



ACTION PLAN

FOR THE
CONSERVATION
OF MIGRATORY
SHOREBIRDS IN
ASIA PACIFIC

1998 ~ 2000

SHOREBIRD
WORKING
GROUP

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AVAILABLE FROM:

The Wetlands Unit
Environment Australia - Biodiversity Group
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601
ph: 02 6274 1111 (switch)

Shorebird Flyway Officer
c/- Wetlands International - Oceania
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601
ph: 02 6274 1111 (switch)



FOREWORD

The *Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Shorebirds in Asia Pacific 1998–2000* (the Shorebird Action Plan) is the result of successful international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. It is one of three action plans for priority species groups prepared under the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 1996–2000*, with other action plans being implemented for cranes and Anatidae (ducks, geese and swans).

The Shorebird Action Plan does not sit under any international legal framework, but rather relies upon Governments and non-government organisations working in partnership to conserve migratory shorebirds and their habitats in Asia Pacific.

However, as well as providing a broader plan for action in Asia Pacific, the Shorebird Action Plan is also enabling the Commonwealth Government of Australia to meet its obligations under the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and the China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement.

In June 1998 the Commonwealth Government approved a total of AUD 900 000 (US\$560 000) over three years as Australia's contribution to implementing the Shorebird Action Plan. These funds are being provided under the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia, which is a major investment in the natural environment across five major themes: vegetation, rivers, biodiversity, land and coasts.

BRENDAN EDGAR,

Director, Wetlands Unit, Environment Australia

The Shorebird Action Plan has been developed to identify the key priority actions to begin the immense task of ensuring the long term conservation of migratory shorebirds and their habitats in Asia Pacific.

The prime focus of the Shorebird Action Plan is the establishment of a network of well managed internationally important shorebird sites. Over the past three years Wetlands International has worked to develop the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Network (the Network). The Network now embraces 21 internationally important sites in nine countries within the East Asian–Australasian Flyway (the Flyway).

The Shorebird Action Plan sets specific goals for additional sites and the training needs to ensure that the Network can effectively conserve migratory shorebirds.

Wetlands International gratefully acknowledges the considerable support provided by Environment Australia towards the development of the Network and Shorebird Action Plan, and in funding some of the initial Shorebird Action Plan activities.

We invite all organisations and people with an interest and concern in migratory shorebird and wetland conservation to become involved in the implementation of the Shorebird Action Plan.

MARK BARTER

Chair, Shorebird Working Group, Wetlands International - Asia Pacific

1. BACKGROUND

ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SHOREBIRDS IN ASIA PACIFIC 1998 ~ 2000

A COMPONENT OF THE
ASIA-PACIFIC MIGRATORY
WATERBIRD CONSERVATION
STRATEGY: 1996 ~ 2000

At an international meeting at Kushiro, Japan in December 1994 it was agreed that there was an urgent need for multilateral cooperation for the conservation of migratory waterbirds in Asia-Pacific. The meeting recognised that there was not a suitable international legal framework to develop conservation plans and called on Governments and non-government organisations to work in partnership to develop a regional conservation strategy. In response an *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy* (the Strategy), for the period 1996-2000 was drafted. The Strategy was refined at international meetings in Japan and Malaysia and then launched during the Conference of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) in March 1996 in Brisbane, Australia.

Implementation of the Strategy is being coordinated by Wetlands International with core funding from Environment Australia and the Environment Agency of Japan.

This *Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Shorebirds in Asia Pacific: 1998-2000* has been prepared by the Shorebird Working Group of Wetlands International to provide guidance on the priority actions that need to be undertaken by Government agencies, site managers, researchers and non-government organisations.



2. RATIONALE

Conservation through Networks of Important Sites

In Asia Pacific there are over 130 populations of migratory shorebirds with a combined minimum population of over 9 million. This includes 10 species that are considered to be threatened. The migratory behaviour of these shorebirds means that each year they move through several countries. Consequently their conservation is dependent on international cooperation.

The Strategy recognises three major flyways in Asia Pacific. It identifies the development of networks of internationally important sites as a primary implementation mechanism for conservation actions.

The development of Shorebird Networks will provide:

- international recognition for important sites
- a focus for public awareness and education activities
- an international framework for public awareness and education, training and research activities
- an integrated conservation model for Governments and funding bodies.

