Newsletter of the Asian Waterbird Census

No. 13, June 2007

Editor: David Li
Language Editing: Gabriel Chong

Wetlands International
(Registration: 394031D)
3A39, Block A, Kelana Centre Point
Jalan SS7/19, 47301 Petaling Jaya
Selangor, MALAYSIA
Tel: +603-7804 6770
Fax: +603-7804 6772
E-mail: david@wetlands.org.my
Web site:
http://www.wetlands.org/articlemenu.aspx?id=8fb450de-f760-42bb-8337-c9942a41d5fc

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1. Letter from the AWC International Coordinator

Dear AWC coordinators and participants,

The AWC 2006 kept us all very busy, but it all paid off with several successful projects. The AWC 2006 received financial support from the Keidanren Nature Conservation Funds (KNCF) and co-funding from Wetlands International Headquarters in the Netherlands. The 2nd international meeting of the AWC coordinators was held in October 2006 in Manila where a strategy for the development of the AWC in 2007–2015 was discussed and approved. In addition, the AWC 2002-2004 report entitled *Numbers and distribution of waterbirds and wetlands in the Asia-Pacific region, results of the Asian Waterbird Census 2002–2004* was published and launched at the World Migratory Bird Day on 12 May 2007. A well designed brochure was also produced to promote the work of the AWC.

Recognising the efforts of Wetlands International and importance of the AWC for conservation of waterbirds and wetlands in the Asia-Pacific region, the KNCF has kindly committed to continue its financial support of the AWC in 2007. The support from KNCF will allow us to organise one national training workshop in India and China respectively, as well as publish the AWC 2007–2015 strategy to guide the long-term development of the AWC.

Wetlands International Headquarters has also received co-funding for the development and improvement of the AWC database from the Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance (GAINS) programme. With this funding we are working on the data entry for the 2005–2007 AWC, increase standardisation and improve data quality of the AWC.

By early next year, the AWC database will be uploaded on to the Wetlands International website to allow wider sharing and use of the AWC data. Through this effort, the AWC will achieve greater value for waterbird and wetland conservation in the Asia-Pacific region.

AWC's extensive work spanning 20 years (1987 – 2006) will be compiled and published in a report titled "*Status of Waterbirds in Asia*". We hope to successfully raise funds to publish and launch the report at the Ramsar COP 10, to be held in South Korea in October 2008.

I appreciate all of your past efforts in supporting the AWC, and I look forward to continued support as we further develop the AWC.

Best regards,

David Li
AWC International Coordinator
Wetlands International, david@wetlands.org.my

2. Introducing AWC database support officer

Sinor Rafliz Musa, Technical Officer, Wetlands International-Malaysia, Sinor.Rafliz@wetlands.org.my

Hi all! Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Sinor Rafliz Musa. I have just joined Wetlands International-Malaysia office as a Technical Officer.

The continent of Asia has many wetland areas that are vital to survival of waterbirds. The AWC ensures that we have the necessary data required to make informed decisions about managing Asia's waterbirds and wetlands through an organized, systematic monitoring programme. I am very impressed by the efforts, dedication, and hard work put into the AWC by the thousands of volunteers and the national/sub-national coordinators.

I am now assisting David Li, the AWC International coordinator, to key-in the 2005-2007 count results into the AWC database. Data entry is not the most exciting task but I am enjoying it nevertheless as I am learning about the various bird species and the sites found in the region. It is a great opportunity to participate in the efforts of the AWC. I am excited to be able to assist in this important work.

3. Launch of the AWC 2002-2004 results

David Li, david@wetlands.org.my

Wetlands International recently released the latest results of the AWC at the World Migratory Waterbird Day on 12 May 2007. The publication entitled *Numbers and distribution of waterbirds and wetlands in the Asia-Pacific region, results of the Asian Waterbird Census 2002–2004,* provides the waterbird census from 2,032 sites in 22 countries. In total, 274 species of waterbirds and 61 other wetland-dependent species were recorded. Approximately 8 million waterbirds were counted this year. Amongst these sites, a total of 459 met the criteria for international importance by either recording more than 20,000 waterbirds or 1% or more of the population of at least one species. A total of 79 Ramsar Sites, 36 Migratory Waterbird Network Sites in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, and 280 Important Bird Areas (IBA) identified by BirdLife International were covered. One hundred fifty nine species covered by the census are listed in the Appendices of the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

To celebrate the launch of this publication, special events were organized by the Bangladesh Bird Club and at Sungai Boluh Wetland reserve in Singapore on 12 May 2007. The Protected Area and Wilife Bureau, the Philippines organized an event to launch the report on the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May 2007.

