

TWELFTH MEETING OF PARTNERS OF THE EAST ASIAN – AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY PARTNERSHIP
Cebu, Philippines, 8-14 November 2025



Decision 15

Interim Review of the Single Species Action Plan for the Far Eastern Curlew

Submitted by the Government of Australia, Chair of the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force

Summary

This draft decision is submitted by the Government of Australia, in its capacity as Chair of the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force, to the 12th Meeting of Partners to the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership. The draft decision provides a preliminary overview of the implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for Far Eastern Curlew since October 2017 to present; a review of the Action Plan's success; identifies gaps in implementation; and provides recommendations for the next intersessional period.

Partners are invited to read the outcomes of the interim review and agree to the draft decisions, including a recommendation to close the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force and establish a sub-group under the Shorebird Working Group. The Task Force recommends that the Action Plan is updated by 2030 to incorporate new knowledge and revised actions.

This draft decision contributes to the implementation of KRA 5.2 (Indicator 5.2.2) of the EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-2028.

Background

Far Eastern Curlew

1. The Far Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*) is an endemic migratory shorebird to the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. The species is the largest migratory shorebird in the world. The Far Eastern Curlew is listed Endangered under the IUCN Red List (IUCN, 2024).
2. The species was listed on the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Appendix II in 1994 and Appendix I in 2012. The species was designated for Concerted and Cooperative actions under the CMS in 2014. There are currently no effective international instruments that address conservation issues across the entire range of the species.

3. Evidence from non-breeding range states suggests that the Far Eastern Curlew has undergone a significant decline over the past 30 years. Drivers of this decline are likely due to habitat loss, climate change, human disturbance and possibly hunting on their breeding grounds and along their migration route.
4. Successful conservation of this species requires coordinated and collaborative action across its full geographical range, including at breeding locations, at important migration stop-over sites as well as in non-breeding areas.

Establishment of the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force

5. In 2015, at the 8th Meeting of Partners (MOP8) of the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership in Kushiro, Japan, the Government of Australia proposed the formation of a Far Eastern Curlew Task Force.
6. Australia sought a commitment from all Partners, including all relevant Government Partners, to cooperatively develop an International Single Species Action Plan for the Far Eastern Curlew.
7. Partners agreed and the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force was officially endorsed by the Partnership at MOP8. Australia was elected as Chair of the Task Force and BirdLife Australia was elected as the Task Force Coordinator.
8. The EAAFP Far Eastern Curlew Task Force membership was open to (1) designated representatives of EAAFP Government Partners of all principal Range States, (2) representatives of the relevant EAAFP Working Groups, (3) representatives of national experts and conservation organizations from all principal Range States, international organizations, and (4) other experts (not necessarily from the EAAF) as required.
9. The primary role of the Task Force was to:
 - a. Coordinate the development of the International Far Eastern Curlew Action Plan;
 - b. Consult and support range states on identifying specific threats and actions to support the survival of Far Eastern Curlew;
 - c. Encourage and support range states on the implementation of the Action Plan.
10. Between MOP8 and MOP9 (Singapore, 2017), the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force, in cooperation with the EAAFP Secretariat, prepared a draft Single Species Action Plan that was sent to all Range States, Partners and the Chair of relevant Working Groups and Task Forces on 5 August 2015. Further targeted consultation occurred on 17 December 2015 with Range States, non-government organisations and researchers. The final draft of the Single Species Action Plan was again circulated for comment on 1 April 2016 to all EAAFP Partners, finalized and submitted to MOP9 for consideration and adoption.
11. At MOP9, Partners unanimously adopted the Single Species Action Plan in response to the species' rapid decline in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. Partners further requested that the Task Force continue to operate intersessionally to effectively monitor and report on the implementation of the Action Plan.
12. The Action Plan was also endorsed by the 12th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals in Manila, Philippines in October 2017 (Res.5.9 (Rev.COP12)).

