

Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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 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.

WWF-Hong Kong is responsible for the administration of the Fund.



*A male ruff in Dawsan Tsagaan Lake, Mongolia
(Photo credit: Mongolian Bird Conservation Center)*

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	Completed
2015-16	Malaysian Nature Society	Malaysia	Completed
2015-16	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association	Myanmar	Completed
2015-16	Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia	Mongolia	Ongoing
2016-17	Environmental Protection Society of Nianbaoyuze	Qinghai, China	Completed
2016-17	Mongolian Bird Conservation Center	Mongolia	Completed
2016-17	Ministry of Land and Environment Protection	DPR Korea	Completed
2016-17	Qingdao Bird Watching Society	Shandong, China	Ongoing

2.1 Projects completed from July 2017 to June 2018

2.1.1 Training surveyors and protectors of black-necked crane in Nianbaoyuze, Qinghai Province <Environmental Protection Society of Nianbaoyuze>

The black-necked crane (*Grus nigricollis*) is currently classified as a globally vulnerable (VU) species because its single small population is in decline. Nianbaoyuze is an important breeding site for over 100 black-necked crane, about 1% of the global population. However, the cranes there have been facing threats, such as the decrease of wetland area due to climate change and disturbances caused by domestic animals, wild dogs and tourists. This project aims at building the capacity of 14 female protectors recruited by the Society in 2011 so that they can be more dedicated to the voluntary work and are equipped with the skills to better protect the black-necked crane.



Chicks of black-necked crane (Photo credit: NYANTSOG)

The project concluded successfully with the following outcomes:

- 22 people participated in a two-day training workshop, including 16 black-necked crane protectors;
- Black-necked crane breeding in Nianbaoyuze in 2017 was monitored.



Black-necked Crane protectors in Nianbaoyuze (Photo credit: NYANTSOG)

Significant conservation impacts:

- **The black-necked crane protectors learned about the biology, behaviour and ecology of the crane and obtained practical skills in monitoring the migration and breeding behaviour e.g. points to note while filling in the data collection forms;**
- **30 adult black-necked cranes were recorded to breed in the 16 pieces of wetlands in Nianbaoyuze with 24 chicks hatched in 2017. However, one chick was not able to fledge and another one was lost;**

- **The black-necked crane protector group is proud of its work and determined to carry on in the future.**

2.1.2 Waterbird conservation through improving public awareness and pasture management of Mongol Daguur Special Protected Area, Mongolia <Mongolian Bird Conservation Center>

Mongol Daguur holds a significant proportion of the global breeding population of the white-naped crane (*Grus vipio*), swan goose (*Anser cygnoides*) and many other waterbird species including threatened shorebirds such as far eastern curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*), Asian dowitcher (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*) and relict gull (*Larus relictus*). In order to improve the knowledge of wetland conservation of the local people and reduce the threats caused by steppe fire and herding, the project:

- Organized 4 indoor talks and field activities to 250 local students during the World Migratory Bird Day 2017. Waterbirds and wetlands brochures and posters were also distributed to local students, herders and other stakeholders;
- Produced brochures about the prevention of steppe fire and met local governor to discuss how the pasture management can avoid affecting the breeding areas of waterbirds during their breeding season;
- Organized on-site waterbird identification and survey training where 8 rangers attended.



Watching waterbirds in the field with students to celebrate the World Migratory Bird Day 2017 (Photo credit: MBCC)



Distributing brochures and posters to the (Photo credit: MBCC)

Significant conservation impacts:

- **After the World Migratory Bird Day 2017, the park administration expressed that they are happy to support this kind of event again in the future;**

- In the meeting with the local governor, it was found that rebuilding old wells may help in reducing the occurrence of steppe fire. The park administration later approved the well locations and the expense of the rebuilding work will be covered by them;
- The waterbird survey results reflected that Chukha Lake provided a very good condition to the breeding white-naped crane and the decrease in breeding pairs in other lakes was mainly caused by the lack of reeds;
- The 8 trained rangers were encouraged to keep monitoring big species such as cranes as they are very good indicators for habitat changes.

2.2.3 Advocacy and awareness promotion on wetland and migratory waterbirds in Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve Area, DPR Korea

<Ministry of Land and Environment Protection>

In the migration of waterbirds from Russian Far East and Alaska to Australia and New Zealand, the intertidal wetlands along the west coast of the Korean peninsula, especially at the Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve (DPRK), play a very important role. However, due to a general lack of awareness on the importance of wetlands and the conservation of migratory birds, wetland ecosystems and their resources are



*Distributing training materials to local people
(Photo credit: MoLEP)*

continually being over-exploited and damaged, resulting in negative impacts on wetlands and migratory birds. Therefore, the project aims to improve the awareness and capacity of managing officials, the public and local communities, who have a role in the long-term sustainable management of wetlands and the conservation of migratory birds at the Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve. At the end of the project:

- Flipchart “Wetland and Migratory Bird Conservation” and leaflet “Mundok Migratory Bird (Wetland) Reserve” were published and distributed to relevant stakeholders such as Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve managing officials, schools and local communities;
- 10 staff members of Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve, school teachers and relevant stakeholders were trained to conduct public awareness raising activities.

Significant conservation impacts:

- **Awareness of the local community on wetlands and migratory bird conservation was improved and they understood better why Mundok has to be protected;**
- **The capacity of the trained staff members of Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve in organizing trainings was developed. They organized 18 local trainings targeting farmers, school teachers, students and other local people to introduce wetlands and migratory bird conservation during the project period and totally 492 people attended.**

2.2 Project approved in 2018

With DPR Korea officially became the 170th Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention and the designation of the Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve and the Rason Migratory Bird Reserve as the first two Ramsar Sites on 2nd February 2018, support to the wetland and migratory waterbird conservation work there is in need. In 2018, AWCF did not arrange the thirteenth round of applications but directly supported two applications by DPR Korea instead.

2.2.1 Publication of the second edition of “National Wetland Inventory of DPR Korea” <Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, DPR Korea>

In 1996, the first wetland inventory was published where 34 wetlands of international importance were identified. In this second edition, 54 pieces of wetland were identified by local experts and literature review. The Inventory will be released during the 13th Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention.

2.2.2 Activities for conservation of great knot in Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve < Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, DPR Korea>

Great knot is a globally endangered migratory shorebird with a very rapid declining population. Although it is known that great knot mostly stop overs in wetlands along the west coast in spring and autumn, information such as their number and habitat choice is still insufficient. The project will conduct field surveys in Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve to understand the number of great knot in spring and autumn and at the same time raising public and wetland managers' awareness on this species through publication of leaflets and organization of local training workshops.

3. Income and expenditure

No additional funding has been received in 2018.

A total of US\$12,182 (approximately HK\$95,000) 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
Project instalments (2016-17)	112,033.15	14,455.66
Project instalments (2017-18)	95,132.60	12,181.50
Administration and technical advice (2005-present)	314,086.42	
Sub-total	1,340,507.21	
Net Balance	104,332.80	

4. Acknowledgements

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