

# Collaboration in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership to Protect Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitat along the Flyway



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# Introduction

## Overview

- The Flyway covers 23 countries and 45% of the world's population
- Recent Conservation Status Review findings are not good
- 24 populations of migratory shorebirds are in decline
- 27% of waterbird species are threatened or near threatened
- Increasing adverse impacts of climate change, pollution and ongoing loss of and declining condition of habitat
- Collaboration between EAAF Partners has never been more essential
- Engagement by all Partners is critical to conserve declining populations and habitats

# East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership

Launched on 6 November 2006 as a non-legal voluntary framework

**Vision** – Migratory waterbirds and their habitats are recognized and conserved for the benefit of people and biodiversity

**Mission** - The Partnership provides a flyway wide framework to promote dialogue, cooperation and collaboration between a range of stakeholders to conserve migratory waterbirds and their habitats

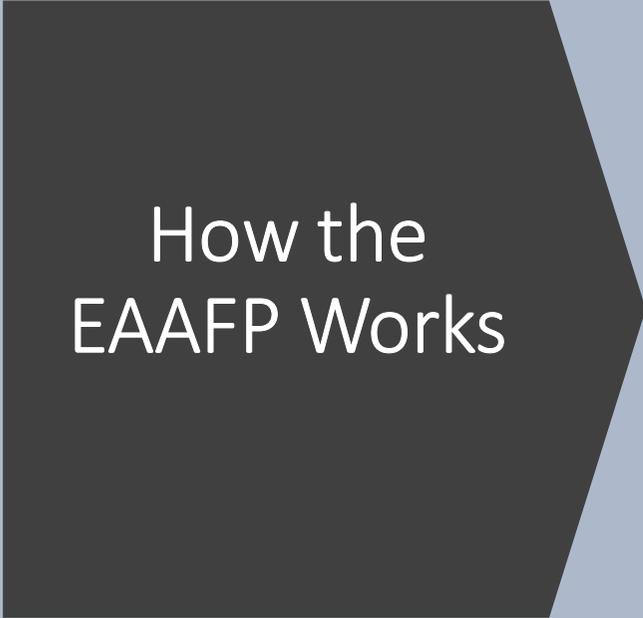
Currently has 39 Partners

- 18 National Governments
- 6 Intergovernmental Agencies
- 13 International NGOs
- 1 International organisation (IUCN)
- 1 International private enterprise (Rio Tinto)

## Benefits of the Partnership Model

- As a non-legal mechanism, it provides for a more flexible arrangement for Partners to co-operate and work together
- Allows countries to engage and collaborate without strict UN requirements (e.g. levies)
- Formal conventions such as Ramsar are more constrained in what they can do
  - Nomination of sites but no funds to invest in implementation action
  - Individual governments are expected to implement agreed Ramsar Resolutions
- Using the EAAFP model, Ramsar is now looking at development of a strategic plan





## How the EAAFP Works

### **EAAF Partners Partners**

- meet regularly to report on implementation of the Strategic Plan, to respond to emerging issues and priorities, and to discuss future collaboration
- Next MoP in Brisbane March 2023

### **▪ Secretariat**

- provides support and guidance for the Partnership, oversight of the EAAFP Science Unit, and the EAAFP Foundation.
- Secretariat is based in Incheon City RoK
- Incheon City is the major funder of the Secretariat

## EAAFP Committee, Task Force and Working Group Structure

- **EAAFP Committees**

- Management Committee
- Finance Subcommittee
- Technical Subcommittee
- CEPA

- **EAAFP Working groups**

- Anatidae
- Shorebird,
- Avian Influenza
- Black-faced Spoonbill,
- Crane,
- Seabird WG

- **EAAFP Task Forces**

- Yellow Sea Ecoregion
- Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Waterbirds
- Dalmatian Pelican
- Spoon-billed Sandpiper
- Scaly-sided Merganser
- Monitoring of Waterbird Populations and Sites
- Amur-Heilong Basin
- Baer's Pochard
- Far Eastern Curlew

## How Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups work

- The EAAFP structure of committees, task forces and working groups allows representatives of Partners to engage in specialist areas
  - Can be species related or
  - Broader based areas of interest – monitoring, populations etc
- Management Committee provides guidance and recommendations to the MoP
  - Its composition rotates with Partner representatives endorsed at each MoP
- Finance and Technical Sub-committees provide oversight in both areas and report to the Management Committee
- Task Forces and Working Groups can seek advice from the Technical Sub-committee, and they report to the MoP

