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## Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways

No 20: January 2011

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*Tattler* is the quarterly newsletter of the Australasian Wader Studies Group. Contributions are welcome and encouraged for all working with shorebirds and their habitats along the East Asian- Australasian Flyway. Please contact the editor for more information.

### Editorial

The broadscale flooding that has swept through much of eastern Australia and the Gascoyne region in Western Australia has devastated communities and left a trail of destruction in its path. One positive that can be taken from this is that it will result in the renewal and revitalisation of many inland and coastal wetlands around the country.

Shorebirds have evolved to survive the ever changing weather. It is when humans modify or destroy habitat on which shorebirds rely that we see the resilience of a species to survive environmental change hampered. We need to better understand habitat use along the flyway and conserve as much known habitat as possible so that shorebirds can continue to cope with and adapt to natural environmental change.

## State of the World's Waterbirds: in trouble in Asia, recovering in 'the West'

The rate of decline of waterbird populations has slightly decreased over the last three decades. However, 47% of the waterbird populations are still declining and only 16% are increasing. The status of waterbirds is improving mainly in North America and Europe, while it is least favourable in Asia. Especially long distance migrants appear to be vulnerable.

These are the key findings of the 'State of the World's Waterbirds 2010' report recently launched by Wetlands International. The new publication analyses the changes in the status of waterbird populations between 1976 and 2005 using the data collected for the four editions of Waterbird Population Estimates published since 1994.

The report shows how the status of waterbird populations is improving in regions where strong conservation legislation is implemented, such as North America and Europe.

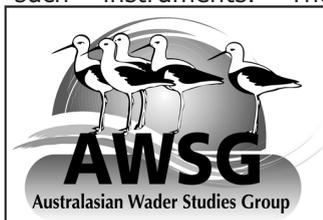
However, the rate of decline of waterbird populations is increasing in all other regions without such instruments. The situation is

especially alarming in Asia where 62% of waterbird populations are decreasing or even extinct.

"The combination of rapid economic growth and weak conservation efforts appears to be lethal", said Ali Stattersfield - BirdLife's Head of Science. "Waterbird populations are exposed to a wide range of threats, such as agricultural intensification, leading to the loss and degradation of marshes and lakes, as well as unsustainable hunting and the impacts of climate change".

The status of long-distance migrant waterbirds is generally worse than of those remaining in regions with strong conservation measures. This highlights the importance of coordinated conservation measures across entire flyways from the breeding to the non-breeding grounds.

"It is not surprising that the rate of decline of the long distant migrant sandpipers, snipes and curlews has accelerated most rapidly", said Prof Nick Davidson - Deputy Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.



Compiled and published by the Australasian Wader Studies Group

A Special interest Group of Birds Australia

[www.awsg.org.au](http://www.awsg.org.au)



"Now, 70% of their populations are decreasing. Halting destruction of their migratory staging areas is vital". On the other hand, the improving status of many crane species demonstrates that targeted conservation actions for the protection of key sites can produce positive results.

"We feel we have to put more effort into the conservation of waterbirds in this region", added Mr Daizaburo Kuroda – Senior Councillor to the Japanese Minister of the Environment that supported the publication.

"The decline of waterbird populations in developing countries is an indication of the environmental problems in these parts of the world. The world community of governments that is gathering at the UN Conference in Japan should take action to reverse this trend", stated Dr Taej Mundkur – Wetlands International's Flyway Programme Manager.

The 'State of the World's Waterbirds 2010' report follows BirdLife's global model for the 'State of the

World's Birds'.

BirdLife's 'State of the World's Birds' report and website provides a comprehensive overview of current and emerging conservation issues.

Presented in a clear and exciting way, it is a synthesis of the work and knowledge of the BirdLife Partnership, as well as leading researchers and conservationists from around the globe.

Through a searchable database of more than 230 case studies, it examines why birds and biodiversity are important, what we know about the changing state of the world's birds, why birds are declining and what can be done to improve their status.

*Nick Askew*

*Communications Officer, BirdLife International*  
Mon, Nov 8, 2010

<http://www.birdlife.org/community/2010/11/state-of-the-world%e2%80%99s-waterbirds-in-trouble-in-asia-recovering-in-%e2%80%98the-west%e2%80%99/>

## New eco-tourism initiative benefits Spoon-billed Sandpiper conservation

One of the most challenging issues faced by conservationists working to save the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper from extinction has been establishing exactly where they breed in the vast coastal areas of the Russian Far East.