Since its inception, the AWC has covered more than 6,100 sites in 26 countries, with the active participation of thousands of volunteers. The data is useful to identify internationally important sites for wetland biodiversity. This data is used to link with predictive modelling on climate change assessments on wetland habitats, which helps to highlight particularly vulnerable biodiversity hotspots and species at risk.

The AWC is part of the annual International Waterbird Census (IWC), coordinated by Wetlands International. Held in January each year, the IWC collects long term data on waterbird distribution and abundance on a large number of coastal and inland wetlands worldwide. The data is published in the *Waterbird Population Estimates –Fourth Edition* (Wetlands International 2006). The publication provides an assessment of waterbird numbers and global trends. The AWC is the main source of information for the Asia-Pacific region of the publication.

Indicators published in the most recent edition highlight that waterbirds in Asia are under more pressure than on any other continent from human development. Although 10% of waterbird population with known trends are increasing, 62% of waterbird populations with known trends are declining or have become extinct in Asia. The AWC also identified partial or complete reclamation as the biggest threat to wetlands and habitat of waterbirds across the Asian region.

The theme for this years' celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day, *Migratory birds in a changing climate*, reflects how waterbirds are one of the indicators of how climate change is having an impact on the environment and related biodiversity. Rising sea levels, loss of inter-tidal habitats, change in water levels of freshwater lakes and other ecosystems have resulted in the loss of habitat for feeding, resting and breeding habitats of waterbirds. As one of the main effects of climate change is the increase in frequency and intensity of droughts, wetlands in arid and semi arid regions are under great threat. These regions are detrimental to the survival of waterbirds on their annual migration and nesting seasons. Many waterbird species migrate south in enormous numbers from their Arctic breeding grounds, where global warming is forecast to have potentially catastrophic impacts on vast tracts of tundra habitats, which are of vital importance to these birds. Immediate actions by every country

are needed to provide international and global actions in addressing these threats.

Waterbirds and their wetland habitats in the Asian region are clearly in need of urgent protection, through both on-the-ground conservation activities and policy-based measures. We urge governments in the Asia-Pacific region to take urgent actions to protect their wetlands by implementing the Wise Use Concept for wetland management promoted by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The AWC report can be downloaded from http://www.wetlands.org/ and will soon be on sale at http://www.nhbs.com/.

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4. AWC 2005 - 2007 results update

David Li, david@wetlands.org.my

As of 1 June 2007, AWC coordinators and individual counters have submitted reports of 787, 555 and 248 sites in 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively. The accompanying table provides a breakdown. We plan to review the AWC count 1987-2007 this year. We therefore encourage countries that have not yet reported their count results to do so by 31 October 2007. Counts received after that may not be included in the report.

Country	2005	2006	2007	Note
Bangladesh	*	24*	*	2005-2007 data to be received. 2006 costal count received from Christoph Zockler.
Bhutan				
India	180*	23*	3*	Data in 2005 received from BNHS, 2006 & 2007 count received from individuals. Comprehensive count to be received from BNHS during 2005-2007.
Maldives				
Nepal	5	10	11	All data received.
Pakistan	20	11	5	Only data from Punjab and individuals. Additional data to be received.
Sri Lanka	5*	44	*	Data in 2007 and additional data in 2005 to be received.
South Asia	*210*	*112*	*19*	
Brunei Darussalam	1		13	All data received. No count made in 2006.
Cambodia	9	6	6	All data received.
Indonesia	6	18	26	All data received.
Lao PDR	1			
Malaysia	70	81	*	2007 data to be received.
Myanmar	30	37	20	All data received.
Philippines	55	57	122	All data received.
Singapore	*	*	*	2005-2007 data to be received.
Thailand	141	94	*	2007 data to be received.
Timor Leste				
Vietnam	9	6	*	2007 data to be received.
Southeast Asia	*322*	*299*	*187*	
China				
Mainland	87	10	*	2005 data received from Mark Barter for Yangtze survey. 2007 data to be received.
Hong Kong	3	3	*	2007 data to be received.
Macao	1	1	1	All data received.
Taiwan	47*	42*	39*	2005-2007 data to be received.
Japan*	88*	86*	*	Shorebird data received from 2005-2006. Monitoring 1000 project data on other species in 2005-2006 and all data in 2007 to be received.
DPR Korea				
Republic of Korea	*	*	*	2005- 2007 data to be received.
Mongolia				
Eastern Russia	2	2	2	
East Asia	*228*	*144*	*42*	
Australia	*27*	*	*	2006 & 2007 data to be received.
New Zealand	*	*	*	All data to be received.
Papua New Guinea				
Australasia	*27*			
Total No. of Sites	787	555	248	

