

Newsletter of the Asian Waterbird Census

No. 5, May 2003

Editor: David Li and Dr. Taej Mundkur
Language Editing: Mohala Santharamohana



Wetlands International
(Registration: 394031D)
3A39, Block A, Kelana Centre Point
Jalan SS7/19, 47301 Petaling Jaya
Selangor, MALAYSIA
Tel: +603-7804 6770
Fax: +603-7804 6772
E-mail: david@wiap.nasionet.net
Web site: <http://www.wetlands.org>

Contents

1. Letter from the AWC International Coordinator.....	1	5. Meetings and Conferences.....	6
2. AWC 2002 and 2003 Results.....	2	6. New Publications on Waterbirds.....	7
3. AWC News for the Region.....	2	7. Other News on Waterbirds.....	8
4. International Black-faced Spoonbill Census 2003...	6		

1. Letter from the AWC International Coordinator

Dear AWC coordinators and participants,

I would like to report to you the new developments that have happened in the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) since November 2002.

The AWC 2003 has been very successful. From our communication with Dr. Asad Rahmani, the national coordinator in India, there were more than 300 sites covered by the AWC this year after 355 sites been counted in 2002. Mainland China, an important area for many species of waterbirds has achieved great success as, more than 32 sites were covered in the census. Likewise, Myanmar too, had very good coverage of the AWC this year, a total of 77 sites covered! Not to be outdone, Malaysia had an impressive number of 47 sites covered, which is twice the number of sites counted last year. The wintering shorebird census in Japan was well organised and a total of 95 sites were covered. I also learnt that the Republic of Korea is continuing its annual wintering waterbird census. Although we haven't heard the total numbers of the sites which have been counted in other countries, we have been informed by most coordinators that the census has been very well organised and very successful.

I would hereby like to express my appreciation to the AWC volunteers and coordinators for their excellent work, without their commitment and support the census would not have been such a resounding success. I would also like to encourage participants and coordinators to submit your data as soon as possible, if you haven't done so. This will enable us to present to you with a more complete result of the census in the next newsletter.

Progress on compiling information of the AWC 1997-2001 Report is continuing smoothly. We expect a first draft of this report to be ready by August, and the final report will be available by the end of the year.

We are continually working on fundraising for the AWC work and more news on this will be presented to you in the next newsletter.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,

David Li
AWC International Coordinator
<david@wiap.nasionet.net>

2. AWC 2002 and 2003 Results

With the commendable organization by the coordinators and active participation by the volunteers, the results of AWC 2002 and 2003 have been excellent. As at 1 May 2003, 884 and 580 sites were counted respectively in 2002 and 2003, as reported by the coordinators and the count data received by Wetlands International. We can expect more than 900 sites to have been counted in both the years 2002 and 2003 once we receive reports from the remaining countries. This is a good recovery of counting effort as compared to the peak number of 770 sites that were counted between 1997 and 2001.

Country/Region	No. of Sites Counted	
	2002	2003
Bangladesh	37	
Bhutan	6	
India	355*	300+*
Nepal		1
Pakistan	70	17
Sri Lanka		
South Asia Total	468	318
Brunei	9	
Cambodia	5	
Indonesia	44	
Laos		
Malaysia	23	47*
Myanmar	34	77
Philippines	49	
Singapore	1	
Thailand	8	
Vietnam	16	4
Southeast Asia Total	189	128
China, Mainland		32
Hong Kong		
Macau	1	1
Taiwan		
Japan	106	95*
Korea, Republic of	118	5
Russia (Asian part)	2	1
East Asia Total	227	134
Australia		
New Zealand		
Papua New Guinea		
Australasia Total		
Total	884	580

Note: * shows the number that has been reported by coordinators, although count data is yet to be received.



3. AWC News for the Region

Reports and updates from Coordinators and contributors reproduced below have been edited for inclusion in this Newsletter.

Bangladesh

Enam Ul Haque, National Coordinator.
enam.gqi@gq-group.com

In 2002, we had the first seminar to present our AWC data to bird-lovers and biologists in Bangladesh. We found that in addition to the AWC data, our information from site observations and opinions on the bird areas were considered valuable by all.

A keynote address was presented on the need for the protection of *Tangua Haor*, a Ramsar site and the best bird area that we have. Renowned biologists of *Dhaka University* made a strong case for the protection of this area. In view of the success of the seminar, we have decided to make it an annual event.

We had our second seminar on 10 April 2003. In that seminar we decided to do more than present a keynote address and allow participants to contribute. At the seminar we also exhibited publications of Wetlands International and BirdLife International, as well as posters on bird migration and habitat conservation, and held photography and video shows on our AWC tours. Wetlands International's recent publication *Waterbird Population Estimates: 3rd Edition* generated a great deal of interest among those who visited our mini-exhibition.