For the past two decades, local Russian and international scientists working with BirdLife have been monitoring diminishing populations at a handful of important breeding sites in Chukotka and Northern Kamchatka.

Knowledge gleaned from recent studies coupled with new mapping and modelling techniques have identified several other areas where Spoon-billed Sandpipers are highly likely to be nesting. However, getting to these places is by no means straightforward. The sheer scale of the areas to be surveyed, their remoteness and their inaccessibility has, to date, presented an insurmountable barrier to visiting potential new breeding sites.

Now, BirdLife Species Champion and award winning expedition travel company [Heritage Expeditions](#) is providing the necessary logistical and financial support that will enable surveys to be conducted in an area with particularly high potential by making an approach from the sea.

A new Heritage Expeditions voyage '*In the Wake of Bering*' will take place in June/July this year which will incorporate a dedicated search for breeding Spoon-billed Sandpipers in the previously inaccessible Olyutorsky Bay area.

Those customers making this pioneering voyage will split in to small groups and participate in searches

for the birds under the supervision and guidance of BirdLife scientists. As this area has never been surveyed before, all species encountered will be carefully recorded and detailed notes will be taken on the suitability of habitat encountered.

Rodney Russ, conservationist and owner and founder of Heritage Expeditions comments "Our remarkable ship – The Spirit of Enderby – unlocks the opportunity for this urgent piece of research to be undertaken. We are delighted to be able to offer our customers this extraordinary adventure and support the vital conservation action required for Spoon-billed Sandpiper in this way".

Jim Lawrence, BirdLife's Preventing Extinctions Programme Manager comments "There is much hype in the tourism industry about unique travel opportunities but this expedition offers just that. Heritage's customers will not only visit places tourists have never set foot before, they will also be directly contributing to conservation. We are very excited about the new opportunities this initiative represents."

After searching for new breeding sites, the voyage will continue north to the main Spoon-billed Sandpiper study site at Meinypilgno – an area where Birds Russia, in conjunction with BirdLife International, are monitoring breeding Spoon-billed Sandpipers. Whether the earlier searches are successful or not, here Heritage's passengers should have another good chance of seeing nesting Spoon-billed Sandpipers under controlled conditions that minimise disturbance.

For information about joining this extraordinary

Heritage Expedition please visit <http://heritage-expeditions.com/trip/in-the-wake-of-bering-in-search-of-the-spoon-billed-sandpiper>

Tue, Jan 18, 2011  
Jim Lawrence

Development Manager, BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme  
<http://www.birdlife.org/community/2011/01/new-eco-tourism-initiative-benefits-spoon-billed-sandpiper-conservation/>

## Bangladesh's First Ringing Camp focuses on shorebirds

A search for the critically threatened Spoon-billed Sandpiper at Sonadia Island, southeast Bangladesh, was combined with bird-ringing training for Bangladeshi students during 20 November-2 December 2010. The survey was led by Enam Ul Haque, President, Bangladesh Bird Club (Bbc) and five trainee ringers, Mohammad Foysal, Samiul Mohsanin, Sayam Chowdhury, Simanto Dipu and Tarik Kabir, participated. A two days bird-ringing workshop for 25 zoology students of two public universities in the capital, Dhaka was subsequently held on a university campus. British and Thailand-based ornithologists and qualified ringers Nick Dymond, Andrew Pierce and Philip Round provided instruction and supervision throughout.

Among birds mist-netted and ringed were 34 shorebirds (22 Lesser Sand Plovers, six Little Stints, four Red-necked Stints, one Common Redshank and one Terek Sandpiper), caught on an area of disused salt-pans at Sonadia. Netting on the foreshore, which had daytime roosts of c. 3000 shorebirds, including at least three critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpipers, was attempted but proved not feasible, as night-time high-tide roosts were different to those used in the day and could not be located.

The survey's results were presented at a workshop in Dhaka, and reported in the national press. Holding at least 25 Spoon-billed Sandpipers, and significant concentrations of other shorebirds, Sonadia Island is a wetland of international

importance. However, its integrity is threatened by the proposed construction of a deep-sea port.