In March 1996, during the Brisbane Ramsar Conference, the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Network (the Network) was launched and also promoted to Parties and non-Parties through Recommendation 6.4 (Annex 1). This Network now includes 21 sites from 9 countries. The Network is being coordinated by a Shorebird Flyway Officer, engaged by Wetlands International with funding from Environment Australia, based in Canberra, Australia. Two international consultative committees (Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee and the Shorebird Working Group) have been established to oversee the implementation of these conservation initiatives for migratory waterbirds.

Focus on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway

This Action Plan focuses attention on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. In this Flyway there is considerable documentation of the threats to shorebirds and their habitats, a significant knowledge base on shorebird populations and important sites and a number of organisational structures to implement actions.

Information is more limited in the Central Asian Flyway and organisational structures are less developed. It is anticipated that these two issues will be addressed as part of the implementation of the Strategy by Wetlands International - Asia Pacific and that this will provide the basis for the future development of a shorebird site network in this Flyway.

In the West Pacific Flyway shorebirds are widely distributed in low abundance. It is considered that shorebird conservation will be best addressed in this Flyway through more general wetland conservation initiatives. During the term of this Action Plan such initiatives will be progressed by Wetlands International - Oceania through its various actions in the Pacific Islands region.

Time Frame: This Action Plan covers the period January 1998 – December 2000.

MISSION STATEMENT

To achieve the long term conservation of migratory shorebirds and their habitats in Asia Pacific through the establishment of networks of appropriately managed sites that are of international importance for migratory shorebirds.

3. PRIORITY ACTIONS

Development of the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Network

It is estimated that the East Asian-Australasian Flyway has more than 250 sites of international importance for migratory shorebirds. At the beginning of 1998 the Network included only 8% of these sites.

It is planned to develop the Network to include at least 20% of the sites of international importance to migratory shorebirds. This gives a target of 50 sites in total for the Network by the year 2000. The geographic coverage of the Network will also be broadened to include all countries in the Flyway.

ACTION 1

Obtain the nomination of the 4 foreshadowed Network sites (Chongming Dao, China; Kaoh Kapik, Cambodia; Eighty Mile Beach and Roebuck Bay, Australia). A2, B1, C1 1

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies, Governments, Shorebird Working Group] 2

ACTION 2

Publish a map of sites of international importance for migratory shorebirds. A1, A2, B1, C1, G1

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Governments, Non-government organisations]

ACTION 3

Obtain the nomination of 25 new sites for the Network, to reach the target of 50 sites. B1, C1

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies, Governments, Shorebird Working Group]

ACTION 4

Obtain the nomination of at least one site from all countries with sites of international importance in the Network. Priority countries will include Vietnam, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Cambodia, Singapore, United States of America (Alaska), Thailand, Myanmar and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. B1, C1

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Governments, Non-government organisations]

ACTION 5

Conduct dedication ceremonies at 35 Network sites that involve the site management agency, and Government and local community representatives. A3, B1, C1, C3, G1

[Site Management Bodies, Shorebird Flyway Officer, Non-government organisations]

ACTION 6

Ensure adequate planning and fund raising for the development of the Network. Conduct annual reviews of the implementation of the Shorebird Action Plan and prepare an annual workplan.

B1, C1

[Wetlands International, Shorebird Working Group, Shorebird Flyway Officer, Non-government Organisations]

Appropriate management of Network sites

Supporting the implementation of appropriate management (wise use of wetland resources as defined by the Ramsar Convention) at each Network site is the highest priority of the Shorebird Action Plan. This will be achieved by improving site management skills and building community awareness.

ACTION 7

Provide access for site management and associated personnel to existing training initiatives in species monitoring, wetland management, management planning, education and public awareness, and project management. The target will be to involve two people per site during the term of the Shorebird Action Plan (through Actions 7 and 8). A3, A4, B1, C1, C3, E3, I1, I2, I3, I4, I5

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies, Governments, Non-government organisations]

ACTION 8

Assist in the development of at least one special training activity for the Network each year.

A3, A4, B1, C1, C3, E3, I1, I2, I3, I4, I5

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies, Governments, Non-government organisations]

ACTION 9

Promote the development of management plans for Network sites. Site management bodies will be provided with information on management planning and potential links with existing wetland planning initiatives (eg. Ramsar). The Flyway Officer will be available to respond to enquiries from site management bodies regarding shorebirds and habitat management issues.

