

Tattler

Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways & Australian Shorebirds 2020 Project

No. 52 July 2023

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Red Knot female on the nest by Pavel Tomkovich in the Russian Far East tundra

Editorial

Another year has past since Tattler #51 and COVID has had continued impact much longer than expected. During this time this has resulted in the delay of two global events reported in this edition of Tattler. These include the Conference of the Parties, Ramsar COP14 which was rescheduled to be held in Geneva, Switzerland on 5 to 13 November, chaired virtually by China. COP14 was originally to be held in Wuhan, China in November 2022. The COVID situation in that country had made that difficult. The updated plan was for China to be the Host country, working together with the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention in Switzerland as the geographical location.

Alison Russell French provides a report of the EAAFP which was held in Brisbane in March despite these delays both the Ramsar COP14 and the EAAFP MOP 11 were among the best I have attended since 1996. Reported on in this edition of Tattler.

Doug Watkins has stepped down after an effective three-year term as Chief Executive, a position now taken on by New Zealander Jennifer George with an extensive background as a performance-driven profession that spans government, law, education, business development, and the non-profit sector and long list qualifications making the choice by the EAAFP a wise move for future management in a challenging world!

Dylan Jones provides us with a report on the Ramsar COP from a Youth Engaged in Wetlands (YEW) perspective following their successful involvement at the COP. A report on YEW is also included in this Tattler to explain who they are and their involvement in both Ramsar and the EAAFP meetings. Youth are our hope for the future all we need is funding to engage them with us older generation and take over the reins with a fresh perspective.

The World Wetland Network is an umbrella grouping for smaller civil society and NGOs who focus on wetlands. (Continued on page 2)

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www.awsg.org.au

A Special Interest Group of BirdLife Australia



Editorial (cont'd)

It amplifies those voices in the world of the wetlands conventions such as Ramsar which would otherwise could not occur. The need for a World Coastal Forum: Micha Jackson believes that an effective strategy for achieving coastal conservation is to learn from and build on the wealth of experience that exists globally. Reflecting this, the World Coastal Forum has a bold vision to operate as a voluntary, independent initiative that will gain endorsement for its establishment and ongoing operation at a high political level by a truly representative cross-section of stakeholders around the world. These will comprise national, sub-national and local government representatives engaged in coastal management alongside international organisations, NGOs, academics, and business leaders.

Avian influenza has been around for some time, but recent events spreading globally, which is a great concern, has resulted in the reinvigoration of the EAAFP Avian Disease Working Group of which I am a member on behalf of the EAAFP Shorebird Working Group. Fortunately, Australia's representative, Marcel Klaasen, gives us an overview of the situation in the EAA Flyway and the need for Australia to be more vigilant given the mass mortalities in seabird breeding colonies, species that could reach Australian shores.

Chris Hassell gives us yet another Bohai report on his activities in China, including monitoring and scanning for leg flags, filling an otherwise big gap in our knowledge. Some sad news is that funding for his work through the Global Flyway Network has dried up after many years support from the Netherlands, for which we are extremely grateful. Fortunately some, but reduced, funding from other sources (including the AWSG, QWSG and VWSG, as well as the Bobolink Foundation), has kept him active in the short term.

'Looking after a dot on the landscape within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway'. Think Globally, Act Locally is an umbrella is a philosophy followed by smaller civil society and NGOs, according to Tom Clarke and actioned with hundreds of volunteers to accomplish meaningful management of one of the most important migratory shorebird sites in Australia. A project outside the resources of the NSW NPWS 'site managers'. Such a project to restore shorebird habitat that was initiated over 20 years ago. This type of action is commonplace in many countries where large membership-based organisations who own and manage large nature reserves. But rare in Australia where wildlife management is low on the agenda, and state government budgets.

Another AWSG/VWSG has been honoured, this time awarded the John Hobbs Medal for 2023 to a Member who has made a significant lifetime contribution to the knowledge and conservation of native birds in Australia, by BirdLife Australia. Unfortunately, another highly honoured woman, Priscilla Park OAM, well known to many AWSG members, passed away on 24 July. Both included in articles in this edition of Tattler.

Phil Straw, Editor

Contributions are welcome and should be sent to:
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Looking after a dot on the landscape within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway

You have all heard this I am sure, "Think Globally, Act Locally" but did you know that it has been actioned by hundreds of volunteers carrying out essential work in the Hunter Estuary? A project to restore shorebird habitat that was initiated over 20 years ago continues to maintain prime shorebird roost areas for these amazing birds. With occasional assistance through Government funding and enduring relationships with Government agencies, this Hunter Bird Observers Club-led project is testament to what can be achieved by volunteers doing great things over an extended period.

A major issue for shorebirds in the Hunter, indeed for the entire flyway, is finding a safe roost. Not just one but several so that alternative arrangements can quickly be made when conditions and levels of disturbance make life uncomfortable at the preferred roost. These issues were becoming obvious to Hunter Estuary shorebird watchers in the late 1990s.

Of particular concern was the viability of one of the major day-time roosts: Stockton Sandspit. Mangrove invasion along the beachfront was creating a wall of vegetation, effectively blocking the river view and views of approaching aerial predators, resulting in shorebirds avoiding the place. Also, the saltmarsh areas were becoming overrun by Spiny Rush *Juncus acutus* and the ground between was filling with Bitou Bush *Chrysanthemoides monilifera*. Shorebirds need an open area with clear views to the water to feel safe and at ease over the high tides while they catch some sleep. This need was not being met.

The vegetation needed to go; but what could be done? From 1997, several weeding days were organised by HBOC to mostly sort out the bitou bush but by 2001 the mangrove issue was becoming urgent. A meeting of stakeholders, including both commercial and recreational fishers, was convened and a plan to remove a section of mangroves was agreed upon. Permission to remove this protected species was granted by NSW Fisheries. Ultimately funding was secured and National Parks and Wildlife Service was approached to manage the primary work.

Over the summer of late 2002 approximately half a hectare of mature mangroves was cleared by contractors from the edge of Stockton Sandspit while HBOC volunteers carried out shorebird monitoring as part of the funding agreement.

Looking after a dot on the landscape

This action had an amazing and immediate effect; most of the shorebirds returned to the sandspit. For one species, Pacific Golden Plover, it would take several years to return but that is another story.

Additional monitoring by HBOC members began in April 2003 as an extra activity of the Mid-week Group and this morphed quickly into a bitou bush weeding exercise. Continuous weeding works by HBOC volunteers through to the present have kept Stockton Sandspit as a preferred day-time roost for thousands of shorebirds.



Figure 1. Mass drop of mangrove seeds happens every year at Stockton Sandspit and other places in the Hunter Estuary. Six months later the surviving seedlings are removed by volunteers.

The successes enjoyed at Stockton Sandspit emboldened shorebird watchers to consider other known important shorebird sites in the Hunter Estuary that were being compromised by encroaching mangroves. (This mangrove encroachment, by the way, is not a Hunter River phenomenon; it is happening in all the estuaries). Not just historical roost sites but also some feeding areas within saltmarsh communities were being impacted.