Implementation of the Single Species Action Plan for Far Eastern Curlew

13. Since adoption, the Task Force has assisted Partners with implementation, monitored progress and reported to relevant international fora.
14. Past activities of the Task Force include implementation of high priority actions outlined in the Action Plan. Examples include: ongoing monitoring at key staging and non-breeding sites, quantifying illegal hunting, take and trade of Far Eastern Curlew, banding and tracking individuals to determine migratory pathways, providing advice to national focal points on Far Eastern Curlew conservation issues and promoting the conservation of Far Eastern Curlew through relevant fora, such as CMS COP13 and COP14.
15. Relevant materials are available on the Task Force website and include:
 - [Teepol B, Kong D, Majri N, Au NJ. \(2023\) Exploratory surveys to clarify the status of the Far Eastern Curlew on the Sarawak coastline in Borneo, Malaysia](#)
 - [Klokov KB, Ivanovich MA, Valentinovich PV, Leonidovna ME, Evgenievich SE, Antonov A, Sasin AA \(2023\) Evaluation of Hunting Pressure on Shorebirds in the Russian Far East, with Special Attention to *Numenius* \(Curlews, Whimbrels\) and Other Threatened Species; Stage III: Surveys in Khabarovskiy Krai and Amur Oblast](#)
 - [The Malaysian Nature Society Kuching Branch \(MNSKB\) Shorebirds Brochure, 2023 \(v1.6\) — 马来西亚砂拉越洲峇哥文丹海滨之滨鸟](#)
 - [The Malaysian Nature Society Kuching Branch \(MNSKB\) Shorebirds Brochure, 2023 \(v1.7\) — Burung-Burung Pantai Di Teluk Bako Buntal, Sarawak, Malaysia](#)
 - [The Malaysian Nature Society Kuching Branch \(MNSKB\) Shorebirds Brochure, 2023 \(v1.6\) — Shorebirds of Bako Buntal Bay, Sarawak, Malaysia](#)
 - [BirdsRussia report on shorebird hunting 2019](#)
 - [Birds Korea. 2021. Survey of Far Eastern Curlew: July 21st-25th 2021. EAAFP Secretariat & Far Eastern Curlew Network in the Korean Peninsula \(Eng\)](#)
 - [Birds Korea. 2021. Survey of Far Eastern Curlew: July 21st-25th 2021. EAAFP Secretariat & Far Eastern Curlew Network in the Korean Peninsula \(Kor\)](#)
 - [EKSAI Foundation. 2021. Far Eastern Curlew Potential Site Survey at Sumatra Island, Indonesia \(2020\). EAAFP Secretariat, Hwaseong City](#)
 - [EKSAI Foundation. 2022. Report of Long-Term Monitoring of Far Eastern Curlew by Local Birdwatcher in Sumatra, Indonesia \(2021-2022\). . EAAFP Secretariat, Hwaseong Eco Foundation, and Hwaseong City](#)
 - [Dy. I & V. Natural. 2023. Far Eastern Curlew \(*Numenius madagascariensis*\) Census \(2022, the Philippines\). EAAFP Secretariat, Hwaseong Eco Foundation, and Hwaseong City.](#)
16. Many of the activities to date have been funded through the EAAFP Small Grant Fund and voluntary contributions by Partners.
17. Successful EAAFP Small Grant projects have included:

- a. 2021: Evaluation of hunting pressure on *Numenius species* (Curlews, Whimbrels) and other shorebirds in the Russian Far East. Stage three: surveys in Khabarovskiy Krai
 - b. 2020: Evaluation of hunting pressure on *Numenius Species* (Curlews, Whimbrels) and other shorebirds in the Russian Far East. Stage two: surveys in Sakhalin
 - c. 2019: Population Analysis and Community Workshop for Far Eastern Curlew Conservation Action in Pantai Desa Sungai Cemara, Jambi, Indonesia
 - d. 2019: Evaluation of hunting pressure on *Numenius species* (Curlews, Whimbrels) and other shorebirds in the Russian Far East. Stage one: initiation of surveys in Kamchatka
 - e. 2017: Research on Far Eastern Curlew at Yubu Island
 - f. 2017: Support for a CMS side event on Far Eastern Curlew
 - g. 2017: Support for surveys in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway (Far Eastern Curlew Task Force)
18. The Government of Australia has also provided voluntary contributions to CMS to support the implementation of the Action Plan and implement high priority actions in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. Examples of completed projects coordinated by CMS include:
 - a. An initial study, including surveys and an analysis of the impacts of shorebird hunting in the Russian Far-East, was conducted by BirdsRussia in Kamchatka, the Russian Federation, in 2019. Two further studies on the same topic were undertaken through small-scale funding agreements with BirdsRussia: in Sakhalin in 2020, and in Khabarovsk and Amur regions in 2021/2022. The first two studies indicated that hunting of shorebirds was deeply rooted in local hunting communities. The impact was assessed as significant; in Sakhalin shorebird hunting was on an even larger scale than in Kamchatka in 2019. Informal interviews showed that the intentional taking of Far Eastern Curlew was taking place. Other large, medium-sized and small shorebirds were also regularly shot, and interviewees had observed declines in the abundance of various species in recent years. Collateral damage to non-targeted species was also reported. The projects highlighted the need for changes in hunting legislation, and temporary limitations or suspension of hunting to protect Far Eastern Curlews as well as other non-targeted species killed by accidental shooting; and education and awareness activities, including on how to identify different species. As further outputs, recommendations for further research were made with regard to the status and trends of populations of the studied shorebird species. The reports are available from the CMS Secretariat.
 - b. Another project, *Exploratory surveys to clarify the status of the Endangered Far Eastern Curlew on the Sarawak coastline in Borneo, Malaysia*, was implemented through a small-scale funding agreement with the Malaysian Nature Society. The results of the study are presented in [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Inf.28.5.1a](#).
19. Current activities of the Task Force include the implementation of high priority actions outlined in the Action Plan. Examples include ongoing monitoring at key staging and non-breeding sites, quantifying illegal hunting, take and trade of Far Eastern Curlew, banding and tracking individuals to determine migratory pathways, providing advice to national focal points on Far Eastern Curlew conservation issues and promoting the conservation of Far Eastern Curlew through relevant fora.

