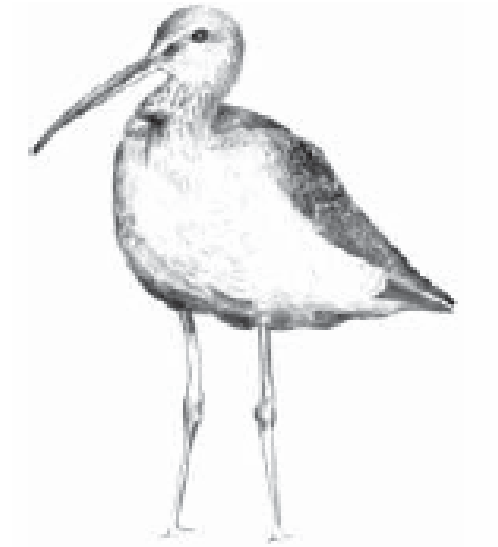


Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage

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Natural Heritage Trust

Helping Communities Helping Australia

A Commonwealth Government Initiative

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Annexure A

List of migratory shorebird species to be included under the Wildlife Conservation Plan



Cover illustration: Feathers, Flyways and Friends. Other illustrations by Keith Woodley.



Introduction

A wildlife conservation plan sets out the research and management actions necessary to support survival of one or more migratory, marine, conservation dependant or cetacean species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act), which are not considered endangered or vulnerable, but would benefit from a nationally coordinated approach to conservation. This is the first Wildlife Conservation Plan developed under the Act.

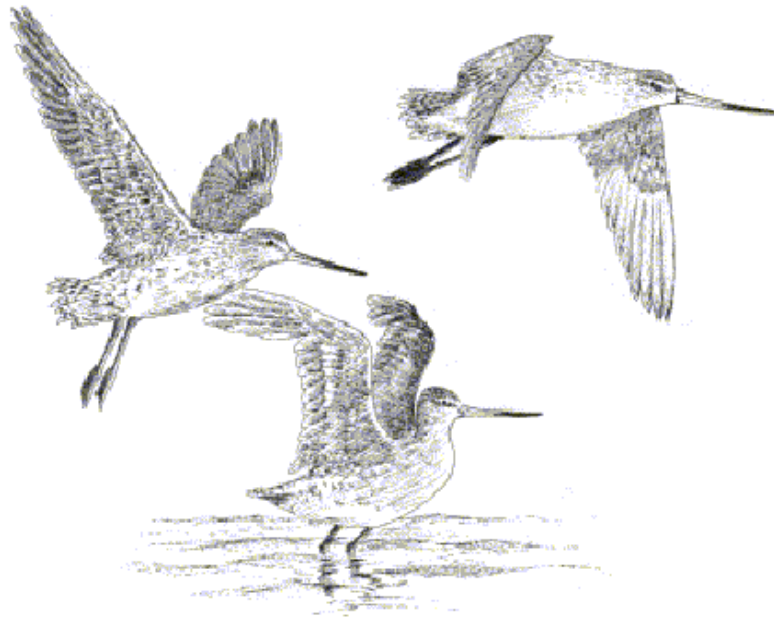
Australia is already involved in a wide range of activities that promote the conservation of migratory shorebirds, both within Australia and across the East Asian – Australasian Flyway. This Plan recognises that there are a range of Government agencies, non-Government organisations, research groups, industry, community groups and volunteers that are contributing to these activities in Australia and that the successful implementation of the Plan relies on the continued involvement of these organisations and people.

This Plan outlines national activities to support flyway shorebird conservation initiatives and provides a strategic framework to ensure these activities plus future research and management actions are integrated and remain focused on the long-term survival of migratory shorebird populations and their habitats.

The Plan contains the statutory elements as legislated by the EPBC Act. Detailed background information outlining the conservation activities currently being conducted in Australia, as well as information on the biology, population status and threats to the migratory shorebirds covered by this plan can be found in the accompanying Background Paper, available from

www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/migratory/publications/shorebird-plan.html

This Plan must be reviewed every five years.



