

## WWF Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund ANNUAL REPORT 2025 (July 2024 –September 2025)

### 1. Background

The Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund (AWCF) was established in July 2005 by WWF-Hong Kong to sponsor projects at sites of importance for migratory waterbirds (including seabirds) in Asia along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF).

Cathay Pacific made an initial donation of HK\$500,000 into the AWCF in 2005 and additional funding was received through proceeds of WWF's Big Bird Race fundraising event from 2006 to 2008. The Fund was further boosted with a donation of HK\$500,000 by Mr Trevor Yang, former WWF-Hong Kong Chairman (2008-2014), from 2012 to 2016.

In late 2019, the AWCF was reformed and two new grants, the WWF Dr Lew Young Grant and the Asian Flyways Initiative Grant (AFI Grant), were set up to extend the support from the EAAF to the Central Asian Flyway (CAF). The maximum funding amount for WWF Dr Lew Young Grant is US\$10,000 for a one-year project, while that for the latter grant is US\$5,000 for a one-year project or US\$5,000/year for a multiple-year project. The grants seek to support projects on the ground in Asia that will lead to the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the EAAF and CAF, particularly through partnership with the local community at the site.

WWF-Hong Kong is responsible for the administration of the two grants. Since 2005, a total of 54 projects have been funded. A summary table can be found in Appendix 1. Projects completed under the WWF Dr. Lew Young Grant and the AFI Grant from July 2024 to September 2025 are reported below.

### 2. Results of Project Completed

#### 2.1 AFI Grant: Engaging local communities in the management of Wetland conservation in Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake in central Myanmar.



**Name of organization:** Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association (BANCA)

**Project period:** October 2024 to September 2025

**Project Site:** Pyu Lake (designated Ramsar Site) and Paleik Lake (proposed Ramsar Site), Mandalay Region, Central Myanmar. These are the newest EAAFP Flyway Network Sites to Myanmar, particularly important for the Critically Endangered Baer's Pochard. The wetlands are threatened by pollution, unsustainable fishing and unsustainable hunting.

**Project aims:** The project aimed to strengthen community-led wetland conservation in Central Myanmar by empowering local community-based organisations (CBOs) to monitor migratory waterbirds, raise awareness of wetland values, and develop sustainable wetland management approaches at Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake—two critical freshwater wetlands along the East Asian–Australasian Flyway.

**Expected conservation results provided in the proposal:**

- Establish a regular, community-led monitoring system of migratory waterbird populations and key threats at Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake.
- Improved awareness and understanding among local communities of wetland ecosystem services, migratory waterbirds, and the importance of Ramsar and Flyway Network site designation.
- Enhanced capacity of local CBOs to engage communities in wetland conservation through CEPA activities.
- Development of community-based wetland zoning management planning to support the long-term, sustainable use and conservation of freshwater wetlands.

**Key achievements/findings:**

- **Community-led waterbird monitoring resumed:** Local CBOs, namely Shwe Kanthayar Nature Conservation Association (SKNCA) and Paleik Lake Nature Conservation Association (PLNCA), successfully reinitiated the Asian Waterbird Census after several years of disruption, recording over **7,660 waterbirds** across Pyu Lake, Paleik Lake, and Banaw Inn. Notably, **critically endangered Baer's Pochard** and **vulnerable Common Pochard** were recorded at both lakes, reaffirming their international conservation significance.
- **Broad community engagement through CEPA Programme:** More than **1,000 villagers**, including women and youth, participated in a series of awareness-raising activities, village talks, and World Wetlands Day celebrations. Knowledge–Attitude–Practice (KAP) surveys highlighted strong community dependence on wetland ecosystem services and a high willingness to participate in conservation actions.
- **Capacity strengthened at local level:** CEPA Training-of-Trainers (TOT) improved the confidence and skills of local conservation groups, enabling them to independently deliver awareness activities and engage their communities.
- **Community-based management planning advanced:** A **community-led wetland conservation management plan for Pyu Lake** was developed and finalised through multi-stakeholder consultations, marking a significant step towards sustainable Ramsar Site management. While progress at Paleik Lake was constrained by administrative challenges, groundwork for future management planning has been established. [2.2 AFI Grant: Migratory Bird Survey, Habitat Assessment, and Education for Conservation Bioacoustics in the Mampie, West Sulawesi, Indonesia](#)

