



Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund

Annual Report 2015-16



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1. Background

The Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund (AWCF / the 'Fund') was established in July 2005 to provide financial support for projects at sites of importance for migratory waterbirds in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway (EAAF).



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The objective of the Fund is to support projects on the ground in Asia that will lead to the conservation or protection of migratory waterbirds and their wetland habitats in the EAAF, particularly through partnership with the local community at the site.

Cathay Pacific made an initial donation of HK\$500,000 into the Fund and more funding was received through proceeds of the WWF Big Bird Race fund raising event. The Fund was further boosted with HK\$500,000 donated by Mr. Trevor Yang, past Chairman of WWF-Hong Kong, over 5 years from 2012-2016.

WWF-Hong Kong is responsible for the administration of the Fund. At present, the maximum amount that can be applied for each project is US\$5,000 (HK\$38,500). There is a single call for application to the Fund each year with the deadline being 31 October.



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2. Progress and results of the projects

A summary of the projects approved since 2005 is provided below (Table 1):

Table 1: Summary on the projects approved

Year	Organization	Project Location	Status
2005-06	Wetland International – Thailand Office	Thailand	Completed
2005-06	Wilderness Conservation	Bangladesh	Completed
2005-06	Har Us Nuur (HUN) Club	Mongolia	Completed
2006-07	Bird Conservation Society of Thailand	Thailand	Completed
2007-08	Sumatra Rainforest Institute	Sumatra, Indonesia	Completed
2007-08	Shanghai Oasis Wildlife Conservation and Communication Centre	Shanghai, China	Completed
2007-08	MarineLife Alliance (with Wilderness Conservation)	Bangladesh	Completed
2008-09	Administration Bureau of Tumuji National Nature Reserve	Inner Mongolia, China	Completed
2008-09	Sumatra Rainforest Institute	Sumatra, Indonesia	Completed
2009-10	Asian Coastal Resource Institute Foundation (CORIN-Asia)	Vietnam	Completed
2009-10	Anhui Bird Watching Society	Anhui, China	Completed
2010-11	Administration Bureau of Tumuji National Nature Reserve	Inner Mongolia, China	Completed
2010-11	Sumatra Rainforest Institute	Sumatra, Indonesia	Completed
2010-11	The Bird Conservation Association of Northeast Forestry University	Inner Mongolia, China	Completed
2011-12	Wuhan Bird Watching Society	Hubei, China	Completed
2011-12	The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society	China	Completed
2011-12	Bird Conservation Society of Thailand	Thailand	Completed
2012-13	Mongolian Ornithological Society	Mongolia	Completed
2012-13	Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.	Philippines	Completed
2012-13	Daursky State Nature Biosphere Reserve	Russia	Completed

Table 1: Summary on the projects approved (cont'd)

Year	Organization	Project Location	Status
2013-14	Russian Society for Bird Conservation and Study (BirdsRussia), Kamchatka Branch	Russia	Completed
2013-14	Bangladesh Bird Club	Bangladesh	Completed
2013-14	Mongolian Ornithological Society	Mongolia	Completed
2014-15	Spoon-billed Sandpiper in China	Jiangsu, China	Completed
2015-16	Qufu Normal University Bird Watching Society	Shandong, China	On-going
2015-16	Malaysian Nature Society	Malaysia	On-going
2015-16	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association	Myanmar	On-going
2015-16	Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia	Mongolia	On-going

2.1 Project completed in this reporting year

2.1.1 Enhancing conservation of wetlands critical to threatened waterbird in Southern Negros Occidental, Philippines < Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.>

The project concluded successfully with the following outcomes:

- Waterbird monitoring was carried out at 13 locations; results indicate diversity of waterbird was the highest during the mid-winter migration time, with waders being the dominated group.
- Fifty government officials, teachers, students and researchers were trained and involved in the waterbirds monitoring.
- Twenty-five school children participated in lecture and birdwatching training.
- A total of 740 students, teachers and government officials participated in lecture and symposium series on wetland conservation.
- More than 3,400 public visited the photo exhibitions promoting waterbirds and wetland.
- Fifty stakeholders including locals, academics, NGOs and government officials from related departments from 10 wetland sites attended a workshop to identify and agree on the conservation plan. (Southern Negros Wetlands were successfully declared as Ramsar Site in February 2015).



