

## **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’<sup>1</sup>. There are eight major flyways around the world. The East Asian-Australasian Flyway (the Flyway) stretches from the Russian Far East and Alaska, southwards through East Asia and South-east Asia, to Australia and New Zealand and encompasses 22 countries. The East Asian – Australasian Flyway is home to over 50 million migratory waterbirds from over 250 different populations, including 28 globally threatened species. During migration, waterbirds rely on a chain of highly productive wetlands to rest and feed, building up sufficient energy to fuel the next phase of their journey. International cooperation across their migratory range is therefore essential to conserve and protect migratory waterbirds and the habitats on which they depend.

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.

Achievements under the Strategy and Actions Plans have included the identification of more than 700 sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds in the Flyway and the development of Site Networks for Anatidae, Cranes and Shorebirds, as well as a range of activities that have increased our knowledge of migratory waterbirds, raised awareness of the importance of these birds and built capacity for managers responsible for maintaining sites important for migratory waterbirds across the Flyway.

Despite these efforts, waterbirds and their coastal and inland habitats are under increasing pressure from rapid population growth and economic development, particularly in East and South East Asia. These pressures impact on the waterbirds that spend the non-breeding season in these countries as well as those waterbirds that utilize the central parts of the Flyway during migration. This Partnership recognises the importance of economic development for communities that share

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<sup>1</sup> See definitions in Appendix II

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 a flyway wide approach to the conservation of migratory waterbirds is the most effective way to enhance their conservation status.

The Partnership will contribute to the implementation of a number of Inter-Governmental agreements and other international frameworks, including the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Biological Diversity (resolutions 7.4 and 7.28), the UNDP and UNEP Project Priorities and Guidelines, the UNEP Water Policy and the Portfolio of Water Actions compiled at 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum. Endorsement of the Partnership as a regional initiative within the framework of the Ramsar Convention as stated in Resolution 9.7 is a significant recognition of the importance of this Partnership in the Flyway.

The Partnership will also assist those countries that currently have bilateral agreements for migratory birds in the Flyway (People's Republic of China, Japan, United States of America, Australia, Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea) to meet their obligations under their respective agreements.

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 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 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 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.
4. 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.
5. Government Partners are encouraged to submit internationally important migratory waterbird sites that occur in the territory they control for listing in the Flyway Site Network in Appendix V. Provided the criteria for inclusion in Appendix IV are satisfied, the Partners will note the submission and the site will be included in Appendix V according to the guidelines for sites to join the Flyway Site Network.
6. Government Partners are entitled to remove a site from the Flyway Site Network and inform the Secretariat of their decision.
7. 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 business sector may join this Partnership by endorsing the text and supporting the objectives and actions under this Partnership.
3. This Partnership is open to new Partners.
4. The Partners should encourage additional membership of the Partnership.

5. Partners will be advised of application for membership out of session. If no issues are raised within one month, the applicant will be added to the list of Partners.
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 1.

#### **PARAGRAPH 9 – Administration**

1. Initially, to oversee implementation of the Partnership, a meeting of the Partners will be held annually or as needed at mutually convenient locations.
2. The Partners will elect a chair and vice chair for a term of 2 years.
3. The Partners will establish a Secretariat to facilitate the effective communication and coordination of the Partnership and to coordinate activities across the Flyway. The Partners are encouraged to support and provide resources to the Secretariat.
4. The Partners will consider the nature of the Secretariat and develop and adopt Terms of Reference.
5. The Partners may engage the services of a Partner or organisation to provide services to the Secretariat
6. Partners may amend the text of this Partnership document by consensus at meetings of the Partners
7. 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.
8. The Partners may establish a Management Committee to facilitate the effective operation of the Partnership.
9. The Partners may establish advisory groups and permanent and/or ad hoc working groups/task forces as needed. The potential organisational structure of the Partnership is represented in Appendix VI.

#### **PARAGRAPH 10 – Finance**

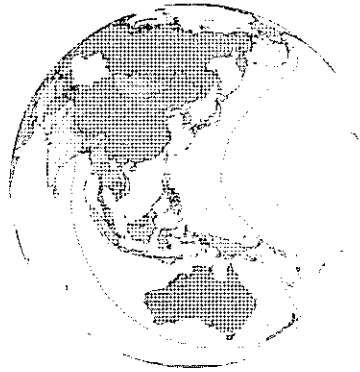
1. The Partners are encouraged to provide resources to support activities of the Partnership.
2. Meetings of Partners will assess the extent of the need and options for generating financial resources for:
  - a) assisting Partners to carry out activities under this Partnership; and
  - b) the expenses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



## Appendix 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 includes parts of the countries of United States of America (Alaska) and the Russian Federation (Russian Far East) and the regions of East Asia, South-East Asia and Australasia.



Map of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway

3. 'Flyway' means the East Asian – Australasian Flyway.
4. 'Government Partner' means National Governments which have endorsed the Partnership. Countries within the Flyway are; Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Peoples Republic of China, Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Union of Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines, Republic of Korea, The Russian Federation, Republic of Singapore, Democratic Republic of East Timor, Kingdom of Thailand, United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
5. 'Inter-Governmental Partner' means international and regional organisations, bodies and agencies which have endorsed the Partnership.
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.
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.**

<b>Taxonomic Group</b>	<b>English Name</b>
Gaviidae	Divers/Loons
Podicipedidae	Grebes
Phalacrocoracidae	Cormorants
Procellariidae	Shearwaters
Oceanitidae	Storm Petrels
Pelecanidae	Pelicans
Ardeidae	Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns
Ciconiidae	Storks
Threskiornithidae	Ibises and Spoonbills
Anatidae	Swans, Geese and Ducks
Gruidae	Cranes
Rallidae	Rails, Gallinules and Coots
Heliornithidae	Finfoots
Jacaniidae	Jacanas
Haematopodidae	Oystercatcher
Recurvirostridae	Stilts and Avocet
Glareolidae	Pratincoles
Charadriidae	Plovers
Scolopacidae	Sandpipers
Laridae	Gulls, Terns and Skimmers
Stercorariidae	Skuas
Alcidae	Auks



**Appendix IV – Flyway Site Network Criteria**

To be considered for inclusion in the Flyway Site Network, this Partnership adopts the following criteria:

- a. Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) criteria for internationally important sites for migratory waterbirds. That is:
  - Criterion 2: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.
  - Criterion 5: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.
  - Criterion 6: A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.
- b. The staging criteria as applied under the Asia- Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy. That is:
  - i. A staging site should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 0.25% of individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbirds on migration.
  - ii. A staging site should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 5,000 or more waterbirds at one time during migration.
- c. Under exceptional circumstances a site can be nominated if it supports migratory waterbirds at a level or stage of their life cycle important to the maintenance of flyway populations. Justification of such nominations will be considered by the partnership on a case by case basis.

**Appendix V – Sites included in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site Network**

Country	Migratory Waterbird Site included in Flyway Site Network	Migratory waterbird species or species groups for which the site is internationally important

Appendix VI – Potential Organisational Structure of the Partnership

