
Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force

News Bulletin No 30 · May 2024





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The Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force (SBS TF) News Bulletin is a regular, half-yearly update of activities of the SBS Task Force of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). The News Bulletin is edited by Dr Christoph Zöckler, Chair of the EAAFP SBS Task Force with assistance from Elena Lappo and Coordinator Sayam Chowdhury.

Mission:

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force (SBS TF) aims to coordinate the conservation activities identified in the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Single Species Action Plan for the species, which was commissioned by BirdLife International. The activities in the Action Plan are regularly reviewed and updated by all Flyway Members and a growing network of active supporters and groups in the Flyway countries, and beyond.

The Task Force originates from the establishment of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Recovery Team (SBS RT) in 2004, when several partners active in the conservation of this globally threatened wader met in Edinburgh. With the growing level of activity, the finalization of the Action Plan in 2008 and a growing network of partners, organisations and supporters the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force (SBS TF) was formed at the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) meeting in Korea in February 2010. In December 2010, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force (SBS TF) was officially endorsed as one of the first species Task Forces by the Partnership under the EAAFP Shorebird Working Group. Implementing organisation for the SBS TF is BirdLife International through its partner Birds Russia. It is chaired by the Government Partner of Russia. Task Force members consist of the EAAFP Government Partners of key range states for the species and international conservation organisations. These are: the Russian Federation, Japan, People's Republic of China, People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Union of Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh and India, the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (WWT), Wetlands International, a representative of the EAAFP Shorebird Working Group, Fauna Flora International (FFI) and experts and conservation organisations from principal range states and other partners. We are grateful to the RSPB, NABU and the Manfred-Hermsen-Stiftung for their continued support of the SBS Task Force and Spoon-billed Sandpiper projects across the range states.

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Layout by Matthias Fanck Graphic Design, Zell, Germany, German SBS Support Group



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Foreword from the Editor

Dr Christoph Zöckler · Manfred Hermsen Foundation



There are two reasons to celebrate. This is our 30th newsletter and more importantly, it was 20 years ago, when our Task Force, then Recovery Team, was constituted in Edinburgh at the Waterbirds around the World conference. Many things have happened since. A strong community of like-minded people working on a common cause and demonstrated that great things, such as conservation work can be achieved across cultural, religious and political boundaries against all odds. And indeed, the odds are not abating. Our Russian team is still able to travel abroad, and many members joined us in Shenzhen, China for our 14th Taskforce meeting and even in Myanmar this winter. Together with members from other flyway countries and the Chinese host we discussed how to advance the conservation efforts. Our chair and host Lili Sun offered a great venue for the meeting. She also announced at the meeting to step aside after two years as Chair and pass the Chair on to me, while remaining in leading position as Vice Chair.

However, almost forgotten by the turmoil in the world, the civil war in Myanmar continues and takes its toll on our members there. While the situation around the business centre Yangon and in the neighbouring Gulf of Mottama is still relatively normal, northern and southern coastal sites are heavily impacted by fighting and curfews. Everybody is still fine though forced to flee from their homes in Sittwe and facing an uncertain future. We stay in constant touch with everybody and can provide support as needed.

Orange K9 received a transmitter this winter in Thailand and left for China this spring. Together with A6, another tagged bird in Thailand they showed us incredibly new sites and feats crossing the Yellow Sea heading towards Korea and Sakhalin. It is very exciting to see both birds heading for the breeding areas, revealing potential new areas on spring migration and breeding sites. We will report further.

Twenty years of conservation work might have slowed the decline but not halted or reversed as we'd hoped. Yet, the main reason for celebration are the many friendships that have developed in almost all flyway countries over the years. This in itself is a huge achievement, but it is also a vital prerequisite for achieving even bigger things in the conservation of a migratory species on a very difficult flyway.

As always we are grateful to the many supporters that kept supporting our work loyally over the decades.

The 14th International SBS Task Force Meeting in Shenzhen and Winter Survey in January 2024

Christoph Zöckler



On 25-27th January 2024 over 50 members and supporters from Russia, Japan, Myanmar, Singapore, China, US, UK and Germany assembled in Shenzhen on invitation of the Mangrove Conservation Fund (MCF) to participate in the 14th international meeting of the SBS Task Force. After several welcome notes and greetings from honorable guests we have had a series of discussions on the crucial issues affecting our threatened species.

Several members reported on the progress towards a new International Species Action Plan to save the threatened and declining sandpiper. Key-note presentations gave an overview of the current situation and progress made in China. While the real reasons for continuing decline are unknown, a combination of several factors, mostly on the migration route is likely. Other key presentations focussed on the current situation on the breeding grounds, climate change, hunting mitigation measures along the flyway, the pollution impact, habitat restoration, protected areas, feeding ecology, head-starting and captive breeding.

Lili Sun also announced at the meeting to step aside after two years as Chair and pass the Chair on to me while becoming Vice Chair. This new leadership arrangement together with Sayam Chowdhury from Bangladesh as new Coordinator was agreed among all members at a separate follow up online meeting 25th of March.

Prior to the meeting, an international team of Russian, German and Burmese members, accompanied by a German and several Chinese film teams, joined our Chinese friends in surveying the Leizhou Bay in Guangdong Province, South China for the coordinated mid-winter survey of Spoon-billed Sandpiper. A total of 32 birds were counted of which 6 were flagged with colour flags, including 11 birds in the newly in 2023 discovered site Wuchuan.

It was not only impressive how well the survey and workshop were organised by MCF. It was also very encouraging to see so many local birdwatchers from the Zhanjiang Birdwatching Society joining the survey. More than 100 birdwatchers were

covering well over 30 sites along the southern coast of China in Guangxi, Guandong and Zhejiang Province.