Besides presenting the waterbird census data at the seminar we tried to make a case for the conservation of *Aila Beel*, an important bird area of Bangladesh. *Aila Beel* is a part of the maze of freshwater lakes generally known as the *Haor Basin* (an individual lake is called a *Haor* or a *Beel*). *Aila Beel*, in the past, missed the attention it deserved. Even we had allowed it to drop out of our AWC site-list for several years simply due to lack of resources to conduct the census on so many *Beels* and *Haors*. This year we mustered the resources for our census at *Aila Beel* and were rewarded with the heart-warming sight and sound of more than a hundred thousand waterbirds there.

We were happy to receive very wide media coverage of the seminar and of our case for the conservation of *Aila Beel*. We were also pleased with the publicity received by Wetlands International and the worldwide waterbird census activities.

Mainland China

Xu Qiang, Wetlands International - China Office
wicp@public3.bta.net.cn

The AWC in mainland China has been very successful in the year 2003.

A total of 33 sites from 10 provinces and Autonomous Regions in mainland China and Macao SAR were covered by the AWC 2003. 341,821 waterbirds of 90 species were recorded during the AWC period from December 2002 to February 2003.

During 5-23 January 2003, Wetlands International - China Office worked with Mr. Mark Barter, a shorebird expert from the Australasian Wader Studies Group, to conduct a Dunlin survey in conjunction with the AWC at the middle and lower Yangtze River Basin in Jiangxi, Anhui, Hunan and Hubei Province. Whilst the survey was focused on Dunlin, the opportunity had been used to count other waterbirds and thus useful data was also collected for the AWC. A total of 242,077 waterbirds, including 47,739 Dunlin, were counted at 12 lakes in the above mentioned 4 provinces.

The coastal area in Fujian Province is one of the most important wintering areas for waterbirds. A count was organized by the Provincial Forest Department this year, which was a great success.

The waterbird census around Leizhou Peninsula, Guangdong Province was conducted by the South China Institute of Endangered Animals, where a total of 3,796 waterbirds of 38 species were recorded.

Furthermore, census has also been conducted at Shanghai City, Liaoning Province, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

In addition, a waterbird count form from Macao has been received. A total of 46 Black-faced Spoonbill were counted at the Seac Pai Wan Marsh.

Wetlands International - China Office would like to extend our appreciation to those people who have participated in the census and we expect a more fruitful AWC for 2004 with their continued contribution.

Hong Kong

Yu Yat-tung, Coordinator, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, hkbws@hkbws.org.hk

The January 2003 waterbird count took place on the 19th and the coverage of both the Ramsar site and Deep Bay area was complete. The January count coincided with the annual Asian Waterbird Census organized by Wetlands International.

A total of 53,795 waterbirds were counted in the Deep Bay area including Futian, of which 40,272 were recorded in the Ramsar site. The largest group of waterbirds was ducks and grebes, constituting 20,203 (37%) of birds present in the area. Gulls and terns comprised 13,191 (24%) individuals, which is the second largest group of waterbirds. A total of 7,959 (15%) Great Cormorants were counted and 7,527 (14%) waders were recorded in the area.

The globally threatened species as identified by IUCN 2002 are Dalmatian Pelican (14 birds), Black-faced Spoonbill (230 birds), Greater Spotted Eagle (1 bird), Imperial Eagle (2 birds) and Saunders' Gull (34 birds).

India

David Li, AWC International Coordinator,
Wetlands International, david@wiap.nasionet.net

Dr. Asad Rahmani, our India national coordinator and his team from the Bombay Natural History Society have produced a detailed AWC 2002 national report at the end of last year. In this report, 355 sites were counted during the AWC 2002. More than 300 volunteers participated in the census. A total of 2,985,602 waterbirds of 152 species were recorded during the census. Among these, a total of 27 species were counted making up more than 20,000 birds and 8 species were counted making up more than 100,000 birds. The eight most abundant species are the Northern Pintail (364,547), Common Coot (239,541), Northern Shoveler (223,121), Galwall (199,175), Lesser Whistling Duck (146,165), Eurasian Wigeon (114,499), Common Pochard (109,377) and Black-tailed Godwit (104,432).

