vanbirds@positiveearth.org)

Vanuatu Birds Online is a project of **Wantok Environment Centre** <http://www.positiveearth.org/>, a local environmental non-government organisation in Vanuatu. The project has received no external funding and all of the development and field work has been done on a voluntary basis.

East Asian - Australasian Flyway Shorebird Action Plan

January 2006 – Quarterly Update

To submit news on migratory shorebird conservation in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, or for enquiries on the Shorebird Action Plan please contact Warren Lee Long at Wetlands International – Oceania. Email: warren.leelong@wetlands-oceania.org Tel: +61 2 6274 2890

Development of the Network:

(Action 2) Krabi Estuary and Bay in south-west Thailand, was noted as a new Shorebird Network Site in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway on 9 November 2005. Krabi is the first site in the network from Thailand, and makes a total of 39 sites across 12 countries in the East Asian - Australasian Shorebird Site Network.

(Action 3) The Working Group responsible for drafting the new Flyway Partnership Text and Action Plan 2006-2010 met on 15-16 December at Krabi, Thailand. The 10th Annual Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee (MWCC) meeting, held immediately after this workshop, agreed to extend the current Strategy and Action Plans for one year until the new Flyway Partnership is ready to be launched in late 2006. The Flyway Partnership Working Group will meet again in early 2006 to further develop details on the Partnership Structure, Text and Action Plan.

(Action 3) The 9th Annual Shorebird Working Group meeting at Krabi (19-20 December), included workshop sessions to review the priority tasks for migratory shorebird conservation in 2006 and beyond. The results of these sessions will assist the development of the new Flyway Partnership framework. For more information contact Lew Young (Chair of the SWG, <lyoung@wwf.org.hk>) or Warren Lee Long (Shorebird Flyway Officer, <warren.leelong@deh.gov.au>).

Appropriate Management of Network Sites:

(Actions 4, 10) A Wetlands and Waterbirds Workshop was held in Fujian on 1-3 November, organised by the Fujian Province Forestry Department and assisted by WWF Hong Kong. The workshop also promoted networking among scientists and managers in the Fujian and Taiwan area.

(Actions 4, 11, 12) Training for Malaysian government and NGO staff in shorebird surveys and monitoring was completed at Pulau Buit in November 2005. David Li (Wetlands International - Malaysia) is assisting this training with financial support from the Australian Government's Department of the Environment via the Shorebird Action Plan.

(Actions 4, 12) A national information exchange meeting in shorebird surveys for local researchers was held at Fujimae-Higata on 7-9 January, 2006 by JAWAN and WWF Japan, as part of the national shorebird site network activities. Ten presentations and four posters were

presented on: survey methodology, the web-based data input system, and shorebirds status and conservation at Ise/Mikawa Bay. Participants recognised the importance of publishing results of local surveys to stimulate conservation of local shorebird habitats.

(Action 5) Two public events for raising awareness about shorebirds in Malaysia were held on 19 November (Teluk Air Tawar-Kuala Muda, Penang) and 14 January 2006 (Kapar Power Station) and attracted participation of school students, government agencies, NGOs, and local communities. These events follow on the success of events in 2004, and have stimulated increased support for conservation efforts within Malaysia. Contact David Li, Wetlands International –Malaysia: david@wetlands.org.my

(Action 5) The Feathers Flyways Friends website will launch Malaysian and Indonesian language pages on World Wetlands Day. The Hunter Wetland Centre, Australia has facilitated these translations with funds from the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and assistance from the Shorebird Flyway Officer and Wetlands International offices in Malaysia and Indonesia.

(Action 6) A site dedication ceremony to commemorate Krabi Estuary and Bay as a new Shorebird Network Site was held on 15 December 2005 during the annual Flyway meetings. The ceremony was officiated by the Governor of Krabi Province, Office of Natural Resources and Environment Policy and Planning, local stakeholders and international representatives from the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee and the Shorebird Working Group. This event has helped the site managers (Krabi Province Administration Organisation) to secure greater local support and international connections for new projects in conservation and community development at Krabi Estuary and Bay.

