

Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund

Annual Report 2012-13



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1. Background

The Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund (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, Chairman of WWF-HK, 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 applications 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 2006 is given below (Table 1):

Table 1: Summary on the projects approved

Year	Organisation	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 Center	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	Finalising report
2011-12	Bird Conservation Society of Thailand	Thailand	Finalising report

2.1 Project completed in this reporting year

2.1.1 Community Participatory Co-management of Waterbirds and their Habitat through Promotion of Sustainable Behavior and Livelihood in Tumuji Township <Tumuji National Nature Reserve >

The project concluded successfully with the following outcomes:

- Twenty-four local communities, school teachers and reserve staff trained on wetland conservation knowledge and waterbird monitoring skill at an eight-day workshop. These trainees later on organised awareness raising activity at their own communities/schools.
- A photograph showing three individuals in a flat, open landscape. One person on the right is looking through binoculars mounted on a tripod. Another person in the center is holding a clipboard, and a third person on the left is pointing towards the horizon. The sky is clear and blue. A copyright notice '© TMJNRR' is visible in the bottom right corner.
- Waterbird monitoring programme carried out from early April to June and September to November involving participants from the training workshop.
 - Thirty-two students joined an education field trip to the Reserve to appreciate the wetland and waterbirds.
 - Twelve participants trained and practiced new techniques to plant alternative pasture grass and breeding more productive species of sheep. Such new practices bring economic benefit to the local herders and at the same time reduce the impact of overgrazing at the wetland area.
- A photograph of a person in a white shirt and dark shorts herding a large flock of white sheep in a lush green field. The sheep are gathered in a line, and the person is standing in the middle of the flock. The background shows a vast, flat landscape under a cloudy sky. A copyright notice '© TMJNRR' is visible in the bottom right corner.
- A study tour organised for nineteen local communities, school teachers and reserve staff to two pilot “community participatory co-management” project reserves to understand how local communities there co-operate with wetland reserve authority to carry out best practice of herding at the proximity of the wetland.
 - Two thousand copies of education leaflets distributed to local communities, schools and government sectors to promote wetland and waterbirds conservation.
 - Twenty-seven reserve staff and local community trained on bird epidemic and diseases prevention and monitoring. The trainees co-operated with the reserve authority to carry out monitoring in the bird migration season.

- A closing workshop organised to bring stakeholders together to review the project, and provide recommendations for co-operation in future.

Significant conservation impacts:

- **Threat of livestock overgrazing and destroying wetland in the reserve was reduced.**
- **Local communities' awareness on wetland and waterbird conservation was increased.**
- **Capacity of local communities and reserve staff build on waterbirds monitoring and protection.**

**2.1.2 Migratory Waterbird Conservation and Its Habitat in Deli Serdang District
Sumatra Utara Province – Phase I < Sumatra Rainforest Institute (SRI)>**

The project was completed with the following outcomes:

- Waterbird monitoring programme was carried out for a year from April 2011 to March 2012 at four coastal village areas in North Sumatra. Updated information on waterbird population, status and threats was collected.



- During the monitoring, 13 individuals of the globally endangered Nordmann's Greenshank were recorded, which was the first record of the species in North Sumatra and equalled to around 3% of the global population.

- Colour-flagged shorebirds were discovered during the monitoring, involving four bird species from seven locations, including a Terek Sandpiper from Hong Kong.
- A one-day workshop organised for twenty stakeholders of the Sumatra Utara Province and Deli Serdang District, including government officials, lecturers and students from universities and journalist. Results of the waterbird monitoring were presented and discussion was conducted to assess the



potential of nominating the area as a network site of the EAAF Partnership.

- Recommendations from the workshop were submitted to the Government of Deli Serdang District as an input to develop strategic plan for the Coastal Area Development of Deli Serdang District.

Significant conservation impacts:

- **More knowledge gain on waterbird population and distribution at the site enable better planning on protection of the site in future.**
- **Stakeholders (including government officials) engaged in dialogue on planning for protection of the site.**

2.1.3 Promoting community support and involvement in conservation of the endangered Red-crowned Crane and other rare waterbirds at Hui River National Nature Reserve, Inner Mongolia, China <Bird Conservation Association of Northeast Forestry University (BCA_NEFU)>

The project concluded with the following fruitful outcomes:

- Environmental education materials (4,000 calendars, 10,000 flyers and 21,000 playing cards) on crane conservation were designed by fifteen university students and were distributed to local communities and schools around the nature reserve.