**Name of organization:** Centre for Ecology, Conservation and Ethnobiology Studies, Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Indonesia

**Project period:** August 2024 – March 2025

**Project Site:** Mampie Wetland, West Sulawesi, Indonesia

**Project aims:** The project aimed to understand waterbird population dynamics, identify key habitats, and assess threats. Data collected will also inform evidence-based conservation-planning. It also aimed to evaluate habitat quality and threats for migratory waterbirds, identify key sites and inform future conservation actions, as well as to raise awareness, build capacity, and foster community engagement in waterbird conservation.

**Expected conservation results provided in the proposal:**

- Regular monitoring will be conducted from August 2024 to March 2025 to understand waterbird population dynamics, identify key habitats and assess threats.
- Field surveys will be conducted to assess habitat characteristics and threats.
- Outreach activities will be organised in local communities to raise their conservation awareness.

**Key achievements/findings:**

- Acoustic surveys of migratory waterbirds: Surveys and bioacoustic monitoring recorded 29 waterbird species at one site and 24 species at a second site in Mampie, detected and validated through AudioMoth acoustic recordings.
- Habitat priorities identified: Habitat assessments combining soil and water quality measurements identified seven sites suitable for conservation (foraging) and five sites requiring restoration (roosting).
- Community awareness and capacity strengthened: A community workshop and training event engaged 116 participants, including local residents, NGOs, students, and academics. Activities such as birdwatching, conservation talks, funfair, and photo exhibition to raise local awareness of migratory waterbirds and no-go for bird consumption.



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2.3 WWF Dr Lew Young Grant: Sustaining Flight: A Comprehensive Approach to Migratory Shorebird Conservation in Batu Bara Coastline, North Sumatra, Indonesia

**Name of organization:** Wild Heritage of Sumatra (WHIS) Foundation

**Project period:** July 2024 to Jul 2025

**Project Site:** The Batu Bara Coastline in North Sumatra, Indonesia

**Project aims:**

The project aimed to conserve key coastal habitats for migratory shorebirds along the Batu Bara coastline, with a focus on Sejarah Eco-tourism Beach, by strengthening local governance, generating baseline population data, and building long-term community support for shorebird and wetland conservation.

**Expected conservation results:**

- Key stakeholders will be engaged to gain their support on the proposed village regulations;
- Consultative meetings and workshops will be organized to establish village-level regulations on the protection of waterbirds and their wetland habitats;
- Monthly surveys will be conducted at the intertidal mudflats of Sejarah Beach to assess the population trends of wintering waterbirds;
- Capacity building activities will be organised for biology students from three universities in Medan City to enhance their knowledge and skills on shorebird identification;
- Outreach activities will be organised for students from two elementary schools at Perupuk Village to raise their conservation awareness.

**Key achievements/findings:**

- Internationally important site confirmed: Seven months of monitoring (September 2024–March 2025) recorded 40 waterbird species, including 24 shorebird species, with peak counts of nearly 14,000 waterbirds. Six shorebird species exceeded 1% of their East Asian–Australasian Flyway populations, confirming Sejarah Beach’s international conservation significance. The surveys recorded four Endangered and three Vulnerable species, alongside 16 species protected under Indonesian law, highlighting the site’s high biodiversity value.
- Major milestone: A village regulation on waterbird and wetland protection was formally established in Perupuk Village following inclusive consultations with village authorities, community leaders, and government agencies, providing a strong legal foundation for long-term conservation.
- Community stewardship strengthened: Collaboration with local authorities, local community group, Kelompok Tani Cinta Mangrove, embedded shorebird conservation within existing mangrove protection and ecotourism initiatives.
- Awareness and capacity built: Environmental education was delivered to 28 elementary school students and seven teachers, complemented by birdwatching and mangrove planting. Over 140 university students attended a workshop and 15 participated in field-based training, fostering local stewardship and future conservation leadership.