While in the beginning the weather was warm and very pleasant a massive temperature drop made us feel the winter again, which did not deter the birds at all.

Shortly after the survey MCF announced that Wuchuan will likely be declared a protected area and incorporated into the Zhanjiang Mangrove Nature Reserve because of its special role for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper.



Scanning for Spoonies in Wuchuan



Posing the Zhanjiang BW Society flag



Interview with film team



Birding in Futian Mangrove Ecological Park



SBS Survey in Leizhou Bay



Lili Sun, Chen Qing, Elena Lappo, Yuri Gerassimov, Anton Ivanov, Jodie Clements and Pyae Phyong presenting



Discussions during the meeting ...



both photos Börris Weiffenbach



Shell fish fisherman



Shenzhen is geared up in preparation for Chinese New Year!



Visitors of Futian Park taking photos of ducks and godwits



MCF staff guiding park visitors in Futian Coastal Park



Modern Spoonies travelling by bus



Spoonies overlooking the MCF office

Gulf of Mottama SBS Survey January and February 2024

Pyae Phyto Aung, Thura Soe Min Htike, Saw Moses, Gideon Dun, Ye Min Aung, Nyan Lin, Shein Thu Lwin, Zarni Aung, Ye Wint Phyoe, Nang Phyu Phwe, Anton Ivanov, Elena Lappo and Christoph Zöckler

From 9-17 January and 2-9 February 2024 four Myanmar partner NCS conducted two comprehensive surveys in the Gulf of Mottama (GoM). While the January survey was completed by Burmese surveyors only and focussed on the Western mudflats, the survey in February largely focussed on eastern mudflats and was undertaken with support of two Russians and one German. In total 14 people participated in the survey. These included also fishermen that were formerly hunting birds and are now applying their local knowledge for the sake of bird conservation.

In total well over 100,000 waterbirds of 53 different species of which almost 80,000 waders were estimated to winter in the GoM. It has become an even greater challenge every year to spot the elusive and rare Spoon-billed Sandpiper. In total 19 and 16 observations were recorded in January and February respectively (s. also Fig. 4). Based on over 440 flock counts the total number of SBS has been estimated at 34 birds of which 5 were flagged, two with green flags, wild birds from the breeding grounds and two yellow from the staging areas, of which one could be read as 'XJ' ringed in 2020 in Kamchatka, resighted at Yangkou, Jiangsu Province in autumn 2022 and last seen autumn in

2023. Also, one white flagged bird was observed. The total number of flagged birds represents 15% in the GoM, considerably lower than 24% observed in southern China. Considering 80 flagged birds left alive (R. Green *et al.* in preparation) the total global population is around 400 birds.

Other bird species among the globally threatened

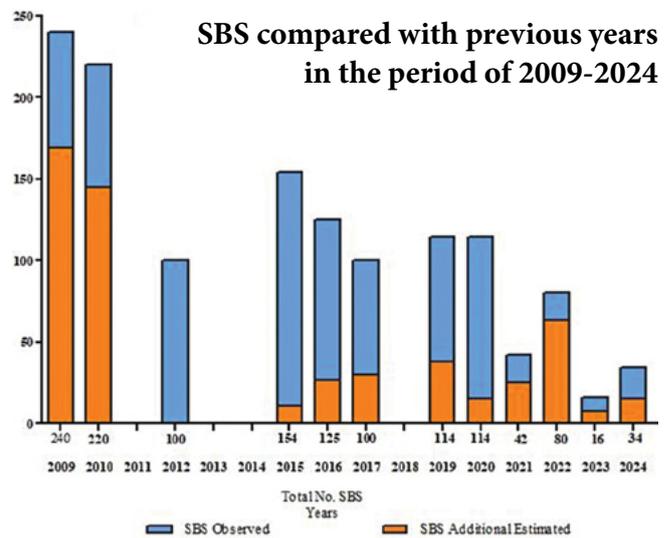


Fig. 1: Spoon-billed Sandpiper population estimates in the GoM from 2009-2024, blue reflects the actual observed number, and orange the additional estimated number based on flock counts, the numbers above the labels of years indicating the total number of SBS for each year



Fig. 2 and 3: XJ was one of five flagged SBS observed in the Gulf of Mottama in February 2024 (right, photo Ye Min Aung), marked in August 2020 on the West Coast of Kamchatka (left, photo Yuri Gerassimov)