Figure 2. Contractors felling mature mangroves at Milham Pond on Ash Island in the Hunter Estuary. All follow-up has been undertaken by volunteers.

Since that first brave step several additional areas have been cleared of mangroves and on each occasion an initial primary effort by contractors has been funded through various Government programs. Following all these primary treatments has been an ongoing, determined and dedicated effort from HBOC volunteers and others.

The core team of HBOC members has been assisted from time to time by others from a diverse array of organisations. Other like-minded groups as well as community organisations seeking to engage their members with a worthwhile environmental project have contributed over the years. It is estimated that over 480 persons have volunteered at some time and hopefully went home with an appreciation of shorebirds and some of the issues that confront them. Since April 2003, over 10,900 hours of continuous volunteer effort towards preserving shorebird habitat have accrued.



Figure 3. A beach on Smith Island being cleared of mangrove seedlings by intrepid Landcare people.

From humble beginnings and a wild idea about clearing a protected native tree to save some endangered birds, the project continues to carry out restoration of about 150 hectares of Hunter Wetlands National Park. Back then many questions were being considered: "What can a bunch of birdos do?" "What could possibly be the extent of our influence?" "Is it possible to do something positive for the flyway?" Doing nothing was not an option.

While it was clear that HBOC members had an obligation (this was the initial reason for doing something anyway) the ongoing work provides a positive feedback loop that maintains the energy and brings much satisfaction to the carers. This happens on every occasion when we witness the arrival of the shorebirds to those places that were restored each year; a positive joy.

Tom Clarke

On behalf of those 480 plus persons.

Bohai Updates 23 April to 3 June 2023

Bohai Updates 23 April to 3 June 2023

This season's work was in jeopardy as funding for Global Flyway Network has dried up from the major sources in the Netherlands and China, who we thank for their long commitment to our work here. Luckily for our dataset and most importantly our presence at Nanpu, four organizations have pledged money to GFN to keep the work going for its 14th year in a row. They have committed enough funds to enable Katherine Leung and Mr Xiao Liu to be at Nanpu for 6 weeks. So, GFN extend our thanks to **Bobolink Foundation, Australasian Wader Studies Group, Queensland Wader Studies Group and Victorian Wader Studies Group.**

Having missed the 2022 spring season, here I am at the Nanpu seawall with the knots again!

On 23 April, Xiao Liu and I arrived at the seawall shortly after dawn. We waited for the mudflat to become exposed and for the birds to start to arrive to feed after roosting in the salt ponds during the overnight high tide. There were only 1,200 Red Knots around and at this time of the year the majority of the knots from North-west Australia have not arrived in Bohai Bay, so we only managed to record a small number of colour-banded birds. Nevertheless, it was nice to be back to the standard scene and to be familiar again with the routine.

It also seems to be a "standard" thing for the GFN team to discover something not quite the same as in the previous years. As the clock passed 07:30, we started to see big trucks arriving at the seawall. They were all fully loaded with earth, heading towards the Beipu end of the seawall. And the trucks come back the same way after unloading. It wasn't very pleasant for us scanning on the seawall, as every time a truck zoomed past, we got a 10-second shaking view in our telescopes, and ourselves plus our telescopes were covered by layers of sand and dust! It wasn't pleasant for the shorebirds either; birds feeding close to the seawall took off almost every time a truck passed until the tide dropped low enough for them to feed at the water line far away from the seawall. I did a little count and found out the trucks drove past me 20 times within an hour, so on average, a truck appears every 3 minutes. This is a bad situation for the knots at a critical stage of their annual cycle.

The situation stayed the same throughout the week, but we are starting to see more knots with

NW Australia colour bands. Later, we found out that these earth-moving works are for "wetland restoration" of the seawall and a big area of salt ponds near the end of the seawall of Nanpu in preparation for the upcoming World Heritage nomination. The evaluators will do an inspection on 10 May. Looking at the scale and progress of the work, I expect it is going to be a difficult season for both the birds and us. I feel so sorry for the birds.

Time is flying so fast! It is already Day 27 of this season's field work at Bohai Bay.

On the Nanpu seawall, the Red Knots and the two of us are still facing the stress from the trucks. For a short while from 3-10 May, the busy earthmoving works had temporarily stopped in preparation for the World Heritage nomination evaluators' inspection on 10 May. But from 11 May onwards, the trucks come to work every day starting from 5am. The trucks come along the coast from Zuidong in the east, through the Nanpu seawall and continue towards Beipu. There is no section of coast left undisturbed.

It is not difficult to imagine that a "canteen" [feeding site] next to a dirt track with busy trucks going up and down creating noise and dust will not attract many customers. Up until now we have not seen any Red Knot number higher than 2,200 on the Nanpu mudflats. The overall number of waterbirds has also been very low. Despite the low number, we have so far recorded Red Knots from 16 banding locations on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, plus an individual from India on the Central Asian Flyway.

Starting from May, the Nanpu mudflats are reopened for shellfish harvesting. This 8km section of mudflats is managed by the Beipu Village, and the village heads hire workers to carry out the harvesting each year. The shellfish collectors usually pose no harm or disturbance to the feeding shorebirds. In the past years, we have always seen flocks of Red Knot feeding quite close to them. However, we found that the number of workers has increased quite a lot this season compared to previous years. We are concerned that the intensified harvesting might not be a good practice for the shorebirds. Upon speaking with the workers, they comment that the harvest has dropped this year. Has other food in the mudflats for Red Knots and other shorebirds also dropped, thus leading to the low number of birds? Our colleague, Hebo Peng's mud sampling work results will help answer this important question later.

Bohai Updates 23 April to 3 June 2023

The lack of Red Knot at Nanpu led us to check Hangu at the west side of the Bay near Tianjin. In the past years, usually when the Red Knots at Nanpu disappear, there will be high a number in Hangu. We did find a high number of "red-bellied" shorebirds in Hangu, but 6,000 of them were Curlew Sandpipers and there were only 500 - 1,000 Red Knots seen during our four visits. Disappointingly, we also found trucks and diggers operating next to the Hangu mudflats for another "wetland restoration" project in Tianjin. So, the shorebirds there are also under stress.

I kept saying to Xiao Liu at the end of our field session each day: tomorrow might be a better day! I am still hoping the number of Red Knots will increase for a couple more thousand as we are getting nearer late May. But the continued disturbance might mean they are not going to stay long and gather in big numbers like the past. We'll see.

As long as there are still Red Knots in our telescope view, we will continue to monitor and document the situation this season.

