Tattler

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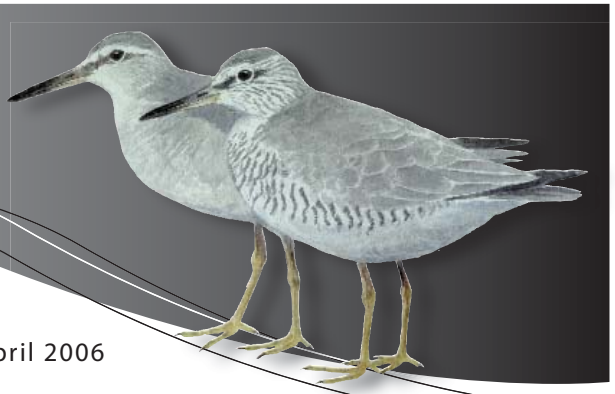
Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways April 2006



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Editorial

We hope you liked the new look of the January issue of '*Tattler*' which appeared in Chinese as well as English. The image used in the logo is of two Grey-tailed Tattlers, one in breeding plumage and one in none breeding plumage, kindly painted specifically for *Tattler* by Keith Woodley.
This edition of *Tattler* will be produced in English, Chinese and Indonesian. The English version is available via the internet as a pdf file as well as in a printed format at www.tasweb.com.au/AWSG. It is hoped that we will have a website host for other languages very soon. This printed edition has been sponsored by the Australasian Wader Studies Group.

In this edition of Tattler we feature an article on what is probably the largest single loss of wetland habitat anywhere in the world affecting a significant proportion of the worlds shorebird populations as well as having a major impact on fisheries in the Yellow Sea . No doubt there are some very proud engineers to have produced such a milestone in history. Time will only tell whether they are remembered for achieving something useful for the South Korean people or those that caused one of the greatest losses of wildlife. What we have to bear in mind is that any development is a balance between producing something that is essentially needed for development and the advancement of humankind against preserving important habitat and wildlife for many generations to come – commonly referred to as sustainable development.

It is usually takes an obvious immediate threat to the environment such as Saemangeum to galvanize conservationists into action and for authorities to realize that there is a wave of support to protect our environment. It is hoped that the loss of Saemangeum will prepare us for further threats of habitat loss in the future.

Nine years ago, on 14 April 1997, Isahaya Bay in Japan was closed to the sea by the Ministry of Agriculture in Japan resulting in the loss of large expanses of mudflats (*The Tattler* April 1997). Since then the Fujimae mudflats in Japan were saved from being filled in as a rubbish tip by a much better prepared conservation movement in that country. The site has since been declared a Ramsar site, complete with a large education centre.

It is important that conservation groups and researchers work closely with government departments to ensure sustainable development in the future. It is hoped that the research project initiated by the Australasian Wader Studies Group and Birds Korea will provide useful data relating to the impact of large scale habitat loss on shorebirds. However the further loss of the Geum estuary, close to Saemangeum is already imminent. In fact most of the intertidal areas of the Yellow Sea are under threat of landfill projects designed for industrial or agricultural development.

Monitoring of shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway will tell us just how much impact the closure of Saemangeum has on shorebird populations. In the mean time we must do more to determine where the important areas are for shorebirds in the Asia Pacific region and find ways to protect these in the future.

As you will see from the articles on colour flagging, some very interesting results have been recorded between the northern hemisphere breeding grounds, staging areas throughout the flyway and at the non-breeding areas. These results would not be possible without the enormous effort put in by volunteers in many of the Asia Pacific countries.

While we are receiving interesting articles from some countries in the region we would like to see articles from other countries, from the Indian sub continent in the west through to the Pacific.

Contributions are welcome and should be sent to the Editor at <PhilStraw@avifaunaresearch.com> or posted to PO Box 2006, Rockdale Delivery Centre, NSW 2216, Australia.

Phil Straw, Editor; Chih Ying Lee, Assistant Editor

The death knell for Saemangeum

On Friday 21 April 2006 the final closure of the seawall closing off the world famous Saemangeum tidal flats was completed. The area was home to an estimated 300 000 to 400 000 shorebirds during the migration period. An international team of shorebird specialists are currently monitoring the impact of the project.

Background

The 33-km long Saemangeum seawall was completed on 21 April 2006 blocking off 40 100 ha of tidal-flats and shallows at the mouths of the Mangyeung and Dongjin Rivers, on the west coast of South Korea. However a 540 m long series of sluice-gates have so far remained open. The restricted water-exchange caused by this has resulted in an estimated 1 m tidal range within the Saemangeum system, compared to a natural tidal range of about 7 m at highest spring tides.

Upper tidal-flat areas have become progressively drier through the second half of the month while some lower-lying tidal-flats have become permanently covered by water. Local fisherman reported that extensive areas of sand and mud flats were covered by dead and dying shellfish north-west of the mouth of the Dongjin River. A similar scene was also noted by the international monitoring team at Simpo (between the Mangyeung and Dongjin Estuaries) on 25 April as well as a red algal bloom in the remaining pools of water in the same area on 28 April.

Shorebirds have apparently altered their distribution within the system in response to these changes (compared to mid-April and in comparison to previous years), with most species no longer using upstream areas. Most individuals concentrated in the few remaining suitable areas (e.g. off Simpo and Okgu).

Large numbers of Great Knot and Dunlin were observed feeding on dead and dying bivalves at Simpo. These shellfish were on the surface of the mud, gaping open, allowing shorebirds to pick out the flesh easily without ingesting the shells. However, this crop of dying shellfish proved to be a very temporary resource. The feeding behaviour was first observed on 25 April, and by 29 April shorebirds at the same site were feeding far less successfully as the surface bivalves were by then mostly dead and the majority had been picked clean of flesh.

There has as yet been no evidence of any movement of shorebirds (individuals or species) out of the Saemangeum system in the late April period to adjacent areas.

Dry cracked mud is all that is left of what was productive tidal flats.
Photo © Jan van de Kam

Counts

Throughout the period of this project, counts of key areas and leg flag searches were conducted by between 7 and 10 experienced counters daily. At least ten additional people were involved in the Program during this period although many of these people were only present for one day, attracted by an evening seminar on shorebirds and reclamation on 30 April by Mr. Jan van de Kam and Mr. Kim Hyun-tae. During the third series of spring high tides (25 April to 30 April), repeat counts were also conducted at the Mangyeung, Dongjin and the adjacent Geum Estuary. Full counts of the Mangyeung Estuary conducted on 25, 28 and 29 April; and at the Geum Estuary (including offshore islands) on 26 April; and at the Dongjin Estuary on 27 April.