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**Appendix 1: Summary Table of the Projects Funded Since 2005**

	<b>Year</b>	<b>Project Location</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Amount (USD)</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	2005-06	Thailand	Wetland International – Thailand Office	Public Awareness Campaign to Enhance the Conservation of Migratory Shorebird and Their Habitat at Chao Mai Marine National Park, Trang Province, Southern Thailand	4,020	Completed
2	2005-06	Bangladesh	Wilderness Conservation	Capacity Building & Community Based Waterbird Conservation Activity in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh	4,005	Completed
3	2005-06	Mongolia	Har Us Nuur Club	Support of Har Us Nuur Club's Conservation and Public Awareness Activities in Western Mongolia	2,400	Completed
4	2006-07	Thailand	Bird Conservation Society of Thailand	Conservation Education on Waterbirds and Habitat with Focus on the Inner Gulf of Thailand	4,000	Completed
5	2007-08	Indonesia	Sumatra Rainforest Institute	Capacity Building for Local NGO's on Migratory Shorebirds Conservation in North Sumatra	3,143.75	Completed
6	2007-08	China	Shanghai Oasis Wildlife Conservation and Communication Center	Community-based Initiative in Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and Coastal Wetlands in Nanhui Dongtan, Shanghai, China	4,000	Completed
7	2007-08	Bangladesh	MarineLife Alliance	Community Based Waterbird Monitoring and Conservation in Cox's Bazar Coastal Areas, Bangladesh	4,000	Completed
8	2008-09	China	Administration Bureau of Tumuji National Nature Reserve	Establishment of Waterbirds Conservation Stewardship through School and Community-based Education and Interpretation	4,000	Completed
9	2008-09	Indonesia	Sumatra Rainforest Institute	Capacity Building for Village Leaders on Migratory Shorebirds Conservation in North Sumatra, Indonesia	3,950	Completed
10	2009-10	China	Anhui Bird Watching Society	Continued Conservation Education and Public Awareness Activities on Waterbirds and Lake Wetlands at Shengjin Lake, Anhui Province, China	3,940	Completed

	Year	Project Location	Organization	Project Name	Amount (USD)	Status
11	2009-10	Vietnam	Asian Coastal Resource Institute Foundation (CORIN-Asia)	Local Radio for Bird Protection Awareness Raising in Xuan Thuy Ramsar Site, Vietnam	3,925	Completed
12	2010-11	China	Administration Bureau of Tumuji National Nature Reserve	Community Participatory Co-management of Waterbirds and Their Habitat through Promotion of Sustainable Behavior and Livelihood in Tumuji Township	4,000	Completed
13	2010-11	Indonesia	Sumatra Rainforest Institute	Migratory Waterbird Conservation and Its Habitat in Deli Serdang District, North Sumatra Province - Phase I	4,000	Completed
14	2010-11	China	Bird Conservation Association of Northeast Forestry University	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	4,000	Completed
15	2011-12	China	Hong Kong Bird Watching Society	Capacity Building for Waterbird Monitoring at Important Sites along the China Coast	5,000	Completed
16	2011-12	China	Wuhan Bird Watching Society	Monitoring and Community Awareness of Critically Endangered The project Pochard Wintering at Liangzi Lake, Hubei	4,950	Completed
17	2011-12	Thailand	Bird Conservation Society of Thailand	Potential Flyway Sites Monitoring and Raise Awareness of Local People in the Inner Gulf of Thailand	5,000	Completed
18	2012-13	Mongolia	Mongolian Ornithological Society	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Migratory Waterbird Habitat at Dashinchilen Tsagaan Wetlands, Mongolia	5,000	Completed
19	2012-13	The Philippines	Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.	Enhancing Conservation of Wetlands Critical to Threatened Waterbird in Southern Negros Occidental, the Philippines	5,000	Completed
20	2012-13	Russia	Daursky State Nature Biosphere Reserve	Involvement of Local Community in the Long Term Dauria Transboundary Russian-Mongolian-Chinese Monitoring and Management Waterbirds Network (Phase 1: Russian Territory)	4,700	Completed

