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Waterbirds around the world

A global overview of the conservation,
management and research of the
world's waterbird flyways

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Cover photography: Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* arriving at Martin Mere, England. Photo: Paul Marshall.
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3.6 East Asia-Pacific Flyway. Workshop Introduction

Taej Mundkur

Wetlands International - South Asia, A-25, 2nd Floor, Defence Colony, New Delhi - 110 024, India.

Mundkur, T. 2006. East Asia-Pacific Flyway. Workshop Introduction. *Waterbirds around the world*. Eds. G.C. Boere, C.A. Galbraith & D.A. Stroud. The Stationery Office, Edinburgh, UK. p. 315.



Oyster farm in Luoyuan Bay, Fujian Province, China. The inter-tidal mudflats of the Chinese coast, as elsewhere in East Asia, are subject to a very high intensity of use by populations of dependent humans as well as waterbirds. Photo: Mark Barter.

The waterbirds of Asian-Australasian flyways are the most poorly known of the world's waterbird migration systems, and the greatest number of globally threatened waterbirds occurs here. This flyway extends across the most densely populated part of the world, where there are extreme pressures not only on unprotected wetlands but also on protected sites (many of which also either contain or provide the livelihoods of very large numbers of people). Effective protection of wetlands of major importance is a critical need, as in other regions of the world. There are huge, and crucial, challenges in ensuring effective wise-use of key sites, as well as ensuring that consumptive uses of waterbirds are sustainable.

The symposium reviewed existing policies, case studies and problems within the East Asian flyway, and discussed the effectiveness of the different approaches.

The following recommendations were made:—

- Networks of internationally important sites provide a sound foundation for flyway conservation initiatives. Chan presented the example of the North-east Asian Crane Network as a model. Voluntary conservation initiatives can provide a successful model for migratory waterbirds and wetland conservation. Significant voluntary effort has been expended in recent years to better understand wader conservation needs. Recent work was outlined by Straw *et al.* and Huettmann *et al.*
- Conservation of migratory waterbirds must be achieved increasingly through delivery of sustainable development.
- Conservation of migratory waterbirds must address the needs of local communities and national governments if they are to be successful in the longer term.
- Developing networks of wetland education centres should be promoted to create greater local awareness and support, and provide the foundation for conservation of migratory waterbirds through strong and functional flyway site networks. Young summarised the role of Asian wetland centres in the conservation of wetlands and migratory waterbirds.
- Management of migratory waterbirds requires sound monitoring information covering their annual life cycles. Development and strengthening of such monitoring programmes requires long-term investments across flyways. Li *et al.* describe a range of recent initiatives.