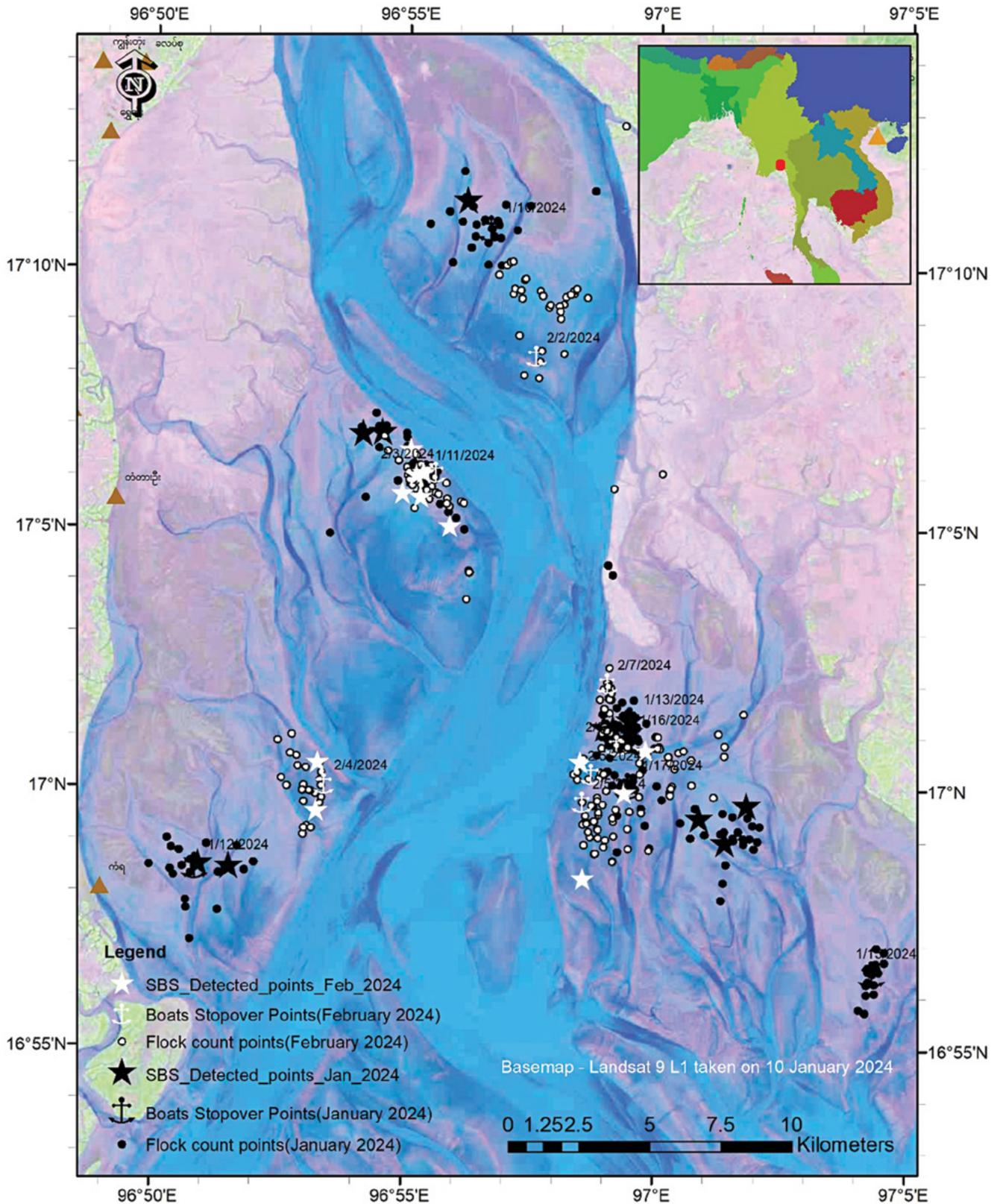


Fig. 4: SBS Survey in Gulf of Mottama, Jan and Feb 2024

birds were Great Knot with only 27 individuals and 49 Nordmann's Greenshank which clearly has increased but could also have been overlooked as preferably feeding on the western mudflats. Other globally threatened birds included two Steppe Eagles that were recorded for the first time in the GoM area, as well as one Greater Spotted Eagle, which seemed to have declined again, compared to three or four in previous years.

Sadly, the teams also observed that bird hunting has been resuming in several areas. This is not surprising considering the difficult economic situations due to the fighting, skirmishes and curfews in the country.

In other well know wintering areas of Myanmar little opportunities arose to survey these areas due to the curfews in Rakhine and fighting in the very South.



However, Ren Nou Soe was able to confirm the return of Lime 27 and Yellow CU to Nan Thar island in late October before the curfew was set in place.

Urgent action is needed to address the resurgence of hunting and continue to strengthening the community based conservation activities at all known SBS sites.

We are grateful for their generous support to the Mangrove Conservation Fund (MCF), Manfred-Hermsen Foundation (MHS), East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), Wildsounds and the Rare Bird Alert, U.K., Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Swiss Development Corporation funded Gulf of Mottama

Project (GoMP). We also like to thank Graeme Buchanan RSPB for helpful advise on the interpretation of remote sensing data.



NCS Support Boat



Survey team celebrating Chinese New Year!

Tracking the Spring Migration of Spoon-billed Sandpiper

Katherine Leung

Earlier in March, two Spoon-billed Sandpipers, Orange K9 and A6, were colour-marked at the Gleua Café in Chachoengsao, Thailand. They are also equipped with solar-powered satellite transmitters. This is a new milestone for research of the migration of this Critically Endangered species. In the past years, 13 Spoon-billed Sandpipers were tagged with satellite transmitters in the breeding ground in Chukotka, Russia and at the staging ground in southern Jiangsu, China, which provided valuable information on the autumn migration of the species. On the other hand, very little is known on the spring migration of the species. Thus, this important piece of research work was initiated in the 2022-23 winter season in Thailand as part of the “Migratory Shorebird Research Project” led by the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Thailand (DNP), in collaboration with the Conservation Ecology Program at King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (CEG KMUTT), WWT, RSPB, and the SBS Task Force.

In the previous News Bulletin (No 29, November 2023), I have reported the unsuccessful attempts in capturing Spoonies in February and March 2023. This time, with enhancement in equipment and the painful lessons learnt from previous year, the team tried again and achieved beyond expectation to successfully capture two Spoonies on 9th and 11th of March.

About a month after they were colour marked and tagged, both Spoonies departed and started their northward migration.