(Action 10) Statements on Avian Influenza in relation to migratory waterbird conservation have been posted on the Wetlands International and Birdlife International websites: <http://www.wetlands.org/IWC/Avianflu/AI_position.htm> and <http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/avian_flu/>. Taej Mundkur (Strategy Coordination Officer) and Yus Rusila Noor (Wetlands International - Indonesia) have recently provided expert presentations to regional technical panels and media interviews on this issue. For example: <<http://www.rsi.sg/english/perspective/archive/2005/1/.html>>

(Action 10) The 5th Australasian Shorebird Conference in Nelson, New Zealand, 11-14 December 2005 (see article in this issue) provided an opportunity for wider discussion of the proposed Flyway Partnership for conservation of migratory shorebirds. The Shorebird Flyway Officer presented the reasons for, and key features of, the Flyway Partnership, including the importance of national partnerships and of enhancing links with other global and regional programs to assist outcomes for shorebird conservation.

(Action 10) A symposium on migratory shorebirds at the Asian Waterbird Conference (Tainan, Taiwan on 24-27 November) was led by Lew Young, Chair of the Shorebird

Working Group. Participants heard and discussed updates on the status of knowledge and conservation on migratory shorebirds the East Asian – Australasian flyway.

(Action 10) A proposed regional shorebird studies group has been discussed at several recent Shorebird meetings and received widespread support, with a growing list of scientists, conservationists and managers expressing interest in participating. For details, see separate article in this issue of *Tattler*, or contact Phil Straw (Vice Chair of the Australasian Wader Studies Group) or the Shorebird Flyway Officer.

Improving the Information Base

(Action 12) Comprehensive coastal waterbird surveys in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore are being conducted during January-February 2006 to identify - and update the status of - internationally important sites for waterbirds (including shorebirds). Wetlands International - Malaysia is working with government and NGOs, and will produce a comprehensive survey report with these updates in late 2006. Contact David Li, Wetlands International - Malaysia: david@wetlands.org.my

Coming up:

(Action 4) Two additional trainees from China, under the Yalu Jiang – Miranda Sister Sites Partnership will commence a 3-month program in New Zealand and Australia this February, to gain experience in shorebird studies and conservation, project development and international communications. This follows the very successful training program that Mr Lu Yong (Wetlands International – China) and Mr Zhang Guangming (Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve) undertook from October to January.

(Action 12) Comprehensive winter surveys of migratory shorebirds and other waterbirds along the Fujian coastline will be conducted over 3 weeks in February, supported by WWF Hong Kong and implemented by Fujian Forestry Bureau (Mr Liu Bofeng and staff), University of Science and Technology of China (Dr Cao Lei), and the Australasian Wader Studies Group (Mark Barter as survey leader and trainer).

Information Contacts:

The “Shorebird Site Network” E-mail Discussion Forum assists networking and information exchange among site managers, shorebird experts, education specialists and other partners in the flyway. To join this un-moderated e-mail discussion forum please contact the Shorebird Flyway Officer, Warren Lee Long: <warren.leelong@wetlands-oceania.org>.

The Waterbird Strategy Calendar for 2005 is available at: <<http://www.wetlands.org/IWC/awc/waterbirdstrategy/Calendar.htm>>. If you are aware of other events appropriate to the Flyway, please send information to Dr. Taej Mundkur (Asia Pacific Waterbird Strategy Coordination Officer): <taejmundkur.wi@vsnl.net>.



