

East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership

SHOREBIRD WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference

Endorsed at the SWG members meeting on 31 August 2023

1. Introduction

Each year millions of shorebirds migrate between their breeding areas in the Russian Far East, northern China and Alaska to as far south as Australia and New Zealand. To complete this remarkable one-way migration of more than 13,000 km, shorebirds are dependent on a variety of habitats between their breeding and non-breeding areas through intermediate staging sites. These staging sites are particularly important for feeding and the replenishment of energy reserves that enable them to successfully complete their migration to breed. These sites are spread across most countries throughout east and southeast Asia and therefore successful conservation of migratory shorebirds requires a coordinated international approach. The East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP, established in 2006 in Bogor, Indonesia) has agreed to such an approach for all waterbirds and their habitats for the benefit of people and biodiversity within the Flyway.

Many Shorebird populations around the world are declining. In the East Asian-Australasian Flyway a disproportionate number of shorebird species have been classified as threatened and the shorebirds using this flyway are under increasing threat from previous large-scale habitat loss and currently habitat deterioration. The Partnership acknowledges that international collaboration and cooperation is essential if its goal of conservation is to be achieved.

Under the former Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategies (1996 – 2000; 2001 - 2006), the Shorebird Working Group was established in 1998 to implement the Shorebird Action Plans. This was effective in facilitating the collaboration of researchers, site managers and governments within the Flyway. A Shorebird Site Network was established in the late 1990s and coordinated by a Flyway Officer. These Network sites formed a key component of the Partnership Flyway Site Network.

At the Second Meeting of EAAFP in November 2007, the concept of Working Groups was endorsed and a template developed for the preparation of Terms of Reference for each Group. The following sets out the Terms of Reference for the current Shorebird Working Group.

2. Goal

To promote, facilitate and coordinate shorebird conservation, management, education and research activities within the EAAF and to improve communication between shorebird specialists and managers in the flyway.

3. Taxonomic and geographic scope

The Working Group covers the taxonomic groups of shorebirds migrating within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway including:

- Jacanidae (Jacanas)
- Haematopodidae (Oystercatcher)
- Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocet)
- Glareolidae (Pratincoles)
- Plovers (Charadriidae)
- Scolopacidae (Sandpipers)

4. Objectives

- To assist EAAF countries develop flyway network sites for shorebirds.
- To promote a network of shorebird expertise with a capacity to offer sound advice relating to management, education and research activities for the conservation of shorebirds and their habitats.
- To provide a forum for exchanging information on shorebirds between scientists and managers in the EAAF.
- To support and advise the Partnership in the development of collaborative activities, including research, education and public awareness plans, that promote shorebird conservation.
- To identify current and emerging shorebird conservation, management, research and public outreach issues and opportunities in the EAAF.
- To promote the collaboration and dissemination of information on shorebird related activities with national and regional shorebird groups within and outside of the EAAF.
- To identify priority shorebird species and populations of conservation concern and propose response options for consideration by the Flyway Partnership.
- To identify priority areas for shorebirds in the EAAF and propose strategies for the conservation and sustainable management of the sites.
- To report to the Flyway Partnership on the activities of the Shorebird Working Group.
- To develop an integrated plan of cooperative shorebird activities or initiatives for the EAAF Partnership Strategic Plan.

5. Membership and Duties

- The Shorebird Working Group consists of one representative nominated by each of the Partners, as well as experts actively involved in conservation issues along the flyway that provide knowledge on shorebird research, management, education and conservation throughout all the geographic areas of the EAAF. The latter group of experts will be hereafter called “Invited Members”.
- The number of invited members shall be the same or lower than the maximum number of representatives of Partners. The list of Invited Members will be reviewed every two years. Invited Members that fail to respond to emails and attend virtual meetings may be replaced with people more actively involved in conservation issues along the flyway.
- All members have the right of making decisions, such as to review the work plan, TOR and voting for the Chair of the Shorebird Working Group and endorse the Core Team members.
- Members of the Shorebird Working Group are responsible to elect a Chair as the lead.
- From the representatives of Partners and Invited Members, a “core team” consisting of people representing the breeding grounds to the non-breeding grounds with various expertise in shorebird conservation will be selected by the Chair to engage regularly and function as an active team.
- The Core Team will be endorsed by the Shorebird Working Group members.
- The Chair and Core Team members serve for a two-year term and may be renewed at the discretion of the EAAF Shorebird Working Group members at meeting of members.
- If Chair, or Core Team member are unable to attend more than half of the meetings organised in a calendar year without valid reason, or if members are not satisfied with their efforts, their appointment will be reviewed at the meeting of members.
- The Chair is responsible for identifying Invited Members and representatives from the Partners.
- All other interested parties are welcome to participate in the Shorebird Working Group meetings but will not have voting rights.

6. Role of Chair and Core Team

- The EAAF Shorebird Working Group is administered by the Chair and the Core Team.

- Core Team members will work with the Chair to
 - 1) develop the SWG Work Plan.
 - 2) lead particular tasks as identified in the Work Plan (such as coordinating activities, leading task meetings, collating information where necessary, and reporting results to responsible parties etc).
- The Chair with assistance from the Core Team members is responsible for scheduling and facilitating meetings for the members, preparing and distributing materials prior to meetings, report on work progress at the meetings and completing appropriate records of meetings. Materials and records are also to be provided to the Partnership Secretariat, and all members within 90 days of completed meetings.

7. Meetings

- The EAAFP Shorebird Working group will meet annually or as often as necessary either online or physically to fulfil its objectives and approve the work plan.
- The Chair in consultation with Core Team members will determine the timing and location of meetings.
- A Listserv and Facebook group “East Asian – Australasian Flyway Shorebird Conservation Network” will be used to communicate and share information with all interested parties across the flyway.

8. Financing

- Unless there is prior arrangement, EAAF Shorebird Working Group representatives and other attendees are responsible for their own travel and associated expenses.
- Collaborative grant writing and funding of projects is encouraged.