K9 left Thailand on 4th April and made its first stop in one direct flight for a week in Xinhui, Guangdong province, China. It was briefly seen by a local birdwatcher on 8th April. Then it made another “small hop” to reach a salt pan area in Zhangpu, Fujian province. Both of these sites above were not known to support Spoonie in the past. After a week, on 20th April, K9 was seen and photographed by birdwatchers at the salt pan

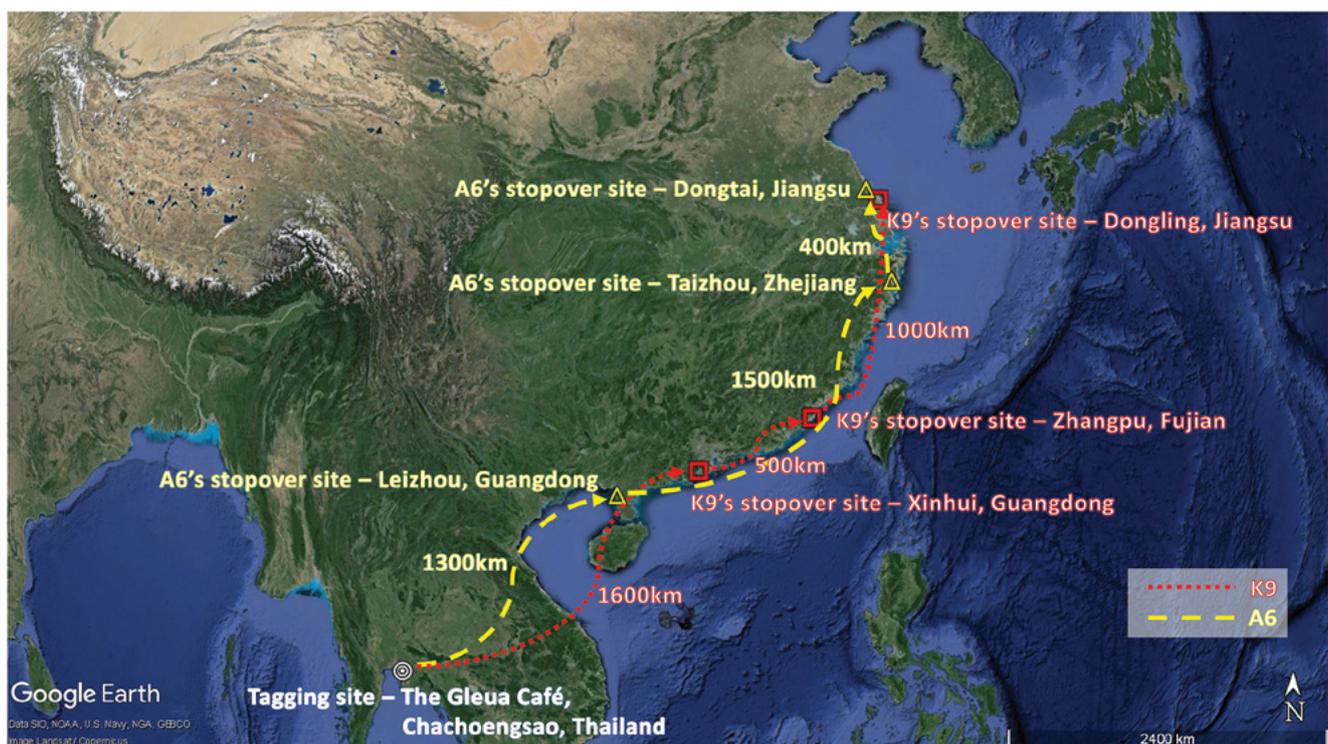


Figure 1: Journey of K9 and A6 (as of 5th May)

area before it departed again in the evening. A few more brief stops were made along coastal area of Fujian and Zhejiang province and K9 finally decided to land in Dongling, Jiangsu province on 25th April. Dongling is an important staging site for both Spoonies and Nordmann's Greenshanks during autumn in the southern part of the Yellow Sea, where both species carry out their primaries moult.

A6 departed Thailand on 12th April and reached the west coast of Leizhou, Guangdong province in one direct flight. Leizhou is a well-known wintering site for Spoonies, however, the majority of the records are on the east coast. Where A6 stopped over was not known to support Spoonie in the past. A6 faced quite some heavy rain and spring thunderstorm while it was in Leizhou. As soon as the weather turned better, it departed on 25th April. For a week A6 stopped over in Taizhou, Zhejiang province and then departed on 3rd May to reach Dongtai, Jiangsu.

Both Spoonies are now about 3,000 km from their wintering ground in Thailand. So far, the journey of K9 and A6 has already gave us lots of new insights to the spring migration of Spoonies. Their journeys also once again underscore the crucial role of interconnected coastal wetlands in conserving endangered species along Asian flyways.

Acknowledgement: Special thanks to Mr. Arm, the owner of the Gleua Café and nearby salt pans, who welcomed us to carry out research work on his property. Our gratitude also goes to Paul Howey and the staff at Microwave Telemetry for their continued support. The tracking project is funded by the RSPB and WWT, with local support from the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST).

[see further details in Latest News. Ed.]



Figure 2: K9 with satellite transmitter

Alan Leitch



Figure 3: K9 observed in Zhangpu, Fujian on 20th April.

Zhou Longjie



Figure 4: Habitat of A6 at west coast of Leizhou, Guangdong.

He Tao



Closer Cooperation between BirdsRussia, Russian and Chinese Research Institutes in Tiaozini

Olga Solomina¹, Nikita Chernetsov², Jiang Wei³, He Jia⁴, Zhang Yingrong⁵, Anton Ivanov^{2,6}, Elena Lappo^{1,2}

¹ Institute of Geography Russian Academy of Sciences · ² BirdsRussia · ³ Project Service Centre, Jiangsu Dongtai Coastal Economic Zone · ⁴ Documentary Department of Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation · ⁵ School of Foreign Studies, Nanjing University · ⁶ All-Russian Research Institute for Environmental Protection