Note: * indicates that either the original count form was not received, or the complete data has not been received or data has not been received at all.

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5. AWC News from the Region

The following section provides the summary of the regional report of the AWC 2007.

Brunei Darussalam

Andrea Bloem, Panaga Natural History Society, andreabloem@brunet.bn

A total of 13 sites were counted during the AWC 2007 in Brunei Darussalam. Two new sites was covered in the AWC conducted between 22 December 2006 and 21 February 2007. It was not possible to arrange the surveys at all sites in January but we plan to conduct the AWC at all sites in the January 2008 census. Two additional new sites were counted in early March. However, as they were outside the accepted period of the AWC, therefore was not included in this report.

About 25 people participated in the 2007 census. This was a record since Brunei started participating in 1990. One of the main goals of the AWC Brunei is to make more people enthusiastic about bird watching and bird counting, especially permanent residents of Brunei. Getting residents involvement has not been easy, but probably we made a start in getting 10 local students to help in this year's census.

Aside from the inland lakes of Luagan Lalak and Tasek Merimbun, most sites in Brunei are coastal environment. A total of 4,028 waterbirds from 35 species were reported in the AWC 2007, but this included 928 double counted egrets, as they were recorded at their foraging site as well as at their

roost. This is the largest number of waterbirds recorded since Brunei Darussalam started participating in 1990. The observed major waterbird groups were Cormorants & Darters (1 species, 17 birds), Herons & Egrets (14, 2,756), Storks (1, 1), Geese & Ducks (1, 1), Rails & Coots (3, 38), Waders (14, 272), Gulls & Terns (2, 18). Cattle egrets were the most in the area with 1,017 birds identified. In addition, 13 wetland dependent Raptors of five species and 65 Kingfishers of four species were recorded.

Two globally threatened species, the Vulnerable (VU) Chinese egret (7) and Lesser Adjutant (1) were recorded. In addition, Oriental Darter, a near-threatened (NT, 17) species was reported. Other highlights were the Malayan Night heron, Northern pintail and Oriental plover.

Sungai Seria and its surrounding Grasslands Panaga – Seria registered the highest concentration of waterbirds with 250 birds per ha. The area also had the highest number of species with a minimum total of 2002 birds from 32 species in an area of around 800 ha. The grasslands offers a refuge for many species of waterbirds during the high tide and an important staging site for large numbers of Cattle egrets that roost along the Sungai Seria. For these reasons, Sungai Seria and the surrounding grasslands should be considered as one unit.

Brunei Bay, with its contributing rivers, surrounding mangroves, and peat swamp forests, is the most prominent and diverse wetland in Brunei Darussalam. A minimum of 573 (*2643*) waterbirds from 16 (*17*) species were recorded. The area includes the coastal sites stretching north to south of Muara and Serasa beach, Mentiri Prawn farms, Brunei Bay. There are many more interesting waterbird sites along Brunei Bay still to be discovered.

Compared to previous years, sites such as Wasan Rice and Sungai Bera, show a decrease in the numbers and species of birds. Change of agricultural methods, bird catching at rice fields, dumping of land fill, oil pollution and over growth of vegetation in and around Sungai Bera are believed to be some of the reasons contributing to the decline. The major threat to bird populations in the coastal zone of Brunei are habitat losses caused by residential and industrial development.

PNHS and BNS would like to thank all the volunteers who made this year's count a remarkable achievement.

CHINA

Hong Kong

Yat-tung YU, Coordinator, International Black-faced Spoonbill Census, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, ytyu@hkstar.com

The AWC in Hong Kong was conducted on 14 January 2007. Three sites were covered during the census: the Deep Bay area, Shuen Wan and Starling Inlet. The Deep Bay area included the Ramsar site, the new Hong Kong Wetland Park at Tin Shui Wai, and the Futian National Nature Reserve in Shenzhen.