Twenty-one globally threatened species were recorded. The White-billed Heron (1 - the record was questioned in the report, therefore it may not be reliable), Greater Adjutant (4) and Nordmann's Greenshank (8) are listed on the

IUCN 2002 category of Endangered (EN). The Spot-billed Pelican (1,080), Lesser Adjutant (53), Marbled Teal (560), Baer's Pochard (30), Sarus Crane (196), Masked Finfoot (2), Sociable Plover (3), Spoon-billed Sandpiper (1), and Indian Skimmer (131) are listed as Vulnerable (VU) while the Dalmatian Pelican (141) is listed as Conservation Dependant (LR/cd). The Oriental Darter (489), Painted Stork (4,675), Black-necked Stork (18), Black-headed Ibis (4,903), Lesser Flamingo (13,019), Ferruginous Duck (1136), Asian Dowitcher (314, the record was questioned in the report, therefore it may not be reliable) and Black-bellied Tern (162) are listed as Near Threatened (LR/nt). Kindly contact Dr. Asad Rahmani <bnhs@bom3.vsnl.net.in> for more detailed information.

Japan

Satoshi Maekawa, WWF-Japan
maekawa@wwf.or.jp

During December 2002 to February 2003, the shorebird census was conducted at 95 sites in Japan. A total of 43 species were recorded and the largest number of a species recorded was the Dunlin (ca. 65%). At the Daijugarami tidal flat in southeast Japan, about 7,000 shorebirds were observed and this figure was the highest in Japan for this census.

This census project was conducted by the Ministry of Environment, Japan and WWF-Japan. We are planning to continue the shorebird census in 2004.

Malaysia

Yeap Chin Aik, National Coordinator, Malaysian Nature Society, natsoc@po.jaring.my (Attn: Yeap)

The AWC 2003 in Malaysia saw a marked increase of wetlands surveyed and the total number of individual and waterbird species recorded compared to the previous year. Surveys of 47 sites were undertaken by 33 MNS volunteers, and teams from the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Peninsular Malaysia (Perhilitan) of Cheras and Kuala Gula.

The total number of individual and waterbird species recorded were 36,052 and 78 respectively. The breakdown of sites according to States are as follows: Perlis (2), Kedah (1), Pulau Pinang (3), Perak (5), Selangor and

Kuala Lumpur (9), Melaka (1), Johor (10), Pahang (5), Sarawak (7) and Sabah (4). Seven wetland-based Important Bird Areas were surveyed; Matang mangroves (Perak), Kapar Power Station (Selangor), Parit Jawa (Johor), Timah-Tasoh Dam (Perlis), Pulau Mantanani (Sabah), Penaga-Bagan Belat (Pulau Pinang) and Bako-Buntal Bay (Sarawak). One proposed Ramsar Site was also surveyed, the Tanjung Piai State Park (Johor).

The total number of waterbirds recorded in the surveys this year amounted to 36,052 individuals of 78 species, almost double that of last year's figures (18,949 individuals; 72 species). The breakdown according to respective groups is listed in the Table below.

Species Group	Number of Birds	Number of Species
Shorebirds	22,708	37
Heron & Egrets	7,205	15
Gulls & Terns	2,822	10
Frigatebirds	2,700	2
Rails & Gallinules	320	7
Storks	195	3
Grebes	60	1
Geese & Ducks	41	2
Ibises	1	1
Total	36,052	78

The globally threatened waterbirds (IUCN 2002) recorded were, Christmas Island Frigatebird (CR); Nordmann's Greenshank (EN); Chinese Egret, Milky Stork and Lesser Adjutant (VU); Malaysian Plover, Far Eastern Curlew and Asian Dowitcher (LR/nt).

The MNS Bird Conservation Council would like to thank the participants for this year's census.

Appreciation also goes to Ms. Siti Hawa Yatim and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Peninsular Malaysia who undertook surveys in the east coast of Peninsula.

Myanmar

The Zaw Naing, National Coordinator, Myanmar Bird and Nature Society, SST@mptmail.net.mm

In the Asian Waterbird Census 2003 in Myanmar, a total of 77 sites were counted with the help of 40 volunteers, including 5 birders from American and Austria. Comparatively, the number of sites surveyed this year, had increased that counted in previous years. Overall, 53,159 waterbirds from 108 species were counted. The significant records are:

2 Indian Skimmers (VU), a globally threatened species as identified by IUCN 2002, was a first record for Inle Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary. Two globally threatened species, 18 White-winged Wood Ducks (EN) and 7 Masked Finfoots (VU) were only recorded at the Wetthigan Wildlife Sanctuary, and other threatened species of 7 Lesser Adjutants (VU), 3 Greater Adjutants (EN) and 3 Sarus Cranes (VU) were recorded at 3 sites, 2 sites and one site respectively.