# EAAFP Stakeholders

- Stakeholders include:
  - All levels of governments
  - Site managers
  - Multilateral environmental agreements
  - Technical institutes
  - UN agencies
  - Development agencies industrial and private sector
  - Academe
  - NGOs
  - Community groups
  - Local people



# Collaborative Arrangements (1)

## EAAFP Strategic Plan

- For over 12 years collaboration with the EAAF Partnership has been fostered under 2 Implementation Plans (2007-11 and 2012-17)
- The EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019-28 has been developed to build on previous efforts and address increasing pressure on migratory waterbirds
- The Plan has 5 Objectives and under each objective the broad strategic directions are outlined in Key Result Areas to provide guidance to Partners to achieve improved and sustainable outcomes
- Partners will report on progress in implementing the Strategic Plan at each MoP

# Benefits of the Strategic Plan

- The Strategic Plan has been endorsed by all Partners at MoP 10
- It will be the driver for action to conserve migratory waterbirds against agreed parameters and reporting mechanisms
- Under the Strategic Plan, guidelines for national and site partnerships have been developed and will be endorsed at MoP 11 (Brisbane March 2023)
- National partnerships will encourage country partners to work with all those in that country working on shorebird and habitat conservation to
  - share data and information and develop mechanisms for sustainable management of sites
  - Utilise CEPA opportunities to engage broadly with communities
- Partnerships will vary from country to country

# Collaborative Arrangements (2)

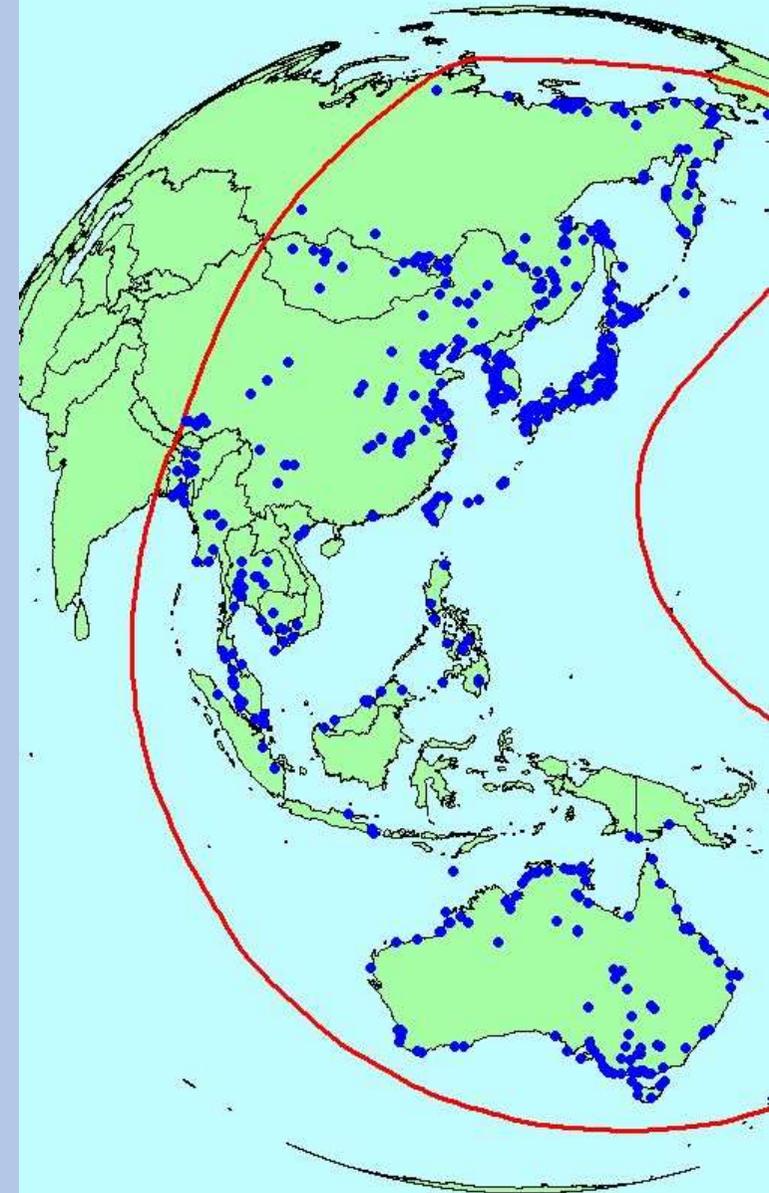
## CEPA

- CEPA Action Plan provides opportunities for Partners to collaborate on education, participation, awareness raising and communication about migratory waterbird and habitat conservation
- Provides education tools (skills, templates, materials etc)
- Promotes activities like World Migratory Waterbird Days
- Can facilitate capacity building opportunities
- Promotes sustainable use of wetland habitats
- Assist in engagement of local people in conservation activities
- Promotes establishment of sister sites

# Collaborative Arrangements (3)

## Flyway Network Sites

- The Flyway Network sites (FNS) is a core element of the EAAFP
- It was established to ensure that the network of internationally important sites is sustainably managed
  - to support the long - term survival of migratory waterbirds
- Flyway Network sites are nominated by EAAFP national Partners
  - Currently 153 FNS
- FNS at different countries can sign off Sister Sites Agreements to enhance collaboration.