At the Mangyeung Estuary, multiple teams of counters recorded 90,640 shorebirds of 25 species on 25 April, with a similar count of 92,678 individuals of 26 individuals recorded over 28 and 29 April. Counts were conducted from land, and also from boats at Okgu on 29 April. At least some of the small difference between counts derived from a significant increase in the number of Lesser Sand Plover recorded between counts, with 343 on 25 April increasing to 1,178 on 28 and 29 April (a large increase of this late-migrating species was also noted in counts in the Dongjin estuary between 27 April and 29 April).

Most numerous species, apart from Lesser Sand Plover, were Great Knot (61, 013), Dunlin (24, 849), Bar-tailed Godwit (1, 932), Eastern Curlew (876) and Grey Plover (643). Additional species, that were of special conservation concern, included three Nordmann's Greenshank on 25 April and one on 28-29 April; one Spoon-billed Sandpiper on 25 April; and one Chinese Egret and four Saunders's Gull on 25 April.

At the Dongjin Estuary, four teams of counters on 27 April recorded a total of 45,100 shorebirds of 28 species, with 13,000 left unidentified (the vast majority considered to be Great Knot and Dunlin).

Most numerous of the positively-identified shorebirds included Dunlin (13,480), Great Knot (11,329), Bar-tailed Godwit (3,512), and Lesser Sand Plover (532). Additional species of special conservation concern included 4 Spoon-billed Sandpiper, 4 Nordmann's Greenshank, one Asian Dowitcher and 10 Saunders's Gull.

Without any consideration of shorebird turnover rates, and combining only the totals of 27 April (Dongjin) and 28-29 April (Mangyeung) a minimum of 137,778 shorebirds were present within the Saemangeum reclamation area towards the end of April. This compares with a total of only about 68,000 shorebirds recorded within the system on 15 and 16 April, 2006.

Based on counts in previous years, most of this doubling in number can be attributed to shorebird migration strategies, with the peak in shorebird numbers in South Korea typically occurring between late April and early May.

Following claims by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, that shorebirds displaced by the Saemangeum reclamation would simply move to the adjacent Geum Estuary and Gomso Bay, counts were made at both these sites during the study period, with near daily coverage at the threatened Geum Estuary.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Simpo, Saemangeum. 27 April 2006 © Jan van de Kam

Four teams of counters conducted a full count of the Geum estuary on 26 April, with one team on Yubu Island, one on an the adjacent Daecheung Island and two teams on the mainland. In total, 51,568 shorebirds of 24 species were recorded, with most numerous being Dunlin (21,829), Great Knot (14,024), Bar-tailed Godwit (9,416), Grey Plover (2,371), Eastern Curlew (704) and Lesser Sand Plover (533).

Of very great conservation significance was the recording of 43 Nordmann's Greenshank, including 35 seen at a single roost site (in total, the counts probably represent between 4% and 8% of the world population of this Endangered species), along with 4 Black-faced Spoonbill (Endangered) and about 14 Saunders's Gull (Vulnerable).

The Geum Estuary count on 26 April revealed less than a 15 % increase over the 45 000 shorebirds recorded on 17 April, when there was slightly less complete coverage of the area. A further count was also conducted at several points in the more southern Gomso Bay. Previous counts on 5th and 15th April found only 38 and 4 individual shorebirds respectively. On 27 April, 727 shorebirds of 8 species were recorded, with most numerous being Whimbrel (609) and Common Greenshank (55), both relatively late spring migrants to South Korea.

Sightings of leg-flagged shorebirds

During the period, flag sightings and observations of individually-marked shorebirds were achieved within the Saemangeum reclamation area and at the Geum Estuary.

During the whole of April, the Monitoring team made approximately 250 sightings of birds marked in various countries in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

What's next?

A further series of counts will be conducted over the spring high tide period in Mid-May; and then repeated in spring 2007 and 2008 (volunteers and funding are already being actively sought!).

Nial Moores, Birds Korea & Danny Rogers, AWSG

You can help to improve colour flagging results

The use of colour flags and combinations of different coloured bands is getting a little complex now with more researchers becoming involved in more countries in the Asia Pacific. However the rewards that can be gained from accurate recording of these flags and bands are immense and will have a very important influence in helping to understand the movements of shorebirds and help with their conservation. An example of some of the results are shown in Table 1 of birds flagged in Australia and observed overseas. Similar patterns are appearing from flags sightings of birds flagged in other countries. Some of the colour marking programs are shown below.

A new method of marking birds using alpha numeric engraved flags has provided unprecedented success in tracking the movements of individual birds between their banding location, breeding sites, and staging areas along their flyways.

Everyone is therefore asked to carefully note which flags and/or coloured bands are seen on shorebirds this year. Also keep an eye out for engraved flags. The main register for sightings is at <mintons@ozemail.com.au>. If you send your observations to this address you will receive a quick reply providing you with details about the bird/s you saw. If you have problems communicating in English you can send your details about your observations in Chinese to Ma Zhi-jun <zhijunm@fudan.edu.cn>, or in Indonesian language through Yus Rusila Nor <biodiversity@wetlands.or.id>. You will be informed where the bird was banded and other interesting information about the bird/s you have seen. If you can, tell us how many birds of the same species were in the flock when you saw the flags/bands.

Engraved flags from Australia

Since February 2005, nearly all medium-large species of waders caught in Broome, northwest Australia, have been released with a yellow leg-flag with a difference - they are engraved with inscriptions (currently, only two: for example: A1, 9Z, AZ). The difference is quite a big one, as each of these birds is individually identifiable upon reading the alphanumeric inscription. This allows birds to be 'recaptured' by sightings, rather than actually being caught - which is of course much more difficult.

