

# Evidence-based conservation through the world's largest partnership for birds, nature and people



**Vinayagan Dharmarajah**  
Regional Director (Asia)  
BirdLife International  
6 Dec 2021

“If you take care of the birds,  
you take care of most of  
the big environmental  
problems in the world.”

Thomas E. Lovejoy,  
the Godfather of Biodiversity



Red-headed Vulture & White-rumped Vulture © Bjorn Olesen

# Birds are indicators of the health of our planet



Birds are mobile everywhere



Responsive to environmental change



Population trends are mirrored by other species



Better known and studied than other taxa

# SCIENCE CENTRAL TO OUR APPROACH



>2,500 IBAs identified to date in Asia. Some of these are EAAFP network sites and Ramsar sites.



| UK rank | Institution                               | Global rank | Mean citations/paper in Environment/ecology |
|---------|---|-------------|---|
| 1       | BirdLife International                    | 24          | 38.70                                       |
| 2       | Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew                | 28          | 36.69                                       |
| 3       | Zoological Society of London              | 50          | 32.29                                       |
| 4       | Royal Society for the Protection of Birds | 52          | 32.25                                       |
| 5       | University of Reading                     | 59          | 31.63                                       |
| 6       | British Trust for Ornithology             | 60          | 31.49                                       |
| 7       | University of East Anglia                 | 68          | 30.12                                       |
| 8       | University of Leeds                       | 77          | 29.65                                       |
| 9       | University of Aberdeen                    | 81          | 29.36                                       |
| 10      | University of Birmingham                  | 91          | 28.92                                       |

Data from Web of Science InCites Essential Science Indicators



## Saving Species

Species are the primary element of biodiversity and each has a unique ecological role to play. Conserving species across their full natural ranges is vital to prevent further erosion in genetic diversity and increases resilience to environmental change.

## Conserving Sites & Habitats

Focusing efforts on sites where biodiversity is especially concentrated, unusual or threatened is a cost-effective conservation approach.

# BirdLife's conservation approach



FLYWAYS



FORESTS



ILLEGAL  
KILLING &  
TRADE



MARINE



ISLANDS

Climate Emergency

Human Health

Economic and Social Wellbeing

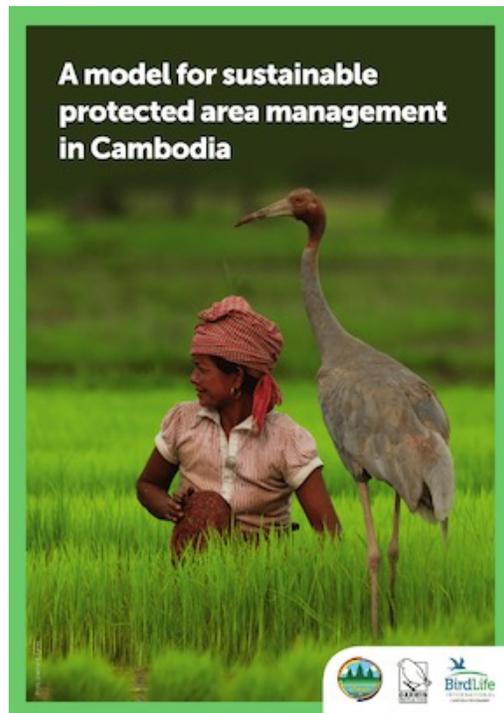
## Encouraging Ecological Sustainability

The economic, social and ecological dimensions of sustainability are interlinked. Sustainability is the root cause of biodiversity loss and degradation.

## Recognizing that conservation benefits people

The destinies of people and nature are inseparable. In many cases their livelihoods, health and security depend on it directly.

# Ensuring that our conservation efforts support the Sustainable Development Goals



The current negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems will undermine 80% of the targets of SDGs #1, 2, 3, 6, 11, 13, 14 & 15

**Crane Rice:** An initiative to secure the Sarus Crane and the livelihoods of Cambodia's people.



# Ensuring that our conservation efforts support a post-COVID Green Recovery



## A Green Recovery must

- Reignite the economy
- Restore purchasing power
- Create new jobs
- Address social inequality

But any recovery must be sustainable and not be at the expense of nature.

