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Asian Waterbird Census

July 2014

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Contents

[Update on recent AWC counts](#)

[AWC update for India](#)

[New national coordinators](#)

[World Migratory Bird Day](#)

[AWC in the news](#)

[Goose Specialist meeting](#)

[2014 results for Cambodia](#)

[The Birds of Cambodia published](#)

[Bhutan to join the AWC](#)

[Great White Pelican meeting](#)

Dear Reader,

Time certainly flies – we are already half way through 2014 and looking back over the last six months since the last AWC update was sent out in December there is a lot of information to share.

As always, the 2014 annual waterbird count was organised in January and took place in most countries across the region. These efforts have been widely covered by local

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several threatened bird species. We report on what we have culled from the web and have received from national coordinators. Congratulations to the efforts of all those involved in working with the media to ensure this wide publicity.

We share exciting updates from Mr. Hong Chamnan, the national coordinator in Cambodia where the focus has been the wetlands associated with the famed Great Lake and from Bhutan where the newly appointed coordinator Mr Sherub has been training people to participate in the first counts.

We include an update of the counts received from national coordinators from across the region and also from across India where there has been a sustained push to strengthen local coordination.

This issue of the newsletter has been generated following a new production format that we trust is more reader friendly and appreciated by all. We are sharing this newsletter with many contacts involved in waterbird work in Asia and Australasia, and we trust you will find it interesting. If you want to share this with friends or colleagues, you can use the social media links above or they can [subscribe directly](#) to receive future editions. If you would like to unsubscribe from the list for any reason, then just follow the link at the bottom of the newsletter.

Thanks for all your input and feedback for this newsletter.

Enjoy reading!

Taej Mundkur
Tom Langendoen

[Return to top](#)

[Update on recent AWC counts](#)

The AWC coordinating team has been working hard with AWC coordinators and participants to obtain count information for the last few years, plugging information gaps and verifying information. We are pleased to report on a positive response and the table below provides an overview of the number of counts received until 25 June 2014. Many other national coordinators are working on collating their 2014 data, so we expect to be able to update the summary over the coming months and report on this later in the year.

Many, many thanks to all the coordinators who have provided information and

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often on a voluntary basis, to produce these counts.

Overview of sites reported to Wetlands International for the Asian Waterbird Census (2008-2014)

Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Max during 2008-2014
Australia	88	155	114					155
Bangladesh	37	38	15	26	16	22		38
Brunei Darussalam	1	8	10	17	20	9	15	20
Cambodia	4	10	8	13	13	11	6	13
China – mainland		2						2
-Hong Kong	3	2	2	2	2			3
-Taiwan			30					30
India	41	42	88	210	312	188	131	312
Indonesia	38	11	30	11	9			38
Japan	191	168	145	172	152	139		191
Korea South	139	135	137	132	137	133		139
Malaysia	23	41	15	13	6		4	41
Mongolia		1		1	2			2
Myanmar		17	15			12		17
Nepal	38	38	50	42	37	49		50
New Zealand	597	510	477	476	468	72		597
Pakistan	10		64	58	69	9		69
Philippines	164	169	228	220	164	194		228
Russian Federation	2	2	2	2	1	1		2
Singapore	9	8	9	9	8			9
Sri Lanka	26	45	35					45
Thailand	122	47	53	69	82	88		122
Timor Leste		1						1
Vietnam			2	1		3		3
Total	1533	1450	1529	1474	1498	930	156	1533

Note:

- Counts being reported from all countries include all waterbird groups with the exception of Australia and New Zealand which report only shorebirds and Japan reports mainly Anatidae and Shorebirds, and cranes in some years.
- The number of sites counted per country per year is shown here. The definition and size of sites varies from country to country, so comparison between countries should be treated with great caution.

As no counts were submitted from Afghanistan, Laos, Maldives, North Korea and

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able contribute to the annual counts.

For more information...

A **[new map-based feature on our website](#)** enables the network to have an overview of the latest count data that we have received. This is updated on a quarterly basis. You can also check out the **[waterbird forum](#)** for more national reports and summaries.

[Return to top](#)

[New AWC national coordinators for mainland China and Bhutan](#)

This period has had a few changes in AWC coordinators; for mainland China Mr Lu Yong of our China office has taken over from Mr Zhu Bingrun who is focussed on completing these studies. Mr Sherub has consented to promote the annual counts in Bhutan.

We thank all national coordinators for your continued efforts in providing us your annual national counts.

For more information...

Details and contact information for all **[AWC coordinators are available on our website](#)**.