As of the end of 2005, nearly 2,500 waders caught in NW Australia now carry an engraved flag, this will help develop a better understanding of survival rates, as re-sightings are already proving to have a high 'recapture' rate compared to actual re-captures or recoveries of banded waders. An example of the success obtained so far is the sighting of eight engraved-flagged waders overseas during northward and southward migration in 2005. Seven of these individuals have since then been seen back at Roebuck Bay in October 2005. In addition to this, about 800 of the 1,200 birds flagged before October were seen again during intensive flag-searching by observers during October-November as part of a PhD study by Alice Ewing in shorebird survival ecology). So, *every* sighting counts.

In addition to many species of yellow-engraved

TABLE 1: Australian-flagged birds seen away from their flagging region. 2005 records by species (upper table). All records by year of sighting (lower table).

Species	NZ	Aust	China (mainland)	China (Taiwan)	USA	China(HongKong)	Indonesia	Korea	Japan	Russia	Malaysia	Mongolia	Thailand	Other(SriLanka)	TOTAL
Bar-tailed Godwit	419	21	50		118	2		39	1						650
Red Knot	584	47	2	10				2							645
Red-necked Stint	1	131	85	28		37	38		3	5	1	1			330
Curlew Sandpiper		68	2	21		23	23						1	1	139
Sanderling		37	4	2		8			6						57
Great Knot		13	15	15		1		2	3		1				50
Grey-tailed Tattler		1		38		2									41
Ruddy Turnstone	7	11		8		5		2	2						35
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		16	3	7											26
Eastern Curlew		12	3												15
Greater Sand Plover		1		8		5									14
Terek Sandpiper			1	1		1		1							4
Black-tailed Godwit		1					1	1							3
Grey Plover		1	2												3
Double-banded Plover	3														3
Lesser Sand Plover		3													3
Common Greenshank			1	1											2
Common Redshank		1													1
Marsh Sandpiper		1													1
Pacific Golden Plover		1													1
TOTAL	1014	366	168	139	118	84	62	47	15	5	2	1	1	1	2023

Year	NZ	Aust	China (mainland)	China (Taiwan)	USA	China(HongKong)	Indonesia	Korea	Japan	Russia	Malaysia	Mongolia	Thailand	Other(SriLanka)	TOTAL
1990	1					4									5
1991	10	18				1			2						31
1992	26	42		1		2	1		12						85
1993	22	89		2		89	1		9				1		213
1994	22	79	1	2		38		4	12	3					163
1995	25	45	1	4		10			30	1	1				118
1996	43	46	3	1		20		7	62	12					195
1997	47	54	4	12	1	45	2	61	83	2					311
1998	68	195	6	1		159		77	67	1					574
1999	90	149	14	27	24	142		57	85	17		1			606
2000	112	182	14	33	2	105	1	36	75	7	1	17			587
2001	202	245	20	26	21	111		36	78	2		1			743
2002	382	279	63	45	27	75		39	35	2					950
2003	604	273	6	52	76	92		16	16	5	2				1142
2004	378	340	203	97	58	97	13	36	34	9	1	8			1275
2005	1014	366	168	139	118	84	62	47	15	5	2	1	1	1	2023
TOTAL	3046	2402	503	442	327	1074	80	416	615	66	7	28	2	1	9021

Note: In addition, there have been 4 sightings from Brunei, 1 from Singapore, 1 from PNG and 6 from Vietnam and these are included in the yearly totals. However there were no sightings in any of these countries in 2005

flagged waders from NW Australia, keep an eye out for Ruddy Turnstone with engraved flags from both Victoria (orange engraved flag) and south-east South Australia (engraved orange flag on tibia, and plain yellow flag on tarsus).

Already, many waders have already departed on northward migration. It would be very valuable if all wader-watchers at staging sites throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway could keep an eye out for these flags during both north- and south-ward migration, as already, several engraved-flagged birds have been seen at Chongming Dongtan mudflats (near Shanghai), and in Taiwan.

Clive Minton and Heather Gibbs

New Zealand colour banded birds

Prior to the 2006 northward migration over 500 individually colour banded Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Knot and Turnstone have departed New Zealand northwards - they could be on a beach near you!

The birds have been marked by the Ornithological Society of New Zealand as part of a study on behalf of the New Zealand Department of Conservation to investigate movements around New Zealand - the ability to follow their movements throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway is an added bonus!

Birds are marked with two colour bands (rings) on each tarsus and one WHITE flag - which may be on the tarsus or tibia. It is important to note the position of the FLAG as well as the colour of the bands as the flag position forms part of the identification code.

A few birds have discoloured white flags and bands - which look creamy yellow and may cause difficulty in the field. This appears to be caused by staining at certain coastal areas in New Zealand. If you are in doubt as to whether a band/ring or flag was yellow or white please note this in your report.

Further details about the project, together with examples of colour combinations used and an Excel reporting form are available at our website: htpp://osnz.org.nz/nzwaderstudy.htm

We would be very grateful to receive all reports of banded birds. We will provide banding details to observers for all birds reported.

Last year we received reports of banded birds from China, South Korea, Japan and Alaska.
We look forward to hearing from you!, Thank you very much for your involvement.

David Melville, Ornithological Society of New Zealand

New flag combination and flag engraving project at Chongming Dongtan

The shorebird trapping and banding program at Chongming Dao Bird Nature Reserve started during the southward migration in 2002 using numbered metal bands issued by the Chinese Banding Scheme. This program was highly successful and large numbers of birds have been banded during the past three years. However to monitor the movements of these birds it is necessary for someone to catch the bird again in order to read the number (or for a hunter to return the bands of any birds they catch by sending them to the office of the Banding Scheme). The use of leg flags greatly improves the 'recovery rate' by enabling people to recognise a unique flag combination in the field. Each country or region in the flyway uses a unique colour combination to indicate where the bird was flagged. In our case this was a white flag over the black flag, both placed on the tibia of one leg of the bird. This program has been successful with more than 450 flag sighting reports from other countries and regions, documented evidence that Dunlin travel between non-breeding grounds in China and breeding areas in Alaska (The Tattler 45: October 2005). From the commencement of the banding program at the nature reserve until now, we have banded 10,060 shorebirds, and a few terns, of which 9,700 were colour flagged white over black.

While flagged birds provide information as to where the bird was caught and flagged it doesn't tell anyone which bird it is or when it was flagged. Recent developments, using flags inscribed with unique alpha numeric combination, provided the opportunity to be able to recognise individual birds in the field using binoculars or a telescope, without the need to catch the bird. This technique has been used successfully by the Australasian Wader Study Group, Taiwan Wader Study Group and the Alaska Shorebird Group and many of these birds have been observed in mainland China.