Species covered under the Wildlife Conservation Plan

The Wildlife Conservation Plan includes 36 species of migratory shorebird that regularly visit Australia as set out in Annexure A.

If a migratory shorebird species that is considered to be vagrant was to be recorded on a regular basis, monitoring programs for the species should be supported to determine whether inclusion under the plan is appropriate.

Objectives (287(2)(a))

The Objectives of the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds are to:

1. Increase international cooperation for migratory shorebirds and ensure that countries of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway work together to conserve migratory shorebirds and their habitat.
2. Identify, protect and sustainably manage a network of important habitat for migratory shorebirds across Australia to ensure that healthy populations remain viable into the future.
3. Increase biological and ecological knowledge of migratory shorebirds, their populations, habitats and threats in Australia to better inform management and support the long term survival of these species.
4. Raise awareness of migratory shorebirds and the importance of conserving them, and increase engagement of decision makers and the community in Australia in activities to conserve and protect migratory shorebirds and their habitat.

Criteria to measure the achievement of the plan against the Objectives (287(2)(b))

Each objective of this plan will be achieved when:

Objective 1.

- Criterion 1.1. An international action plan for migratory shorebird conservation in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway has been developed for 2006 - 2010 and Australia has implemented actions within its jurisdiction.
- Criterion 1.2. At least thirteen countries in the Flyway are engaged in activities to conserve internationally important habitat for migratory waterbirds.
- Criterion 1.3. Thirty-six internationally important sites for migratory shorebirds in Australia have been included in the Flyway Site Network.
- Criterion 1.4. The number of activities undertaken by Australia in the Flyway to promote migratory shorebird conservation has increased.

Objective 2.

- Criterion 2.1. Sites of international, national and regional importance have been identified and mapped.
- Criterion 2.2. The boundaries of large sites have been reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for site management.
- Criterion 2.3. Effective conservation and management measures have been developed and implemented at priority sites.
- Criterion 2.4. Effective conservation measures for all other sites included under the plan are, or are being, developed and all reasonable steps have been taken to implement these measures.
- Criterion 2.5. Important sites continue to support significant numbers of shorebirds.

Objective 3.

- Criterion 3.1. Knowledge of migratory shorebirds, their habitats and threats in Australia, including population and conservation status has been increased and shared between all levels of Government, non-Government organisations and site managers in Australia and throughout the Flyway.
- Criterion 3.2. Better informed decisions have been made in relation to the appropriate use and conservation of important migratory shorebird habitat.
- Criterion 3.3. Population estimates have been produced and trends identified.

Objective 4.

- Criterion 4.1. Awareness and appreciation of migratory shorebirds, their population status and conservation needs are demonstrated among decision makers, site managers and the public.
- Criterion 4.2. Communities are engaged in the conservation and protection of migratory shorebirds and the appropriate use of their habitats.
- Criterion 4.3. Effective communication mechanisms are established to ensure information about migratory shorebirds and their habitat is widely available.

Actions identified to achieve the Objectives (287(2)(c))

Objective 1.

- Action 1.1. Through leadership, encourage participation by countries throughout East Asia, South East Asia and Australasia, and particularly those countries with sites of international importance for migratory shorebirds, in activities to conserve migratory shorebirds.
- Action 1.2. Lead the development and implementation of an action plan for migratory shorebird conservation in the East Asian -Australasian Flyway.
- Action 1.3. Include at least 25% of the known sites of international importance for migratory shorebirds in Australia in the Flyway site network.
- Action 1.4. Through example, encourage information sharing on migratory shorebird conservation activities across the Flyway.
- Action 1.5. Develop and support training programs in population monitoring and habitat management for site managers in Australia and throughout the Flyway.
- Action 1.6. Encourage shorebird migration and population dynamic research across the Flyway.

