

# Yellow-breasted bunting action plan: update

African-Eurasian  
Migratory  
Landbirds  
Working Group  
2nd Meeting  
*Abidjan, Côte  
d'Ivoire, 25-27  
November 2015*

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# **Yellow-breasted Bunting is only AEM LAP EN migrant passerine**

Except

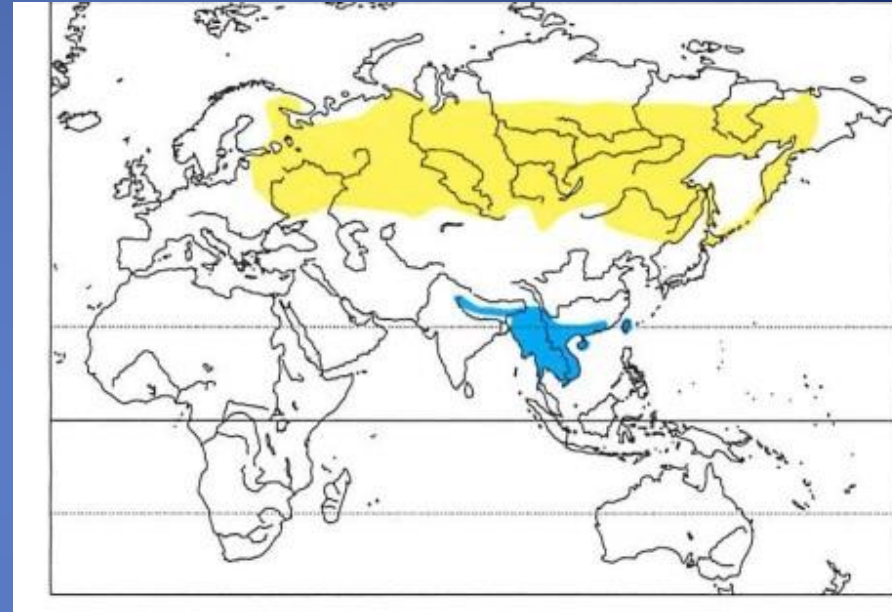
- Basra Reed-warbler (breeds Iraq, Iran?, Israel, winters E Africa)
- Spotted ground-thrush (intra-African, east Africa)





# Yellow-breasted Bunting: 30 years ago among most widespread and numerous passerines in the world

- Breeding range: 15.7 million sq km.  
Japan to Finland
- Estimated number: hundreds of millions.  
Superabundant  
c 1 pair/ha over vast area in Siberia



## **AEMLAP Range States**

*Breeding:* Russia, Kazakhstan,  
Ukraine? Belarus?