We decided to start using engraved flags at Chongming Dongtan Nature Reserve by engraving the white flag were are using with a black inscription to make is easy to see in the field. However because the white flag is on top of the black flag on the bird's tibia it is sometimes partially obscured by the bird's feathers. So we decided to seek permission to reverse the order in which the flags

were attached to the bird's leg, so that the white flag is below the black flag.

In April this year we started using our new flag combination and on 11 April 2006 we flagged our first shorebird with the inscribed flag 'A1'. This bird, a Great Knot, was the first shorebird fitted with an engraved leg flag in mainland China. We plan to adopt the engraved flags on at least five species of shorebirds this season based on the shorebird species that we could catch, and hope this efficient method can be promoted to more species in the future. We hope that many people will see leg flagged shorebirds and take careful note about which colours they are and report them (in English) by sending details to <mintons@ozemail.com.au> and (in Chinese) to <birdhz@forestry.ac.cn> (National Birds Banding Office) or <zhijunm@fudan.edu.cn> (Dr. Zhijun Ma).

Zhang Kejia
Shanghai Chongming Dongtan Bird National Nature Reserve

Global study of Red Knot

In Australia and New Zealand researchers are taking part in a world-wide project to compare seasonal and annual survival rates of six subspecies of Red Knot that winter in Europe **(***Calidris canutus islandica*), West Africa (*C.c. canutus*), NW Australia (*C.c. piersmai*), New Zealand (*C.c. rogersi*) and the Americas (*C.c.rufa* and *C.c.roselaari*), and of four subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit that winter in Europe (*Limosa lapponica*), West Africa (*L.lapponica taymyrensis*), NW Australia (*L.l.menzbieri*) and New Zealand (*L.l baueri*). In northwest Australia researchers are also using the same method on Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*).

In this research project the colour bands are the same in each country but the flag is a different colour for each country. However, the flag will not always be in the standard position on the leg i.e. the upper right leg (tibia) but maybe on the left tibia or even on the lower leg (tarsus) with the colour bands.

Please ensure that you check the colour and the position of the flag on any colour banded birds very carefully. Zhang Kejia and his team in Chongming Dongtan Nature Reserve have already caught some Australian and New Zealand birds during this northward migration season.

News from the Alaska end of the flyway

Beginning in early May and continuing through October, shorebirds throughout Alaska will be the target of a huge surveillance monitoring program to detect Highly Pathogenic (HPAI) Avian Influenza H5N1. To select which species to monitor we conducted a ranking exercise that included five factors: 1) the proportion of the population occurring in Asia, 2) contact with a known 'hot spot' or source, 3) habitats used in Asia in context with exposure potential, 4) population size in Alaska, and 5) ability to obtain a representative sample of sufficient size. From the 30 species that were ranked, 10 emerged as likely candidates for monitoring, including: Dunlin (*Calidris alpina arcticola*), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*C. acuminata*), Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica baueri*), Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), Pectoral Sandpiper (*C. melanotos*), Red Knot (*C. canutus rogersi* and *C. c. roselaari*), Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*), Rock Sandpiper (*Calidris ptilocnemis tschuktschorum*), Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*), and Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*).

Both the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will implement major field programs throughout Alaska. Rick Lanctot (USFWS) will coordinate the effort in northern Alaska, Brian McCaffery (USFWS) the effort on the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, and Bob Gill (USGS) will coordinate the work throughout western and southwestern Alaska. Other familiar names will also be helping, including Pavel Tomkovich and Maksim Dementyev from Russia and David Melville from New Zealand. Pavel and Maksim will be on the Yukon Delta beginning early May, hopefully to unravel the knotty issue of which subspecies of C. canutus stage there on their northward migration, and then in June helping to capture nesting godwits. David returns in 2006 following a month-long visit in 2005 as part of the Beringian '05 Expedition. His skills at capturing birds and collecting AI samples will be even more valuable this year.

Without question our primary charge will be to collect AI samples from the suite of targeted species, but the AI surveillance program offers unique opportunities to get to remote places in Alaska (not to be confused with most of the state) and to address both fundamental and more focused questions about shorebird ecology. If we meet our targeted sample sizes, we will have had over 4,000 shorebirds in hand by the end of October, but we will likely process many more than this considering the species we will capture incidental to those targeted. Each bird will be banded, many flagged or color-banded, and all measured and weighed. In addition, blood and feather samples will be taken from subsets of each species for molecular and stable isotope analysis. For a few species (e.g., Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper) we will focus on their migrations to better learn routes, timing, and site connections to help assess possible routes of AI transmission. Conventional VHF radio telemetry will be used on the smaller species and satellite telemetry with the godwits (see January 2006 Tattler). Stay tuned for an update in the next issue of the Tattler.

Bob Gill (robert_gill @usgs.gov)

Fujian Province Waterbird Survey

A survey of waterbirds along the coastline of Fujian Province, China, was carried out from 8 to 27 February 2006. The survey covered 21 coastal and near-coastal wetlands along the complete Fujian coast over a twenty-day period. The survey team was comprised of ornithologists from the University of Science and Technology of China and the Fujian Forestry Bureau.

During the survey a total of 108,125 waterbirds of 65 species were counted. The most common species group was the shorebirds (59.4% of waterbirds counted), followed by gulls and terns (13.7%), and *Anatidae* (ducks, geese and swans) (12.9%). The most common species counted were Dunlin (43,239), Common Black-headed Gull (11,489), Kentish Plover (9,880), Great Cormorant (7,148) and Little Egret (4,865).

Other shorebirds counted included: Eurasian Curlew 3,420, Grey Plover 1,859, Common Greenshank 798, Sanderling 194, Red-necked Stint 185, Pacific Golden Plover 144, Little Ringed Plover 74, Common Redshank 58, Pied Avocet 49, Eurasian Oystercatcher 41, Marsh Sandpiper 28, Ruddy Turnstone 25, Common Sandpiper 17, Green Sandpiper 13, Lesser Sand Plover 10, Northern Lapwing 9, Spotted Redshank 3, Common Snipe 1, Bar-tailed Godwit 1 and Temminck's Stint 1.