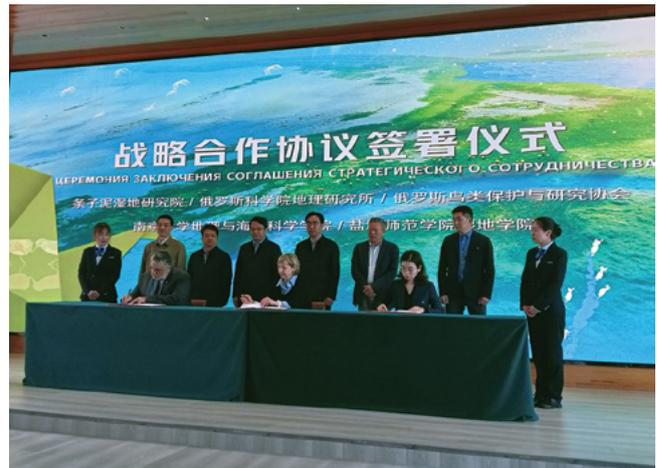
Several Russian and Chinese organisations and institutions met in Jiangsu and signed a co-operation agreement on the conservation of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper in April 2024. BirdsRussia, the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IG RAS), Jiangsu Tiaozini Wetland Research Institute, Nanjing University Institute of Geography and Marine Sciences, and Yancheng Teachers University School of Wetland agreed on a **Strategic Cooperation** for the conservation of Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other migratory bird species, environmental protection and joint scientific research. This corresponds with the Flyway Network Sites (FNS) of protected areas within the framework of the EAAFP. Two Russian members of the SBS Task Force and two other Russian officials visited Tiaozini in Jiangsu Province in China.

The program of the visit included:

1 Visit to the Yellow Sea National Park – an important migration stopover site for SBS and other migrating water birds on the tidal flats of Tiaozini.

2 Exchange of experiences and discussion of strategies for the conservation of migratory birds on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway between the Russian delegation and Chinese colleagues from Beijing Forestry University and the Faculty of Zoology of the School of Life Sciences of Nanjing Forestry University (Prof. Lei Guangchun, Prof. Jia Yifei, Prof. Zhou Yan).

3 The Signing of the Strategic Cooperation Agreement between the organizations mentioned above, on 19 April with attendance of special



Signing of the Cooperation Agreement

Elena Lappo

guests: Prof. Lu Huayu, Director of School of Geography and Marine Sciences, Nanjing University; Tang Boping, Director of School of Wetland, Yancheng Teachers University, also the Vice-Chairman of the Yancheng Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; Qiu Haitao, Chairman of Dongtai Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; Xu Hanyou, Member of the Standing Committee, Minister of the Publicity Department of the Dongtai Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China; Chang Wei, Deputy Director of Jiangsu Dongtai Coastal Economic Zone.

4 Opening of an information board in the Tiaozini Museum dedicated to Evgeny Syroechkovskiy, and his memory in the field of SBS conservation.

5 Chinese media interviews with Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation and others.

6 Meeting and discussion about the future plans



In memory of Evgeny Syroechkovskiy

Elena Lappo

of activities with Lili Sun and Baohua Yan (MCF).

The Russian side was represented by Dr. Nikita Chernetsov, Director of Zoological Institute RAS, Vice-President of BirdsRussia, Dr. Olga Solomina, Director of IG RAS, Dr. Elena Lappo, Senior Researcher of IG RAS, the leader of Chukotka BirdsRussia Expedition and Dr. Anton Ivanov, leading researcher of All-Russian Research Institute for Environmental Protection and member of the Birds-Russia Chukotka expedition.

The host organizations were Jiangsu Dongtai Coastal Economic Zone and Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation.

Background information

The coastal wetlands and tidal flats of Tiaozini in Dongtai City, Jiangsu Province, China, and the vicinity of the village of Meinypilgyno in the

Anadyrsky District of the Chukotka Autonomous District of the Russian Federation are both key habitats for SBS and other migratory birds on the East Asian-Australasian Migration Flyway (EAAF).

The Tiaozini tidal flats in Jiangsu Province are key migration stopover sites for EAAF migratory birds, of which 29 species are listed as globally threatened by the IUCN Red List. Many of these species are included in the Bilateral Agreement between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Migratory Birds and their Habitats and are regularly monitored. Almost 100 SBS stop over regularly at spring and autumn migration.

Tiaozini became a protected area in 2019 and is included into the list of World Heritage sites. It is a wetland of international importance and

protected in the EAAFP network sites. It is very important for the conservation of the species and their habitats.

BirdsRussia, the Institute of Geography Russian Academy of Sciences, Jiangsu Tiaozini Wetland Research Institute, Institute of Geography and Marine Sciences of Nanjing University and School of Wetland of Yancheng Teachers University believe that it is important to work together to develop effective strategies and methodologies, coordinating activities to preserve the natural and cultural values, achieve a balance between ecology and industrial development, and work in harmony with humans and nature. In this regard, the parties agreed and announced to develop and strengthen a strategic cooperation with the following aims:

- Development and implementation of joint scientific and environmental projects in accordance with bilateral interests, goals and strategies.
- Strengthening the monitoring and scientific research of common species, with special focus on SBS, and integrated ecosystem monitoring of the Tiaozini wetland.
- Reducing the disturbance on the environment and developing projects to restore it.
- Develop conservation strategies for migratory water birds, including common species.
- Presentation of scientific research and practical environmental measures at international, Russian and Chinese conferences.
- Exchange of experiences in the conservation and management of migratory birds at coastal wetlands, public education and awareness, and protection of common species and their habitats.

P.S.: The Pere David's Deer *Elaphurus davidianus*, a special deer in the wetlands, is also protected at Tiaozini and reintroduced after it previously disappeared in its natural habitats, back in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), but their population dwindle



Li Dongming



Li Dongming

dled to extinction after the flooding of the Yongding River in 1895. It was restored from only 16 individuals, kept in one English garden only. Now in Tiaozini its local population already consists of 1000 animals.