*Birdwatching activity was held for school children
(Photo credit: PBCFI)*



Stakeholder workshop fomulating conservation plan (Photo credit: PBCFI)

Significant conservation impacts:

- **Important waterbird sites in Southern Negros Wetlands identified and is under the process of Ramsar Site declaration.**
- **Awareness has been raised for school children, local communities, NGOs, government units and academics.**
- **Capacity built for local stakeholders on waterbird monitoring skill.**

2.1.2 Globally Threatened Waterbird Conservation in the coastal areas of Bangladesh <Bangladesh bird club>

The project was completed with the following fruitful outcomes:

- An 8-day waterbird census and 2 regular waterbird monitoring carried out by 10 volunteers covering 17 delta islands. The main threats to waterbirds in the area were identified.



Waterbird monitoring (Photo credit: Bbc)

- Three shorebird ringing camps were organized with 5 to 7 volunteers participated in each trip. 70 shorebirds were rung and colour flagged aiming to understand their migration.

- Four public awareness programmes were organized nationally and locally, promoting wetland and waterbird conservation to over 3,000 students and local people.



National bird fair (Photo credit: Bbc)

- Two community patrol guards were trained and engaged in guarding shorebird habitats; identifying and recording some threatened shorebird species and increasing awareness of local community groups on wetland and waterbirds conservation.
- Numerous news and articles published locally and internationally to communicate successes of the project.

Significant conservation impacts:

- **Waterbird monitoring and ringing carried out to understand habitat use, threats facing and migration of shorebirds in coastal area.**
- **Awareness has been raised for students and local communities.**
- **Capacity built for locals to monitor and safeguard waterbird habitat.**

2.1.3 Dongtai Tiaozini Sandbanks Survey and Conservation <Spoon-billed Sandpiper in China (SBS in China)>

The project concluded with the following outcomes:

- Waterbird surveys carried out in Spring and Autumn migration periods indicated that Tiaozini was of outstanding importance for migratory shorebirds, particularly the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Nordmann's Greenshank.
- Over 3,500 local school students reached via awareness raising activities.



*Awareness building activity in school
(Photo credit: Siyang Liu)*

- 30 local people reached via awareness raising workshop.
- 2,000 leaflets and 300 Spoon-billed Sandpiper pins were produced and distributed to local students and communities.

Significant conservation impacts:

- **Awareness has been raised for local communities and students.**
- **Surveys carried out confirming importance of the site for migratory shorebirds.**



Local fishermen receiving leaflet (Photo credit: Andrew Baksh)

2.2 Project approved in 2016 annual application

The eleventh round of applications to the Fund was concluded in October 2015. Nineteen applications were received and four were selected by the AWCF Committee.

2.2.1 The monitoring and protection propaganda of Baer's Pochard in Taibai Lake, Jining City, Shandong Province <Qufu Normal University Bird Watching Society>

Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*) is currently classified as Critically Endangered as it is estimated to have undergone a very rapid population decline, with a global population of less than 1,000 individuals. In winter 2014/15, at least 84 individuals were recorded in Taibai Lake, Shandong Province. In order to understand their situation in the Lake, weekly survey are conducted from April 2016 to April 2017. Environmental awareness will be raised through organizing talks and distributing printed materials and souvenir.



*Baer's Pochard in Taibai Lake in 2015
(Photo credit: Xiaodong Gao)*

2.2.2 Waterbirds training, survey, monitoring, and awareness focused on EAAF bird flyway in Malaysia <Malaysian Nature Society>

To identify important sites for migratory waterbirds, regular survey work in different areas is essential. In this 1-year project, a waterbird survey training workshop will be organized to increase the number of surveyors involved in yearly Asian Waterbirds Census. Monthly waterbird surveys will also be conducted to identify key waterbird sites along the North central Selangor coast for future monitoring and conservation. During the Festival of Wings in October 2016, awareness activities will be organized for youths and schools in Kuala Selangor.