# Flyways programme



- One of the 9 Global Conservation Programmes
- >95% BirdLife Partners.
- Working across the flyway through Partners to collectively address threats and formulate solutions.
- Working from local to global – ensuring that local concerns are elevated to the global stage – through international policy processes and communications.
- Delivering year-round conservation

# Flyways Programme – Threats addressed



Coastal wetlands  
and shorebirds



Illegal hunting



Energy infrastructure



Freshwater wetlands



Land birds and the  
impact of  
unsustainable land  
use

# Flyways programme – how we work

- Coordination & Partner engagement
- Capacity development
- Research & monitoring
- Site action
- Policy advocacy (national international)
- Communication
- Fundraising



# Conserving Vietnam's shorebirds



Surveying coastal intertidal flats in South Viet Nam in 2019-2020

- 3-year project focused on Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other threatened shorebirds
- Exploratory shorebird surveys and year-long monitoring
- Identification of priority sites in the Mekong Delta and threats faced at those sites.
- Raising awareness of migratory birds in Mekong Delta and adjacent areas of wetlands.
- Supporting government efforts.
- New phase of work to commence along the Gulf of Tonkin.

# Conservation of Shorebird sites along the Gulf of Thailand



- Pak Thale-Laem Phak Bia - a mosaic of salt pans, aquaculture ponds and remnants of mangrove forests – critical for the Spoonbill Sandpiper and the Nordmanns Greenshank.
- In 2019, BCST was able to acquire the salt pans – 8 hectares. Site now being planned for management as a nature reserve.
- Further strengthening local capacity for conservation and wetland management.
- The BirdLife Partnership and Toyota have worked to create incentives for Thai salt farmers to maintain traditional management practices and to provide alternative livelihoods through ecotourism.

# IKB Situation Analysis in Southeast Asia



- Assess the state of bird hunting across SE Asia.
- Based on similar situation analysis completed by BirdLife for Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.
- Assessments completed for Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Brunei and Timor Leste.
- Due to be published in early 2021

# Supporting international policy processes



## BirdLife engages with:

- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- World Heritage Convention
- East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership
- Ramsar Convention
- Convention on Migratory Species.
- CITES

# Protecting migratory birds through Avian Sensitivity Mapping



# AVISTEP

**ADB**  
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

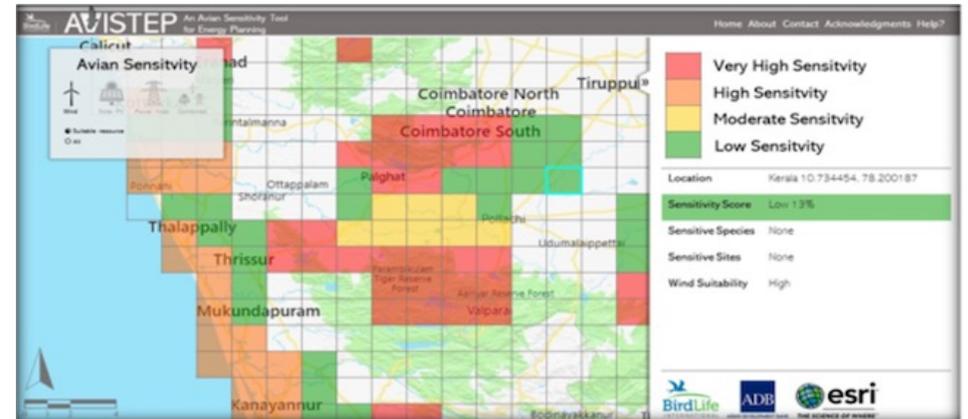
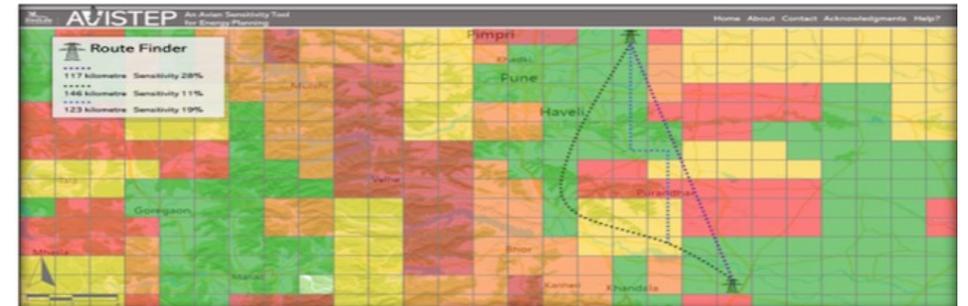
THE AVIAN SENSITIVITY TOOL FOR ENERGY PLANNING