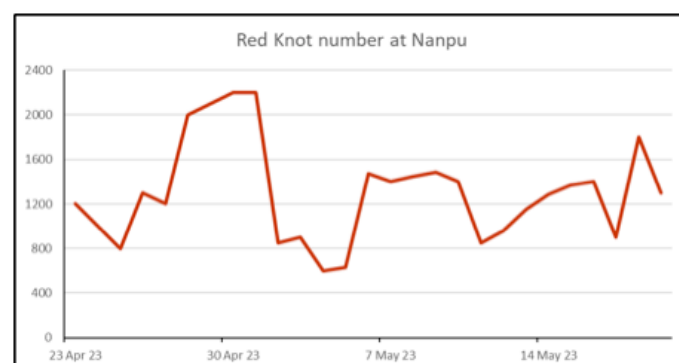
3 June 2023

On this very last day of this field season in Nanpu, I am sitting on a stool by a large salt pond around the Prison, looking at 400+ Red Knot roosting right in the middle of the pond in the distant heat haze. Meanwhile, Pied Avocet and Black-winged Stilt are making alarm calls next to me as they have nests and chicks around here. This is another frustrating moment of this season, as the last remaining Red Knots are too far away for me to scan their legs for colour bands or even for counting the number accurately, and I know there must be some late arriving colour-banded individuals that I have not yet recorded!

But I am feeling quite contented to see them having a safe place to roost and feed happily, undisturbed before they have to make their next move to the Russian Far East breeding ground. Nine years ago, back on 11 April 2014 (my very first experience of Nanpu), at this same salt pond, I got my feet muddy joining Ady and Matt first thing in the morning to rescue shorebirds trapped in mist nets set for hunting. So, today's scene is already a huge contrast and relief from some of the worrying scenes in the past.

Over the past 2 weeks, the number of Red Knot only slightly increased with peak counts of 3,600 individuals on 25 and 28 May. This is surely a historical low number for Nanpu. Nevertheless,

since there has not been any report of big numbers of Red Knot elsewhere along coastal China, the peak count of 3,600 individuals is still a significant number (>3% of the EAAF population).



Something changes, but something stays the same: like the colour-banded Red Knot 1BLLB, which Xiao Liu recorded at the salt pond on the last day of May. It is now 16 years or more old and has been seen at Nanpu almost every spring since 2009. Late but checked-in as promised!

I keep thinking that maybe we are entering a new "era" here with Red Knot changing their migration pattern and not using Nanpu as the major hub like the past. Maybe the majority of them are passing through the site in smaller flocks for shorter periods of time. These are only my not-very-scientific speculations; a full analysis of our resighting data over the years should give us some more solid evidence. At the same time, it is getting even more important to keep monitoring this site in the coming years to record these changes properly. I am still feeling hopeful that, with better implementation of conservation management of the Wetland Park in future, Nanpu will still be a sustainable stop-over site for our Red Knot and other shorebirds in the EAAF.

Theunis and I would like to add once more, a thank you to the organizations that made this 2023 season's work possible: Bobolink Foundation, Australasian Wader Studies Group, Queensland Wader Study Group and Victorian Wader Studies Group. Also, a huge thankyou to Katherine Leung and Mr Yang Liu (Xiao Liu) for their hard work to complete the season and collect a great set of data. They had some challenges with the low numbers of birds and the poorly timed work on the Wetland Park, but they persisted with dedication and good humour. Thank you very much to them both.

Chris Hassell

Global Flyway Network

Priscilla Park OAM 13 August 1929 – 24 July 2022



***OAM awarded for Services to the Environment 2007
Entered on Honour Roll of Women in Tasmania 2009***

It's all because of a love of birds. I just hate to see their habitats being desecrated. (Priscilla Park 2007)

Priscilla Park was born in South Africa in 1929. She came to Tasmania in 1960 after living in England and training as a physiotherapist at a London hospital.

Over a period of 40 years, Priscilla has made a significant contribution to the improved conservation status of birds in Tasmania, particularly shorebirds. She is considered an authority on many aspects of Tasmanian birds and their habitats by state and local governments. She has had papers published in respected scientific journals. Priscilla has also been involved in the field supervision of numerous higher-degree students from the University of Tasmania and Macquarie University.

Priscilla was a Life Member of BirdLife Australia, and a founding member of the Bird Observers' Association of Tasmania (BOAT) that became Birds Tasmania and is now BirdLife Tasmania. Her strong conservation ethic came to the fore almost immediately following the establishment of BOAT, and she was involved in the regular Summer and Winter wader counts in southeast Tasmania since their inception. Her interest in shorebirds took her as far as northwest Western Australia, where she joined a wader expedition to Broome in 1982. She was a founding member of the Tasmanian Shorebird Study Group and was a regular contributor to issues of *An Occasional Stint*.

She joined the BOAT Committee in 1974, and contributed on a broad spectrum of issues and focal species, from Welcome Swallows to Spotted Doves. Priscilla was an active contributor to the 'original' Atlas in the late 1970s, and participated in the (then) RAOU Congress and Campout to Maria Island in 1980. Priscilla was often the instigator of conservation efforts – from reducing swan collisions with overhead power lines to the protection of the Waterview Sanctuary at Sorell to the ongoing issue of duck shooting in the state. She organised and contributed to several of the early statewide Hooded Plover surveys in the 1980s and early 1990s, and was a key player in the conservation efforts for the Robbins Passage – Boullanger Bay wetlands to be listed on the National Estate in the late 1990s.

Perhaps her greatest effort – and success – was fighting the Walker Corporation proposal for the Lauderdale Marina and Canal Estate – a battle that took more than 9 years and that was ultimately successful when the proposal was rejected. Earlier, she was involved in the efforts to declare the Pitt Water – Orielton Lagoon as a Ramsar site (wetlands of international significance) and in the reservation of the South Arm Conservation Area. As a direct consequence of her efforts and actions, there has been a tangible 'sea-change' by State agencies and some Councils in their attitude and approach to coastal management and conservation. There is no doubt that Priscilla has made a significant and lasting contribution to the improved conservation of birds in Tasmania, particularly for coastal species. No conservation issue was too big or too small for her.

Priscilla was involved in the supervision of numerous post-graduate degree students enrolled in their Honours, Masters and doctoral degrees. She was an informal field supervisor, research advisor and source of support, encouragement and assistance to these students. Her networking skills were truly remarkable – always knowing who to contact in state government or council in relation to an issue – and this was in the days before computers and the web. She was tireless and diligent in her efforts, and an informed advocate - characteristics that contributed to her achieving so much.

She was awarded the Harry Bloom Memorial Award for Environmental Excellence in 2002, an Order of Australia Medal for "services to the environment" in 2007 and was inducted on to the Honour Roll of Women in Tasmania in 2009.

Priscilla Park OAM passed away in July 2022, just a few weeks shy of her 93rd birthday.

New CEO appointed to BirdLife Australia

New CEO appointed to BirdLife Australia

On behalf of the Board of BirdLife Australia, I am very pleased to announce that Ms Kate Millar has been appointed to the position of CEO of BirdLife Australia.

Kate is currently the Executive Director, State Coordination and Operations of Emergency Recovery Victoria. Kate has expertise in executive leadership, financial management, and stakeholder engagement across the private and public sectors. Throughout her career she has managed large teams of staff as well as large budgets and achieved impressive results. Kate has extensive experience in organizational governance including oversight of Finance and Audit, Risk and Compliance Committees.