Objective 2.

- Action 2.1. Agree and adopt criteria for identification of sites of national and regional importance.
- Action 2.2. Review the boundary of large sites to ensure that they are appropriate.
- Action 2.3. Using agreed criteria and reviewed boundaries assess the importance of sites.
- Action 2.4. Encourage the production and dissemination of maps for important sites to assist with their management.
- Action 2.5. Identify threats to important habitat and develop conservation measures for managing them.
- Action 2.6. Identify priority sites for conservation action based on their importance to migratory shorebirds, the level of threat and adequacy of existing management arrangements.
- Action 2.7. Encourage and support the development of appropriate management arrangements for important sites, particularly those identified as priority sites.
- Action 2.8. Develop a directory of organisations and people responsible for managing important sites throughout Australia.
- Action 2.9. Develop and support training programs in population monitoring and habitat management for site managers in Australia.
- Action 2.10. Support the Flyway Partnership on migratory waterbirds, through encouraging and supporting nomination of wetlands of international importance to the migratory waterbird site network.
- Action 2.11. Encourage nomination of wetlands of international and national importance for inclusion as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and/or A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia and inclusion in Protected Areas.
- Action 2.12. Include migratory shorebirds and their habitat in environment protection arrangements at Local, State and National level to avoid significant impacts on migratory shorebird populations.

Objective 3.

- Action 3.1. Identify gaps in knowledge required for management of migratory shorebirds, their habitats and threats in Australia.
- Action 3.2. Prioritise and support research on migratory shorebirds, their population and conservation status, habitats and threats to address knowledge gaps.
- Action 3.3. Identify and implement ways to integrate research and enhance collaboration.
- Action 3.4. Encourage shorebird movement and migration research within Australia and across the Flyway.
- Action 3.5. Develop and implement a consistent national method to monitor migratory shorebird populations.
- Action 3.6. Encourage ongoing population monitoring programs for species covered by this plan.
- Action 3.7. Encourage research on reproduction and survival rates of migratory shorebirds and trends of these over time.
- Action 3.8. Collect and make available information resulting from research projects.

Objective 4.

- Action 4.1. Promote public and community education and conservation awareness, through strategic programs and educational products.
- Action 4.2. Identify existing migratory shorebird and wetland communication networks and where possible use these networks to promote conservation of migratory shorebirds.
- Action 4.3. Develop and implement a communication strategy to promote the exchange of information on shorebird conservation and habitat management, between all levels of Government, non-government organisations, Natural Resource Management regional bodies, Industry and Communities.
- Action 4.4. Distribute demonstration materials and models for community engagement in shorebird conservation activities.
- Action 4.5. Prepare supplementary administrative guidelines on significance for migratory shorebirds to assist with EPBC Act referrals and determining whether an action has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on migratory shorebirds.

Identification of habitats and the actions needed to protect those habitats (287(2)(d))

The identification and protection of important habitat is essential to the conservation of migratory shorebirds. A substantial amount of work has been done to identify important habitat and build the network of sites important for migratory shorebird populations. However, more work is needed to comprehensively document international, national and regional sites that are important for the long-term survival of migratory shorebird populations. To assist in the scientifically robust identification of habitat, particularly in areas where knowledge is incomplete, such as temporary or ephemeral wetlands, work should be undertaken, as a priority, to establish agreed criteria for identification of nationally and regionally important sites. (See Action 2.1)

In the interim, whilst further work is being done to establish criteria and thresholds to identify important national and regional sites, the following criteria should be used to identify important habitat for migratory shorebirds in Australia.

Criteria for determining Sites of International Importance includes:

- Site regularly supports 1% of the flyway population.
- Site regularly supports 20,000 or more shorebirds.

