

## News from the East Asian-Australasian Flyway

*Doug Watkins, Shorebird Flyway Officer, Asian Wetland Bureau*

The major news for shorebird research and conservation in the Asia-Pacific has been developments on implementing regional planning under the "Kushiro Initiative" (see last issue). Asian Wetland Bureau and the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau - Japan Committee have now drafted an Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Strategy. As part of this process a Migratory Shorebird Action Plan will be completed by October. Similar action plans are being developed for other waterbird species groups.

An East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network proposal has also been developed. This proposal is based on the very successful Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network that has been in operation in the Americas for ten years (see elsewhere in this *Bulletin*).

In June, delegations from the Governments of Australia, China and Japan meet in Brisbane, Australia for discussions under their respective bilateral Migratory Bird Agreements. This was the first time that the three governments have come together for a sequence of three meetings and is evidence of a movement towards multilateral action for regional bird conservation.

A one-day workshop was convened following the formal meetings to discuss the draft Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy and the Shorebird Reserve Network proposal. The Australian Government indicated its support for the development of the Network in two ways. Firstly, it proposed to sponsor a resolution at the upcoming Ramsar Convention meeting in March 1996 in Brisbane, Australia. This resolution will recognise the benefits of a flyway approach to the conservation of

waterbirds and call on the 12 Contracting Parties in the Flyway to nominate internationally important wetlands for shorebirds to be part of the Network. The Australian Government has also undertaken to provide funding for a Shorebird Flyway Officer on a half time basis over the next three years.

Other outcomes for shorebirds from the meetings were commitments to develop a colour marking protocol and the develop of flyway research projects on the Eastern Curlew and the Great Knot.

Three major upcoming events in the flyway are the Wetlands and Development Conference in Malaysia (8-14 October), the North-west Australia Expedition (2 March - 20 April) and the Ramsar Convention in Brisbane (19-27 March). In the weekend preceding the Ramsar Conference the Australasian Wader Studies Group is convening an international conference on shorebird conservation. This will focus on the flyway approach to shorebird conservation around the globe and in particular the current developments in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

The Australasian Wader Studies Group is now publishing a quarterly newsletter called *The Tattler* to complement *The Stilt*. Subscriptions are available from: AWSG, 34 Centre Ave. Vermont, Victoria 3133, Australia.

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