At Emergency Recovery Victoria, Kate coordinated State relief and recovery programs, emphasizing community engagement practices and sustainable partnerships. Notable achievements include coordinating flood recovery programs and overseeing State recovery governance.

Prior to joining Emergency Recovery Victoria, Kate worked in Executive Director positions at Bushfire Recovery Victoria and Regional Development Victoria. Before that, she worked as a Strategic Adviser at the Victorian Coastal Council after an eighteen-year career with Parks Victoria. Kate began her career with Parks Victoria as a Ranger and worked her way up to senior executive positions including Director of State-wide Services and General Manager of Park Planning.

Kate has a Master of Forest Science and Bachelor of Forest Science with first class Honours. She is a working parent with three children and she and her family are environmental volunteers in the City of Merri-bek, where Kate's partner works as a Biodiversity Officer. Kate also gives her time to a local community mentoring program that supports young refugees in the Flemington area. Kate's favourite holiday destination is Cape Conran Coastal Park in Far East Gippsland with its wealth of birdlife, including the Turquoise Parrots which are a family favourite.

Kate will commence work at BirdLife on Monday 10 July 2023. I am sure we will all welcome her to the position and look forward to working with her in achieving BirdLife's mission and goals.

Mandy Bamford

President, BirdLife Australia

Avian influenza gone rampant

Avian influenza virus is of global concern to wildlife, poultry, and humans. While most avian influenza viruses are not causing major disease, some of them can evolve to become highly pathogenic. One such high pathogenicity avian influenza virus (HPAI), A/Goose/Guangdong/1/96, emerged in 1996 in Hong Kong. Since, it continued evolving and spreading in East Asia and, starting 2005, descendants of the virus led to regular incursions into Europe and Africa. Since 2014, viruses belonging to this lineage became even more widespread, jumping the Atlantic, and progressively more destructive (Wille and Barr, 2022). This has culminated in the emergence of the current descendant lineage 2.3.4.4b, which since October 2021 has resulted in the death and destruction of half a billion poultry and potentially millions of wild birds of a great diversity of species (so far 356 species belonging to 21 orders) (Klaassen and Wille, 2023).

Currently, much attention goes to the latest frontier of the panzootic in South America and to reports of mass mortalities in seabird breeding colonies in the Nearctic and Western Palearctic, where this is happening for the second breeding season in a row. While the virus has spread to all continents across the globe except Antarctica and Australia, little news emerges on waders and what is going on in our flyway. Alas, our part of the world and our waders are not escaping the impact of this panzootic. Amongst the bird species affected thus far, 22 belong to the families of Scolopacidae and Charadriidae. While plotting the number of outbreaks in our flyway seemingly sketches a favourable picture compared to the situation in Europe and the Americas, appearances may be deceptive. Not everywhere there are people to note the problem and not all countries sample their poultry and wild birds with equal vigour. Thus, Japan standing out compared to other countries in East Asia might be more reflective of Japan's particular attention for the problem rather than wild birds in Japan being disproportionately hammered by the virus.

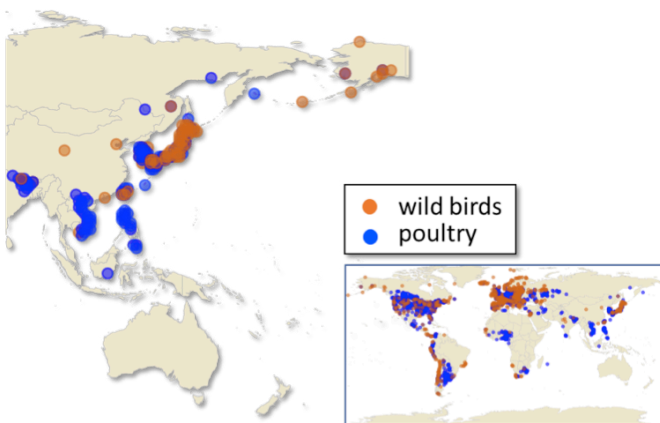
Over the past year, Australia has been on high alert for this novel lineage of HPAI, focussing on migratory sea and shorebirds as potential vectors bringing the virus to Australia's shores. So far, the news is good (Wille and Klaassen, 2023). Yet, past performance is no guarantee of future results, notably not with a virus that continues to evolve, and in a world where the virus becomes progressively more widespread. Comes the new southward migratory season, during which

The need for a World Coastal Forum

migrants also often aggregate and become more prone to infection, we should again be vigilant. Various authorities are currently planning on how to respond in case of the virus emerging on Australia's shores and best protect wildlife, livestock, and humans (although the risk to humans is thus far limited!). The recently established Avian Disease Working Group of the EAAFP will inform you on this information once it becomes available and update you on how the panzootic continues to develop along our flyway.

Klaassen, M., Wille, M., 2023. Wild birds' plight and role in the current bird flu panzootic. *bioRxiv*, 2023.2005.2002.539182. <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/biorxiv/early/2023/05/03/2023.05.02.539182.full.pdf>
 Wille, M., Barr, I.G., 2022. Resurgence of avian influenza virus. *Science* 376, 459-460
 Wille, M., Klaassen, M., 2023. No evidence for HPAI H5N1 2.3.4.4b incursion into Australia in 2022. *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses* 17, e13118. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/irv.13118>

HPAI outbreaks Oct 2021 – May 2023



Reported outbreaks of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) amongst poultry (blue symbols) and wild birds (orange symbols) within the East Asian Australasian Flyway since October 2021. Inset shows the global picture over the same period. Data extracted from the World Animal Health Information System of the World Organisation for Animal Health (<https://wahis.woah.org/>).

The need for a World Coastal Forum -Micha Jackson

When you ask people why they are so passionate about migratory shorebirds, many of them say it's because the annual trans-boundary flights of these birds inspire people from different localities, countries, cultures, and languages to work together to conserve them. This is certainly something that

inspires me. All around the world, concern for migratory shorebirds has fostered collaborative efforts from the scale of villages to entire flyways. People from many walks of life are eager to contribute to their conservation and our shared knowledge about their ecology. Over the course of my own research journey, I've been astounded and delighted by the willingness of people throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway to provide time, expertise, insight, and data to facilitate analyses that tell a flyway-scale story.

Nonetheless, despite numerous local examples of successful conservation policy, management, and restoration interventions, we have not yet done enough to halt population declines in many of our beloved shorebird species. Increasingly comprehensive and sophisticated analyses tell us that shorebirds around the world, including many common species, are still on a downward trajectory. While there are many drivers behind this, an undeniable factor is the loss and degradation of wetland habitats in the coastal areas that many shorebirds rely on.

This attrition of coastal ecosystems is occurring despite the fact that they underpin the livelihoods and wellbeing of millions of people worldwide. They support vast nearshore fisheries and recreational activities. They protect communities from sea-level rise and reduce disaster risk in the face of escalating extreme weather events. They help to purify the water and air.