2003 Australasian Shorebird Conference proceedings now available.

The proceedings of the Australasian Shorebird Conference, (*Status and Conservation of Shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway*) held in Canberra in 2003 have been produced as a special publication of the International Wader Study Group (International Wader Series 17) and Wetlands International (Global Series 18) by the Australasian Wader Studies Group of Birds Australia. Table of contents can be view on the AWSG website: www.tasweb.com.au/awsg

This publication is now available at a special rate of \$24.00 including postage and packing surface mail until 30 March 2006. After this date the price will be \$25.00 plus \$8.00 postage within Australia or \$13.00 sea mail overseas. Air-mail rates on application.

Orders, with payment, made out to AWSG, should be addressed to Phil Straw, Editor, PO Box 2006, Rockdale Delivery Centre, NSW 2216, Australia.

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Important Waterbird Site Survey Chongming Island

Chongming Dongtan Wetland Nature Reserve is located at the eastern end of Chongming Island, in the mouth of the Yangtze River, 46km north-east of Shanghai Municipality. It is an important stop-over site for shorebirds migrating along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. The site is also used by used as an overwintering site by huge numbers of waterbirds, including many species of ducks. Recently, it has been found that Beihu Lake, on the north

side of Chongming Island, is also a crucial place for the waterbirds. This lake was formed as a result of the construction of a dam between Chongming Island and the small island of Huangguasha in the northern branch of the Yantze River.

Since September 2005, a regular waterbird survey has been carried at both sites once per month by staff at Chongming Dongtan Bird Nature Reserve and experienced volunteers. The results shown in the table below covers the southern migration of shorebirds and overwintering waterbirds, including ducks.

The waterbird survey result in Chongming Dongtan Wetland and Beihu Lake from September 2005 to January 2006

SPECIES	Sep-05		Oct-05		Nov-05		Dec-05		Jan-06	
	Dongtan	Beihu	Dongtan	Beihu	Dongtan	Beihu	Dongtan	Beihu	Dongtan	Beihu
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptes ruficollis</i>	48	0	191	0	225	108	104	0	53
Great-crested Grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	17	0
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	0	0	0	0	18	2	161	0	0
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	53	7	104	40	110	43	81	14	55
Eastern Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>	229	12	34	28	36	4	33	9	13
Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>	5	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	24	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chinese Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>	29	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	1556	436	288	226	356	56	302	0	258
Chinese Egret	<i>Egretta eulophotes</i>	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	358	0	11	7	27	0	0	0	32
Eurasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Yellow Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Black-faced Spoonbill	<i>Platalea minor</i>	3	13	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Tundra Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0
Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>	0	0	0	0	24	0	14	0	0
Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grey-lag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	2
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	467	10
Mandarin Duck	<i>Aix galericulata</i>	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	0	0	20	20	207	160	160	290	1
Falcated Duck	<i>Anas falcata</i>	0	0	13	0	96	75	402	16	8
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	0	0	0	120	69	60	10	0	0
Baikal Teal	<i>Anas formosa</i>	0	0	5	0	1	0	201	0	15
Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	20	0	255	70	710	353	1012	10	2706
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	0	0	11	0	1528	348	73	4	5408
Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	10	0	144	250	2680	1726	1352	153	8278
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	0	0	8	3	47	0	2	23	4
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	0	0	42	0	17	46	402	0	2
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	0	0	0	0	0	183	0	0	0
Greater Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
Velvet Scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	80	72
Common Crane	<i>Grus grus</i>	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	6
Hooded Crane	<i>Grus monacha</i>	0	0	0	0	104	0	129	0	127
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	50	0	237	0	306	0	183	0	78
Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	0	0	9	0	159	19	266	83	405
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	80
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	0	0	0	0	22	70	29	0	2
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	4	1	2	131	4	0	124	0	235
Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Greater Sandplover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lesser Sandplover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	72	303	140	1727	374	2	64	5	287
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	0	0	7	0	28	0	7	0	18
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	9	29	330	26	0	0	0	0	0
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	2	1	0	51	10	0	186	0	23
Eastern Curlew	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	9	12	1	44	0	0	0	0	0
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	21	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	0	0	71	147	155	0	235	0	264
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	37	3	2	15	3	0	0	0	0
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	186	377	120	318	137	3	103	0	22
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	164	0	2	4	0	0	5	0	0

Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	19	1	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	14	3	1	0	4	0	4	0	1	0
Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	21	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	133	0	218	1764	842	30	2188	161	3907	1
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinerea</i>	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Herring Gull	<i>Larus vegae</i>	28	2	174	37	611	25	607	564	575	90
Common Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	3	207	0	23	0	3	2	50	1	0
Saunders's Gull	<i>Larus saundersi</i>	0	0	0	173	0	0	0	0	0	44
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	111	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i>	278	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	34	5	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	6	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Little Tern	<i>Sterna albibrons</i>	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UID Duck		0	0	1054	615	461	215	1120	350	3180	8
UID Shorebirds		90	350	4	679	163	61	5	29	8	8
UID Tern		57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UID Gull		121	15	0	300	15	0	0	0	0	15
UID Spoonbill		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0
SITE TOTALS		4003	1898	3549	6846	9584	3633	9605	2326	26167	1733
SPECIES TOTALS		46	25	39	29	38	26	36	17	37	18

Chongming Dongtan has long been known as a well known area for migratory shorebirds and overwintering ducks as well as threatened species such as Black-faced Spoonbill, Hooded Crane and recently a sighting of the Chinese Crested Tern (the world's rarest tern). Our data confirms the importance of the site and show that large numbers of birds still use the area. Dominant species at the nature reserve varies according to season, shorebirds during migration and ducks during winter.

Our survey results also show that Beihu Lake is a very important roosting and wintering site for the migrant waterbirds and is crucial habitat for several species such Common Black-headed Gull, Common Shelduck and threatened species such as Saunders's Gull. The lake is quite small compared to the Dongtan wetland with a surface area of 8 km². Due to its remote location from human populations there is little disturbance of the waterbirds from people.

Based on development plans on Chongming Island by Shanghai

New Chinese Wader Study Forum

In 2002 the Taiwan Wader Study Group and the Natural Photographic Centre set up the TWSG Forum, an Internet message board for ornithologists, birdwatchers and photographers to share information. The forum has played an important role in information sharing over the past four years. Topics discussed widely on the forum included wader studies and survey, bird identification, banding and recoveries, wetlands conservation, wetland news and experiences, and photo sharing.

The Natural Photographic Center had a big program upgrade in the first day of 2006 (the name is now Nature Campus). Because of the awareness of the lack of, and the urgent need for, a communication network between mainland China and Taiwan, the Nature Campus agreed to rename Taiwan Wader Study Forum the "Wader

Municipal Government, there will be a huge project, including and Eco-city, to promote the economy of the region. Although the plan is said to be focus on ecological development, it will be difficult to avoid disturbance and alternation to Beihu Lake's environment. At the moment there are no plans in place to manage or protect Beihu Lake as waterbird habitat. It is therefore strongly suggested that the Government should establish a nature reserve to protect it before it is affected by the proposed development.

STOP PRESS!

The largest flocks of the endangered Baikal Teal ever recorded in the area, and the largest in China for many years, some 8,000 to 10,000 were observed between 24-27 January 2006 at the Chongming Dongtan Nature Reserve (Ramsar site). This represents the largest number of this species outside of Korea. Normally maximum counts in the Shanghai area are about 200 birds.

Study Forum" and hopes to become a major and useful Chinese platform for wader related discussion and communication. You are welcome to join us and share resources and help each other.

The old Taiwan Wader Study Group Forum is now closed but people can still browse and search the contents. <http://nature.kl.edu.tw/forumdisplay.php?s=&forumid=29>

The Nature Photographic Center (now Nature Campus) is one of the biggest forums of wildlife survey, observations, identification, and photo sharing in Taiwan. <http://nc.kl.edu.tw/bbs/index.php>

The new Wader Study Forum: <http://nc.kl.edu.tw/bbs/forumdisplay.php?f=21>

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