Formerly Finland

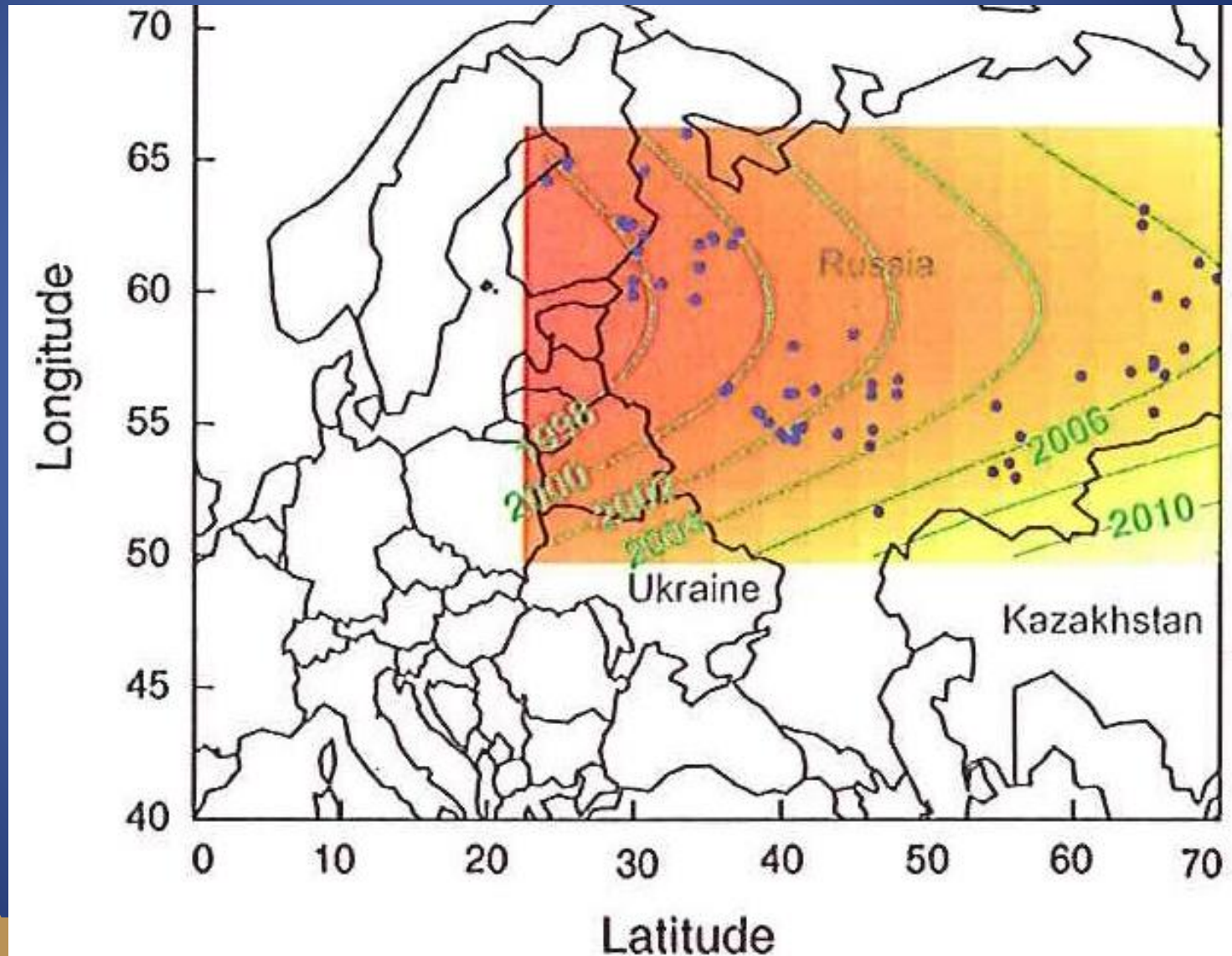
*Wintering:* Nepal

# Decline of Yellow-breasted buntings

- 84.3 – 94.7% decline from 1980 to 2013
- Extinct in Finland since 2009
- By 2012, virtually extinct in European Russia, west and central Siberia and Kazakhstan
- Very close to extinction in Japan (only one known breeding site left)
- Red Data Book ranking:
  - Near Threatened 2004
  - Vulnerable 2008
  - Endangered 2014

*Modelled Yellow-breasted Bunting extinction time across west & central parts of range. Contour lines separate areas of similar predicted extinction time, more intense shading = earlier extinction*

Retracted  
east by  
c 5000 km  
in < 25 yrs  
(200 km/yr)