A3, A4, B1, C1, C3, J4

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Site Management Bodies]

ACTION 10

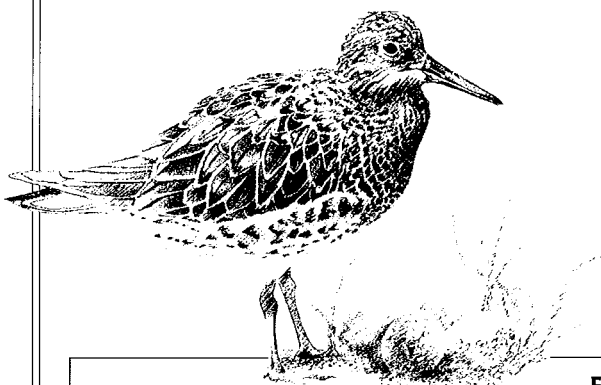
Develop at least one educational and public awareness product each year to cover issues such as shorebird migration, habitat conservation and the Network. A3, A4, B1, C1, C3, G1, G2

[Shorebird Flyway Officer, Governments, Non-government Organisations]

ACTION 11

Enhance the exchange of information on shorebird conservation and habitat management between site managers, researchers and non-government organisations. This will include the use of existing publications (eg. *The Still and Tattler*), wetland newsletters, email and Web sites. A3, A4, B1, C1, H1, K1

[Non-government Organisations, Site Management Bodies, Shorebird Flyway Officer]



Increasing the information base on migratory shorebirds

Ongoing survey, monitoring and research work on shorebirds and their habitats is needed to ensure that the Network is achieving the conservation of migratory shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

ACTION 12

Develop statistically robust methodologies to monitor shorebird populations and design implementation projects in priority countries (Australia, New Zealand and Japan).

C1, E1, E2, E3, E4

[Non-government Organisations, Site Management Bodies, Governments, Shorebird Flyway Officer]

ACTION 13

Develop and implement projects to identify internationally important sites for shorebirds in countries where knowledge is incomplete, notably the People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Vietnam, The Philippines and Papua New Guinea. A1, C1, E1, E2

[Non-government Organisations, Governments, Shorebird Flyway Officer]

ACTION 14

Support existing and initiate new projects on shorebird migration with a special focus on the use of colour leg flags. Seek to maximise community involvement in these projects, particularly in reporting sightings of colour flagged birds. C1, E1, E2, E7, E10

[Non-government Organisations, Governments, Shorebird Flyway Officer]

ACTION 15

Compile and publish an overview of the status of shorebirds and internationally important sites in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Assess the adequacy of the Network to conserve species. A1, C1, E1, E2, E7, E9

[Non-government Organisations, Shorebird Flyway Officer]

FOOTNOTES

1 Cross reference to Actions listed in the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 1996-2000.

2 The bodies responsible for implementing each action are listed in the square brackets.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

The Action Plan has been developed to make the maximum use of existing organisational structures and activities. Successful implementation requires cooperative action between Government agencies, site management bodies and non-government organisations.

Key Personnel and Agencies

Shorebird Flyway Officer. Implementation of the Action Plan will be coordinated by the Flyway Officer. The Officer will be responsible for the development of the Network, promoting appropriate management of Network sites and supporting shorebird research.

National Government Agencies. These agencies are responsible for the endorsement of nominations for sites to be part of the Network. It is anticipated that they will provide in-principle support and, where possible, funding for activities associated with implementation of the Shorebird Action Plan.

Site Management Bodies. It is the day-to-day management of internationally important sites that determines the future of shorebird populations. Site management bodies need to have access to training opportunities, up to date knowledge and resources for appropriate site management.

Non-government Organisations. National and regional shorebird specialist groups exist in the Russian Federation, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. International organisations such as Wetlands International, BirdLife International and World Wide Fund for Nature are also involved in shorebird conservation in the Flyway. These organisations perform a vital role in such activities as monitoring, research, public awareness and the exchange of information. All of these organisations will be invited to be fully involved in implementation of the Shorebird Action Plan.

Review and Consultation Mechanisms

Shorebird Working Group. A consultative committee has been formed consisting of eight members drawn from government and non-government organisations from across the Flyway. The Shorebird Working Group has agreed on the Shorebird Action Plan, will monitor/review its implementation, assist to identify and secure resources, review the annual workplan of the Flyway Officer, provide advice and assistance to the Flyway Officer, promote the Shorebird Action Plan and establish links with related activities. It will meet at least annually and report to the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee.

Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird

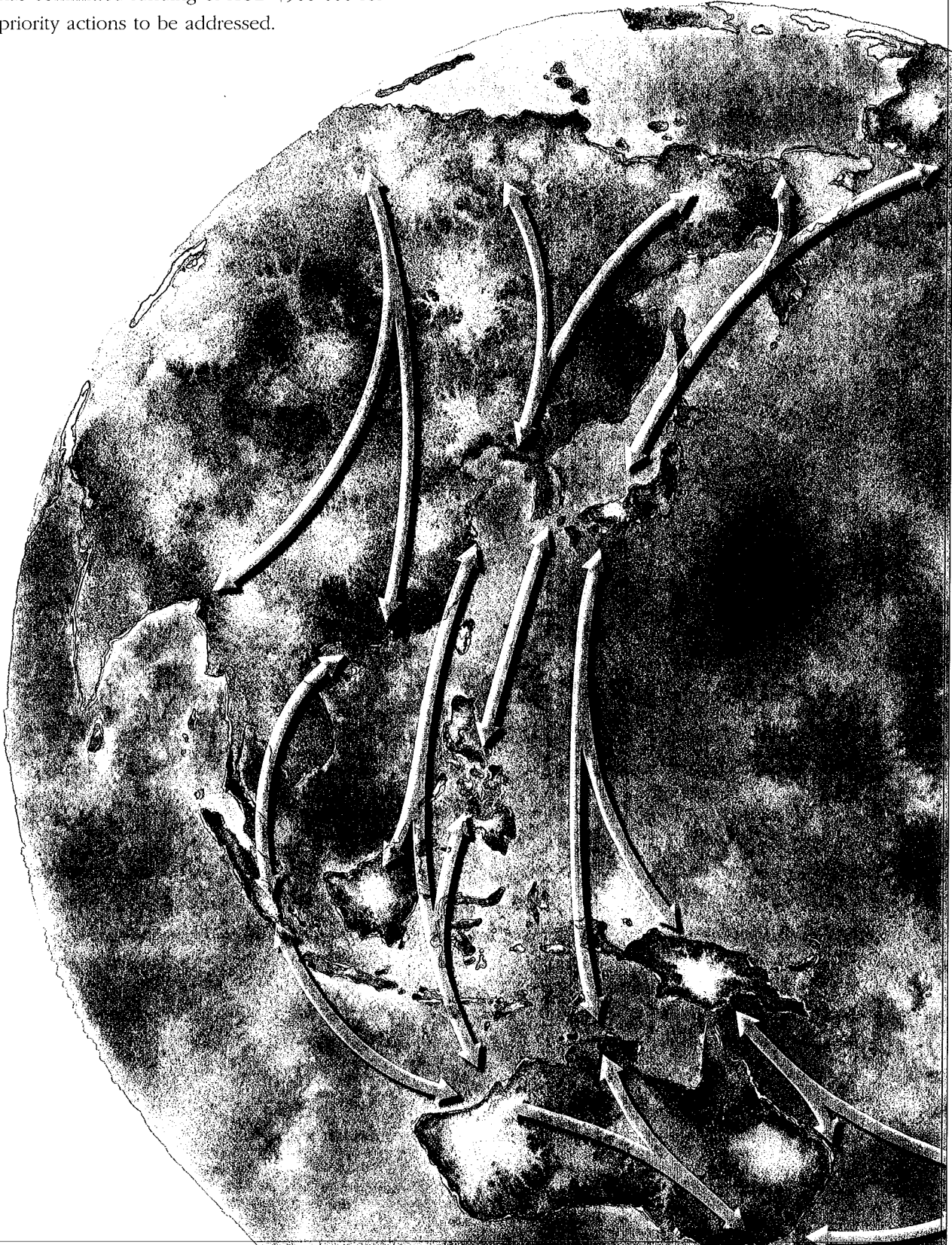
Conservation Committee. This Committee has up to 12 members drawn from representatives of governments, the Ramsar Bureau, the Bonn Convention Secretariat, development assistance agencies and international non-government organisations. The Committee oversees the implementation of the Strategy and receives reports from working groups. The Committee reports to the Council of Wetlands International – Asia Pacific.

Linkages to Major Regional and Global Initiatives

The Shorebird Action Plan is a component of the *Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 1996-2000*. It links to a number of other initiatives, such as the Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 1997-2002 and bilateral agreements for the conservation of migratory birds.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resources will be required to implement the Shorebird Action Plan with funding to be directed to building the Network (25%), supporting the network (45%) and increasing information on shorebirds (30%). The Australian Government has committed funding of AUD \$900 000 for priority actions to be addressed.