Rings were provided by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Shorebird leg-flags were not affixed, as no colour combination has yet been assigned for Bangladesh. However, the expedition had a few individually numbered red flags for use with Spoon-billed Sandpipers, in the event of capture of that species, kindly provided by Dr. Nigel Clark, Head of Projects, BTO. The survey was organized jointly by Bbc and The Wetland Trust (UK), and funded by grants from the Smythies fund of the Oriental Bird Club and UNDP's Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project.

Bbc monitors shorebird and other waterbird numbers annually but shorelines, and consequently the best shorebird sites, are continually changing due to the constant accretion of silts in the super-active Meghna estuary of Bangladesh. Three globally threatened, and three near-threatened shorebirds are already known in significant numbers but many other important concentrations of shorebirds are yet to be discovered.

Bbc plans organize further shorebird surveys and ringing camps in 2011.

*Bangladesh Bird Club*

*House # 11, Road # 4, Banani DOHS, Dhaka 1206, Bangladesh*

## Shorebird counting in Khayryuzova Bay, Russia

Khayryuzova Bay is located on the west coast of Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia, 70km to the north of Moroshechnaya Estuary – a Ramsar site on the East Asian-Australasian flyway.

Two big rivers, the Khayryuzova and Belogolovaya, flow into the bay. The maximum tidal range is 5.4m and up to 150km<sup>2</sup> of mudflats and sand beaches are exposed during low tide on the 30km stretch of coast between Ombon Cape and Kovran River. The importance of this area for shorebirds during southward migration was known (Lobkov, 1998), but poorly studied. Observations of southward migration of shorebirds was conducted in the mouth of Khayryuzova River (57°05'N; 165°43'E) from July 28 – August 20 2010 at the same time as the studies on white whales was undertaken. Counting of waders on the mudflats was carried out over 19 days in this period. Great Knot was most numerous

species – at least 15,000 individuals were counted on August 14. A maximum of 2200 Dunlins were counted on August 19, 1530 Whimbrels on August 1, 770 Black-tailed Godwits on August 6, 627 Bar-tailed Godwits on August 1, 470 Red-necked Stints on August 14 and 346 Grey Tattlers on August 15. Also smaller numbers of Mongolian Plovers, Red-necked Phalaropes, Red Knots, Eastern Curlews, Wood Sandpipers, Greenshanks, Common Sandpipers, Pacific Golden Plovers, Long-toed Stints and Common Snipes were observed. On August 19 three Spoon-billed Sandpipers were recorded in a flock of Red-necked Stints. During counting we could observe only 20–25% of mudflats used by shorebirds. Consequently the total quantity of waders staging in this area in one day is much higher than counted.

*F. Kazansky*





## Flyway Partnership Meeting in Cambodia

The 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the East Asia-Australasian Flyway Partnership was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in early December. Birds Australia/AWSG was represented by myself and Phil Straw. The meeting was probably the best of the Partnership meetings to date in that we had representatives from 24 Partners including 2 new government Partners—Thailand and Bangladesh—and 2 new NGO Partners—Miranda Naturalists' Trust (NZ) and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (UK). There were also a number of observers from other governments and NGO's. North Korea was represented by 2 people for the first time. In total there were up to 80 people at times.

The purpose of this Partnership is to provide a flyway wide framework to promote dialogue, cooperation and collaboration between a range of stakeholders including all levels of governments, site managers, multilateral environment agreements, technical institutions, UN agencies, development agencies, industrial and private sector, academe, non-government organisations, community groups and local people to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats. The goal adopted by the Partnership is:

*Migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway are recognised and conserved for the benefit of people and biodiversity.*

Comprising such a large and diverse membership, decision making is sometimes slow but I would acknowledge the leadership and momentum provided by the Secretariat led by Mr Roger Jaensch and his team located in Incheon, Republic of Korea. During this meeting there were several important strategic actions initiated. These included:

- The establishment and first meetings of task forces for priority regions of (i) Yellow Sea and (ii) Amur-Heilong Basin and also for priority species (Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Scaly sided Merganser).
- Progress was made on two existing task forces on (i) co-ordination of colour-marking and (ii) monitoring of habitats and waterbird populations.