Currently in Australia this includes:

- Those sites listed on the Shorebird Site Network under the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Strategy.
- All sites identified as internationally important for migratory shorebirds as identified in the report, 'A National Plan for Shorebird Conservation in Australia' (Watkins 1993)
- All Ramsar sites in Australia which were nominated under the waterbird criteria, as internationally important for migratory shorebird species.

Criteria for determining habitat of national importance are to be established as an action of this plan. Until these criteria are established, information on sites of national importance can be found from the following:

- Sites in 'A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia' which were included for their importance to migratory shorebirds.
- All sites identified as nationally important for migratory shorebirds as identified in the Watkins 1993 Report, 'A National Plan for Shorebird Conservation in Australia'

Criteria to identify sites of regional importance may be established as an action of this plan.

Actions needed to protect habitats are set out in actions 2.1 – 2.12.

Interests that will be affected by the plan's implementation (287(2)(e)(i))

Organisations likely to be affected by the actions proposed in this plan include the following: the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, Department of Defence, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Department of Transport and Regional Services, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, State and Territory Governments, Local Governments, Indigenous Land Councils, Natural Resource Management regional bodies, Conservation groups, land owners, wildlife interest groups, shorebird researchers, recreational users of sites (eg. four wheel drive owners, dog owners, fishers, watercraft users), water authorities and industry groups (eg. salt works, land developers, port operators).

Organisations or persons involved in evaluating the performance of the plan 287(2)(e)(ii))

Wildlife Conservation Plans must be reviewed by the Commonwealth Environment Minister at intervals of not longer than 5 years. A national migratory shorebird working group will be established to evaluate the

performance of the plan and advise on priorities in its implementation. This group will be made up of relevant Commonwealth, State/Territory, conservation and research group representatives and experts and will report the result of their evaluation to the Department of the Environment and Heritage.

Major benefits to EPBC listed migratory species, marine species, species of cetacean or conservation dependant species (other than those to which the plan relates) that will be affected by the plan's implementation (287(2)(f))

Through protection of important habitat for migratory shorebirds, major benefits will flow to other migratory and marine species that share habitat. Species that may share habitat with migratory shorebirds include crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*), marine turtles (*Chelonia mydas*, *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Lepidochelys olivacea*, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, *Caretta caretta* and *Natator depressus*), and other listed marine species. This includes many resident shorebirds such as the Painted snipe (*Rostratula benghalensis*), Red-capped plover (*Charadrius ruficapillus*) and Beach stone-curlew (*Esacus neglectus*) and migratory seabirds such as the Little tern (*Sterna albifrons*).

Annexure A

List of Species to be included under the Wildlife Conservation Plan

Scientific Name	Common Name
Scolopacidae	Sandpipers
<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Latham's Snipe
<i>Gallinago stenura</i>	Pin-tailed Snipe
<i>Gallinago megala</i>	Swinhoe's Snipe
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Black-tailed Godwit
<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Bar-tailed Godwit
<i>Numenius minutus</i>	Little Curlew
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Whimbrel
<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	Eastern Curlew
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Common Redshank
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Marsh Sandpiper
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Common Greenshank
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wood Sandpiper
<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	Terek Sandpiper
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper
<i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>	Grey-tailed Tattler
<i>Heteroscelus incanus</i>	Wandering Tattler
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Ruddy Turnstone
<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>	Asian Dowitcher
<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	Great Knot
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Red Knot
<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sanderling
<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	Red-necked Stint
<i>Calidris subminuta</i>	Long-toed Stint
<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Pectoral Sandpiper
<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper
<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	Broad-billed Sandpiper
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Ruff
<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Red-necked Phalarope
Charadriidae	Plovers and Lapwings
<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Pacific Golden Plover
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Grey Plover
<i>Charadrius bicinctus</i>	Double-banded Plover
<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	Lesser Sand Plover
<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Greater Sand Plover
<i>Charadrius veredus</i>	Oriental Plover
Glareolidae	Pratincoles
<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	Oriental Pratincole