During the survey internationally important numbers of Eurasian Curlew were recorded at the mouth of the Min River (Fuzhou), Xinghua Bay, Meizhou Bay, Quanzhou Bay and Futou Bay, and of Dunlin at Xinghua Bay.

Given that the coverage estimates for the five most important wetlands ranged from 60% to 80%, and that counts were sometimes conducted under unfavourable tidal conditions, it seems likely that the Fujian coast was supporting more than 150,000 waterbirds at the time of the survey. Many of the additional birds would probably be Dunlin.

Levels of human disturbance were generally high along the whole coastline. Disturbance mainly involved different kinds of fishing activities (see photograph), but also included ongoing reclamation, road construction, sand mining and pollution. Many local people rely on mudflat resources for food and income and it is important to develop sustainable utilisation of these resources, which also takes into account the needs of the waterbirds. It is suggested that a community awareness and public education programme be carried out to inform the inhabitants about the migratory birds and their needs and encourage them to minimise disturbance levels as far as practicable.

Water surface (and mudflats at low tide) is covered by fishing nets and floats

Mark Barter, AWSG and Cao Lei , University of Science and Technology of China

Surprise and concern arising from Coorong wader survey

The AWSG undertook a wader survey of the Coorong and SE coastal lakes for the seventh consecutive year in early February 2006. This was carried out with the support of the South East Region of the SA Department of Environment and Heritage. The survey covered the total area of this complex system and utilised many local resources as well as people from elsewhere; a total of over 40 people participated this year over the 3 days including local fishermen who gave of their time, boats and local knowledge as well as the Park Rangers for the Southeast of SA. Two thirds of the participants came from South Australia while 5 travelled from Victoria, 1 from NSW and 2 were from the UK.

The number of waders counted (167,872) was double the number of last year. However, some 95,000 of these were the more ephemeral species of Banded Stilt and Red-necked Avocet. Excluding these species, the 73,000 waders is of the same order as 2002 and 2003 but still a shadow of the numbers that made this wetland one of the top 10 sites for waders in Australia in the 1980's. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were recorded at the highest level since the early 1980s reflecting above average breeding years in the Arctic. However although Red-necked Stint showed a marginal increase on last year they were 30% lower than 2002 and 2003 despite several good breeding years and higher numbers in other parts of southeastern Australia. Curlew Sandpiper are of critical concern as numbers continue to crash; the 2388 birds is the lowest ever recorded in the Coorong and less than half of last year. Compared to counts of 20 – 40,000 of this species in the early 1980s this is bad news. On the other hand there was a major presence of Banded Stilt with over 92,000 being counted. The observation of a breeding event for this species in December/ January was a first in the recorded history in the Coorong. While these birds are opportunistic breeders and normally utilize inland lakes after major rain events it would seem that they have capitalized on the large hatch of brine shrimp and abundance of other food sources such as chironomid larvae to attempt to breed. A total of 1006 chicks were counted of which over 330 were banded and flagged by the Victorian Wader Study Group. Red-necked Avocet were also breeding for similar reasons. Again this is thought to be a first record for the Coorong.

The distribution along the length of the Coorong in 2006 was dominated by the Banded Stilt in the south lagoon and a general movement to the northern lagoons for other species as a result of the poor water quality and high salinity of the area south of Parnka Point. The condition of the Coorong has deteriorated significantly over the last 4 years largely as a result of the lack of flows in the River Murray over the barrages and weirs. The salinity levels in the southern lagoon were around 4 times that of sea water in February which has caused a critical decline in aquatic

food resources for a wide group of waterbirds including waders. This again reinforces the need for increased River Murray flows if the unique nature of the Coorong system and the fauna it supports is to be retained.

A survey of a number of the SE Lakes was also undertaken and it was found that once again the wader utilisation of this area is very dependant on seasonal conditions and water presence. It was disturbing to see that the water quality in Lake George had deteriorated this year to the extent that a green algae was present which had an impact on the number of waterbirds utilising this area.

These annual counts are very important and it is essential that regular counting be maintained for these important areas to provide land managers with appropriate planning information. To enable a better understanding of the broader movements in southern Australia it is recommended that similar surveys be initiated in coastal and inland areas not currently counted on a regular basis.

We would like to thank the many people who helped to gather the information for this survey. A Report has been written and provided to the SA Department of Environment and Heritage.

Ken Gosbell and Maureen Christie

High numbers of shorebirds in North West Tasmania

People who participated in the annual summer wader count in the northwest of Tasmania during the Australia Day holiday long weekend were treated to spectacular numbers of migratory and resident shorebirds, with the total count approaching 23,500 birds.

Highlights during the day's counting included a minimum count of 400 Bar-tailed Godwits, 1500 Red Knot, 2300 Curlew Sandpiper, 800 Pied Oystercatcher, 100 Grey Plover and estimates of up to 190 Eastern Curlew, 1300 Ruddy Turnstone, 280 Pacific Golden Plover and 16,000 Red-necked Stint (including 11,000 at Shipwreck Pt). The highest count was at Shipwreck Point on the far northwest tip of Perkins Island where almost 13,800 birds were present during the high tide roost.

The count was the highest ever for the Robbins Passage/ Boullanger Bay wetlands, and reinforces the importance of these wetlands as high national and international conservation value, with more shorebirds present in the wetlands than the rest of Tasmania combined at any time of the year. Sincere thanks to all who assisted on the day.

Information obtained from *Yellow Throat, April 2006*, with permission of Birds Tasmania.
Eric Woehler

Large count of Pacific Golden Plover, *Pluvialis fulva*

It has been estimated that about 10% of the world population of 90 000 Pacific Golden Plover migrate to Australia during the non-breeding season, which is a total of about 9000 birds. However if counts of this species in recent years is any indication this species has declined quite dramatically at many count sites. For example, Moreton Bay in Queensland has been attributed with over 2000 birds and the Hunter River estuary in New South Wales with 800 Pacific Golden Plover 20 years ago. Neither of these sites regularly had more than 25% of those counts in recent years.

One site in NSW, the Shoalhaven River estuary, seems to have bucked this trend of late with regular counts in summer 2005 and summer 2006 of over two hundred birds and counts this year of over 315 birds (R. Worrell and M. Jarman, pers. comm.) The observations are similar to a maximum count for this site reported in 1990 (Smith, 1991) of 312 birds.