- A proposal by WWF (Hong Kong) to develop a Plan for Shorebird Conservation Priorities and Actions. This would be initially funded through WWF (HK) but would be developed in close collaboration with the Shorebird Working Group of the Partnership.
- A new CEPA working group was formed under the Chair of Lew Young.
- The Shorebird Working Group was re invigorated and agreed to work closely with WWF (HK) in the development of its proposed Plan for shorebird conservation in the flyway. This Working Group is in the process of receiving nominations from Partners and I have taken on the role of Chair of this group for the next year to help get it established.
- A representative and potential Partner from Rio Tinto, Mr Rick Humphries, attended the whole meeting and gave a presentation on how the international corporate sector could actively collaborate to provide biodiversity values and benefits. This was particularly encouraging and all Partners have an important role in developing this relationship. There is huge potential in fostering collaborative activities with such global corporations; in particular, those that undertake business ventures throughout the EAAFlyway.
- The International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper was discussed at a meeting of the Task Force for this species. The dramatic decline of this enigmatic wader species to an estimated 130-250 pairs (and maybe <100) and its recent uplisting to 'Critically Endangered' places extreme urgency on gathering information and coordinating conservation efforts necessary to conserve this species.

I would acknowledge the excellent job the government of Cambodia did in hosting this meeting.

*Ken Gosbell*



## Red Knots depend on a small threatened staging area in Bohai Bay, China

The migration system of Red Knots in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway (EAAF) is poorly known. Two subspecies occur in this flyway: *Calidris canutus rogersi*, which nests in Chukotka, in far-eastern Siberia, and the recently described *C. c. piersmai*, which nests on the New Siberian Islands.

Given the size of the non-breeding population of Red Knots in the EAAF, estimated at 220 000 individuals, surprisingly few Red Knots have been found at staging sites. The study site in Bohai Bay – a 20-km stretch of coastline – proved to be extraordinarily important to Red Knots, supporting over 45% of the EAAF population during northward migration. Outside Bohai Bay, no other staging sites of comparable importance to Red Knot have been found in the Yellow Sea, though other locations near Bohai Bay have historically supported large numbers. It is clear that this fairly small area is the key staging area on northward migration for well over half of the Red Knots in the EAAF. Exactly why they should be so localised during this time of year has yet to be resolved.

There were clear differences in the migration schedules of the two subspecies. *C. c. piersmai* was a late migrant, as previously predicted on the basis of observations of departures from northwest Australia. The average arrival date for *C. c. piersmai* (29 April) corresponded closely enough in time to departure dates observed in northwest Australia to suggest this subspecies makes a direct flight to Bohai Bay. In contrast, the average arrival date for *C. c. rogersi* was later (18 April) than observed departures from New Zealand by the end of March or start of April, suggesting this subspecies uses an unknown staging area/s before arrival in Bohai Bay.

On average *C. c. piersmai* arrived 11 days later than *C. c. rogersi*, staged for a similar period and had later departure dates that were far more compressed in time. One possible interpretation is that the timing of breeding varies more in *C. c. rogersi* than in *C. c. piersmai* because it has a more extensive breeding range. Alternatively, the difference may be explained by the differing terrains the subspecies fly over *en route* to their breeding grounds. For *C. c. piersmai*, the great circle route to the New Siberian Islands involves a long overland flight before reaching the shores of the Eastern Siberian Sea, which are frozen in late May and early June; they should therefore schedule their departures tightly in order to arrive on the breeding grounds when the thaw begins. Even when doing this they may encounter late snowfalls that force them to survive on their own body stores on reaching the breeding grounds. In contrast, the great circle route from Bohai Bay to Chukotka takes *C. c. rogersi* parallel to the northwest shores of the Sea of Okhotsk, where numerous estuaries, tidal

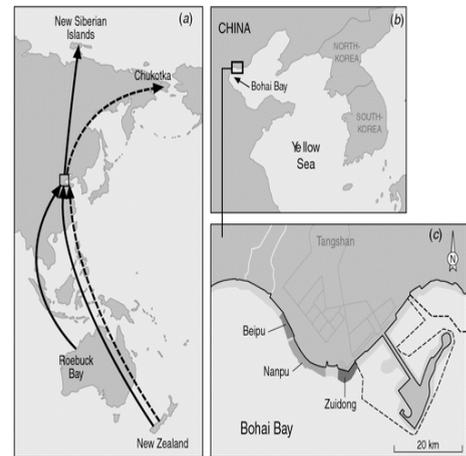
flats and coastal lagoons may provide stopover opportunities for Red Knots should they encounter adverse conditions. Satellite imagery suggests there are ice-free areas along

these shores in late May and there are observations of Red Knots consistent with such an interpretation. If *C. c. rogersi* does undertake further staging on northward migration, and does have more flexibility in arrival at the breeding grounds at a time when weather conditions are suitable, this could also explain another apparent paradox in our data: *C. c. rogersi* has a similar stopover period in Bohai Bay to *C. c. piersmai* (average 29 days), despite being slightly more distant from the breeding grounds (it is ~4700 km to from Bohai Bay to Chukotka, cf. ~4200 km to the New Siberian Islands).