As we were told, its name translates from Chinese as “an animal that does not look like anyone: neither a horse, nor a deer, nor a cow, nor a donkey ...” Indeed, this is some kind of collective image of a hoofed animal ... also living exclusively in wetlands.

Boat Race for Shorebird Conservation 2023

Nazim Uddin Khan and Md Foysal

Bangladesh Spoon-billed Sandpiper Conservation Project, SCOPE Foundation



On 24 November 2023, the Bangladesh Spoon-billed Sandpiper Conservation Project (BSCP) team organized a boat race event in Ghotibhanga village near Sonadia Island, Cox's Bazar to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day 2023. Sonadia Island serves as a critical habitat for many globally threatened wintering shorebirds, including the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. The event, attended by approximately 1,500 locals from neighbouring villages, aimed to convey a strong conservation message against shorebird hunting and raise awareness about wildlife conservation. Teams representing different villages competed in the boat race, each named after an important shorebird species like the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Knot, Godwit, Curlew and Sanderling. The event attracted the participation of local forest depart-

ment officials and government representatives, highlighting the significance of the initiative. This event demonstrated a creative approach to conservation by leveraging traditional cultural practices for community engagement. The event was supported by the International Conservation Fund for Canada (ICFC).

Additionally, the BSCP organized a similar boat race in early March 2015, involving five villages around Sonadia Island. This initiative marked the first time a boat race event was applied for conservation purposes in Bangladesh. We aim to organize similar events every alternate year to boost involvement with the local communities of Sonadia Island.



Participants

Nazim Uddin Khan



Spectators

Shafiqur Rhaman

Bird Breeder Ivan Shepelev visiting Germany

Christoph Zöckler



Standing: Lorenz and Lutger Brehmer, Ivan Shepelev. Sitting: Jürgen Fiebig, Christoph Zöckler, Jodie Clements at Lutger Brehmer's Farm shop entrance in March 2024

Ivan has been raising Spoonie chicks in Meiny-pil'gyno for several years in Chukotka until the pandemic, when the head-starting project on the breeding grounds was paused. In 2025 it is the plan to resume head-starting. In preparation and generally to gain some work experience and exchange Ivan visited Germany from February to mid April on invitation by NABU, the German Birdlife partner. He visited Berlin and its zoo but also some nice nature outside Berlin where Great Bustards are still nesting. Ivan was guided by Jürgen Fiebig from the Zoological Museum and me.

Jürgen has an extensive network of people working in zoos.

The main time of his visit Ivan spent on the farm of Lutger Brehmer and his family. Lutger has been raising birds, mostly waterbirds from all over the world. Including ducks, cranes but also waders. Among the ducks are some spectacular birds such as King and Spectacled Eiders and Scaly-sided Mergansers. Lutger's extensive experience has been very useful for Ivan. Lutger himself was very grateful for Ivan's visit and support during a busy

time of the year. On the farm were also sixteen different species of waders, including five different sandpiper species. On March 24 we held a meeting with all members involved in raising Spoonies at Lutger's Farm, where Jodie Clements of WWT took also part in person.

Jodie and Ivan joined Jürgen and myself to visit the famous Walsrode Bird Park which has a new director and a new outlook. We were privileged to be guided by Tomas Pez, who together with his wife also treated us to Czech blini and coffee afterwards, when we had some discussions on the difficulties to raise chicks of waders, especially those of migratory ones.

Finally Jürgen arranged a visit to the Spix' Macaw Centre just outside Berlin, where private entrepre-

neurs managed to raise over 150 of these globally critically endangered Aras and released them back into the wild. A fantastic success story for Ivan to witness, though certainly sedentary macaws are slightly easier to breed than migratory Spoon-billed Sandpipers.

Over Easter, Ivan was a guest in the family of long-time newsletter layout designer Matthias Fanck in Northern Bavaria.

At the end of his visit Ivan left NABU with a wonderfully carved bowl with a spoonie head!

Hopefully in 2025 Ivan and his team can resume the head-starting and in 2024 the team can successfully prepare everything necessary on the ground!

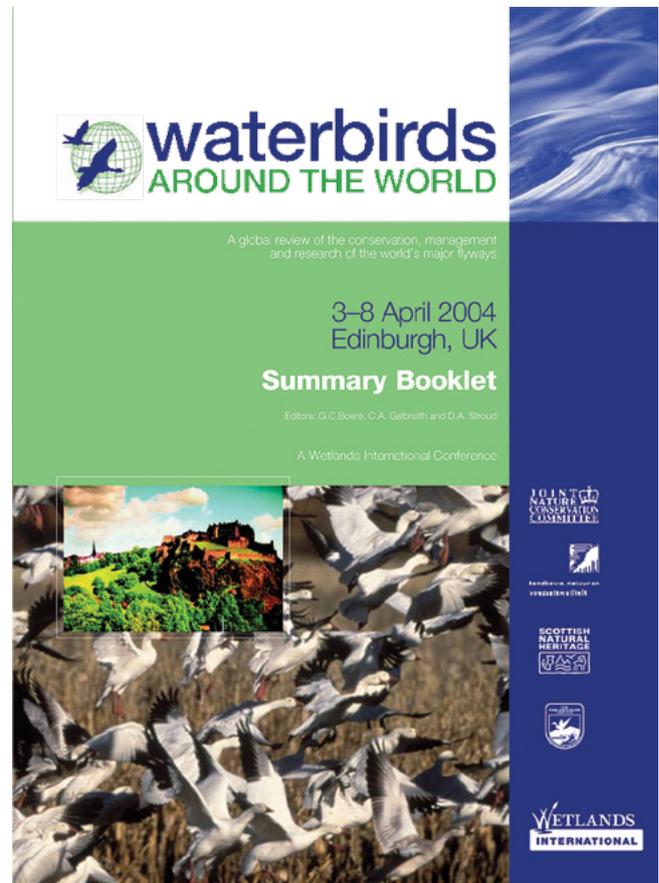


Wood carving made by Ivan Shepelev

From the Archives

Edinburgh Conference 2004

The SBS Task Force originates from the establishment of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Recovery Team (SBS RT) in **2004**, when Evgeny, Lena, Minoru and Christoph met for the first time with partners from other flyway countries to discuss the conservation of the Spoon-billed Sandpipers at the “Waterbirds around the World” conference in Edinburgh.