A total of 65,909 waterbirds were counted in the census. The largest flock comprised 27,913 Ducks and Grebes, a 38% increase from the 12,958 counted in the 2006 census. Shorebirds were the second most with 12,326 individuals. The importance of Ramsar sites can be seen in that 46,372 waterbirds were counted in the Ramsar Site area. Starling Inlet and Shuen Wan sites recorded a total of 429 and 74 birds respectively.

I am grateful to all the counters from the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of the Hong Kong Wetland Parks and members of Shenzhen Bird Watching Society who participated in this census.

Taiwan

Dr. Woei-horng Fang, Vice President, Wild Bird Federation Taiwan, whfang@ntu.edu.tw

This year marked the nineteenth year of Taiwan's participation in the AWC. The census was coordinated by the Wild Bird Federation Taiwan. The census was conducted between 1 January and 31 January 2007. A total of 70,621 birds were recorded in 39 sites. In addition, 9,294 birds were counted in Chin-men Island, off the coast of Fujian Province. Sites where more than 5,000 birds were counted or contained species which met the 1% population criteria included Hua-Chiang-Chiao (7,353), Ta-Tu river mouth (4,102, Kentish Plover 1,000), Ta-Cheng (5,793), Szu-Tsao (1,241, Black-faced Spoonbill 313), Tseng-Wen Estuary (3,139, Black-faced Spoonbill 441, Caspian Tern 300), Kao-Ping-Hsi (2,969, Great Cormorant 1,365), Feng-Shan Reservoir (3,795, Great Cormorant 3,468), Tung-Kang (5,295), Chu-An (5,278, Black-winged Stilt 1,072, Kentish Plover 1,000) and Chin-Men (9,294, Great Cormorant 6,420).

Globally threatened species recorded in the census included 796 Black-faced Spoonbills (441

in Tseng-Wen Estuary; 313 in Szu-Tsaio, 20 in Pu-Tai, 10 in Chu-An, 6 in Tatu Estuary, 5 in Kao-Ping Estuary, 2 in Chin-Men); Two Chinese Egret (one in Kao-Ping-Hsi, and one in Lin-Pien); Five Swan Geese (in Lan-Yang Estuary); Only 3 Saunders' Gulls were recorded this year (3 in Tseng-wen Estuary). Near threatened species including two Asian Dowitcher (in Pu-Tai). Some vagrants were also noted: Seven Bean Goose (4 in Lan-yang Esturay, 1 in Chu-an, 1 in Da-Xi-Tsuo, 1 in Guandu); Two Black Stork in Chinmen; and one Common Crane in Chin-Shan.

The census was supported by more than 100 participants.

Indonesia

Ferry Hasudungan, Wetlands international – Indonesia Office, biodiv@wetlands.or.id

The AWC 2007 in Indonesia was held from 7th to 28th January. Waterbird census data was received from 26 sites in 10 provinces by April 2007.

A total 16,225 birds from 67 species of waterbirds were recorded in the 2007 census. Globally threatened species found in the census included the one Chinese Egret, 26 Milky Stork and one Lesser Adjutant.

This result is not representative of the status of waterbirds in Indonesia, as sites covered by AWC 2007 is still very limited compared to large number of wetland sites across Indonesia.

Myanmar

Thet Zaw Naing, Myanmar Bird and Nature Society, marketing@sstmyanmar.com

A total of 20 sites were surveyed in AWC 2007 by the Myanmar Bird and Nature Society.

A total of 39,562 waterbirds from 74 species were recorded during the census. The listed waterbird species were divided into twelve major groups. Grebes (2 species; 132 individuals), Pelicans (1; 104), Cormorants and Darters (4; 2,383), Herons and Egrets (10; 2,604), Storks (5; 311), Ibises (2; 216), Anatidae (21; 22,848), Cranes (2; 305), Rails, Gallinules and Coots (5; 5,096), Finfoots and Jacanas (2; 544), Shorebirds (14; 3,689) and Gulls and Terns (6; 1,330). A total of 287 wetland dependent birds from 12 species were counted during AWC 2007 survey.

