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Asian Waterbird Census



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With the 53rd IWC fast approaching, we know many of you will be busy with your preparations or even with your first surveys. Your efforts are a great inspiration, not only for us but to many others involved in waterbird and wetland conservation. We therefore ask you to keep us updated on your progress, and particularly to alert us to any posts you make on social media about the counts, so we can promote these and

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(such as #AWC, #IWC50, #waterbirdcensus, #wetlands etc.). You can send us tweets or facebook messages [@WetlandsInt](#). And of course if you are not joining the counts you can still support the census through the [waterbird fund!](#)

For more details on the AWC 2019, check out the [AWC website](#).

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Join the Wetlands Trash Hunt

Plastic pollution is a huge environmental and health problem. A lot of attention has focused on plastic pollution in our seas and along our coasts, but much less has been paid to our inland wetlands. This January we want to track how big the problem is through the International Waterbird Census network. As well as cleaning up litter, it's also important to map waste with the Litterati app (www.litterati.org). With this app, you can specify exactly where each litter item is found and keep track of which brands, types of packaging, and materials are commonly found, which provides insights into the litter problem. By gathering this information, tackling the problem at its source becomes easier. This is possible by developing better packaging or implementing deposit systems on commonly found litter items such as bottles and cans.

Which beverage packaging is most prevalent in the environment? Who are the producers of these items, and who are the polluters? These are the questions we hope to provide an answer to (and of course picking up the trash as you go along will contribute to cleaning the wetlands). Only by keeping track of the waste we will be able to identify and confront the sources of the problem. Download the app, join our Wetlands Trash Hunters Group and start contributing your data!

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AWC coordinators meet in Thailand

The 3rd meeting of AWC coordinators was held in Laem Phak Bia, Thailand in November. Central to the discussions were ideas to enhance the strategic planning of waterbird and wetland monitoring nationally and across the region. Off the back of the meeting, coordinators will now prepare national action plans with priorities and funding needs. Additional efforts will be made to improve the collection of information on waterbirds and wetlands in a more standardised manner. This will in turn help

Central Asian Flyway regional action plan. The meeting was a great success in building collaborations with coordinators, sharing experiences and helping us map out the coming years to strengthen local monitoring actions. We are hugely indebted to the constructive and extremely valuable inputs from all participants as well as the EAAFP Secretariat for supporting the meeting and Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (national AWC Coordinator) for their expert organisation of the meeting.



Photo from Eugene Cheah

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Big steps forward at the EAAFP MoP

The recent 10th Meeting of Partners (MoP) of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) in Hainan, China has voiced a clear direction for the next decade through adoption of a new Strategic Plan 2019-2028 along with several decisions to strengthen and improve the science/technical decision making base to prioritise the work of the Partners and all other stakeholders. This includes adoption of a systematic process to maintain up-to-date information on waterbird population estimates, trends and 1% thresholds through the preparation of a periodic EAAF Conservation Status Review (CSR). This is a vital step towards ensuring the EAAFP

Undertaking such a review will greatly benefit from the input and expertise of all working groups and task forces, as well as the newly formed Science Unit of the Secretariat and the Technical Sub-Committee and other experts across the region. Wetlands International will kick start the process for the first EAAF-CSR development in early 2019, looking to prepare the first CSR over the coming year.

The periodic production of the CSR recognises the need for development of stronger and comprehensive national waterbird monitoring programmes in each country. The MOP also discussed the importance of establishing EAAF National Partnerships to promote national implementation, which would include strengthening monitoring of flyway network sites and other important sites building on the ongoing AWC programme.

The MOP adopted an International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), jointly developed by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), European Union (EU) and East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP). The Plan was also adopted by EU, CMS and the AEWA MOP7 during 2018 and will be finalised for implementation in early 2019. Two of three biogeographic populations of the species occur in Asia, the more numerous one in South and west Asia while the critically endangered East Asian population has less than 150 individuals breed in western Mongolia and spend the non-breeding period along the China coast. A Task Force is to be established under the EAAF Partnership to coordinate, catalyse and monitor implementation of actions of the East Asian population. The Action Plan can be downloaded [here](#). An International Working Group for all three populations of the species is also to be established in 2019.