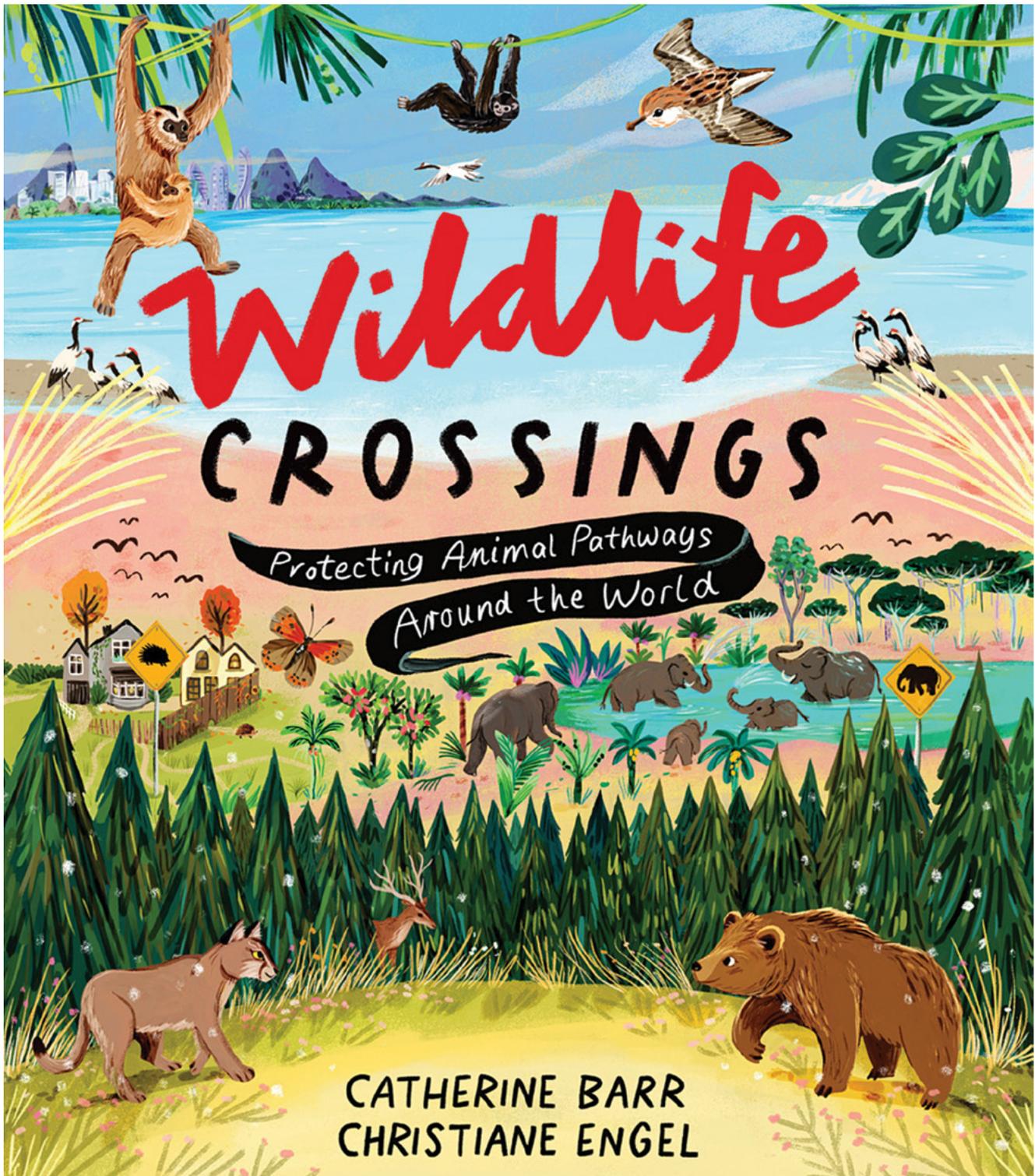
SBS in Arts

Writing in the Spoon-billed Sandpiper

Catherine Barr

For me, 2024 is the Year of the Bird. I have written over 30 nonfiction picture books for children about nature and conservation, many

focusing on endangered species. But I have hardly written about birds. I am keen to change that and discover their stories and extraordinary nature.



Latest News

China to ...

K9 and A6 still going strong

24 May 2024:

After >40 hours flight, K9 finally landed on the west coast of Sakhalin at Tyk Bay.

16 May 2024:

K9 has now settled at DPRK, same site which the tagged SBS used during southward migration. Meanwhile, A6 is still in Tiaozini using areas from Fang-tong in the south to Dongsha Shoal in the north.

15 May 2024:

K9 made a move last night crossing the Yellow Sea towards the Korean Peninsula! Another update later when more signal come through. Exciting!