- A hundred and fifty university students were trained on wetland and waterbird ecology, particularly on Red-crowned Crane. Communication and interview skill were also introduced so that the volunteers were prepared for carrying out the outreach activities later on in the project.
- Education activities including talks, games and drawing competitions were organised by the volunteers at 10 schools, reaching over 1,000 primary and secondary students.
- During waterbird breeding and migration season, the volunteers (together with reserve staff) visited over 500 household, shops and restaurants at 5 towns/villages around the reserve. They talked to the local communities face-to-face on wetland and waterbird conservation.

- Local guard network was set up between the reserve staff and local communities to prevent illegal egg poaching of the Red-crowned Crane and other breeding waterbirds.
- Field surveys and behavior observations on cranes at the Reserve were carried out by the volunteers in April-May 2011, September 2011 and April-May 2012. At the same time, strong co-operation with the reserve staff was built to follow-up any suspected illegal activities observed.
- The activities were reported by local television programme and CCTV news, generating discussion and awareness amongst the local communities.



Significant conservation impacts:

- **Local communities' and students' awareness on wetland and waterbird conservation was increased.**
- **Threats from illegal poaching reduced by better cooperation between reserve authority and local communities.**
- **Capacity of local student volunteers built on waterbird conservation and conservation message communication skill.**

2.1.4 Monitoring and community awareness of Critically Endangered Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri* wintering at Liangzi lake, Hubei <Wuhan Bird Watching Society Of China>

The project completed with the following outcomes:

- Monitoring programme on Baer's Pochard was set up involving government authority at the project site.
- Over 20 volunteers and research staff were trained on the skill to carry out population count, habitat requirement survey and behavioural study of Baer's Pochard.



- Monitoring was carried out by volunteers and staff from November 2012 to March 2013, covering five main areas in the reserve. Only two individuals of Baer’s Pochard were recorded during the monitoring (compare to 131 individuals in January 2011). Degradation of habitat and illegal fishing methods were identified as the main threats to the species.
- Two-thousand calendars were produced and distributed to villages, schools and government offices to promote conservation of Baer’s Pochard.
- Over 100 primary school children participated in a bird-watching and education activity to learn about wetland and Baer’s Pochard.
- Face-to-face interview was carried out with 506 families in two villages at proximity of the reserve. Education background, source of income and dependence of the wetland resources were investigated. The questionnaire results concluded that over 30% of the local communities are very dependent on the wetland resources. Therefore, successful protection of the site for wintering Baer’s Pochard requires strong co-operation between the reserve authority and the local communities.



Significant conservation impacts:

- **Capacity of volunteer built on ecological survey of the Critically Endangered Baer’s Pochard.**
- **Local communities’ and students’ awareness on wetland and Baer’s Pochard conservation was increased.**

2.1.5 Capacity Building for Waterbird Monitoring at Important Sites along the China Coast <Hong Kong Bird Watching Society>

The project concluded in April 2013 and the final report is being finalised by the proponent. A conclusion of the project's achievements will be given in the next Annual Report.



2.1.6 Potential Flyway sites monitoring and raise awareness of local people in The Inner Gulf of Thailand <Bird Conservation Society of Thailand >



The project concluded in April 2013 and the final report has been circulated to the AWCF Committee for comments. A conclusion of the project's achievements will be given in the next Annual Report.

2.2 Annual Application 2012

The eighth round of applications to the Fund was concluded in October 2012, eleven applications from 7 countries were received. Three projects were shortlisted after selection by the AWCF Committee. The grant will be officially awarded to the three project proponent upon the signing of the agreements in August.

The project selection process in this round of application has taken longer than usual due to other work commitments of the Secretariat. Hence the schedule of the shortlisted proposals need to be amended accordingly and, as a result, the drafting of the agreement has been delayed.

3. Income and expenditure

HK\$500,000 is donated by Mr. Trevor Yang, Chairman of WWF-HK, over 5 years from 2012-2016. HK\$100,000 has been received in March 2013.

A total of US\$7,658 (approximately HK\$71,000) 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	
Sub-total	1,144,840.00	
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)	77,076.89	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
Administration and technical advice (2005-present)	146,491.28	
Sub-total	636,953.67	
Net Balance	507,886.33	

4. Acknowledgements

The Fund would like to thank Mr. Simba Chan, Mr. Doug Watkins and Dr. Lew Young for serving as the AWCF committee members and providing valuable advice.



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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