	Year	Project Location	Organization	Project Name	Amount (USD)	Status
21	2013-14	Russia	Russian Society for Bird Conservation and Study (BirdsRussia), Kamchatka Branch	Significance of West Kamchatka, Russia for Waterbirds Conservation on East Asian-Australasian Flyway with Special Focus to Shorebirds	4,720	Completed
22	2013-14	Bangladesh	Bangladesh Bird Club	Globally Threatened Waterbird Conservation in the Coastal Areas of Bangladesh	5,000	Completed
23	2013-14	Mongolia	Mongolian Ornithological Society	Management of an Important Breeding and Migration Site for Waterbirds in Mongolia (Dashinchilen Tsagaan): Phase 2	4,700	Completed
24	2014-15	China	Spoon-billed Sandpiper in China	Dongtai Tiaozini Sandbanks Survey and Conservation in Jiangsu Province, China	4,950	Completed
25	2015-16	China	Qufu Normal University Bird Watching Society	The Monitoring and Protection Propaganda of Baer's Pochard in Taibai Lake, Jining City, Shandong Province	4,850	Completed
26	2015-16	Malaysia	Malaysian Nature Society	Waterbirds Training, Survey, Monitoring, and Awareness Focused on EAAF Bird Flyway in Malaysia	5,000	Completed
27	2015-16	Myanmar	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association	Protecting the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Other Shorebirds on Nan Thar Island, Myanmar	4,986	Completed
28	2015-16	Mongolia	Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia	Conservation and Community Awareness of the Critically Endangered Eastern Subpopulation of Dalmatian Pelicans in Mongolia	5,000	Completed
29	2016-17	China	Nyanpo Yutse Conservation Association	Training Surveyors and Protectors of Black-necked Crane in Nyanpo Yutse, Qinghai Province	5,000	Completed
30	2016-17	Mongolia	Mongolian Bird Conservation Center	Water Bird Conservation through Improving Public Awareness and Pasture Management of Mongol Daguur Special Protected Area, Mongolia	4,950	Completed

	Year	Project Location	Organization	Project Name	Amount (USD)	Status
31	2016-17	DPR Korea	Ministry of Land and Environment Protection	Advocacy and Awareness Promotion on Wetland and Migratory Waterbirds in Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve Area, DPR Korea	5,000	Completed
32	2016-17	China	Qingdao Bird Watching Society	Conducting Waterbird Survey and Protection Work in the Coastal Wetland of Jiaozhou Bay National Marine Park, Qingdao, Shandong Province	5,000	Completed
33	2018-19	DPR Korea	Ministry of Land and Environment Protection	Publication of the Second Edition of “National Wetland Inventory of DPR Korea”	3,000	Completed
34	2018-19	DPR Korea	Ministry of Land and Environment Protection	Activities for Conservation of Great Knot in Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve Area, DPR Korea	15,940	Completed
35	2019-20	DPR Korea	Ministry of Land and Environment Protection	Celebration of “World Migratory Bird Day 2019” in Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve Area, DPR Korea	7,520	Completed
36	2019-20	DPR Korea	Ministry of Land and Environment Protection	Public Awareness Raising through Edition of Documentary Film “Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve”	10,200	Completed
37	2019-20	Myanmar	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association	Regional Situation Analysis on the Poaching of Migratory Birds in Southeast Asia (Myanmar)	5,000	Completed
38	2020-21 (Dr. Lew Young Grant)	The Philippines	Isla Biodiversity Conservation	Towards an Informed Conservation Action Plan for Seabirds in the Philippines	10,000	Completed
39	2020-21 (AFI Grant)	Indonesia	EKSAI Foundation	Endangered Migratory Shorebird Monitoring, Advocacy, and Capacity Building for Local Partner at Pantai Cemara, Tanjung Jabung Timur, Jambi, Indonesia	12,000	Completed