Dalmatian Pelican, photo by Taej Mundkur

The MOP also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Beijing Forestry and EAAFP, establishing a new Science Unit in Beijing to underpin the work of the EAAFP. The Science Unit, led by Prof Lei Guangchun will strengthen scientific study of migratory waterbirds, data collection and information exchange to support the work of partners.

All the MOP papers and decisions are to be posted shortly. The latest in-session versions are available [here](#). More information on the MOP is posted on the [News page](#).



Participants at the EAAFP MOP 2018

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Indonesia makes plans for the future of bird conservation

Indonesia is a crossroads for many migratory birds, with many species passing through on their annual migrations and others visiting for the duration of the northern hemisphere winter. Indonesia is also a large and diverse country, with many wetlands hard to reach and survey. Important progress was made at a recent national workshop, which mapped out the needs and priorities for a national Action Plan for migratory waterbird conservation. High on the list were identifying Flyway Network Sites, enhanced awareness-raising, building conservation capacity, setting up short and long term research and monitoring, improving the exchange of information, coordination of organisation driven initiatives, developing partnerships with stakeholders, and contributing to flyway wide approaches to enhance the conservation status of migratory birds. Much more information about the meeting is available [here](#).



Photo from Ragil Satriyo

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Annual IWC national counted numbers report

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all the counts submitted to the IWC database and includes figures from AWC 2014 - 2018. The vast amount of information reported is a testimony to the efforts of coordinators and their networks in collecting, collating and validating waterbird count data. Default overviews are available for January waterbird counts summarised by [country counted totals](#) and [species counted totals](#), though you can filter and reorganise the data as you wish. Please note that due to the quantity of data involved, the first time you open the webpage it may take a little while to fully load. Don't forgot there are also [summary maps](#) for the AWC as well which will be updated in 2019 once the final version of the report is uploaded.

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ASEAN Flyway Network project

In 2018, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States have established the ASEAN Flyway Network (AFN) that aims to strengthen monitoring of existing EAAF Network Sites, potential network sites and explore coastal areas that may be important for migratory waterbirds. The AFN is planning for the first waterbird counts in early 2019 in conjunction with AWC 2019 and through the use the AWC methodology and networks.

The AFN also serves as a virtual network of flyway site managers and other key stakeholders in the ASEAN region to facilitate regional cooperation needed to ensure the conservation of the migratory waterbirds and the wetlands that support them along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF). The establishment of the AFN was facilitated by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) through a two year project, "Improving Biodiversity Conservation of Wetlands and Migratory Waterbirds in ASEAN Region – Phase I." The project is being supported by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund and is led by Singapore, through the NParks.

Over the last months, national workshops have been organised to plan implementation of the project (such as the one reported above for Indonesia). It is anticipated that the roll out of the AFN will help to strengthen the capacity of government and other EAAF Site Network by filling a major geographic gap. Wetlands International is pleased to offer technical support to the project.

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RAMSAR COP13

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decisions for wetlands management as well as waterbirds; the final versions of all resolutions are [now available](#). Of particular importance for waterbirds includes resolution #20 entitled Promoting the conservation and wise use of intertidal wetlands and ecologically-associated habitats, which calls improvement management of intertidal and adjoining supratidal coastal habitat that provides an important feeding and roosting habitat for migratory and resident waterbirds. The resolution also recognises that conservation efforts, for example mangrove restoration, should not ultimately convert mudflats and intertidal wetlands, which themselves play an important role as breeding and staging grounds for waterbirds.

Another resolution focuses on recognising the critical role of mangroves and seagrasses for their carbon value, which should demonstrate the value of these habitats and improve their management.

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