Part of the reason coastal ecosystems are doing so badly, as indicated by the migratory waterbirds that depend on them being among the most threatened birds in the world, is that they present a particular challenge for protection, management, and restoration. Not only do they transcend ecological boundaries between terrestrial and marine environments, but they often have confused or overlapping jurisdictional boundaries. Multiple actors (including the general public) have competing goals and visions about how they should be managed. Often it is unclear who has authority to design or enforce planning decisions in these muddy places between land and sea.

Compounding this issue is the enormous pressure from human populations on coastal areas. People want to live on the coast, produce goods on the coast, and move goods and people through ports and airports. As a result, vast areas of natural coastal habitat have been lost over millennia, a trend that escalated to an extreme degree in the 20th century.

In recognition of this global challenge, resolutions and decisions have been taken through the Convention on Migratory Species, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Convention on Biological

Roz Jessop awarded the John Hobbs Memorial Medal for 2023

Diversity, and IUCN all calling for a multi-stakeholder global forum that brings together key actors to facilitate the protection, conservation management and restoration of coastal ecosystems and ecologically associated habitats.

Happily, the World Coastal Forum is being developed to respond to this call. It is now in an establishment phase following a meeting in early 2021 hosted by China's Ministry of Natural Resources and the National Forest and Grassland Administration, involving contributions from eight ministers from around the world, in which multiple stakeholders pledged to work together to make it a reality. Fittingly, the meeting was held in Yancheng, a region containing one of the newly inscribed Yellow Sea coast World Heritage sites recognised for their outstanding universal value for migratory birds.

Ultimately, the forum is envisaged as an umbrella that adds value to existing efforts by connecting and activating stakeholders to be more than the sum of their parts. Its primary aim is to accelerate effective on-ground delivery of conservation efforts. This intention recognises that it is not enough to make pledges about increased conservation or wise use. We must make this a reality at all scales – from an important high-tide roost site a few hectares in size to vital stretches of remaining tidal flats spanning many kilometres.

I believe that an effective strategy for achieving coastal conservation is to learn from and build on the wealth of experience that exists globally. Reflecting this, the World Coastal Forum has a bold vision to operate as a voluntary, independent initiative that will gain endorsement for its establishment and ongoing operation at a high political level by a truly representative cross-section of stakeholders around the world. These will comprise national, sub-national and local government representatives engaged in coastal management alongside international organisations, NGOs, academics, and business leaders.

As a first step, a series of thematic task forces is being created to advance the establishment of the World Coastal Forum and drive its operation. Of likely particular interest to a scientific audience is the Task Team on Science and Evidence. This group is considering how we can achieve targets for improving coastal ecosystems. For example, how can we ensure that conservation actions taken at a local level are going to be effective? How can managers, who may not be specialists in ecology, be confident about which actions to implement, or indeed which not to implement? As a global community made up of people based in many different localities, how can we arrive at a shared understanding of how coastal ecosystems are tracking at a global level?

I feel strongly that scientific knowledge can be mobilised to support decision-makers aiming to protect, manage and restore coastal ecosystems effectively and urgently. It's an exciting aim to do so on a global scale with a Global Biodiversity Framework recently agreed.

The international shorebird community has a long history of uniting people and compiling science for the benefit of coastal birds. I sincerely hope it will play a key role in shaping the World Coastal Forum and using it to help prioritise and deliver conservation action based on the evidence we produce. In the face of a rapidly changing climate and a human population 8 billion strong, we need transformative change in the way we operate in coastal regions if we are to maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems of which migratory shorebirds are such an important part.

You are encouraged you to participate in the 2023 World Coastal Forum Conference, which we anticipate will be held in Yancheng, Jiangsu Province, China, in September 2023. Details will be made available on the World Coastal Forum website <https://www.worldcoastalforum.org/wcf_2023_conference> and details will appear on the AWSG <awsg.org.au> website closer to the date.

Article first appeared in the April, 2023 edition of Wader Study (Volume 130), a publication of the International Wader Study Group.

Roz Jessop awarded the John Hobbs Memorial Medal for 2023

Dr Rosalind Jessop has been awarded the John Hobbs Memorial Medal for 2023. The award is made each year by BirdLife Australia to a Member who has made a significant lifetime contribution to the knowledge and conservation of native birds in Australia.

Roz Jessop has been an active member of the Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG) and Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG) for almost as long as these ornithological groups have been in existence. Her contribution to their organization and effectiveness has been instrumental in their success in helping to conserve Australian shorebirds.

Roz started her interest in shorebirds in the early 1980s, as one of the key, original committee members of the Victorian Wader Study Group. Thus started decades of quiet, consistent commitment to the cause of shorebird conservation. Roz became a qualified cannon-netter very early in the piece,

Doug Watkins retires as Chief Executive of the EAAFP

leading catches and processing teams and training many people in the appropriate way to handle and measure birds and how to age birds through assessing moult. Her knowledge on catching and processing waders is vast, and her insights and experience are often called upon when in the field and when planning catches. She is happy to share her knowledge. Her enthusiasm, dry wit and bright personality added to the fun weekends the group enjoyed and continues to enjoy at various coastal locations in Victoria and further afield.

This includes AWSG's northwest Australia expeditions, for which she has been a regular and hardworking volunteer since 1983 and joint expedition leader from 1994, playing an increasingly more important role in the work of teams documenting the amazing numbers and diversity of shorebirds in that part of the flyway.

Her increasing interest and involvement in the activities of the national AWSG group saw her become its Chair for five years, during which time the scientific rigour of its research program and the content and scientific strength of its journal, *The Stilt*, strode ahead in leaps and bounds.

Thus, from early on, Roz has put a great deal of voluntary effort into running and supporting the VWSG and later AWSG, quickly becoming a pivotal person for many aspects of those groups' operational and scientific achievements in their early decades.

Less visible has been the enormous backroom workload over several decades, including, amongst others, VWSG committee membership since 1993 and Deputy Chair of the VWSG since 2004. She has also been the Editor of *The VWSG Bulletin* for 23 years (1994-2017) and *The Stilt* for six years. But possibly most crucially and least visibly have been her ongoing meticulous preparations and submissions of animal ethics, fauna and landholder permits, ensuring that both the VWSG and AWSG could go out and conduct their catching activities. This included guaranteeing that both groups would meet their subsequent reporting and renewal requirements. With scientific, ethics and public land-owner permits within as many as four states in which VWSG and AWSG regularly operate, this comes as a huge administrative burden, which she has been carrying with great responsibility.

Roz has been a co-author of a myriad of papers and has made many presentations on waders, particularly on oystercatchers, over the years to a range of groups and audiences. Her quiet commitment, energy and infectious spirit have stimulated many others to become involved with shorebirds.

Doug Watkins retires as Chief Executive of the East Asian-Australian Flyway Partnership

A tribute to Doug Watkins for his leadership of the EAAFP.

Doug has over 30 years of international experience in working on migratory waterbirds and wetland conservation in our flyway and his extensive knowledge and enormous list of contacts across the Flyway have made him a key player.