	Year	Project Location	Organization	Project Name	Amount (USD)	Status
40	2020-21 (AFI Grant)	Indonesia	South Sumatra Bird Conservation Society	Waterbirds Training, Survey, Monitoring, and Awareness Focused on Farmers of Agriculture Pond in Banyuasin Peninsular, South Sumatra, Indonesia	5,000	Completed
41	2020-21 (AFI Grant)	Nepal	Himalayan Biodiversity Network Nepal	Nesting Ecology and Conservation of Lesser Adjutant in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Nepal	4,715	Completed
42	2021-22 (AFI Grant)	DPR Korea	Ministry of Land and Environment Protection	Development of Documentary Film “Kumya Migratory Bird Reserve”	5,000	Completed
43	2021-22 (AFI Grant)	China	Spoon-billed Sandpiper in China	Conserving Lianyungang’s Migratory Waterbirds, Jiangsu Province	2,019	Completed
44	2021-22 (AFI Grant)	Myanmar	Nature Conservation Society - Myanmar	Protecting the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Other Migratory Waterbirds through Strengthen Capacity Building of Local Conservation Groups	4,999	Completed
45	2021-22 (AFI Grant)	India	Bombay Natural History Society	Understanding the Role Played by Akshi Beach, Alibag, Maharashtra, West Coast of India – a Site Prioritized in the India’s National Action Plan for Conservation of Migratory Birds and Their Habitats along Central Asian Flyway Priority (2018-2023) and Safeguarding the Site for Migratory Shorebirds by Developing Ethical Tourism Framework with Involvement of the Local Community	10,000	Terminated
46	2022-23 (Dr. Lew Young Grant)	The Philippines	Isla Biodiversity Conservation	Building Capacities for Seabird Research and Conservation in the Philippines	10,000	Terminated
47	2022-23 (AFI Grant)	Republic of Korea	Australasian Seabird Group	Investigating the Population Demography and Foraging Ecology of Swinhoe’s Storm-petrel Breeding on Chilbaldo Islet, Republic of Korea	10,000	Completed

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48	2022-23 (AFI Grant)	China	Qufu Normal University	Investigating the Threats on the Breeding Baer's Pochard and the Related Conservation Actions in Nanyang Lake, Shandong Province	10,000	Completed
49	2023-24 (Dr. Lew Young Grant)	Malaysia	Shorebirds Peninsular Malaysia Project	Conserving the Unprotected Wetlands of Teluk Air Tawar-Kuala Muda Coast through Multistakeholder Advocacy, Experiential Training and Community-based Ecotourism for a New Flyway Site	10,000	Completed
50	2023-24 (AFI Grant)	Indonesia	Research Center for Elephant Conservation and Biodiversity Forest (PKGB), University of Syiah Kuala Banda Aceh	Mapping Migratory Waterbirds Poaching on the East Coast of Aceh Province, Indonesia	5,000	Completed
51	2023-24 (AFI Grant)	Indonesia	Wild Heritage of Sumatra (WHIS) Foundation	Conserving Migratory Shorebirds through Monitoring, Habitat Assessment, and Outreach Activities at the Only Spoon-billed Sandpiper Site in Indonesia	5,000	Completed
52	2024-25 (Dr. Lew Young Grant)	Indonesia	Wild Heritage of Sumatra (WHIS) Foundation	Sustaining Flight: A Comprehensive Approach to Migratory Shorebird Conservation in Batu Bara Coastline, North Sumatra, Indonesia	10,000	Completed
53	2024-25 (AFI Grant)	Myanmar	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association	Engaging Local Communities in the Management of Wetland Conservation in Pyu Lake and Paleik Lake in Central Myanmar	5,000	Completed
54	2024-25 (AFI Grant)	Indonesia	Center for Ecology, Conservation and Ethnobiology Studies, Universitas Sulawesi Barat	Migratory Bird Survey, Habitat Assessment, and Education for Conservation Bioacoustics in the Mampie, West Sulawesi, Indonesia	4,985	Completed