PHASE 1: India, Nepal, and Thailand

LAUNCH: Asia Clean Energy Forum, July 2022



- ❖ overlaying resource potential for onshore and offshore wind, solar and transmission lines with avian sensitivity.
- ❖ Provide planning authorities, environmental consultants, developers and financial institutions guidance on the safe siting and operation of new developments.
- ❖ Post construction monitoring, the development biodiversity management plans and site-based conservation programmes.



# Supporting the East Asian- Australasian Flyway Partnership



Organizers: BirdLife International, EAAFP, Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force  
Sponsors: BirdLife International, EAAFP, Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force

JOIN OUR QUEST FOR MIGRATORY WATERBIRD LEGFLAGS

#LEGFLAGCHALLENGE PHOTO CONTEST ...

webinar 10 October, 2020 (Saturday)  
1600 (KST) / 0700 (UTC)

How can legflags on birds guide conservation

Dr. Nigel Clark  
Scientific Advisor  
Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force

Ms. Katherine Leung  
Field Ecologist

Dr. Chi Yeung Choi  
Research Assistant Professor,  
Southern University of Science and Technology

REGISTER  
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/33BRZJZ](https://bit.ly/33BRZJZ)

Launch of Legflagchallenge  
campaign with EAAFP in in Sep  
2020

- Regular reporting and engagement.
- Supporting and collaborating on outreach initiatives for migratory birds.
- Supporting advocacy for wetlands and threatened species.
- Mobilizing BirdLife Partners around key EAAFP initiatives.
- Engaging with the Spoonbill Sandpiper Task Force and supporting Birds Russia on head-starting.
- Implementing the EAAFP strategic plan through the ADB RFI.

# Supporting the inscription of World Heritage Sites along the Yellow Sea coast

- Supporting the 2012 IUCN Situation Analysis and the IUCN WCC resolution that highlighted the importance of the Yellow Sea and threats faced.
- Providing technical support to helping justify and confirm the OUV status of sites in China and South Korea as UNESCO World Heritage sites.
- Communicating the value of these sites internationally.
- Mobilizing national governments through the BirdLife Partnership to support the inscription of these sites.



# The ADB RFI enables BirdLife to support the Global Biodiversity Framework and its own strategic goals.



*By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.*

- Supporting the conservation of threatened species along the EAAF.
- Protecting sites and ecologically connected landscapes.
- Addressing the climate emergency through Nature Based Climate Solutions.
- Ensuring that conservation benefits people and is integrated into economic development plans and recovery packages.
- Engaging governments, corporates and local communities as part of the solution.
- Promoting innovative conservation models.
- Encourage models of sustainable agriculture (and aquaculture).
- Mobilizing financing for nature.



# Thank you!

Disclaimer: The views expressed on this document are those of the author/s and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) or its Board of Governors or the governments they represent. ADB does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication and accepts no responsibility for any consequence of their use. By making any designation of or reference to a particular territory or geographic area, or by using the term "country" in this document, ADB does not intend to make any judgments as to the legal or other status of any territory or area.