He was one of the original team working with the Australian Government towards the development of the EAAFP concept as a Type II initiative during the World Summit of Sustainable Development in 2002, which later officially established the EAAFP in 2006. His involvement in the Flyway began while working for the Australasian Wader Study Group (AWSG) from 1993 to 1995.

Doug then moved on wearing the hat of Wetlands International between 1995 and 2013.

Following his role with Wetlands International, he worked with Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) secretariat as EAAF Coordinator for its Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI) between 2018 and 2019.

Doug's involvement in the Partnership ranges from Chair of EAAFP Monitoring Task Force, and past Chair of Yellow Sea Task Force to being a member of the Management Committee. He was instrumental in drafting the EAAFP Strategic Plans including the latest Strategic Plan 2019-2028. His strong experience and management of a diverse group of partners has been crucial to the implementation of the EAAFP's 10-year strategic plan. Doug worked hard to align and promote activities in the Flyway to address points laid out in the plan. The 32-page Secretariat report is a testimony to the outstanding work of Doug and the Secretariat staff, including the Science Unit.

It's thanks to Doug leading the EAAFP Secretariat and the Partnership since 2019, we have a bright future. Please join me in thanking Doug for his amazing contributions to the Flyway Partnership, both as the Chief Executive, as well as all of his work prior to joining the Secretariat. I am hoping that, like many others who have left leadership roles in the Flyway, there is a tendency to continue to show up at these MOPs where they continue to provide invaluable contributions. I look forward to our paths crossing in the future.

Robb Kaler

(Immediate past chair of EAAFP)

New EAAFP Chief Executive

New EAAFP Chief Executive

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) is delighted to announce the appointment of Ms Jennifer George from New Zealand, as its new Chief Executive of the Secretariat, effective on 20 June 2023. With a distinguished career in various sectors, and being a lawyer in practice, Ms George brings a wealth of experience and a passion for driving positive change to her role in leading the EAAFP's mission of conserving migratory waterbirds and their habitats along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Her recent remarkable contributions extend to her role as an EAAFP consultant for developing the recently adopted MOP 11 Decision papers namely Guidelines for EAAFP National and Site Partner and Guidelines for the EAAFP Sister Site Program. Many of you might have discussed with her during the consultation period of the Guidelines and met her at MOP 11 this March, in Brisbane, Australia. Her expertise and collaboration with the EAAFP Secretariat and Partners have resulted in driving momentum to the development of the partnership. She is also an active member of the EAAFP Partner, Pukorokoro Miranda Naturalists Trust, where her interest and passion for conserving migratory waterbirds has built up.

Ms George has an extensive background as a performance-driven professional that spans government, law, education, business development, and the non-profit sector. She worked in the Secretariat of the Climate Change Chief Executives Board of the Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand, to provide advice on best practice governance, and lessons learned from similar arrangements, mentor analysts, to improve governance systems and processes.

She has years of experience in governance and served in the governmental sector for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Ministry of Justice, Wellington City Council, New Zealand. Her roles ranged from analyst and project manager to convenor of an expert panel. As a governance consultant, Jennifer has been instrumental in developing best-practice governance frameworks for Crown Entity and local governments, ensuring compliance with legislative requirements, and fostering efficient processes. Her research and advocacy have resulted in policy changes at the governmental level.

She also has 10 years of teaching experience in a secondary school and has served as Head of Department, as well as a board member to Central Regional Health School, where she proved her

skills in education and management. In addition, her role as Development Director of Henwood Trust with Māori (New Zealand's indigenous people) communities demonstrated her leadership in developing and cultivating strategic relationships with indigenous people and diverse stakeholders to bring positive changes.

Her track record of success in facilitating transformational outcomes for organizations and communities showcases her exceptional leadership skills and her ability to collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders, including government officials, academics, professionals, Indigenous communities, philanthropists, and NGOs. These diverse cross-sector skill sets would equip her well to lead EAAFP to implement the Strategic Plan and CEPA Action Plan for the coming years.



We are thrilled as Ms Jennifer George takes the helm as the Chief Executive of the EAAFP Secretariat. Please join us to welcome her to the Secretariat.

Report on the 11th Meeting of Partners (MoP) of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) was launched on 6 November 2006 in Indonesia. The Partnership is a voluntary framework that aims to protect migratory waterbirds, their habitats and the livelihoods of people dependent on them. There are currently 39 Partners including 18 national governments, 6 intergovernmental agencies, 13 international NGOs, 1 international organisation and 1 international private enterprise which agree to support the objectives and actions outlined in the Strategic Plan 2019-2028. The Partners generally meet every two years, hosted by a National Partner.

Meeting of Partners (MoP) of the EAAFP

The EAA Flyway is one of 9 major migratory routes recognized globally and covers an area that includes 49% of the world's population. Much of the Flyway is under pressure from development and loss of critical habitat that is seeing population declines in waterbirds. With its broad membership, the Partnership provides a very valuable mechanism for action to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats.

Meeting of Partners (13-17 March 2023)

The 11th Meeting of Partners of the EAAFP took place from 12 to 17 March 2023 in Brisbane, Australia. It was the first time that the MoP has met since 2018 when it met in Hainan, China. COVID 19 made it impossible for the Partners to meet although a number of online meetings on specific issues occurred over the period of COVID constraints.

The EAAFP Taskforces and Working Groups met on 12 March 2023 ahead of the formal MoP to consider matters that would be endorsed for consideration and support by the MoP.

The Australian Government and BirdLife Australia were the joint hosts of MoP 11 and Dr Ilse Kiessling, Assistant Secretary, Protected Species and Communities Branch, Department of Environment and Water and Professor Martine Maron, President of BirdLife Australia, officially opened the meeting. About 170 attendees from National Governments, International NGOs and Intergovernmental NGOs in the Flyway attended, plus a number of local representatives.

In keeping with accepted procedure, a new Management Committee, chaired by the host Government Australia, was appointed with representatives from Cambodia (Vice Chair), Republic of Korea, Convention on Migratory Species, Wetlands International, the Mangrove Foundation, and Thailand for the two years until MoP 12. Membership of the Finance Sub-committee and Technical Sub-committee was also endorsed.

Memorials

Memorial tributes were given for Dr Lew Young, former Chief Executive of the Secretariat and Dr Evgeny Syroechkovskyi, Russia, both of whom had passed on since MoP 10. Both made significant contributions to the Flyway, and they will be sorely missed. Previous editions of Tattler have made mention of the significant contributions made to the Flyway by both Lew and Evgeny.

Farewell to Chief Executive (CE) Doug Watkins

Doug Watkins' term as CE of the Secretariat finished at the end of March 2023. Doug was a founding member of the Kushiro Initiative in 1994 that led eventually to the formation of the Flyway Partnership and his significant contribution to the position of Chief Executive over 3 years and more broadly to the Flyway over many years was recognized at the MoP.

New Partners, Flyway Sites and Sister Sites

Each MoP often welcomes new Partner(s) and two new Partners were welcomed at MoP 11 and presented with certificates – Hong Kong Bird Watching Society and the Mangrove Foundation. As one of the key elements of the Partnership, 11 new Flyway Network Sites were added to the Flyway Site Network from Australia, Cambodia, Japan, Myanmar, China and the Republic of Korea. Certificates were also presented for new Sister Sites agreements between Incheon (RoK) and Hong Kong, and Saga (Japan) and Alaska.