The apparent dependence of Red Knots in this Flyway on Bohai Bay makes their conservation a matter of grave concern. Bohai Bay lies in one of the most densely populated regions in the world, and it is undergoing rapid economic development, which includes conversion of tidal flats to land along much of the coastline. One of the biggest of these developments is at Caofeidian in northern Bohai Bay, a huge port and industrial development that had already destroyed approximately 110 km<sup>2</sup> of tidal flats and shallow water area by the end of 2008, including the former Red Knot site at Zuidong East; this project is now expanding into our study area. The Tianjin sites to the west are being lost to an even larger development project, the Tianjin New Area, which has already resulted in the loss of 80 km<sup>2</sup> of tidal flats to the end of 2008. Other development projects of similar scale are in progress elsewhere in Bohai Bay and at present there seems to be no legal impediment to further projects being planned. Protection of the remaining tidal flats of Bohai Bay is likely to be essential to the continued survival of Red Knots in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway.

Danny Rogers, Hong-Yan Yang, Chris Hassell, Adrian Boyle, Ken Rogers, Bing Chen, Zheng-Wang Zhang and Theunis Piersma

Adapted from journal article in *Emu* 110(4) 307-315 doi:10.1071/MU10024





## Birds Korea Blueprint 2010

The Birds Korea Blueprint 2010 is now available in hard copy and online. The 160-page long report provides essential background information on key habitats, species and sites in a large section of the South Korean part of the Yellow Sea, or Yellow Sea Blueprint Region (YSBR). Funding and capacity allowing, Birds Korea will produce a follow-up document in 2012. As proposed, "The Blueprint 2012" will build on background information, contain analysis of some population trends and describe the status of the YSBR's Important Bird Areas and Ramsar sites.

The publication of "The Blueprint 2010" comes at a critical time – towards the end of the International Year on Biodiversity, and as decision-makers commit themselves once more to reducing rates of biodiversity loss, e.g. in line with commitments made to the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals. Clearly, action is urgently needed in this region. Already participants at the Convention on Biological Diversity COP10 have learned that the status of waterbirds around the world is worst in Asia, where "62% of waterbird populations are decreasing or even extinct". Moreover, according to Professor Nick Davidson, the Deputy Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention in the same press release, "It is not surprising that the rate of decline of the long distant migrant sandpipers, snipes and curlews (shorebirds) has accelerated most rapidly. Now, 70% of their populations are decreasing. Halting destruction of their migratory staging areas is vital" (Wetlands International 2010 <http://www.wetlands.org/NewsandEvents/NewsPressreleases/tabid/60/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2445/Default.aspx>).

### Executive Summary

The Birds Korea Blueprint aims to support ongoing conservation initiatives as part of the Republic of Korea's (ROK) efforts to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss (by 2010), in line with commitments to the Millennium Development Goals. It is a collection of articles and recommendations based on the understanding that biodiversity underpins the functioning of the ecosystems on which people also depend for life and livelihood. The Blueprint's focus is the conservation of avian biodiversity of the ROK part of the Yellow Sea or 'Yellow Sea Blueprint Region' (YSBR), and contains essential information on key sites, species and conservation initiatives divided into three main habitats (intertidal wetland, open sea areas, and islands).

The YSBR is at the heart of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway, and 34 out of c.340 annually occurring species are globally threatened. At the same time, the YSBR is a region under huge development pressure. Reclamation is the major



driver of avian biodiversity decline and has reduced the national area of intertidal wetland by more than 70% to only c.106,000 ha, less than half the estimate of remaining 'coastal wetland' in the official Fourth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The health of remaining

intertidal wetland is also threatened by pollution, estuary dams and infrastructure development along rivers, including the Four Rivers project. The majority of shorebird species and species dependent on intertidal wetlands are therefore in decline or are globally threatened. The 40,100 ha Saemangeum reclamation project, one of many ongoing projects, has already resulted in the loss of livelihood of >20,000 local people and a measurable decline in shorebirds at both the site and the Flyway level. This includes >20% of the world population of Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* (requiring its reassessment as globally Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List). Additional reclamation and mega-projects, e.g. tidal-power plants in Incheon, will cause further massive habitat loss and population declines.