Four globally threatened species listed as vulnerable were recorded during the census. The Spot-billed Pelican (104), Lesser Adjutant (7), Sarus Crane (5) and Greater Spotted Eagle (2). The Near Threatened species recorded are the Oriental Darter (94), Painted Stork (5), Black-headed Ibis (5) and Ferruginous Duck (1,079).

Myanmar Bird and Nature Society would like to extend their appreciation to the participants of this year's census. MBNS is also extremely grateful to Mr. Joost van der Ven who kindly joined the waterbird survey.

Nepal

Dr Hem Sagar Baral, CEO, Bird Conservation Nepal, hem@himalayannature.org

With the return of relative peace in the country, AWC 2007 in Nepal was able to cover more sites and more participation from volunteers than previous years. A total 11 wetland areas (including 31 sub-sites) were covered this year. Similarly an estimated 60 participants took part in the programme. This is the first time that all four of Nepal's Ramsar Sites (all IBAs) were covered. In addition, three IBAs were also included.

Although a number of important wetlands in the terai (lowlands) was covered, Rara Lake, a midhills lake situated at the remote northwest corner of the country could not be included. This was mainly due to lack of communication and trained resources to conduct the count in this lake. We believe that Rara Lake and a few at Pokhara district may be potential Ramsar Sites if their natural resources are thoroughly inventoried and documented.

The count this year indicates that the condition of a number of wetlands has further deteriorated as prime habitat for waterbirds. Of concern is the low number of resident terns, the Black-bellied Tern and River Tern sighted during the census. Fewer birds recorded in Ramsar Sites indicate a further decline of wetland dependent species mainly due to lack of management programmes that are sympathetic for bird conservation. Therefore we see an urgent need of good management for all wetlands including Ramsar Sites.

During the counts at Pokhara and Rupandehi district, we encountered cases of bird hunting, especially of waders and waterfowls. These issues need to be tackled by awareness programme and formulating special projects that work at the community level to mobilise local people and address key factors in this conflict.

Bird Conservation Nepal has recently received two important grants to work on two Ramsar Sites. A grant from Ramsar Bureau will focus on

moving towards stronger participatory conservation at Jagdishpur Reservoir, a Ramsar Site. With UK's Wildfowl and Wetland Trust as the lead agency, the Darwin Initiative funded wetland programme will allow work to begin on improving the status of birds and other wildlife in partnership with the people living in and around the Koshi Tappu reserve. Lessons learnt from these two Ramsar Sites will be shared with other stakeholders. Successful programmes will be replicated at other sites.

The training programme for midwinter waterbird count to improve data collection technique which was scheduled to be held at Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha in central Nepal did not materialise due to lack of funding. With support from funders, we aim to conduct this training before the actual count begins later this year. This will ensure better data quality to allow future trend analysis on waterbird populations.

Partial support for the survey was received from BirdLife International's programme “Establishing waterbird numbers and baseline mortality levels at key wetlands in Asia, Africa and South America” through Wild Bird Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance (GAINS) of Wildlife Conservation Society led project. Their support has enabled us to widen our coverage of sites especially in the Rupandehi, Kaski and Kanchanpur Districts. We would like to thank them for their support.

Our thanks also to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, especially the authorities at Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Chitwan National Park, Bardia National Park and Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve. Our special thanks go to Tiger Tops Group of Companies for their excellent coordination and support for the midwinter bird count. Tiger Tops has been generously supporting the mid-winter count for a number of years. Our thanks also to the National Trust for Nature Conservation at Bardia and Kanchanpur, Bird Education Society at Chitwan, Ghodaghodi Area Conservation and People Awareness Forum and Terai Arc Landscape Programme (WWF staff), Forest Hideaway Hotel and Hotel Racy Shade at Bardia, Lumbini Buddha Garden Pvt Ltd at Lumbini, Koshi Camp Pvt Ltd at Koshi, and Himalayan Nature staff for all their kind help.

The Philippines

Carlo Custodio, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, the Philippines, custodiocarlo@yahoo.com

As a result of the drive by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to be on the look out for the possible entry of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus into the Philippines by monitoring migratory waterbirds and their wetland habitats, more sites were included in the AWC 2007. One Hundred twenty two wetlands were monitored as compared to the 57 sites in 2006. There were other sites monitored for waterbirds in connection with the surveillance of HPAI virus, but these counts did not coincide with the AWC 2007 schedule and therefore not included in the census. This was particularly true for Region 12 in southern Mindanao and some parts of Region 4A in Luzon.