ANNEX 1
RECOMMENDATION 6.4
ON THE BRISBANE
INITIATIVE, THE 6TH
MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE
CONTRACTING PARTIES,
BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA,
19-27 MARCH 1996
1 9 9 8 ~ 2 0 0 0

RECOMMENDATION 6.4:
THE "BRISBANE INITIATIVE" ON THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A NETWORK OF
LISTED SITES ALONG THE EAST
ASIAN-AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY

- 1. RECALLING** Article 5 of the Convention, which calls for international consultation and coordination in the conservation and management of shared wetland resources;
- 2. NOTING** Recommendations 4.4, which calls for networks of reserves to be established, and 4.12, which recognizes the flyway concept for the conservation of wetland bird species;
- 3. AWARE** of the Kushiro Statement (Resolution 5.1), which calls for the strengthening of regional coordination on wetland issues, cooperation with other conventions and organizations, and the establishment of international networks of wetlands with significant ecological or hydrological links;
- 4. WELCOMING** the proposed development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ramsar Bureau and the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) as a mechanism to improve international cooperation on the conservation of migratory species;
- 5. CONVINCED** of the need for a concerted multilateral approach involving governments, non-government organizations and local communities to the conservation of migratory waterbirds within each of the major flyways of the globe;
- 6. FURTHER CONVINCED** that such an approach should have as a central feature a network of wetland sites of international importance, as defined by the Ramsar criteria, for the conservation of migratory waterbirds

7. NOTING the socio-economic and cultural significance of some of these internationally important sites;

8. NOTING the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, developed in the Americas, as a useful model for international cooperation in the conservation of migratory shorebird species;

9. FURTHER NOTING the recent adoption of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds under CMS;

10. NOTING that participants at the regional technical workshop on the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and their Wetland Habitats held in Kushiro, Japan, in December 1994 supported a concerted multilateral approach to the conservation of migratory waterbirds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, through the development of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, and recommended the immediate establishment of an East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network;

11. NOTING that the Delhi Declaration on the Conservation of Wetlands in Asia, adopted at the Ramsar Regional Meeting in March 1995, called for "the support of initiatives to develop frameworks for the coordination of efforts to conserve migratory waterbirds in the Asian flyways"; and

12. CONVINCED that the Ramsar Convention, through the cooperative actions of its Contracting Parties along the major flyways, could facilitate the development of such multilateral approaches to waterbird conservation by supporting the development of networks of wetland sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds;

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

13. ADOPTS this Recommendation as the "Brisbane Initiative" which calls for the establishment of a network of Ramsar-listed and other wetlands of international importance for migratory shorebirds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, managed to maintain their suitability for migratory shorebirds;

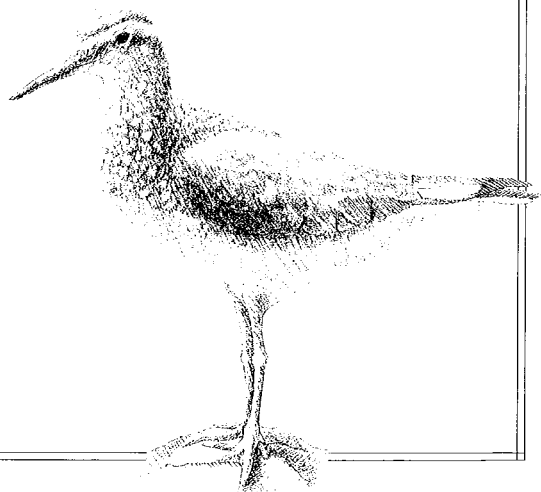
14. ENCOURAGES Contracting Parties to consider supporting the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy;

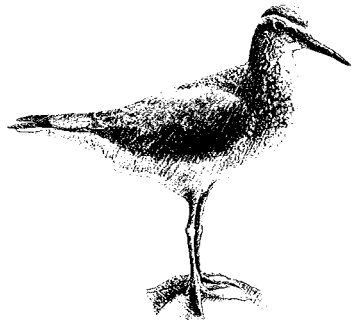
15. URGES Contracting Parties within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway to demonstrate their support for an East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network by nominating one or more appropriate sites for inclusion in the Network;

16. COMMENDS the "Brisbane Initiative" to other countries or territories along the Flyway who are not yet Contracting Parties, and urges their full participation in the Brisbane Initiative;

17. FURTHER COMMENDS consideration of the flyway site network approach to other species groups of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region and in other flyways; and

18. FURTHER URGES participating countries to work together to maintain and expand such networks in a coordinated manner, and to promote public awareness, training and information exchange and thus contribute to the long-term conservation of migratory shorebirds and their habitats.





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