

Abstract

Background: China's coastal wetlands belong to some of the most threatened ecosystems worldwide. The loss and degradation of these wetlands seriously threaten waterbirds that depend on wetlands.

Methods: The China Coastal Waterbird Census was organized by volunteer birdwatchers in China's coastal region. Waterbirds were surveyed synchronously once every month at 14 sites, as well as irregularly at a further 18 sites, between September 2005 and May 2020.

Results: A total of 75 species of waterbirds met the 1 % population level Ramsar listing criterion at least once at one site, including 33 species Shorebirds. The number of birds of the following species accounted for over 20 % of the total flyway populations at a single site: Far Eastern Oystercatcher (*Haematopus osculans*), Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Spotted Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*), Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*), Spoon-billed Sandpiper (*Calidris pygmeus*), Far-Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*).

A total of 26 sites supported at least one species of which their number met the 1% criterion. Many sites identified as being of international importance to waterbirds along the Chinese coast currently lack any formal protection and many are immediately threatened by reclamation projects. For example, there are 26 species, including 20 species of shorebirds, met the 1 % criterion at the Lianyungang coast, Jiangsu.

Conclusions: The results highlight the international importance of China's coastal wetlands for waterbirds. This study also demonstrates that participation of local birdwatchers in waterbird surveys results in data that are invaluable not only for understanding the current status of waterbirds in China's coastal regions but also for waterbird conservation and management.

Current population trends of shorebird species wintering in India with migratory connectivity with East Asian-Australasian Flyway

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The wintering and staging sites along the east and west coasts of India are globally important for several shorebirds, especially Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*. Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, Little Stint *Calidris minuta* and Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*, Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* and Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*. The individual population for these shorebird species in India varies between 100,000 and -300,000. Most of the migratory wader species occurring in India are also commonly observed in the East Asian-Australian Flyway (EAAF). The migratory connectivity between India and EAAF was established through ringing and color flagging for the following 10 species, namely Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, *Ruff Calidris pugnax*, Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*, Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*, Sanderling *Calidris alba* and Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*. Though a decline in numbers is reported in most coastal wader species both globally and nationally, in India, the decline is more so in species preferring intertidal mudflats, such as Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, Terek Sandpiper and Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*. Other Near-Threatened species frequenting the coastal wetlands of India in substantial numbers in recent years are Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*, Red Knot *Calidris canuta* and Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*. In recent years, the sightings of color-flagged waders, namely Curlew Sandpiper, Asian Dowitcher and Great Knot from India at Bohai Sea, South Korea and Thailand, and the sightings of color-flagged Great Knots from Kamchatka and Sakhalin Island in India have reconfirmed the migratory connectivity with EAAF.

Presentation Title

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The Republic of Palau is the Pacific island nation closest to Asia, located approximately 875 km east of the Philippines, 975 km north of Irian Jaya and 3,200 km south of Japan. Although Palau is not an EAAFP eligible country, field surveys now clearly demonstrate the importance of the Northern Peleliu sandflats; where congregations of at least six shorebird taxa meet EAAFP 1% or 0.25% thresholds for flyway sites. We present survey counts conducted over 2014-2019 that document the species present and give insights into seasonal patterns. We also discuss links with other EEAF sites demonstrated so far by flag records and the characteristics of the site, which is remarkably pristine at present, although threatened by tourism development. Local efforts to protect the site in light of the cultural importance of the far eastern curlew are outlined, and the need to establish mechanisms to align these efforts with the EAAFP is highlighted.

Theme: Migration ecology, Monitoring or Conservation Management

Preferred option: Oral Presentation

The Directory of Important Migratory Shorebird Habitat in Australia: Translating shorebird surveys into opportunities for conservation action

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Habitat is key: Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act has established 'Important Habitat' as a key concept for migratory species, including those areas recognized as nationally or internationally important. The Australian Government's Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds subsequently identified the creation of a Directory of Important Habitat for Migratory Shorebirds as a high priority action. BirdLife's Directory Project set out to analyze long-term shorebird data to identify important habitat for migratory shorebirds, using data from Australia's National Shorebird Monitoring and its precursors. Around 1600 volunteers counting 2,882 count areas of 520 shorebird areas have provided 100,000 surveys to date. The effort was based on a revision of the Flyway Population Estimates and highlighted all sites in Australia that meet national and international significance criteria. A total of 381 areas meeting one or more of the criteria were identified using recent surveys from 2005 to 2018, receiving a detailed account and data summary in the Directory. Identification and mapping of important habitat for migratory shorebirds is required to deliver a scientifically robust basis for political decision-making and improved targeting of conservation investments. It is a key component in the delivery of the Migratory Shorebird Conservation Action Plan coordinated by BirdLife. The project also contributes to practical, on-ground delivery of threatened priority bird species. Based on the Directory, species and site-specific action plans can now be developed to address conservation issues in key areas around the continent, ultimately translating the most recent shorebird survey data into opportunities for conservation action.

Theme: Conservation Management

Preferred option: Oral Presentation