

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



Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and the Sustainable Use of their Habitats in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway

(Short Title “Partnership for the East Asian – Australasian Flyway”)

INTRODUCTION

The geographical routes that migratory waterbirds traverse on an annual basis are known as ‘flyways’¹. There are nine major migratory waterbird flyways around the world. The East Asian – Australasian Flyway extends from the Arctic and sub-Arctic through eastern Asia to Australasia. The Flyway is home to over 50 million migratory waterbirds, shared across ecologically connected sites and habitats. International cooperation across their migratory range is therefore essential to conserve and protect migratory waterbirds and the habitats on which they depend and ensure ecological connectivity.

In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, the Governments of Japan and Australia, together with Wetlands International, successfully proposed a Type II Partnership for the conservation and sustainable use of sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds in East Asia, South East Asia and Australasia. The Partnership was included in the list of WSSD Type II initiatives.

In November 2004, representatives from twenty-one Governments, Inter-Governmental organizations and non-government organizations met in the Republic of Korea to discuss future regional cooperation for conservation of migratory waterbirds using the Type II Partnership model. They agreed that this Partnership would enhance collaboration between Governments, Inter-governmental organizations and non-government organizations and contribute towards achieving the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Partnership builds on the achievements of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee, the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy (APMWCS), and its Action Plans for Anatidae, Cranes and Shorebirds. The Strategy and Action Plans have enhanced and guided international cooperation and coordination and activities to conserve and protect internationally important habitat for migratory waterbirds since 1996.

Waterbirds and their coastal and inland habitats are under pressure from a range of threats. This Partnership recognises the importance of sustainable livelihoods for communities that share important sites with migratory waterbirds, whilst ensuring the availability and quality of habitats required to maintain populations of migratory waterbirds.

The Partnership recognises that building and promoting the site network for migratory waterbirds, and delivering capacity building at a local level to ensure sustainable delivery of ecosystem services, will enhance the conservation status of the migratory waterbird groups covered by the Partnership in Appendix III of this document. The Partnership also recognises that urgently implementing a flyway wide approach to the conservation of migratory waterbirds is the most effective way to enhance their conservation status.

The Partners of this Flyway Partnership have mutually consented as follows:

PARAGRAPH 1 – LEGAL STATUS

The Partnership is an informal and voluntary initiative of the Partners.

PARAGRAPH 2 – PURPOSE, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

PURPOSE

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

GOAL

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

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop the Flyway Network of sites of international importance for the conservation of migratory waterbirds, building on the achievements of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy (APMWCS) networks.
2. Enhance communication, education and public awareness of the values of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.
3. Enhance flyway research and monitoring activities, build knowledge and promote exchange of information on waterbirds and their habitats.
4. Build the habitat and waterbird management capacity of natural resource managers, decision makers and local stakeholders.
5. Develop, especially for priority species and habitats, flyway wide approaches to enhance the conservation status of migratory waterbirds.

PARAGRAPH 3 – DEVELOPMENT OF THE NETWORK OF SITES OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS ALONG THE EAST ASIAN-AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY, BUILDING ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC MIGRATORY WATERBIRD CONSERVATION STRATEGY (APMWCS) NETWORKS.

1. Establishment of an East Asian - Australasian Flyway Waterbird Site Network (Flyway Site Network) is a critical element of the Partnership and will ensure that a chain of internationally important sites are sustainably managed and connected through international cooperation and coordination to support the long-term survival of migratory waterbirds within the flyway.
2. The Anatidae, Crane and Shorebird Network sites under the APMWCS will be invited to become part of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Site Network without further validation according to transitional guidelines.
3. The Site Network will indicate which species or group(s) of waterbirds (for example, Anatidae, Cranes, Shorebirds, Herons, Terns) for which a site is internationally important. Shared species between flyway network sites provide a sound basis for collaborative activities of the Partnership.
4. Government Partners are encouraged to submit internationally important migratory waterbird sites that occur in the territory they control for listing as a Flyway Site. Provided the criteria for inclusion in

Appendix IV are satisfied, the Secretariat will note the submission and notify the Partners of the inclusion of the site in the Flyway Site Network. A register of sites will be maintained by the Secretariat.