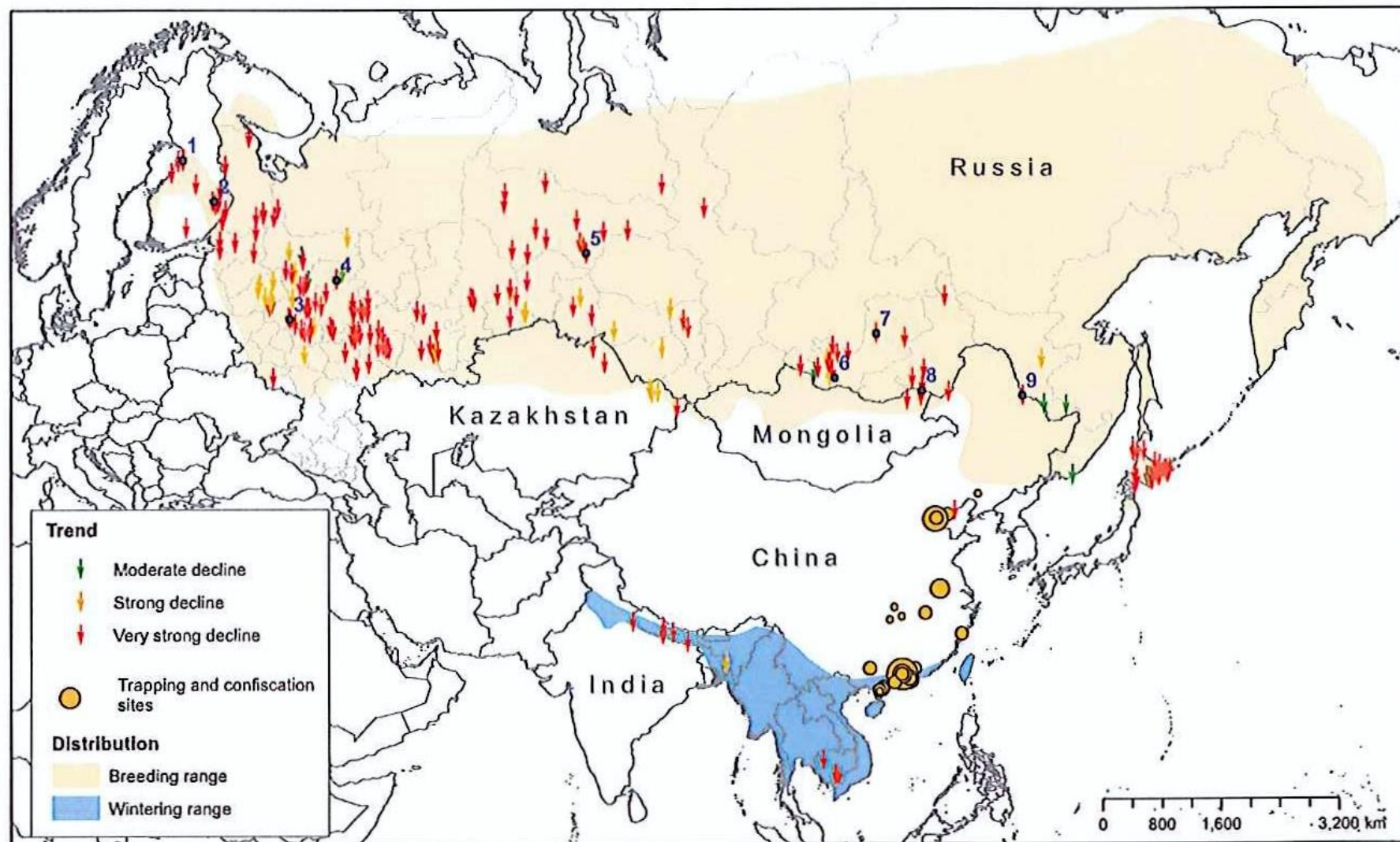


# Comprehensive study (Cons Biol)

## Johannes Kamp et al (2015)

- Data collected from 237 sites (225 breeding 12 migratory /wintering)
- In 82.5% sites very strong decline
- In 13.8% sites strong decline.
- Since 2000, no evidence of stable/increasing YBB anywhere.





**Figure 1.** Spatial distribution and magnitude of population declines and illegal trapping incidents for Yellow-breasted Bunting (orange dots, sites where large quantities of these buntings were confiscated, dot size scaled to the number of confiscated birds, range 100-120,000; dark blue circles, sites from which monitoring and survey data were used to calculate the population trend; site numbers correspond to those in Supporting Information (source of the distribution map: BirdLife International distribution database).