The increase of more than 100% in the number of wetland sites monitored somehow brought only an increase of about 35% in the number of birds counted. A total 142,240 birds were counted compared with the 105,177 in 2006. Eighty-four species were encountered by the 2007 compilers compared with the 88 species in 2006. The highest counts were obtained from the following areas: Naujan Lake National Park in Mindoro Orioental (17,122), Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary (13,270); Lake Mainit in Surigao del Norte and Agusan del Norte (11,666); Candaba swamp in Pampanga (7802); Malasi Lake in Cabagan, Isabela (6073); Vitali (Duran-Alavar) in Zamboanga City (4766); Biong and Pandan in Cabusao, Camarines Sur (4497); and, Puerto Rivas in Balanga, Bataan (4432).

The highest number of individuals per species were the following: 24,313 Tufted Duck, 20,532 Little Egret, 9036 Cattle Egret, 8128 Philippine Duck, 7232 Common Tern and 6618 Lesser Sandplover. Lake Mainit, Candaba swamp, Biong – Pandan in Cabusao, Camarines Sur and Lake Malasi are important wetlands for ducks.

Most of the Chinese Egret were found in the Visayas region but a good number (94) were also found in Tanza, Navotas, a coastal area of Metro Manila within the Manila Bay. All the 20 Asian Dowitchers were found in Olango Island while the Tufted Duck were concentrated in Naujan Lake (12,000), Lake Mainit (11,050) and Lake Malasi (1,133).

A total of 219 volunteers participated in the AWC 2007 with the largest numbers coming from Region 6 in the Visayas, Region 10 in Mindanao and Region 1 in Luzon.

Thailand

Petch Manopawitr and Kritsana Kaewplang, Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST)
pmanopawitr@wcs.org

Wanlaya Chanittawong, Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP),
c_wanlaya@hotmail.com

Since 2005, BCST in collaboration with DNP and the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), have jointly conducted the AWC throughout Thailand. DNP undertakes responsibility for wetands that lie in protected areas, while BCST focus on sites outside the nature reserve network. In 2007, almost 100 key sites around the country were covered. DNP preliminary results indicated that 400,000 waterbirds from more than 120 species were counted and a comprehensive report is in the process of being compiled.

In early January 2007, preceding the start of the AWC 2007, BCST organized a one-day training on waterbird identification and survey techniques at Kasetsart University. This was held in collaboration with DNP and a number of waterbird specialists who gave lectures on identification technique. We also emphasized to participants that information on site status should be collected in accordance with standard protocols laid down in BirdLife's IBA monitoring framework. Additionally, numbers and background information on any dead or visibly diseased waterbirds was to be recorded. The training was attended by over 60 members and volunteers, many of whom signed up and joined the waterbird survey in the following weeks.

BCST mobilized over 40 volunteers to cover the Inner Gulf of Thailand, a site that supports such globally threatened migratory species like the Nordmann's Greenshank (EN), Black-faced Spoonbill (EN), Spoon-billed Sandpiper (EN) and Asian Dowitcher (NT). The survey in the Inner Gulf was carried out in 13-27 January. Additional records or interesting sightings outside the period was also included. Around 50,000 waterbirds were counted including Nordmann's Greenshank (20), Spoon-billed Sandpiper (2), Black-headed Ibis (4), Ruff (38) and Grey Heron (168). The concentration of Great Knot (1,160) at Laem Phak Bia, in the western Inner Gulf, was again one of the largest-ever counted in Thailand. It appears to reflect a genuine increase in their numbers using the Inner Gulf during the midwinter period. At least seven species were recorded in internationally important concentrations following Wetlands International (2006). These were Little Cormorant (3,233), Black-winged Stilt (3,040), Lesser Sandplover (5,111), Black-tailed Godwit (3,173), Marsh Sandpiper (1,157), Red-necked Stint (1,533) and Brown-headed Gull (7,872).

BCST volunteers also covered important wetland in IBAs around the country including the Chiang Saen Basin, several sites in the north and north-east, and at least four sites in the peninsula (Ao Bandon, Laem Pakarang, Thung Tha Laad and Ao Pattani).