5. A Government Partner is entitled to remove a site within its own national jurisdiction from the Flyway Site Network and inform the Secretariat of their decision.
6. Government Partners should assist network site managers in their country to develop and implement site management plans according to relevant internationally agreed guidelines (eg Ramsar guidelines on wetland management).

PARAGRAPH 4 – ENHANCE COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE VALUES OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS

1. The Partners will encourage communication, education and public awareness activities across the Flyway on migratory waterbirds, conservation and sustainable use of migratory waterbird sites.
2. The Partners are encouraged to raise awareness of migratory waterbirds and the importance of conserving them, with the aim of increasing engagement of communities and decision makers in activities to conserve and protect migratory waterbirds and their habitats.
3. A key message in the education and awareness materials will be the concept of the flyway wide approach to migratory waterbird conservation and a flyway site network of habitats, across the flyway that waterbirds need to complete their annual cycle.

PARAGRAPH 5 – ENHANCE FLYWAY RESEARCH AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES, BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON WATERBIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS.

1. The Partners are encouraged to develop and implement flyway wide collaborative research and monitoring programs relevant to shared populations of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.
2. The Partners recognise the need for a better understanding of the migration strategies of migratory waterbirds to assist in avian disease risk assessment and development of response plans.
3. The Partners are encouraged to share information and data from research and monitoring programs in the flyway.

PARAGRAPH 6 – BUILD THE HABITAT AND WATERBIRD MANAGEMENT CAPACITY OF NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGERS, DECISION MAKERS AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS.

1. The Partners are encouraged to cooperate to build expertise across the Flyway Site Network including promoting sustainable development management techniques, developing and implementing management plans, monitoring of waterbirds, promoting awareness and public education, and research formulation.
2. The Partners are encouraged to assist communities to adopt and implement sustainable development principles in the management of sites of international importance, with particular attention in those countries in the flyway that have limited capacity and resources.

PARAGRAPH 7 – DEVELOP, ESPECIALLY FOR PRIORITY SPECIES AND HABITATS, FLYWAY WIDE APPROACHES TO ENHANCE THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF MIGRATORY WATERBIRDS.

1. For priority species (globally threatened migratory waterbirds, regionally threatened populations, species of conservation concern, and flagship species) and habitats within the Flyway, Partners are encouraged to promote and support the development of conservation and species management programs.

PARAGRAPH 8 – MEMBERSHIP

1. Governments may join this Partnership by endorsing the text and supporting the objectives and actions under this Partnership.
2. International Non-Government Organisations, Inter-Governmental organisations and the international private sector may join this Partnership by endorsing the text and supporting the objectives and actions under this Partnership. For clarity, entities joining under Paragraph 8(1) and 8(2) will be referred to as Government Partners, NGO Partners, IGO Partners, and Private Sector Partners.
3. This Partnership is open to new Partners.
4. The Partners should encourage additional membership of the Partnership.
5. Partners will be advised of applications for membership out of session. If no issues are raised within one month, the applicant will be added to the list of Partners. If an objection by any Partner is raised within one month, the applicant's membership will be referred to the next Meeting of the Partners for a decision.
6. The Partners should recognise the role of different levels of Governments in the implementation of the Partnership and encourage national and site level partnerships to support activities.
7. Partners may withdraw membership at any time and are encouraged to provide advance notice.
8. An up to date list of Partners will be maintained in Appendix I and may be amended at any time subject to paragraph 8(5).