# Four models on causes of decline (Kamp et al 2015)

- Harvest
- Habitat loss
- Pollution
- Habitat loss + pollution

Tested by program Vortex 10.0

Cause of decline: Harvest –  
harvest of 2% world popn in 1980  
and increase of 0.2% pa to 8.6% in  
2013 would cause observed decline

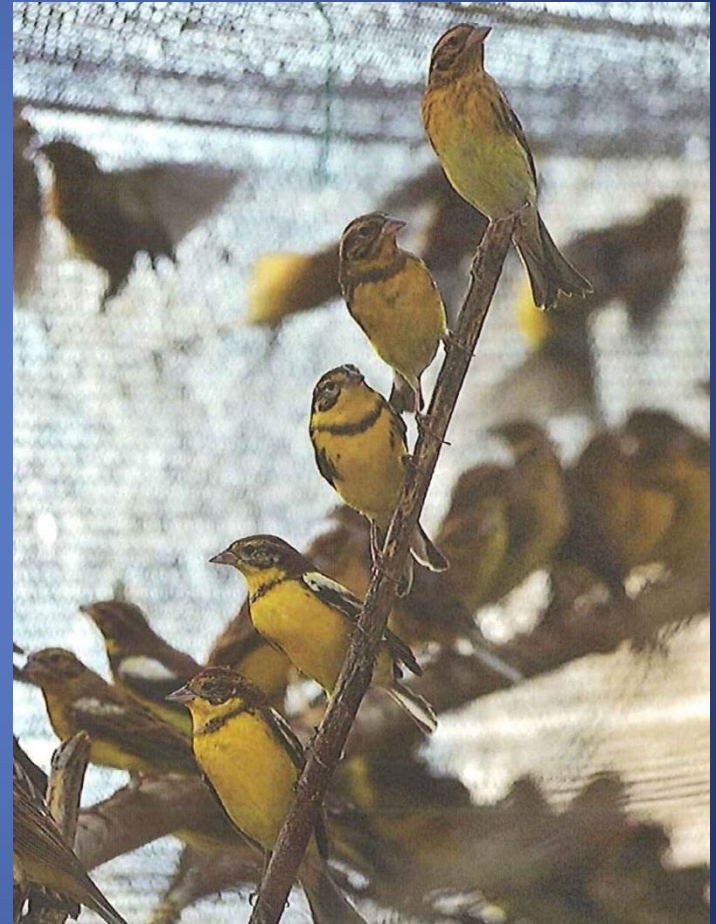


# Hunting in China

- The entire population of YBB migrates through China
- Hunting banned since 1997, but illegal hunting continues and worsens due to economic development in China
- One YBB costs 8 – 11 USD in market

# Protection status in China

- On the list of 'Protected animal species of beneficial, of economic and scientific value'. A low priority of protection.
- Still tens of thousands were confiscated every year.



# Passenger Pigeon

- Similar fate:  
super-abundant in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.  
Declined drastically within 30 years  
Extinct in wild in 1902  
Last captive bird died in 1914.





# Suggestions for action including from Japan and China

- Educating the public.
- Strengthen law enforcement in China
- Hunting toolkit on prevention of illegal hunting (in Chinese)
- Joint study on migration of the YBB, esp isolated Japanese (Hokkaido) population & Sakahlin
- Genetic studies on museum specimens to determine migratory populations
- Monitoring programme in Russia and China
- Conservation work under the bilateral agreement on migratory bird conservation between Russia, China and Japan.

# Steps towards a YBB SAP

- Simba Chan (plus Katsumi Tamada, Hokkaido Research Institute etc) to draft SAP during 2016
- Autumn 2016, Guangzhou (Canton): proposed symposium (where consumption highest) to discuss/approve SAP (Sun Yat-sen University/HKBWS/BirdLife)
- (2016: Japan-China bilateral in Australia)
- Sept 2017, Xi'an: China Ornithological Congress endorse SAP
- Late 2017, Manila: CMS COP adopt SAP
- 2017: Russia-Japan, Russia-China? bilaterals
- 2018: Japan-China bilateral in Japan