There is less information on seabirds and birds on islands of the YSBR. However, the marine environment of the Yellow Sea is increasingly 'stressed', and seabirds at sea are likely threatened by oil and other pollution, in addition to unsustainable fisheries. In addition, some seabird colonies, including of Swinhoe's Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis*, are threatened by invasive alien species. Many migrant bird species on islands, like the island-nesting Styan's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella pleskei*, also appear to be in decline. The Blueprint therefore recommends that data needs to be shared, science needs to underlie policy, and improved collaboration is required to achieve a reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss. The [2010 online version of The Blueprint](#) will, as intended, be updated regularly and made available for participants to the 2012 IUCN World Congress (Republic of Korea).

The Blueprint 2010 is available [online](#) and for [download](#) at [www.birdskorea.org/](http://www.birdskorea.org/).

*Birds Korea, October 24<sup>th</sup> 2010*

## Traditional salt-pans hold major concentrations of overwintering shorebirds in Southeast Asia

Among populations of shorebirds with known trends almost half (48%) are declining, in contrast to only 16% increasing. The reasons for these declines are likely the result of a reduction and degradation of breeding sites, and notably critical stopover and wintering habitats. Some human-modified habitats, particularly salt-pans which are used by shorebirds around the world, may help substitute for natural habitats lost for shorebird species during migration.

On the wintering grounds, feeding habitats can only be exploited by shorebirds if they are associated with suitable roost sites, and roost availability may therefore limit population size. However, natural high-tide roosts are vulnerable to urban development or land reclamation because they tend to be small areas located just above the tide line.

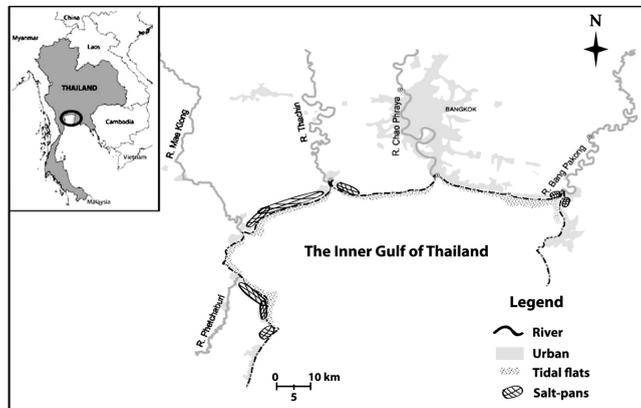
Salt-pans or coastal salt ponds (saltworks, salt crystallization ponds or salinas), in which salt is extracted from sea water through solar evaporation in a series of shallow interconnected evaporation pans varying in size, water depths and separated by dikes are used by shorebirds in many regions. While traditional shallow aquaculture or prawn-capture ponds continue to provide feeding and roosting areas for shorebirds, intensively managed, modern, deep and steep-sided aquaculture ponds are typically unsuitable for shorebirds. A trend towards converting salt ponds to modern aquaculture developments is apparent in the Inner Gulf of Thailand where intensive shrimp farming is once again a booming business in addition to the excavation of pond sediments for landfill. However, in many areas, these two habitats, aquaculture ponds and salt-pans are still often found in close proximity.

This study looked at the influence of landscape characteristics on species richness, abundance, and diversity of shorebirds at 20 sites covering most of the Inner Gulf of Thailand, a landscape with a long history of salt farming.

### Conclusions and conservation implications

In addition to tidal flats as primary feeding grounds, salt-pans appear to provide critical roosting and feeding habitat for shorebirds that overwinter in the Inner Gulf of Thailand and probably elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Sites with salt-pans present held significantly higher species richness, abundance and diversity of shorebirds. Generalized additive models indicated that landscapes with a larger proportion of tidal flats in conjunction with salt-pans were the best predictors of sites with higher species richness, abundance and diversity.

Although tidal flats in the Inner Gulf of Thailand are not threatened by reclamation and development as has already happened in (e.g.) South Korea, they



are at risk from erosion. Consequently, traditional salt-pans in this area may offer at least a partial substitute for natural supratidal and tidal habitats particularly during non-breeding seasons by providing suitable roost sites and supplementary feeding sites during high tide.