PARAGRAPH 9 – ADMINISTRATION

1. To oversee implementation of the Partnership, a Meeting of the Partners will be held biennially or as needed at mutually convenient locations. Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Partners will be adopted by the Partners.
2. The Partners will elect a Chair, who represents a government Partner, and Vice Chair of the Partnership for the intersessional period between the Meeting of the Partners.
3. A Management Committee will be established to facilitate the effective operation of the Partnership during the intersessional period between the Meeting of the Partners and will work closely with the Secretariat.
4. A Budget and Finance Sub-Committee will be established to provide advice on budgetary and finance matters to the Management Committee.
5. A Technical Advisory Group will be established to provide scientific and technical advice to the Meeting of the Partners, the Secretariat, any other body set up under the Partnership, or any Partner.
6. A Secretariat will be established to facilitate the effective communication and coordination of the Partnership and to coordinate activities across the Flyway. Partners are encouraged to support and provide resources to the Secretariat.

7. The Partners may engage the services of a Partner or organisation to provide services to the Secretariat.
8. Partners may amend the text of this Partnership document by consensus at Meetings of the Partners.
9. Partners may amend the migratory waterbird taxonomic groups listed in this Partnership by consensus including adding to, or removing migratory waterbird groups from, Appendix III.
10. The Partners may establish advisory groups and permanent and/or ad hoc working groups/task forces as needed.

PARAGRAPH 10 – FINANCE

1. The Partners are encouraged to provide resources to support the Secretariat and activities of the Partnership.
2. Meetings of Partners will assess the extent of the need and options for generating financial resources for:
 - a) assisting Partners to carry out activities under this Partnership; and
 - b) the expenses required for the operation of the Secretariat, advisory groups, working groups/task forces and other groups established under this Partnership.

APPENDIX I-LIST OF PARTNERS (AT 14 NOVEMBER 2025)

Endorsed by (Government/Inter-Governmental/Non-government Partner)	At (Place) or By (Method)	On (Date)
Australia	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Indonesia	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Japan	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
The Philippines	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Republic of Korea	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Russia	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Singapore	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
United States of America	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Ramsar Convention Secretariat	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Australasian Wader Studies Group – BirdLife Australia	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
International Crane Foundation	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
Wetlands International	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
WWF	Bogor, Indonesia	6 November 2006
IUCN	Letter to interim secretariat	6 November 2006
BirdLife International	Bogor, Indonesia	9 November 2006
Wild Bird Society of Japan	Letter to interim secretariat	18 July 2007
Royal Government of Cambodia	Beijing, China	13 November 2007
People's Republic of China	Letter to interim secretariat	17 March 2008
FAO	Letter to interim secretariat	6 November 2008

Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust	Letter to Partnership Chair	21 January 2010
Endorsed by (Government/Inter-Governmental/Non-government Partner)	At (Place) or By (Method)	On (Date)
Miranda Naturalists Trust	Letter to Partnership Chair	18 May 2010
People's Republic of Bangladesh	Letter to Partnership Chair	3 June 2010
Thailand	Letter to Partnership Chair	8 September 2010
Mongolia	Letter to Partnership Chair	3 December 2010
New Zealand	Letter to Partnership Chair	5 September 2011
Rio Tinto	Letter to Partnership Chair	11 November 2011
Malaysia	Letter to Partnership Chair	9 October 2012
Wildlife Conservation Society	Letter to Partnership Chair	12 February 2013
Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna	Letter to Partnership Chair	10 May 2013
Convention on Biological Diversity	Letter to Partnership Chair	26 November 2013
Myanmar	Letter to Partnership Chair	17 June 2014
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	Letter to Partnership Chair	02 July 2014
Viet Nam	Letter to Partnership Chair	19 September 2014
Hanns Seidel Foundation	Letter to Partnership Chair	14 March 2016
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Letter to Partnership Chair	11 April 2018
Paulson Institute	Letter to Partnership Chair	11 December 2018
Hong Kong Bird Watching Society	Letter to Partnership Chair	DD MM 2020
Mangrove Conservation Foundation	Letter to Partnership Chair	DD MM 2020
Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia	Letter to Partnership Chair	14 May 2023
Eco Foundation Global	Letter to Partnership Chair	4 January 2025
ICLEI Cities Biodiversity Center (ICLEI CBC)	Letter to Partnership Chair	13 April 2025