It is usually assumed that declines of migratory species that reach Australia are the result of impacts (for example habitat loss or hunting) within the migratory flyway rather than at over wintering grounds in Australia. However counts such as those at the Shoalhaven could be an indication that habitat changes at many sites in Australia could be affecting local populations. Pacific Golden Plover have an affinity to saltmarsh habitats, at least as roosting habitat, a habitat which has declined along the south eastern coastal areas where most Pacific Golden Plover counts are made. The Shoalhaven River estuary is one of the few estuaries in NSW where saltmarsh habitat has remained stable since counts started in Australia.

Saltmarsh habitat (high tide roost habitat) and sandflats (feeding habitat) has remained relatively stable in Shoalhaven River estuary for almost two decades. The relatively long (18 year) absence of large floods in the Shoalhaven River estuary may have encouraged stability and subtle accretion of the sediments supporting wader habitat. There are indications that saltmarsh areas at Comerong Lagoon important to Pacific Golden Plover, Eastern Curlew & Pied Oystercatcher are being invaded slowly by the Grey Mangrove *Avicennia marina.* It may be only a matter of time before a decline in the number of Pacific Golden Plovers occurs in the estuary unless management strategies are put in place.

Reference: P. Smith (1991) *The biology and management of Waders (Suborder Charadrii) in NSW*. NSW NPWS Species Management Report Number 9.

Phil Craven, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, Nowra
Phil Straw, AWSG

Arctic breeding success in 2005, based on Australian studies

Australia is well placed to undertake a breeding success monitoring role on migratory waders from the Northern Hemisphere because it is the terminus of migration for most species, with populations of both adult and juvenile birds relatively static in the period from November to mid March. By standardising sampling techniques as much as possible potential biases in the results from year to year are minimised, with the result that both annual and longer term variations in breeding success are more likely to be detectable and meaningful.

This paper details the percentage juvenile monitoring results for the 2005/06 austral summer in both southeast and northwest Australia. These are an indication of the breeding success of the different wader populations in the Arctic summer of 2005.

Satisfactory catch totals were obtained for all of the seven species for which annual monitoring is attempted in southeast Australia. A much better sample of Curlew Sandpipers was obtained than in other recent years, principally due to one excellent catch of 393 birds. The Red Knot sample was also better than usual because of a particularly good catch of 232 at the main Red Knot location, in Corner Inlet. Three larger than normal catches of Bar-tailed Godwits were made, again giving a larger than normal sample for this species.

Sampling in northwest Australia was more typical of other years with the usual species dominating catches. However a greater than normal sample of Red Knots was obtained. As usual Curlew Sandpipers were difficult to accumulate because, at their current reduced population level, they are dispersed thinly throughout flocks of other waders. It took catches to accumulate a total of only 95 birds.

Overall the 2005 Arctic breeding season for wader populations which spend the non-breeding season in southeast Australia appears to have been the best since 1991 and the second best in the 28 years over which these populations have been monitored

Bar-tailed Godwits and Sanderling had exceptional breeding success and in Curlew Sandpiper, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper the breeding outcome was very good. Only Red-necked Stint fared poorly. These results raise a number of interesting questions, in particular:

a) What factors caused such a widespread and unusually successful breeding season across a broad range of species and covering such a wide span of breeding locations (Taimyr to Alaska)?
b) What caused the Red-necked Stint to have such a poor breeding season? Its breeding range and its breeding habitat overlap those of several other species which had a successful breeding season.

The very good breeding season experienced by Curlew Sandpipers in 2005 followed good breeding success in the previous year. This is particularly welcome as it may herald the beginning of a population turnaround for this species which has declined markedly over the last 20 years.

Sharp-tailed Sandpipers had a third consecutive good breeding year. The figures for 2005/06 were not quite as high as in the two exceptional years preceding but were well above the long term median and average.

Perhaps the biggest winner of all in 2005/06 was the Bar-tailed Godwit. All the indications from observations in the field suggest that juvenile Bar-tailed Godwits were far more numerous and widespread in the 2005/06 non-breeding season than in any other year in recent times. Data from the breeding areas of these birds in Alaska (Brian McCaffery pers. comm.) also indicated that 2005 was an exceptionally good breeding season for the Bar-tailed Godwit populations breeding in the north and west of Alaska. It is particularly interesting that the ratio between his 2005 figure and the average of other recent years was the same as a similar ratio in southeast Australia, though in absolute terms the percentage of juveniles in Australia was higher. The latter is at least partly caused by the fact that some juveniles which will ultimately join the New Zealand Bar-tailed Godwit populations spend their first non-breeding season in Australia.

This “New Zealand effect” is most pronounced in the Red Knot, where very few first year birds travel as far as New Zealand. This greatly increases the amplitude of the percentage juvenile figures recorded each year for Red Knot in southeast Australia. Nevertheless the 73.3% juveniles recorded this year would still be classed as a very good breeding outcome for the Red Knot, which probably mainly come from Chukotka in the far northeast of Siberia.

Sanderling was the other species which had an exceptionally good breeding season in 2005. The full extent of the breeding grounds of the Sanderling population which comes to southeast Australia are not known and therefore linking this outcome to particular factors will be difficult. The only breeding season recovery of a southeast Australian banded Sanderling was in the New Siberian Islands so it is interesting that the Red Knot population from there, which mainly spend the non-breeding season in northwest Australia, also experienced an exceptionally good breeding season in 2005. At the main location in Victoria the size of the flock (600-800) in the non-breeding season was almost double the normal level for a period because of the huge numbers of juveniles present. However this species moves quite widely between different locations on the coast in the non-breeding season and this high concentration later dispersed.

Northwest Australia

Red-necked Stints in northwest Australia had a noticeably better breeding performance than those from southeast Australia. Recoveries and flag sightings on or near the breeding grounds indicate that there is probably significant overlap in breeding areas between these populations. This makes the marked difference in apparent breeding performance in 2005 rather surprising, although in some previous years there has also been a lack of correlation.

The Bar-tailed Godwits which spend the non-breeding season in northwest Australia (*menzbieri*) breed in northern Yakutia. They only had an average breeding season in 2005, not as good as the Bar-tailed Godwits from Alaska (*baueri*) which go to southeast Australia (and New Zealand).