In the western portion of the Inner Gulf, where abandoned intensive shrimp ponds are widely found, these ponds typically remain flooded and are little used by birds. Restoration of these abandoned ponds for roosting and supplementary feeding habitats for shorebirds, through adjusting water depth and salinity, could offer a promising approach to wetland management which would benefit not only shorebirds but many other aquatic animals and plants. Systems where the ponds function both as de facto nature reserves yet which also allow for resource harvest and subsistence use by local people might receive more local support. The successful case at the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, Hong Kong suggested that during winter Gei Wai ponds (intertidal traditional shrimp ponds dug out from mangroves) support large numbers of various species of waterbirds when water is drained out during the course of harvesting. Adopting a form of 'Gei Wai' model in the Inner Gulf of Thailand might be worthwhile for both birds and local people.

Further studies on how salt-pans are used by shorebirds are needed, as are comparisons of food availability and benthic and aquatic prey biomass among tidal flats, salt-pans and aquaculture ponds. This should facilitate more effective wetland management in the future. Collaboration between researchers, salt farmers and planning authorities as to how best to maintain salt-pans as potential shorebird roost sites such as in the Inner Gulf of Thailand is urgently needed in order to maintain habitat for shorebird populations in critical wintering and staging areas of this flyway.

*Siriya Sripanomyom, Philip D. Round, Tommaso Savini, Yongyut Trisurat, George A. Gale*

Adapted from *Biological Conservation* 144 (2011) 526–537





## Addressing the challenges facing migratory shorebirds reaching South-Western Australia

**Forum, Seminar and Workshops—17th-20th February 2011  
Denmark, WA**

You are invited to the following events to be held at the Centre for Sustainable Living in Denmark WA between 17 and 20 February 2011:

### Living Lakes Forum

Thursday 17th Feb 2011 (provisionally 8.30am to 5pm includes lunch)

Introduction to the international living lakes network and international efforts to conserve wetlands and estuaries. This forum aims to raise awareness and participation of the international Living Lakes Network in Australia.

### Seminar - Migratory Shorebird Conservation in Western Australia

Friday 18th February 2011 (provisionally 8.30am to 5pm includes lunch, with dinner following)

This seminar aims to bring together people concerned about the crisis facing shorebirds in the East Asian- Australasian Flyway. A range of speakers, local, Australia and International, will address the challenges facing migratory shorebirds

that each year visit Australia. The seminar will cover Ramsar wetlands, case studies of wetland management from WA. One aim of the seminar is to allow increased networking of concerned individuals in the South West and South Coast exchanging information about wetland and estuary management of particular relevance to shorebird conservation.

### Shorebird Conservation Workshops

Saturday Workshop 19th Feb 2011 (provisionally 8.30am – 5pm, packed lunch provided)

Learn from experts from Birds Australia practical knowledge about shore birds, their biology, conservation and monitoring. Workshop A provides the introduction to biology, identification and conservation (with field trips) and Workshop B builds on this to focus on shorebird conservation, further identification and monitoring.

For more information or to obtain an Expression of Interest registration for, please see <http://www.greenskills.org.au/ws.html> or contact Green Skills on 98481019 or contact Basil Schur at

## Australasian Ornithological Conference 2011 Cairns, far north Queensland

The next conference will be held at the Cairns Campus of James Cook University in tropical north Queensland from 28 September – 1 October 2011.

Organisers are calling for abstracts for both spoken and poster presentations. While symposia and contributed papers on any topic are encouraged, in

keeping with the location presentations aligning with the theme of *Ornithology in the Tropics* are particularly welcomed.

Please visit [www.birdsaustralia.com.au/whats-on/australasian-ornithological-conference.html](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/whats-on/australasian-ornithological-conference.html) for more information.



### Australasian Wader Studies Group

Membership of the Australasian Wader Studies Group is open to anyone interested in the conservation and research of waders (shorebirds) in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Members receive the twice yearly journal *Stilt*, and a quarterly newsletter, *Tattler*. Visit [www.awsg.org.au](http://www.awsg.org.au) for more information.

Please direct all membership enquiries to:  
Membership Manager  
Birds Australia  
Suite 2-05, 60 Leicester St  
Carlton, VIC 3053, Australia.  
Ph: 1300 730 075  
E: [membership@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:membership@birdsaustralia.com.au)

#### Annual subscriptions:

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Institutions	A\$45.00