Shorebird Working Group

Dr Rick Lanctot retired as Chair of the Working Group at the MoP after several years in this position and David Li, Senior Manager of Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve National Parks Board, Singapore, was elected new Chair. David will bring a very enthusiastic and engaged commitment to the Chair's role. David developed a new structure for the Shorebird Working Group with a Core Team to drive the Working Group's agenda. The structure was endorsed at the meeting of the WG on 11 March prior to the MoP.

David has already engaged with the Core Team of the Working Group to progress a new agenda of business at an online meeting on 27 April. The report of the meeting can be found on the EAAFP website (eaa-flyway.net). The team will meet quarterly online and make joint decisions on major work.

Decisions from the MoP

Eleven important Decisions were passed by the MoP to guide Partners, Site Managers, collaborators and other stakeholders to take concrete actions for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetlands in the Flyway. The decisions included:

- adoption of the Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Action Plan (one of the key elements of the Strategic Plan);
- adoption of new Guidelines for National and Site and Sister Site Partnerships (another key element of the Strategic Plan);
- maintaining up-to-date Population

World Wetland Network

Estimates and Trends of Migratory Waterbird Populations (following on from the EAAF Conservation Status Review undertaken after MoP 10 and reported on to MoP 11);

- mainstreaming a much stronger participation by youth in the EAAFP (youth engagement was agreed to be of major and increasing importance in the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats);
- monitoring and reducing the Impact of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and other Avian Diseases along the EAAF;
- adoption of a Single Species Action Plan for the Christmas Island Frigatebird (proposed to the MoP by the Australian Government);
- announcement of the EAAFP as the Official Partner to World Migratory Bird Day; and
- adoption of a budget for the Secretariat that acknowledges available resources but also focuses on the need for National Partners (governments) to do more to support implementation of the Strategic Plan 2019-2028 and resourcing needs.

Side Events

A number of successful presentations and 11 side events were held in the margins of the MoP. Of special note was a presentation on the Regional Flyway Initiative sponsored by the Asia Development Bank, the World Coastal Forum, BirdLife International, and the EAAFP Secretariat highlighted efforts to protect major important wetlands in the Flyway as well as achieving sustainable use of wetland resources.

There were two side events on the revised CEPA Action Plan and the new Guidelines for National, Site and Sister Site partnerships; a presentation on 'Green Energy and Conservation of Migratory Birds'; a session on youth and how youth can better engage with the Partnership; and progress on conservation of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. Attendance at all the side events was very high signaling how important the issues are in the Flyway.

Special Events

Several special events were also held during the MoP including:

- A very innovative traditional Welcome to Country by the local Jagera and Quandamooka Aboriginal people who shared their stories of birds and their connection to Country. The Welcome combined both didgeridoo and dancing to reflect their special birds and animals.
- A very powerful and moving presentation combining music by a cello and violin with a film about the story of migratory shorebirds – "Life on Land's Edge" performed by Simone Slattery and Anthony Albrecht.

- Artist Kate Gorrington-Smith installed a "Wall of Wings" in one of the rooms as part of her Overwintering Project on shorebirds. Kate and other artists are supporting the acquisition of satellite trackers for Oriental Pratincole in NW Western Australia through donations to AWSG.
- As AWSG was a Gold Sponsor of the MoP through a generous donation received from the Charles Allen Foundation, we were invited to give a presentation to the plenary session to showcase the contribution that AWSG has made to the Flyway for over 40 years.
- A Field Trip was arranged by BirdLife Australia with the Queensland Wader Studies Group to Stradbroke Island and Point Lookout where participants not only saw many bird species but some iconic Australian native species.

MoP 11 concluded with a stronger commitment in collaboration for conserving migratory waterbirds in the Flyway. It was a very successful meeting, and it was obvious that attendees really benefited from the opportunities that the face-to-face meeting offered in networking, awareness raising and information exchange after four-and-a-half years' absence due to COVID.

Alison Russell-French OAM

Chair AWSG (a Partner of the EAAFP)

World Wetland Network

The World Wetland Network (WWN) is an umbrella grouping for smaller civil society and NGOs who focus on wetlands. It amplifies those voices in the world of the Wetlands Conventions, such as the Ramsar, especially in the lead-up to and during the Ramsar Convention of Partners (COP).

Intro

It started at Ramsar COP 10, in Changwon, Republic of Korea, in 2008. Diverse wetland conservationists from outside the government sector gathered to create the World Wetland Network. They identified the Ramsar Convention as the best arena to amplify civil society's voice. With that in mind, the network structured itself along the same regions as the Convention, which broadly align to the continents, but with some historical anomalies, such as Greenland and New Caledonia both falling under Europe. Overall, this approach allows greater flexibility than e.g. a flyway-based structure would when it comes to dealing with the gamut of human and biodiversity issues facing wetlands.

Report on Youth Engaged in Wetlands

Within any Region there are members of the network, sub-regional representatives (who broadly equate to national representatives), and regional representatives. These regional representatives sit on the WWN Committee, which meets online every month. Since COP 13 in 2018, the Committee has also included one thematic role, namely the youth representative.

The Committee is led by a Chairperson, Dr Jacky Judas, and Deputy Chairperson, Chris Rostron. The regional representatives include the editor of this journal, Phil Straw.

Vision

The first message that greets you when you visit the WWN website explains that The World Wetland Network raises awareness of the role of local people in wetland conservation, supports their active involvement and builds their capacity to deliver effective wetland conservation.

Ramsar COP is the prime venue for this. COP usually happens every three years, and WWN is busy for the whole intervening period. The flagship activity started in 2017 as a Citizen Science Survey on the State of the World's Wetlands. Together with the Society for Wetland Scientists and Charles Sturt University, WWN created a questionnaire to assess the extent and condition of wetlands, and distributed it to the membership and beyond. The result was about 500 reports from wetlands, some of which are not mentioned in the governments' national reports – in essence, the survey filled in gaps in the official knowledge.

In 2020, the same collaboration returned to run the survey again. Once more, they received data on about 500 wetlands – but about 90% of them were new wetlands to the survey. Both times, the participants knew their wetlands well, with some level of expertise. What is more, the two years produced similar trends almost everywhere, suggesting a level of self-validation.

Over the past few years the team has developed the idea further through consultation with stakeholders around the world, and is planning to continue the survey with stronger digital tools and community engagement.

Other regular activities include responding to civil society requests for letter-writing to local and national authorities.

In COP year, activity ramps up. WWN surveys its members on how their relationship with Ramsar is going, to feed back to the Convention at a COP side-event and in a printed report.