12 May 2024:

Just a quick update that both transmitters are still giving daily signal, K9 and A6 are still at where they were a week ago:

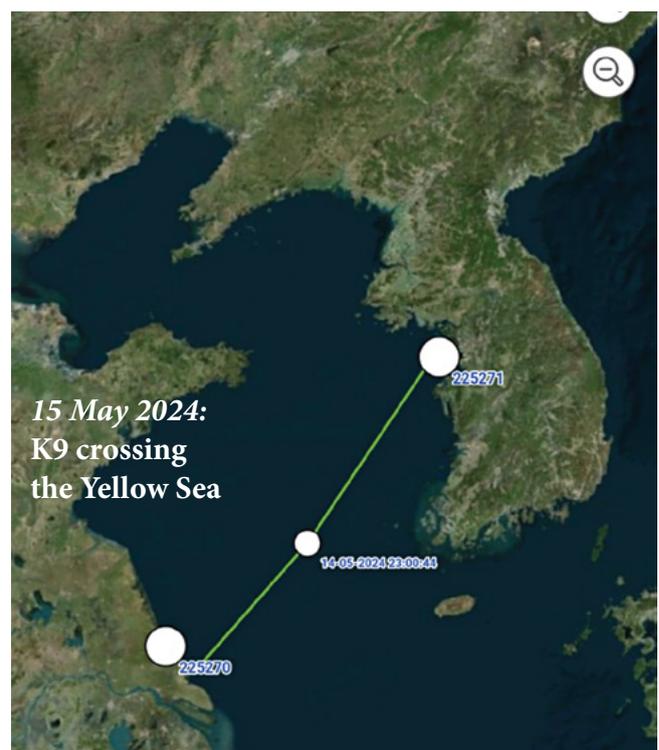
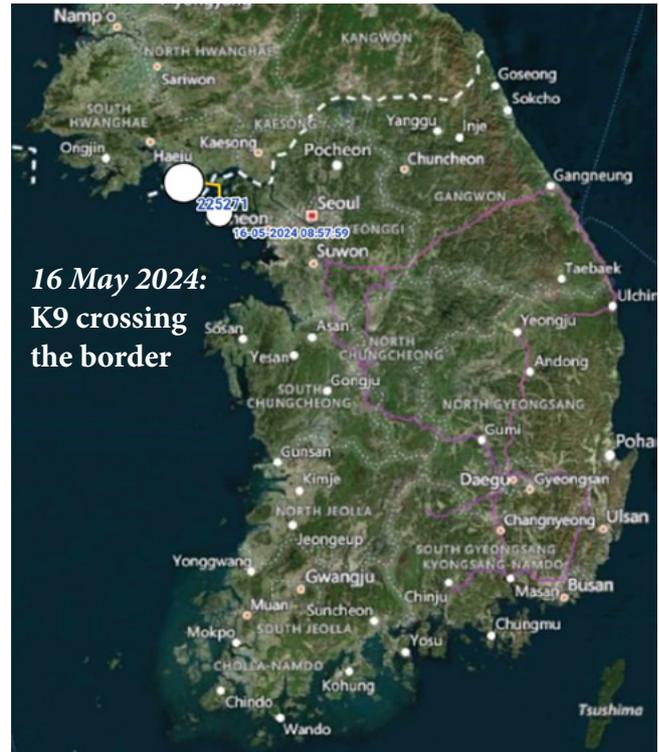
K9 in Dongling, Nantong, Jiangsu
A6 in Tiaozini, Dongtai, Jiangsu

5 May 2024:

While K9 is still in Dongling, A6 has also reached the Yellow Sea area. It departed Zhejiang Province two days ago, today's signal confirmed that it is now in Fangtong Estuary, the southern part of Tiaozini, which is outside the WH site protection boundary. This southern mudflat area of Tiaozini has become increasingly important over the past few years as much of the upper tidal flat in the Tiaozini area is being heavily eroded by a tidal creek. Up to 9 Spoonies were counted in the Fang-tong Estuary area in 2022 autumn. Tracking data of other shorebird species also show that this area is part of the whole "Tiaozini wetland area".

Katherine Leung

... Korean Peninsula



Latest News

Republic of Korea

World Heritage Site Gochang Tidal Flat in Republic of Korea attracted “Lime C8”

In September 2023, an individual of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper (Lime C8) was observed in the area of the Gochang tidal flat (Ramsar Gochang Wetland Center), a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site in the Republic of Korea. This observation was confirmed by Dr. Won-Suk Choi from Chonnam National University during the 2023 national migratory bird monitoring census (focusing on shorebirds) conducted by the National Institute of Biological Resources (NIBR, a national institute under the Ministry of Environment). This event underscores the success of the local government’s conservation efforts, particularly the transformation of a fishpond into a high-tide roost for shorebirds in 2023.

The Gochang tidal flat, situated in the Yellow Sea along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, is home to approximately 194 species of benthic diatoms, providing a crucial habitat for clams and ark shells. Additionally, the flats support over 150,000 of 64 waterbirds species, including 21 globally threatened species listed on the IUCN Red List, such as Chinese Crested Tern (Critically Endangered), Black-faced Spoonbill (Endangered) and Oriental Stork (Endangered). Inscribed as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site in 2021, the area is also recognized as a Ramsar Wetland, a Ramsar Wetland City, and an important habitat for migratory waterbirds within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Network. *Vivian Fu*



Lime C8 using the high-tide roost at Gochang tidal flat World Heritage Site
Won-Suk Choi

Russia

Six members of our survey team arrived in Anadyr on 27 May. Fingers crossed for the success of their work.

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WE SPOON-BILLED SANDPIPERS HAVE A SPECIAL ADAPTATION- OUR SPOON-SHAPED BILLS CREATE A STIRRING MOTION, DRAWING AQUATIC PREY TOWARDS OUR MOUTHS!



THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR HABITAT-TIDAL MUDFLATS, HAS CAUSED A STEEP DECLINE IN OUR POPULATION...



NUMBERING BARELY OVER FOUR HUNDRED WE'RE NOW AMONG THE WORLD'S MOST ENDANGERED WADERS ...



DESPITE BEING BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON FOR A MOUTH!