The Greater Sand Plover was the exception in 2005/06 with a very poor breeding outcome – the lowest recorded in these studies. This species breeds further south than the other species monitored and could well have experienced unusually adverse weather conditions at a critical stage of its breeding cycle and over a widespread part of its breeding range.

Clive Minton

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 6260 8341

***Development of the Network*:**

(Action 1) Six new shorebird site nominations were submitted to the MWCC in April from the Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage on behalf of 4 sites in Queensland (Currawinya Lakes, Bowling Green Bay, Shoalwater Bay, Great Sandy Strait) and 2 sites in Victoria (Shallow Inlet and Discovery Bay).

(Actions 1, 3, 4) A national partnership for migratory waterbirds in Thailand will be the focus of a workshop in mid 2006. The Office of Natural Resources and Environment Policy and Planning, NGOs, provincial agencies and local stakeholders will meet to develop priorities and projects for shorebird conservation in Thailand. Already on the agenda are nominations for new shorebird sites in the Gulf of Thailand, and translation and publication of the Shorebird Studies Manual in Thai. Contact Asae Sayaka at Wetlands International – Thailand: <asae-s@psu.ac.th>

(Action 3) The new Flyway Partnership Text and Strategic Plan 2006-2010 were brought closer to completion by the Partnership Working Group on March 21-23 in Canberra, Australia. The Working Group is also implementing arrangements to make a smooth transition from the present Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy to the new Flyway Partnership before it is finally launched in late 2006.

(Action 3) Applications have closed for the first round of support under the new Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund (AWCF), and successful proposals should be announced in May. This fund was initiated by a generous contribution from Cathay Pacific to WWF Hong Kong, and other contributors are sought to strengthen the fund. For more information on the AWCF fund, see: http://www.wwf.org.hk/eng/maipo/awcf/

***Appropriate Management of Network Sites*:**

(Action 4) A shorebird skills training workshop was held at Sumatra, Indonesia, in late April. Phil Straw (AWSG) provided volunteer training services for twelve trainees from forestry agencies, NGOs and Universities, with workshop coordination and assistance provided by Wetlands International – Indonesia Programme.

(Actions 4, 12) A comprehensive waterbirds survey was completed for coastal wetlands in Fujian in February-March, with coordination by Fujian Forestry Bureau (Mr Liu Bofeng and staff), training by Mark Barter (AWSG) and Ms Cao Lei (China Science and Technology University), and financial support by WWF Hong Kong. The survey covered 21 wetlands and a total of 108,125 waterbirds of 65 species was counted. Several sites supported shorebirds in internationally important numbers, and the team noted that even further areas of Fujian may contain internationally important sites (see article in this issue).

(Actions 4, 11, 12) Training for Malaysian government and NGO staff in shorebird surveys and monitoring were completed at Sarawak State in February, and Sabah State in April. David Li (Wetlands International - Malaysia) provided training for local staff, with financial support from the Australian Government Department of the Environment via the Shorebird Action Plan.

(Action 4) Trainees Ms Jia Na (Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve) and Ms Yang Xiuzhi (Wetlands International – China), have completed 2 months of shorebird studies and conservation experience in New Zealand and Australia under the Yalu Jiang – Miranda Sister Sites Partnership. The coordinators of this successful site partnership hope to continue support for staff training over the coming years.

(Actions 4, 5) The Yalu Jiang – Miranda Site Partnership implemented monitoring surveys and training with Yalu Jiang reserve staff in late April 2006, and provided additional education events for local schools around the Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve.

(Actions 4, 10) A workshop promoting sustainable development and wise use of shorebird habitats was held for site managers in China at the Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve in late April 2006, coordinated by Wetlands International – China and nature reserve staff.

(Action 4) A sustainable development and shorebird conservation project is commencing at Krabi Estuary and Bay, Thailand. Wetlands International – Thailand is working with local communities and provincial agencies to explore alternative community incomes and ways to protect critical shorebird habitats at their new Shorebird Network Site.

(Actions 4, 5) The opening ceremony of the first Migratory Birds Wonder event at Yalu Jiang in April was an outstanding success, attracting several hundred school children, community members and dignitaries. Several thousands of birds flew overhead during the ceremony, as if saluting the guests and participants. The Dandong City Mayor (Chen Tiexing) and Deputy Mayor (Zhao Changfu) were inspired to ensure more habitat was made available for the shorebirds to roost, and that current development threats to the feeding areas were minimised. Also present were the Dongang City Mayor & Deputy Mayor, the Director General of Liaoning Province State Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and the National SEPA Director General and Deputy DG. The event hosts - SEPA, Wetlands International - China and Donggang City Govt – are hoping to repeat the event in coming years.

(Action 5) The Feathers Flyways Friends website launched the new Malaysian and Indonesian language pages on World Wetlands Day, making the site now available in 8 languages (see http://www.wetlands.org.au/shorebirds/index.htm). The Hunter Wetland Centre, Australia has facilitated these translations with funds from the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage.

(Action 5) The Shorebird Migration Brochure has been printed in Thai language and is being distributed widely to stakeholders at shorebird sites in Thailand. This was supported by the Danida funded project, Wetlands International – Thailand is working with hotels in Krabi and Trang Provinces initially to distribute the brochure to visitors.

(Action 10) Information on Avian Influenza in relation to migratory waterbird conservation is being collated and distributed by Dr Taej Mundkur (Strategy Coordination Officer), Wetlands International. See further information at: <http://www.wetlands.org/ >. Taej attended the SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR ON AVIAN INFLUENZA, THE ENVIRONMENT AND MIGRATORY BIRDS: 10-11 APRIL 2006, in Nairobi. The first report on this is in the latest issue of Avian Influenza & Wild Birds Bulletin, Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) 14 April 2006, and can be downloaded at: http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/ais/ymbvol123num1e.html

(Action 10) Proceedings of the 4th Australasian Shorebird Conference have been published by the Australasian Wader Studies Group, with financial support from the Australian department of the Environment and Heritage. The conference was held in December 1993 at Canberra, Australia, and proceedings will be distributed to key contacts across the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. Anyone wanting a copy should contact Phil Straw (the editor) at the address on the front of this newsletter.