The network inputs to pre-COP preparation processes, especially CEPA (Communications, Education, Participation, Awareness) and youth, through members taking part in or leading online pre-meets and workshops. As COP approaches, the network holds an NGO pre-meeting, and requests to present an NGO Statement to the opening plenary of COP. It takes an observer seat in all the plenary sessions, and holds daily coordination briefings for civil society and NGOs. The whole COP is an intense period for WWN, absorbing the discussions, soliciting membership input, and processing it all into an NGO Statement to the closing plenary.

At the two most recent Ramsar COPs, WWN also supported Youth Engaged in Wetlands, the youth group which has soared. In 2022, WWN members also had multiple positive interactions with the new Secretary General of the Wetlands Convention, Dr Musonda Mumba.

Beyond Ramsar, WWN has supported members to draft and promote a resolution to the IUCN World Conservation Congress. The topic, the natural flow of rivers, relates to WWN's work at Ramsar and having the same topic across Multilateral Environmental Agreements means more tools are available to push implementation.

Ultimately, the World Wetland Network wants the best for wetlands and the people of wetlands, and reminds policy makers of just how important non-governmental and civil society organisations are.

A report on Youth Engaged in Wetlands (YEW) at international conventions

Who is YEW?

YEW (Youth Engaged in Wetlands) is an international volunteer youth network, whose mission is to provide a global platform for young people, which would enable and empower them to protect wetlands and promote their conservation worldwide. By facilitating networking and with a strong component on youth capacity building, YEW aims to support the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands' mission and build greater ownership of this mission among younger generations. YEW's vision is to be identified as the leading youth network for wetlands and recognized as a key stakeholder for the Ramsar Convention for greater intergenerational cooperation.

YEW was established in 2018 at the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) to the Ramsar Convention, in Dubai. YEW is composed of a core

Report on Youth Engaged in Wetlands

team of around a dozen young professionals, students and researchers. YEW has four teams:

- Knowledge and Capacity Building
- Conservation Policy
- Finance and Fundraising
- Communications and Engagement

YEW also has regional representatives in each of the Ramsar Regions (Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania), as well as the network lead and deputy network lead. YEW is finalising recruitment for some of these roles in early 2023.

Following establishment at the CoP, YEW developed a work plan following 4 strategic objectives:

1. Implementation and coordination: To ensure ongoing and efficient facilitation and implementation, management, and coordination of the objectives of YEW;
2. Knowledge and capacity building: To establish a platform to increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities for youth engagement in the Ramsar Convention and conservation of wetlands;
3. Participation and intergenerational cooperation: To ensure participation of youth in decision-making and intergenerational cooperation for better representation of youth at different levels of the Ramsar Convention; and
4. Communication and outreach: To build networks with/for youth and youth organizations to communicate the mission of the Ramsar Convention and create greater ownership of the mission among young people.

YEW's vision

Youth Engaged in Wetlands is identified as the leading youth network for wetlands and is recognized as a key stakeholder for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands through meaningful engagement in the processes of the Convention, ensuring intergenerational cooperation.

Ramsar COP 14: Youth Achievements

Youth-related activities at the Ramsar CoP were genuinely both successful and popular, across the board. Against a backdrop of several fairly contentious issues, youth engagement was seen as a welcome relief, a productive step forward, and a promising avenue for resetting the convention. You can find an overview of our experiences here: <https://www.youthengagedinwetlands.com/cop-14>

Youth Resolution

The Youth Resolution passed, with over 60 countries (including the entire European and African regions) expressing support for the resolution. Over 10 countries signed up to the youth working group, and contracting parties including the UK, Canada, Brazil, France, Finland, Korea and China expressed a strong desire to create opportunities for youth in their national Ramsar processes. Conversations on the draft text were generally very productive and led to the development of productive relationships.

Intergenerational Dialogue Side Event

The intergenerational dialogue event was a success. A panel of seven speakers from academia, NGOs, IGOs, and government discussing a range of issues relating to the future of wetland conservation, careers, future CoPs and more. Panellists discussed their personal experiences, shared ideas on future projects, and engaged directly with audience members. One of the most well-attended side-events, almost all of the 50+ attendees stayed for half an hour after the scheduled end-time, continuing the productive discussions. Several delegates remarked afterwards that they had been inspired by the content.

Overall, the CoP was a success for youth, and the groundwork has been laid to create a cultural shift, towards a younger and more dynamic international forum, with youth voices heard and respected.

Youth at the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Meeting of Parties

Following the success of the Ramsar COP, YEW again collaborated with the EAAFP Secretariat, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, and WWT, to hold youth-related event at the MOP. Half a dozen young researchers and professionals, working on shorebirds and flyway sites, shared their work, talked about their challenges, and otherwise connected with attendees.

The MOP also passed a decision on youth, which aims to include young people more generally in the work of the EAAFP, and create a Youth Task Force, which YEW will help with. We are excited, and see this as a crucial next step towards opening doorways in the world of shorebirds.

Dylan Jones

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

ANSTO POSTER COMPETITION

ANSTO SHOREBIRD POSTER COMPETITION

Another successful year for Broome.

May 24th 2022, was a day full of shorebird-related activities for the year 5 Kimberley Primary Extension and Academic Challenge class. This was the third year the Roebuck Bay Working Group facilitated competition entries for the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) Shorebird Poster Competition.

To add to the prizes awarded so far to Broome participants - 2nd place (2021) and three commendation certificates (2020 and 2021), 2022 saw Broome student Maggie receive the prize for Best Slogan or message, Western Australia - "Come to Roebuck Bay to see the Ruddy Turnstone in the pindan clay".

Once again, all posters were automatically entered in a local competition, judged by members of the Roebuck Bay Working Group at the Annual General Meeting.

1st Prize was awarded to Taylor for her Broad-billed Sandpiper poster, winning a voucher for Broome Bird Observatory Tour for Taylor and a friend valued at \$25.

2nd Prize was awarded to Piper for her poster featuring the Far Eastern Curlew, winning a shorebird 'showbag' donated by Grace Maglio.

Thanks to the Broome Bird Observatory for donating the voucher and a very special thank you to local business Yane Sotiroski Photography for the generous donation of a Broome themed painting canvas for each participant valued at \$200, ensuring everyone was a winner!

Thanks once again to Hannah Carnegie, Kimberley Regional Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) Coordinator/Teacher and her wonderful students for making shorebirds a part of their lives.

Grace Maglio

Broome, Western Australia

Join at The Darwin-Garramilla Shorebird Festival!

The Darwin-Garramilla Shorebird Festival will celebrate shorebirds and their stories

The aim of the festival is to engage and ignite the community of Darwin-Garramilla to learn information to protect shorebirds through the arts and sciences - we will share stories about the migrant birds that travel thousands of kilometres every year to visit Darwin beaches; the Bush Stone-curlew that cries at night, and many people already have strong connections to this bird; the Masked Lapwing known for chasing people to protect their nests and young, and many other shorebirds that are found in freshwater wetlands and grassy plains.

The festival will include a curated art exhibition by local artists, art and craft sessions for the community, poetry, birdwatching and surveys, presentations, and social chats, and will conclude with a music immersion session.

For more information <https://www.shorebirdfestival.com.au>



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