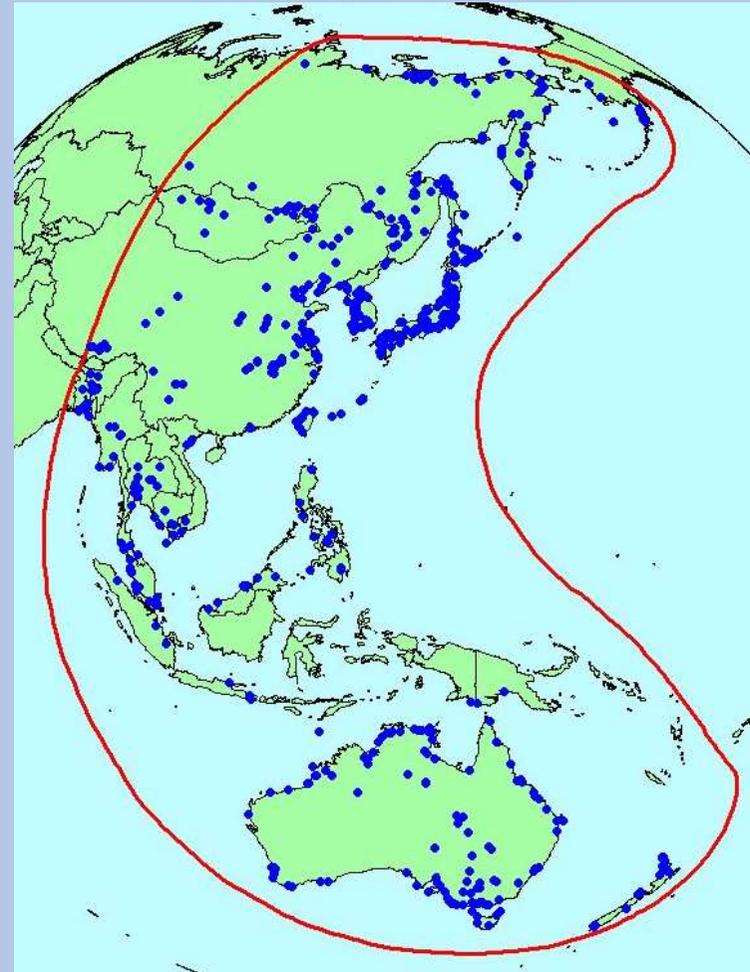


## Internationally Important Sites for Migratory Waterbirds

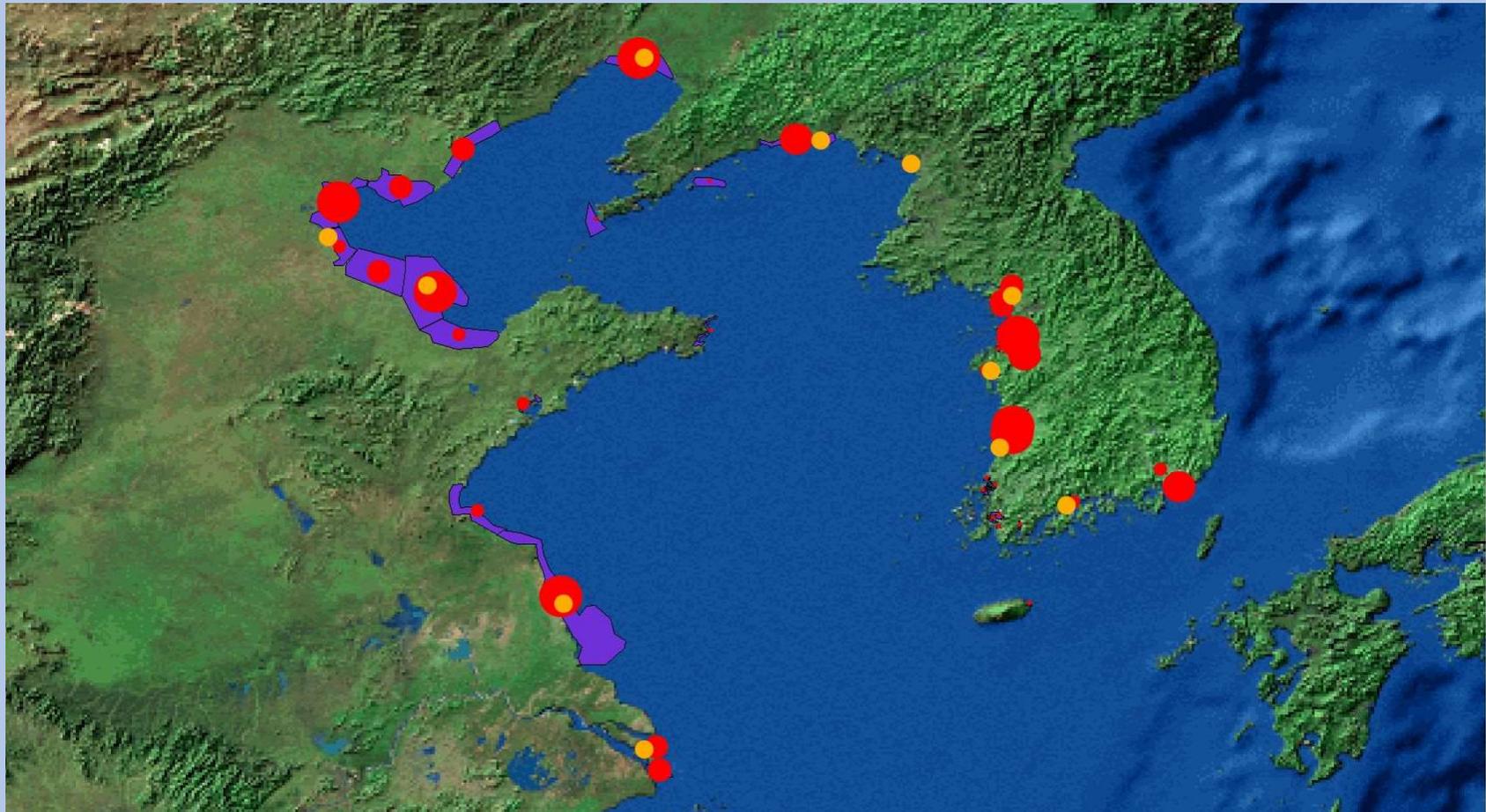
>700 sites

- **Cranes**
- **Anatidae**
- **Shorebirds**

150 sites now part of  
the FNS



# Internationally Important Sites for Migratory Waterbirds in the Yellow Sea



## Staging Sites

- Many staging sites are internationally important sites
- All migratory shorebirds need sites to stop and refuel during migration.
- Not all are yet included as Flyway Network Sites
- Partners are encouraged to nominate sites to the Network
- The key staging areas in the Flyway are the rich tidal flats of the Yellow Sea.
- China has listed a number of key sites along the Shanghai coastline as World Heritage sites and they are considering further nominations



## Collaborative arrangements (4)

### Regional Flyway Initiative

- This initiative launched by the Asia Development Bank with the EAAFP Secretariat and BirdLife International in 2021 aims to focus international support on the most threatened wetlands of East and Southeast Asia
- It aims to preserve wetlands across the region that are crucial to both peoples' livelihoods and migratory waterbirds
- The RFI will mobilise large scale financing to support the protection maintenance and restoration.
- Partnerships will be established among governments, NGOs, communities, regional organisations, development agencies, the private sector and other stakeholders.
- RFI investment will go to sites of international importance, and it will be linked to addressing climate change impacts

## Collaborative arrangements (5)

### **Waterbird Monitoring**

- Monitoring of waterbirds is a critical element of population assessments in the Flyway
- Monitoring is largely done by volunteers and experts but it would be greatly enhanced by stronger engagement from National Partners
- A Conservation Status Review (CSR1) of Flyway waterbird populations was started in April 2021 led by Wetlands International and the EAAFP Secretariat
- The review contributes to Objective 3 of the Strategic Plan and is the first such review to be undertaken
- The aim of the review is to provide researchers, government agencies, conservationists and other stakeholders with up-to-date information on waterbirds
- It was produced in collaboration with Partners, working groups, task forces and experts.

## Conclusion

- Collaboration between EAAF Partners is occurring in a number of ways and will be encouraged to grow
- The Strategic Plan will provide greater opportunities for collaboration especially with the nomination of internationally important sites to the FNS
- CEPA initiatives will encourage Partners to link over complementary activities including sister sites
- Funding in the partnership to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan needs to grow with more initiatives similar to the RFI
- Enhanced collaboration on research, monitoring and information sharing about waterbird populations needs to be pursued