No reports of dead or sick birds were received from our counters. However, bi-monthly monitoring reports by officials in protected areas have yet to be received at the time of writing. Earlier this year, BCST in collaboration with DNP conducted random sampling of avian influenza in key wetland sites, such as the Inner Gulf of Thailand and Bung Boraphet. Some species were the Asian Openbill and Brown-headed Gull. The comprehensive report on this test is being compiled. Preliminary results reveal no evidence of avian influenza infection in wild birds in natural habitat. Nevertheless, the AWC has proved to be a useful system for surveillance of avian influenza in wild birds as well as promoting conservation of Thailand's wetland and waterbirds. The census also helps to actively involve an expanded network of local bird watchers in site monitoring.

6. International Black-faced Spoonbill Census 2007

Yat-tung YU, Coordinator, International Black-faced Spoonbill Census, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, ytyu@hkstar.com

The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) has been coordinating the annual International Black-faced Spoonbill Census since 2003. The 2007 census took place on 19-21 January and a total of 1,695 Black-faced Spoonbills were counted in 44 sites. This represents a small increase of 16 birds or 1% from the previous year's figure. Mainland China (20%) and Japan (22%) are the two countries with the biggest increase in the number of the Black-faced Spoonbills compared to the previous year. However, numbers in the largest wintering ground of Taiwan and in Vietnam have seen a 4% and 40% decline compared to the year before.

The biggest congregation of the spoonbills in this census was 790 in the Taiwan area of Taiwan. The second largest was 356 found in the Deep Bay area of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. A total of 13 sites were identified to meet the criteria of holding 1% population (i.e. 16 individuals) of this species. This census is a tried and tested tool to provide annual and comparable figures to assess

the population of this globally endangered species.

The 2007 census report will be soon be available for download on the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society website: http://www.hkbws.org.hk/bfs/index.html (English), or please contact me at bfspoonbill@hkbws.org.hk and the society office at hkbws@hkbws.org.hk for further inquiries.

English and Scientific names of bird species mentioned in the Newsletter

English Name	Scientific Name
Spot-billed Pelican	*Pelecanus philippensis*
Indian Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*
Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*
Oriental Darter	*Anhinga melanogaster*
Little cormorant	*Phalacrocorax niger*
Pond-heron	*Ardeola* spp.
Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*
Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*
Intermediate Egret	*Ardea intermedia*
Great Egret	*Ardea modesta*
Chinese Egret	*Egretta eulophotes*
Malayan Night heron	*Gorsachius melanolophus*
Milky Stork	*Mycteria cinerea*
Painted Stork	*Mycteria leucocephala*
Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*
Woolly-necked Stork	*Ciconia episcopus*
Black Stork	*Ciconia nigra*
Black-necked Stork	*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*
Lesser Adjutant	*Leptoptilos javanicus*
Greater Adjutant	*Leptoptilos dubius*
Black-headed Ibis	*Threskiornis melanocephalus*
White-shouldered Ibis	*Pseudibis davisoni*
Black-faced Spoonbill	*Platalea minor*
Lesser Whistling Duck	*Dendrocygna arcuata*
Swan Goose	*Anser cygnoides*
Bean Goose	*Anser fabalis*
Comb Duck	*Sarkidiornis melanotos*
Philippine duck	*Anas luzonica*
Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*
Ferruginous Pochard	*Aythya nyroca*
Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*
Sarus Crane	*Grus antigone*
Common Crane	*Grus grus*
Purple Swamphen	*Porphyrio porphyrio*
Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*
Kentish Plover	*Charadrius alexandrinus*
Lesser Sandplover	*Charadrius mongolus*
Oriental Plover	*Charadrius veredus*
Asian Dowitcher	*Limnodromus semipalmatus*
Black-tailed Godwit	*Limosa limosa*
Marsh Sandpiper	*Tringa stagnatilis*
Nordmann's Greenshank	*Tringa guttifer*
Great Knot	*Calidris tenuirostris*
Red-necked Stint	*Calidris ruficollis*
Spoon-billed Sandpiper	*Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*
Ruff	*Philomachus pugnax*
Brown-headed Gull	*Larus brunnicephalus*
Saunders's Gull	*Larus saundersi*
Caspian Tern	*Sterna caspia*
Black-bellied Tern	*Sterna melanogaster*
River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*
Greater Spotted Eagle	*Aquila clanga*
Bengal Florican	*Houbaropsis bengalensis*

Note: The sequence and nomenclature of waterbird species used follows the *Waterbird Population Estimates – Fourth Edition* (Wetlands International 2006).