*Asian Waterbirds Census training in 2014
(Photo credit: Ng Wai Pak)*

2.2.3 Protecting the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other shorebirds on Nan Thar Island, Myanmar <Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association>

Critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper (*Calidris pygmaea*) is a small wader with a special spoon-shaped bill. Their global population is 120-220 pairs and in Nan Thar, a set of small islands in the mouth of Kaladan River in the Arakhan region of Myanmar, about 10% of the breeding population can be found wintering. Although local villagers there mainly rely on fishing, some also collect sea turtle eggs and



*Spoon-billed Sandpiper in the Nan Thar
(Photo credit: Sittwe Nature Conservation Association)*

occasionally hunt birds. In view of the situation, this 7-month project will collect socio-economic information by interviewing hunters and egg collectors to explore potential alternative livelihoods for them. If the hunters agree to try the alternative livelihood, agreements will be signed and followed up. Simple awareness activities will also be conducted in the villages where local supporters from the villages will be identified and trained so as to support the monthly monitoring work of the wintering Spoon-billed Sandpiper from October 2016 to April 2017.

2.2.4 Conservation and community awareness of the critically endangered eastern subpopulation of Dalmatian Pelicans in Mongolia <Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia>

The eastern subpopulation of Dalmatian Pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*) is believed to be critically endangered due to a very small population size with a tendency to decrease. The subpopulation breeds only in two remote wetlands in Western Mongolia but the last breeding survey conducted was already ten years ago. Therefore, these two sites and other potential



*Horse scrapper made with pelican beak
(Photo credit: Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia)*

breeding sites will be visited in the project to update the information on abundance and distribution. Two meetings with representatives from key stakeholders will also be conducted before and after the surveys so as to discuss and determine essential management and monitoring activities for the species.

Traditionally, herders use the upper mandible of the pelican bill to groom their horses. Although the local tradition now becomes illegal, the demand for pelican bills is increasing due to the decrease in the bird number. In view of this, education work to herders and other users of pelican bills will be conducted and alternatives to the bills will also be explored.

3. Income and expenditure

HK\$500,000 is donated by Mr. Trevor Yang, past Chairman of WWF-Hong Kong, over 5 years from 2012-2016. HK\$100,000 has been received in March 2016.

A total of US\$12,407 (approximately HK\$96,000) was given out to projects in instalments.

Table 2: Summary on the Income and Expenditure

Income (year)	HK\$	
Cathay Pacific (2005)	500,000.00	
WWF HK Big Bird Race (2006)	121,841.00	
WWF HK Big Bird Race (2007)	100,000.00	
WWF HK Big Bird Race (2008)	183,537.00	
Proceeds from DVD sales (2007-10)	39,462.00	
Mr. Trevor Yang (2012)	100,000.00	
Mr. Trevor Yang (2013)	100,000.00	
Mr. Trevor Yang (2014)	100,000.00	
Mr. Trevor Yang (2015)	100,000.00	
Mr. Trevor Yang (2016)	100,000.00	
Sub-total	1,444,840.00	
Expenditure (year)		US\$
Project instalments (2006-07)	75,251.45	9,495.00
Project instalments (2007-08)	46,255.13	5,830.25
Project instalments (2008-09)	76,116.89	9,797.00
Project instalments (2009-10)	71,195.01	9,399.50
Project instalments (2010-11)	61,906.87	7,959.50
Project instalments (2011-12)	87,490.00	11,265.00
Project instalments (2012-13)	71,287.04	7,658.00
Project instalments (2013-14)	132,806.22	17,116.00
Project instalments (2014-15)	100,609.21	12,974.00
Project instalments (2015-16)	96,337.22	12,407.00
Administration and technical advice (2005-present)	281,639.82	
Sub-total	1,100,894.86	
Net Balance	343,945.14	

4. Acknowledgements

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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony and nature.

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