APPENDIX II-DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the Partnership:

1. 'Migratory waterbird' means the East Asian – Australasian Flyway population of any species or lower taxon of waterbirds of the taxonomic groups identified in Appendix III, a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries.
2. 'East Asian – Australasian Flyway' means one of the global waterbird migration systems that directly link sites and ecosystems in different countries and continents. The East Asian – Australasian Flyway extends from the Arctic and sub-Arctic through eastern Asia to Australasia.
3. 'Flyway' means the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.
4. 'Government Partner' means National Governments which have endorsed the Partnership document.
5. 'Inter-Governmental Partner' means international and regional organisations, bodies and agencies which have endorsed the Partnership document.
6. 'International Non-Government Partner' means international non-government organisations, national non-government organisations that coordinate waterbird conservation activities in more than one country in the Flyway and international business sector, which have endorsed the Partnership document.
7. 'The Flyway Partners' refers collectively to the Government Partners, Inter-Governmental Partners, and International Non-government Partners within the Flyway.
8. 'Flyway Site Network' means the interconnectedness of migratory waterbird sites through shared species and populations throughout the Flyway.

APPENDIX III– TAXONOMIC GROUPS OF WATERBIRDS MIGRATING WITHIN THE EAST ASIAN-AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY.

(Updated to include additional taxonomic groups of migratory waterbirds as listed in MOP10 Decision 11).

Taxonomic Group	English Name
Anatidae	Swans, geese and ducks
Podicipedidae	Grebes
Phaethontidae	Tropicbirds
Heliornithidae	Finfoots
Rallidae	Rails, gallinules and coots
Gruidae	Cranes
Gaviidae	Divers/Loons
Hydrobatidae	Northern storm petrels
Oceanitidae	Austral storm petrels
Procellariidae	Shearwaters and petrels
Ciconiidae	Storks
Threskiornithidae	Ibises and spoonbills
Ardeidae	Herons, egrets and bitterns
Pelecanidae	Pelicans
Fregatidae	Frigatebirds
Sulidae	Gannets and boobies
Phalacrocoracidae	Cormorants and shags
Haematopodidae	Oystercatchers
Recurvirostridae	Stilts and avocet
Charadriidae	Plovers
Jacanidae	Jacanas
Scolopacidae	Sandpipers
Glareolidae	Pratincoles
Laridae	Gulls, terns and skimmers
Stercorariidae	Skuas and jaegers
Alcidae	Auks, murres and puffins

APPENDIX IV – FLYWAY SITE NETWORK CRITERIA

For inclusion of a site as internationally important as a Flyway Network Site, one or more of the following Criteria must be met:

- **Criterion i.** It regularly supports >20,000 migratory waterbirds [equivalent of Ramsar Criterion 5];
- **Criterion ii.** It regularly supports >1% of the individuals of a biogeographic population of a migratory waterbird [equivalent of Ramsar Criterion 6];
- **Criterion iii.** It regularly supports appreciable numbers of a biogeographic population of a globally threatened (Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) or Vulnerable (VU)) migratory waterbird species [equivalent of Ramsar Criterion 2];
- **Criterion iv.** It is a “migratory staging area” that regularly supports >5,000 migratory waterbirds [no equivalent Ramsar Criterion];
- **Criterion v.** It is a “migratory staging area” that regularly supports >0.25% of a biogeographic population of a migratory waterbird [no equivalent Ramsar Criterion];
- **Criterion vi.** It supports migratory waterbirds at a stage of their life cycles important for the maintenance of their flyway populations, including as a refuge during adverse conditions [equivalent of Ramsar Criterion 4]