Review of the Single Species Action Plan for Far Eastern Curlew – 2017-2025

20. A central activity of the Task Force in 2025 was to undertake an interim review of the Single Species Action Plan to assess levels of implementation, identify priorities for the next intersessional period and determine if an updated Action Plan was warranted.
21. On 30 May 2025, all EAAFP Partners, Technical Sub-Committee, Science Unit, the Secretariat and relevant working groups and task forces were invited to identify actions that had contributed to the implementation of the Action Plan. Responses were requested by 4 July 2025.
22. Four Partners – CMS, Republic of Korea, BirdLife International and Wetlands International - responded to the request as well as the Yellow Sea Ecoregion Task Force and the Malaysian Nature Society.
23. Consolidated input is presented in Attachment A.

Key outcomes on the interim review

24. Overall, most actions were considered underway, and the Action Plan continues to provide useful guidance to Partners when considering the conservation of the species and its habitats. Numerous range states and other organizations are actively implementing actions, research is underway and transboundary cooperation is evident.
25. Good progress can be demonstrated on habitat protection measures along the flyway. Efforts by Yellow Sea range states have increased the size of protected areas which supports migrating Far Eastern Curlew and other migratory birds. On-going efforts by non-breeding range states continue to support habitat protection and management actions to address key threats within important areas.
26. A significant amount of work can be demonstrated to address the illegal and unsustainable take of Far Eastern Curlew throughout the flyway. The establishment of the Asian Pacific Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds Intergovernmental Task Force by CMS has been a pivotal action to address this key threat. Its joint workplan with the EAAFP continues to support efforts to reduce illegal take of migratory waterbirds across the flyway and has multiple benefits to other taxa.
27. Threats such as climate change, human disturbance and pollution continue to affect Far Eastern Curlew, albeit at different spatial and temporal scales. Work needs to continue to understand the impacts of climate change on breeding areas, migration pathways and non-breeding areas.
28. Population monitoring of Far Eastern Curlew is occurring across multiple range states. This information has supported revised population estimates, population trend analysis and informed international and national threatened status assessments. Monitoring in breeding range states remain a gap as well as some demographic parameters.
29. A number of tracking studies have greatly increased our understanding of both migratory pathways and local movements. This information has been welcomed by many range states and interested parties across the flyway. Studies underway in Malaysia will continue to contribute to our knowledge of Far Eastern Curlew movements in the next few years.
30. Efforts to increase awareness of Far Eastern Curlew and its threats have been on-going throughout the life of the Action Plan. Numerous communication products are now available

within a number of range states and promoted through the EAAFP website. CMS has played a particularly important role in elevating the conservation of Far Eastern Curlew and the Action Plan to a global audience.

Recommendations

31. Future priorities and recommendations for consideration:

- a. Continue to prioritize the conservation and management of Far Eastern Curlew in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.
- b. Continue to explore opportunities to increase habitat protection along the flyway and address key threats such as illegal taking and climate change.
- c. Expand monitoring efforts along the flyway and fill survey gaps where possible.
- d. Explore options to update the Action Plan by 2030 to incorporate new information on threats and actions.
- e. Close the EAAFP Far Eastern Curlew Task Force and invite the Shorebird Working Group to establish a Far Eastern Curlew Sub-group to continue to monitor implementation.
- f. Continue to integrate Far Eastern Curlew conservation efforts with other migratory waterbird conservation measures to avoid duplication of effort.

Decision:

- That Partners note the interim review of the Single Species Action Plan for the Far Eastern Curlew at Attachment A.
- That Partners note future priorities and agree to the recommendations for the next intersessional period.

Annex 1

Decision 15

Interim Review of the Single Species Action Plan for the Far Eastern Curlew

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Concerned that the Far Eastern Curlew is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List and was also listed on Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in 2012;

Noting that there are existing instruments and mechanisms that address migratory waterbirds in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway, including the CMS and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat;

Noting further that the Single Species Action Plan for the Far Eastern Curlew covers its entire geographic range, and joint adoption by the EAAFP and CMS offers an opportunity for collaborative conservation of this threatened species;

Thanking the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force for coordinating the development of the Action Plan and tracking implementation of its actions since 2017;

Noting that the interim review was developed in consultation with Partners, the Technical Sub-Committee, Science Unit, relevant Working Groups and Task Forces and the Secretariat in 2025; and

Noting further the future priorities and recommendations for the intersessional period;

The 12th Meeting of Partners of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership

1. *Notes* the interim review of the Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Far Eastern Curlew as submitted to MOP12 at Attachment A;
2. *Urges* Ranges States, Partners, and other stakeholders to continue to implement relevant provisions of the Action Plan as a matter of priority;
3. *Encourages* Partners to provide technical and/or financial assistance to support activities outlined in the Plan;

4. *Requests* the Secretariat to bring the Plan to the attention of all Range States and relevant stakeholders;
5. *Agrees* to close the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force; and
6. *Invites* the Shorebird Working Group to establish a Far Eastern Curlew Sub-group to monitor the implementation of the Plan.