[Return to top](#)

[AWC 2014 in the media spotlight](#)

In January this year, people all across Asia were out in the field counting waterbirds under the Asian Waterbird Census, contributing valuable data on the status of waterbirds at a local, national and flyway level. National coordinators are now busy collating and checking this count information to get an insight into the status of waterbird populations in their country. In turn, these coordinators will contribute counts to the AWC, to help us track the fortunes of waterbird populations throughout Asia.

Local and national media in many countries have reported on the results and efforts of the counters. A number of interesting articles have been published online from Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. We have collected these in the news sections of our web page. If you have an interesting news report from your country you would like to see added to this long list, please do get in touch!

Visit our regularly updated [news page](#).

[Return to top](#)

Results of the AWC 2014 in Cambodia

This item has been adapted from information kindly provided by Mr. Hong Chamnan, AWC national coordinator for Cambodia.

This year we counted six sites in the wetland areas around the Tonle Sap great lake, including Ang Trapeang Thmor (ATT), one of the most important and best monitored sites for waterbirds. In total 99 species and 94,444 water birds were recorded, including 15,553 Lesser Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna javanica*), 13,000 Garganey (*Anas querquedula*), and 10,988 Purple Swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*) at ATT. Additionally, 1,876 Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*), 1,662 Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), 5,508 Indian Shag (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*), 1,799 Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*) and 26,465 Asian Openbill Stork (*Anastomus oscitans*) were recorded at Prek Toal Core Area. Thirteen volunteers helped carry out the counts this year.



Education activities have also been held regularly with the local communities, students and other stakeholders about the importance of ATT. ATT is a 12,650 ha protected area situated in Poy Char commune of Banteay Meanchey province's Phnom Srok district, about 55 km northeast of Banteay Meanchey provincial town and 85 km northwest of Siem Reap town. It is covered by natural flooded grasslands, deciduous forests,

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concentrations of many waterbird species within and surrounding the wetlands. Furthermore, the site supports by far the largest non-breeding congregation of Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) in the Southeast Asia and is thus has been classified as an Important Bird Area.

Public meetings have been held in villages, pagodas and schools, explaining the importance of the ATT protected wetland for waterbirds and human livelihoods as well as relevant laws, such as the land, forestry and fisheries laws. This helps raise the local community's awareness of the biodiversity resources and to increase their participation in protecting and conserving these resources.

For more information...

Contact Mr. Hong Chamnan to find out more about the waterbird census in Cambodia.

[Return to top](#)

AWC ready to launch in Bhutan!

In February a training event was held for 20 officials in Ugyen Wangchuk Institute for Conservation and Environment (UWICE) in Phuntsholing, Bhutan. During this training, participants adapted the AWC Count Form for Bhutan, learnt about data compilation and joined in a field excursion to identify and count waterbirds. This has prepared the participants to join the AWC from next year, with the aim of filling in an important gap in our knowledge.

For more information...

Have a look at the [news item about the training on the UWICE website](#), including some great photos!

[Return to top](#)

AWC update for India

Nationally, the AWC in India is jointly coordinated by Wetlands International and the Bombay Natural History Society. To promote the census on the ground, several state coordinators have been working with local networks and groups. There has been a positive response from the national network to efforts to strengthen the state level coordination in India with new state coordinators being appointed in most states. All contact details are provided [here](#).

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Greyheaded Lapwing (*Vanellus cinereus*): Photo by Humayun Taher

The census has been widely publicised and we have received a lot of counts over the last months. The table below provides an overview of the number of counts received until 25 June 2014. For the 2014 census, we are still receiving information from the various states and expect that a large final tally. Many thanks to all the coordinators and participants who have provided information and responded to our many queries.

Overview of sites in India reported to Wetlands International for the Asian Waterbird Census (2008-2014)

Name of state/ Union Territory	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Andaman & Nicobar Islands				3			
Andhra Pradesh&Telengana			10	14	22	24	39
Assam				6	21		
Chandigarh					2		
Chhattisgarh	7	8	8	23	18	25	21
Delhi				2	3	3	3
Goa						6	5
Gujarat		24		1	100	48	
Himachal Pradesh							1
Jammu & Kashmir					2	3	
Jharkhand					2	2	12
Karnataka				8	9		

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Maharashtra		28	42	126	103	56	2	
Manipur					1			
Odisha					2	2		
Puducherry							3	
Punjab					1	1	5	
Rajasthan							3	
Tamil Nadu			21	10	9		36	
Uttar Pradesh				4	3			
Uttarakhand				4		1		
West Bengal					1			
Total		41	42	88	210	312	188	131

Notes

- The definition and size of sites varies considerably from state to state, so comparison between states should be treated with caution.
- No counts submitted for Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Haryana, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.



Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*): Photo by Satya Prakash

For the 2014 census we have successfully tested a new Excel-based AWC Count & Site Form. This should help to improve and streamline data entry by participants and state coordinators and facilitate data collation and review. Based on the positive

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It is proposed that a more detailed national report will be compiled later this year.

Taej Mundkur and Tom Langendoen in Ede, the Netherlands

Kamal Dalakoti and Ritesh Kumar in New Delhi, India

[Return to top](#)

Celebrating World Migratory Bird Day: Migratory Birds and Tourism

On 10-11 May 2014 people and organisations across Asia and the rest of the world celebrated World Migratory Bird Day and the theme of “Destination Flyways: Migratory Birds and Tourism”. Wetlands International offices joined the activities and showcased the importance of sustainable tourism for migratory birds and people. With our local partners we are laying the foundations for sustainable tourism in our activities. Our two initiatives [Arctic to Africa](#) and [Destination Flyways](#), the latter with the World Tourism Organization, are currently developing sustainable tourism activities at important locations that migratory birds depend on during their annual migrations around the world’s major flyways.

For more information...

[Visit our website](#) for more information about our activities for World Migratory Bird Day around the world.

[Return to top](#)

Announcing the publication of The Birds of Cambodia - An Annotated Checklist by Frédéric Goes

This new publication collates information from 12 years of monitoring in Cambodia, giving a timely update on the variety and status of birds in Cambodia. Detailed information on the life history for 598 bird species is given, as well as a national checklist, a nationally threatened species list and of course extensive photos and illustrations. This book will be invaluable for anyone visiting or interested in the avifauna of Cambodia.

For more information...

Copies can be obtained from Fauna & Flora International Cambodia Programme, #19,

[Return to top](#)

Register now for the 16th Goose Specialist Group meeting

The 16th meeting of the Goose Specialist Group will be held in Beijing, China, hosted by the Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, on behalf of the Goose Specialist Group of Wetlands International and IUCN-SSC, from 22 to 25 November 2014. The meeting will consist of two and a half days of presentations and posters focussed on advances in goose research and conservation. After the meeting a short term field trip will be organized from the afternoon of 25 to 27 November to the famous Poyang Lake.

Registration for the conference is now open, and those interested can submit abstracts for posters and presentations until 1 July.

For more information...

Visit the [Goose Specialist Group website](#), which also has much more information on previous meetings and the work of the Goose Specialist Group.

[Return to top](#)

International Great White Pelican meeting in Israel

The Israel Nature & Parks Authority and the Israeli Ornithological Center (Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel), in collaboration with the Wetlands International and IUCN SSC Pelican Specialist Group are organising an international workshop on the Great White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*). This will be an intimate coming together of invited key scientists and professionals, local, national and international that deal with pelican management issues. The 3 day programme will include lectures summarizing current knowledge of pelican biology and conservation particularly within the Western Palearctic region, combined with workshops and discussions dealing with management issues within Israel. Field trips and meetings with local stakeholders will provide an excellent picture of the current situation.

The entire Western Palearctic breeding population of Great White Pelicans migrates through Israel to and from their wintering grounds in East Africa. Many stopover and foraging wetlands along these migration routes have been seriously degraded or have disappeared, resulting in changes in the ecology of these birds with serious implications for their populations and for aquaculture and fish farms in Israel. Thus far, the stakeholders and local authorities have successfully managed the situation;

species.

For more information...

Anyone interested in attending should contact Ohad Hatzofe (email: ohad@npa.org.il) or Zev Labinger (email: zev_labinger@yahoo.com).

[Return to top](#)

Further reading

Report of the 5th International Swan Symposium, Feb 2014

18th Goose Bulletin, May 2014

Wader Study Group Bulletin 120, Issue 3, April 2014

Our Blogs

Sustainability commitments of peat-heavy industry

Spotlights on 'Building with Nature' by Netherlands and Indonesia

New hope for coastal resilience for the people of Timbul Sloko

Announcements

3rd International Flamingo Symposium, 6-8 October 2014, San Diego, USA

Neil Burgess is the new chair of the Wetlands International-IUCN SSC Diver/Loon Specialist Group

Dr Luis Santiago Cano is the new co-chair of the Wetlands International/IUCN SSC Stork, Ibis & Spoonbill Specialist Group

Dr Eileen Rees reappointed as the Chair of the Wetlands International/IUCN SSC Swan Specialist Group

Research and Development Congress for Migratory Birds and Wetlands within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, 1-10 December 2014, Cebu, Philippines

5th International Sea Duck Conference, 8-14 September 2014, Reykjavik, Iceland

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