

Okinawa Statement

Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy:2001-2005, International Workshop, Okinawa 19 October 2000

The "Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy:2001-2005, International Workshop", held in Naha-city and Tomigusuku-village, Okinawa, from 16-19 October, 2000, was attended by 141 participants from the following states and territories: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Japan , Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Korea (Republic of), Russia, Thailand, USA, Viet Nam and representatives of Wetlands International, Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). The meeting was organised by the Environment Agency of Japan, Environment Australia and Wetland International-Asia Pacific, co-organised by the Okinawa Manko Steering Committee, with assistance from the Okinawa NGO Steering Committee.

The workshop expressed its sincere gratitude to the Okinawa Manko Steering Committee and the Okinawa NGO Steering Committee for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality.

The workshop also congratulated Okinawa Prefecture, Naha City and Tomigusuku Village for their continuing efforts in conservation of Manko as a site under the Convention on Wetlands and East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network.

The cyclical migration of waterbirds across the globe has been long recognised as a natural wonder. Annually, waterbirds fly many thousands of kilometres across a vast range of climates and habitats in response to the urge to nest, to replenish their reserves of strength, and to avoid adverse weather conditions. This constant pattern has been repeated many times and predates the evolution of humankind.

In meeting the demands of their life cycles, waterbirds depend on high quality wetland habitats in many countries. However, this pattern of existence of migratory waterbirds has come under increasing threat. Rapid human development across the globe has dramatically increased pressure on intertidal and freshwater wetlands and other habitats which has resulted in their degradation and loss, their pollution and increased harvest of waterbirds. Efforts to conserve migratory species in one country can only be effective if they are complemented by actions in all countries through which the species moves during its annual cycle. Complementary actions in all areas of their range are therefore essential for the conservation of migratory waterbird species.

In recognition of the threats to migratory waterbirds and their habitats and the need for action across the region to conserve them and their habitats, the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy:1996-2000 was developed. The Strategy has been highly successful in promoting international activity related to flyway co-operation for waterbirds.

Significant achievements of the Strategy 1996-2000 include:

1. the establishment of international site networks for three species-groups (Shorebirds, Cranes, and Anatidae) that focus on promoting conservation of important wetlands in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway from the breeding grounds (northern hemisphere) through staging areas to the non-breeding areas (in the northern and southern hemispheres); and
2. the increased awareness, co-ordination, involvement and support by governments, conservation conventions, NGOs, and local people in the implementation of the Strategy.

The workshop reviewed and exchanged information on the implementation of the “Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy:1996-2000”. Recognising the achievement of this Strategy and building on it’s strength, efficiency of the flyway approach methodology and the multilateral cooperation of this Strategy, and also effective implementation of the related activities in collaboration between governments and NGOs, the workshop approved the “Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 2001-2005”. The Strategy 2001-2005 aims to further enhance the long-term conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the Asia-Pacific region through a number of elements including;

1. Action plans for species-groups and globally threatened species.
2. Effectively managed networks of sites that are internationally important for migratory waterbirds.

Endorsing the Strategy as a framework for the development of actions for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats, the workshop:

1. **Recognised** the need for coordination of action between countries in the flyway for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the Asia-Pacific region,
2. **Is aware** of similar initiatives being undertaken in other flyways that contribute to conservation of migratory waterbirds globally,
3. **Recommended** that countries in the region actively support and implement the “Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy:2001-2005”,
4. **Urged** countries in the region to nominate additional sites to the Networks and to participate fully in the three species-group Action Plans established and developed under the Strategy,
5. **Recommended** that countries actively support the development and implementation of other Action Plans in the Strategy and site networks that will be developed under the Strategy,
6. **Urged** international organisations, non-governmental organisations, local governments or site management bodies, local communities and others to cooperatively participate in and support, particularly through funding the Strategy,

Further urged the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee established by Wetlands International-Asia Pacific to continue coordinating the development and implementation of the Strategy, and to convey and commend the finalised Strategy to the countries in the region and international organisations