Sri Lanka

Deepal Warakagoda, National Coordinator & U Sirivardana, Ceylon Bird Club, birdclub@sltnet.lk

The AWC was carried out in Sri Lanka by the Ceylon Bird Club for the 20th successive year, during mid January and mid February 2003. 25 members of the Club assisted by seven other selected observers participated. Parts of the north and east of the island had to be excluded as they have been for the past many years because of the military situation.

About 258,000 waterbirds of 104 species were counted during the AWC 2003. In September 2002, after the start of the migration period which continued well beyond the period of the census, a concentration of 80,000-100,000 small waders was seen in the Pottuvil area (Gunawardena K & Wikramanayake T, 2002, *Ceylon Bird Club Notes*, p.184) while the total number of waders counted in Sri Lanka during the census is only c. 28,000. The area was covered in the census but the birds were missing. The two highest totals so far for the whole island have been 303,610 in 1989 and 253,828 in 1990.

The Mannar region was a revelation. Formerly a duck shooter's paradise, the military situation prevented this activity here for about the last 15 years. The situation also prevented the census here for nearly the same period and it was resumed tentatively in 2002. This year it was carried out extensively here and yielded c. 164,000 birds. At one site were c. 100,000 ducks, nearly all Pintail. Most remarkable, however, was the breeding of Spot-billed Duck, until now known in Sri Lanka only as a very rare migrant. Now 30 adults and 17 chicks belonging to at least two broods were observed. Other waterbirds which are very rare elsewhere in the country were present here in record numbers. We greatly fear that when peace and normality returns, so will the hunters, who are known to be disregarding the country's total prohibition on duck shooting. It is essential that the richest area here be protected by the State. It has been

already demarcated by the CBC's former chairman Thilo Hoffmann many years ago for proposing this. It also meets the 1% criterion for a Ramsar Site in respect of more than one species and must also be declared such.

One migrant species new to Sri Lanka was reported from the census: Grey-headed Lapwing at Tirukkivil on the east coast by Kithsiri Gunawardena, subject to ratification by the Ceylon Bird Club Records Committee. Other species uncommon in the country included: Western Reef Egret, Lesser Adjutant, Glossy Ibis, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Gadwall, Common Teal, Baillon's and Ruddy Crakes, Pallid and Montagu's Harriers, Osprey, Crab Plover, Oystercatcher, Avocet, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ringed Plover, Terek Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Great and Red Knots, Sanderling, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Ruff and Yellow-legged Gull. There has been a population explosion of Common Coot in the island; whether internal or due to influx of migrants is not yet determined. Addition to the waterbird species, wetland dependant raptors have also been counted during the census.

Highlighting damage to important wetlands in last year's report we explained the need for: restoring the Anavilundawa wetlands, which would need relatively little effort; preserving and protecting the Kalametiya - Lunama Sanctuary, and declaring it a Ramsar Site; and mitigating the damage to the stretch of coastal area between Chilaw to Kalpitiya from prawn farms. It is regrettable that nothing significant has been done since at any of these sites.

Vietnam

Nguyen Duc Tu, National Coordinator, BirdLife International – Vietnam, tu@birdlife.netnam.vn

On 24 and 25 January 2003, staff from BirdLife Vietnam and volunteers visited four coastal sites in northern Vietnam to conduct the annual international Black-faced Spoonbill count and waterbird census in accordance with the AWC programme. Sites that were visited were the Xuan Thuy Nature Reserve (Ramsar Site), Nghia Hung district and Thai Thuy District in the Red River Delta and Ha Nam Island in Quang Ninh Province.

Unfortunately, due to the warm weather and adverse tide conditions during those days, not many birds were found in all four sites. In total, there were 2,447 waterbirds of 31 species counted and the highest number recorded was 1,178 birds at Thai Thuy. During these counts,

only one globally threatened species was recorded: the Black-faced Spoonbill (65 birds).

The counts were made possible by the support from the KNCF and DANIDA funded project.



4. International Black-faced Spoonbill Census 2003

Yu Yat-tung, Coordinator for the International Black-faced Spoonbill Census, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, spoonbill@hkbws.org.hk

The 2003 International Census of the globally endangered Black-faced Spoonbill undertaken on 24-26 January. This annual census has been conducted annually since 1993 and it is a successful tool to provide information on wintering distribution and population size of this species.

A total of 1,069 Black-faced Spoonbills were counted at 40 sites in the census and it is the first time the number of spoonbills had exceeded 1,000. This figure seems to be higher because more spoonbills were found from other surveys along southeast China mainland and Hainan and would be even higher if 73 Black-faced Spoonbills were not killed by avian botulism in December 2002 and January 2003.