(Action 10) The 1-year study of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway continues as Kelly and Kevin White follow the northward migration from New Zealand to Korea. Kelly and Kevin are visiting several sites in Korea and plan to spend time in the Russian Far East to study the issues for shorebird conservation in the breeding areas.

Improving the Information Base

(Action 12) Comprehensive coastal waterbird surveys in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore were conducted during January and February 2006 to identify, and update the status of, internationally important sites for waterbirds (including shorebirds). David Li, Wetlands International - Malaysia assisted government and NGO staff on these surveys, and will produce a comprehensive survey report for the region in late 2006.

(Action 12) A survey of shorebird habitats in the Irrawaddy Delta was completed in February by the Myanmar Nature Society. Further surveys may be required to establish whether the delta supports internationally important sites.

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 2006 is available at: <http://www.wetlands.org/articlemenu.aspx?id=62fa7e34-ea30-4c97-b8a9-4a96bee8d267>. 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>.

New Wader Study Group for South Australia

In South Australia there is a network of 'Friends of the Parks' volunteer groups under the umbrella of the state Department of Environment and Heritage. It is as part of this network that we have formed a new group in the South East of South Australia. One of our aims is to bring together various groups, and individuals, who have been working with shorebirds in the south east (SE) for many years. Jeff Campbell, a past editor of Stilt, is President and Maureen Christie is Secretary. The group works closely with the Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG), Victorian Wader Study Group and Birds South Australia, with members and projects overlapping.

Activities are varied, and include AWSG Population Monitoring at two sites, counting of the wetlands between the Coorong and the Victorian border, banding and flagging, monitoring of Little Tern and a research project on local movement and site fidelity of Ruddy Turnstone.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of our work to date, has been our involvement with fieldwork in the Coorong during the Red-necked Avocet and Banded Stilt breeding event. We have also coordinated the monitoring of a small colony of breeding Little Tern near Port MacDonnell.

Anyone interested in any aspect of our work is invited to contact the Secretary, Maureen Christie, on 08 87380014.

Shorebird Surveys and Training in Indonesia

In 2005, Wetlands International – Indonesia Programme received funding to carry out a training programme on Shorebirds Surveys. The training was implemented successfully in 3 different provinces in Java in March 2005, of which some 30 people, including 2 participants from Malaysia took part. The training achieved its primary objective of improving the capacity of participants to identify and carry out simple shorebird surveys. In addition, the training was able to develop a networking of shorebird watchers, of which the information sharing could be made possible. A second program was carried out in Sumatra from 25 April to 1 May 2006 at Palembang and the small fishing village of Cemara, on the north east coast of Sumatra, to further develop these objectives:

1. To continue training in order to develop shorebird skills training capability in Indonesia;
2. To develop a networking among shorebirds watchers in Sumatra; and
3. To identify potential new sites for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Shorebird Site Network.

The first lectures were held at Palembang, taking advantage of facilities available, such as projectors and screens, in the city before venturing into the field. While on site talks were given using the more traditional aids such as large sheets of butcher's paper to sketch on, and hand outs, including the excellent updated version of the 'Shorebirds Study Manual' recently produced in Indonesian.

The field component started at Palembang travelling about 80 km along the Musi River then another 120 km along the coast to Cemara Village in three flat-bottomed water taxis (at the end of which we all had flat bottoms!). We spent the first night in a typical house of the region on shaky looking stilts in a small village on the shores of the South China Sea after a rewarding day in the field identifying and counting shorebirds. The following four nights were spent in comparative luxury at Cemara Village in an area of wetlands at the edge of the Berbak Reserve, Jambi Province.

The participants were keen, which is just as well because we spent most of the time wading through water and mud to get close to the shorebirds, mostly in breeding plumage, on migration to their breeding grounds. This part of Indonesian coastline provides important feeding habitat and roost sites for more than 100 000 shorebirds at Cemara Beach alone during the non-breeding season. This number would no doubt be doubled with the inclusion of nearby Barong Kecil and the Upang River Estuary mudflats making this region an obvious choice for nomination as an Internationally Important Shorebird Site in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Shorebird numbers were down while we were there as it was late in the season. However there were good opportunities to get good views of 14 species of shorebirds and 7 species of terns in all stages of plumages presenting the candidates with lots of challenges. Evenings were spent identifying birds from field notes and talks on shorebird identification and ecology.

Participants included representatives from the Department of Forestry in Jambi and South Sumatra Provinces, universities in South Sumatra, Riau, Lampung and West Sumatra Provinces, members of birdwatching clubs in North Sumatra, Bengkulu, Lampung Provinces, and 'Friend of Indonesian Birds' Locals included two representative from South Sumatra and Jambi Provinces and two representative of local villagers

A lecture at Sriwijaya University, Palembang, at the end of the program was highly successful, not only because more than 70 students and lecturers enjoy Phil Straw's lecture, but also because of a statement by the Head of Biology Department that special funding would be provided for the students association to study wetlands and waterbirds. At the end of the lecture, the department also announced specific funds to for the purchase of optical equipment and other field equipment. Further discussions are planned between Wetlands International about the possibility of further collaboration on shorebird research projects.

World Migratory Bird Day

The World Migratory Bird Day was launched on the weekend of 8/9 April 2006 by the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement AEWA, together with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and other partner organizations. This year the WMBD was launched with a special event called "WINGS" taking place at the edge of the Great Rift Valley in Laikipia, Kenya, an artistic and cultural show reflecting the wonders of bird migration, hosted by the well-known author, nature conservationist and future CMS Ambassador Ms Kuki Gallmann. WINGS was attended by a wide variety of local and international guests, bird experts and the media.

While WINGS and the Scientific Seminar took place in Kenya, the goal and vision of WMBD is to make it a truly global event. In order for WMBD to become a commemorative event throughout the world there is a need for support and contributions of conservation-minded individuals, Government agencies and NGOs alike.

Phil Straw (left) presenting a World Migratory Bird Day poster to Sawalludin, Head of Cemara Village, during the training programme

As we didn't have enough time to organise an event for the days allocated for WMBD it was decided to include this as part of the Sumatra Migratory Shorebird Skills Training course at Cemara. Villagers were invited to talks during the course and a presentation was made of a bird field guide for the region as well as other items, including a WMBD poster to highlight the importance of the area for migratory shorebirds.

Yus Rusila Noor, Wetlands International - Indonesia