The report of the census 2003 can be downloaded from the webpage <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/bfs/w0103bfse.doc> of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society's Black-faced Spoonbill website. Related information is posted on <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/bfs/index.html> (English) and <http://www.hkbws.org.hk/bfs/indexc.html> (Chinese).



5. Meetings and Conferences

Global Flyways Conference 2004- Waterbirds Around the World

3-8 April, 2004 in Edinburgh, UK

The Global Flyways Conference 2004 - Waterbirds Around the World is jointly hosted by the Governments of the United Kingdom and

The Netherlands and organised by Wetlands International. Support from the Convention on Migratory Species, The Convention on Wetlands, BirdLife International, US Fish and Wildlife Service, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, CIC, FACE, Waterbird Society, CAFF, Pacific Seabird Group and many other national and international organisations will ensure broaden participation and support.

The conference will be held from 3-8 April 2004 in Edinburgh, UK.

This conference will focus on all major themes and developments related to the global conservation of waterbird flyways during their full annual cycle: breeding areas, stop-over sites and wintering areas, harvest of waterbirds, site networks, flyway monitoring, flyway management plans, climate change and flyways, nomadic migration and many more. It will address achievements of the last 40 years and formulate gaps and needs for initiatives to stimulate future conservation of the world's flyways and the species and habitats involved.

For more information and early registration visit Wetlands International website at: <http://www.wetlands.org/GFC/Default.htm> or contact Dr. Gerard C. Boere <Gerard.Boere@wetlands.org>.

Wetlands International Specialist Groups Meeting

26 -27 May, 2003 in Wageningen, Netherlands

The Wetlands International Specialist Group Meeting has been called for as an outcome of the recent Wetlands International Board of Directors Scientific Committee meeting. The meeting will primarily serve as a means of informing and integrating Specialist Groups into Wetlands International's role under the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) support service and other global commitments, as well as supporting the BirdLife Globally Threatened Birds review (see Section 7 for more details).

For more information on this meeting contact Tunde Ojei <tunde.ojei@wetlands.org>, Specialist Group Network Development Officer. For information on Wetlands International's Specialist Groups, visit the website at: <http://www.wetlands.org/networks/SGroups.htm>

6. New Publications on Waterbirds

Waterbird Population Estimates - Third Edition

Launched at the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in Valencia, Spain, in November 2002, this publication sets the global standard in presenting estimates of the numbers and trends of waterbird populations throughout the world.

This book:

- Identifies 2,271 biogeographical populations of all 868 species recognised as waterbirds occurring throughout the world
- Provides estimates of the numerical abundance of 76% of these populations
- Estimates population trends (whether declining, stable or increasing) for 50% of these populations
- Sets 1% levels for identification of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- Provides information fundamental to the conservation of waterbirds under regional inter-governmental initiatives, for example, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) under the Bonn Convention
- Provides information for the identification of internationally important sites and conservation of migratory waterbirds under international cooperative initiatives, for example, the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy, coordinated by Wetlands International
- Identifies gaps in knowledge of populations, species and geographical regions.

The full publication is available for downloading at <http://www.wetlands.org/IWC/WPEnote.htm>.

Report on the White-headed Duck in Central Asia

The White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* is the only stiff tail (Oxyurini) indigenous to the Palearctic. It is restricted to a small area of Central Eurasia and North Africa and currently has the distinction of being "Endangered". The global population has decreased from over

100,000 individuals in the early twentieth century to 8,000-13,000 individuals in 2002.

The publication "Status Overview and Recommendations for Conservation of the White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* in Central Asia" presents the current status of the White-headed Duck in the 12 countries of the Central Asian region, namely Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia (Asian part only), Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The principal threats to the species and its wetland habitats have been identified and priority actions have been recommended. It is evident that the main focus of action should be to conserve the wetlands on which this and many other waterbird species are dependent. The main recommendations include:

- Review of national policy and legislation to ensure adequate legal protection for the White-headed Duck and its enforcement.
- Sustainable management of water resources to ensure adequate allocation of water.
- Site conservation measures, such as, establishment of an international network of sites of importance for migratory waterbirds.
- Development of a flyway-wide project to build and strengthen links between wetland managers and organisations.
- Development of a comprehensive population-monitoring programme covering the wintering, migratory and breeding seasons.
- Research to define the migration routes and population boundaries of the White-headed Duck.

This report in PDF format can be downloaded at http://www.wetlands.org/pubs&/WHD_gs15_index.htm.

New Report on African Waterbird Census

The African Waterbird Census 1999, 2000 & 2001 is out! This bilingual publication (English and French) presents the results of waterbird counts in 36 African countries from July 1998 to January 2001. A downloadable version will be available on the Wetlands International website <http://www.wetlands.org/> soon.

7. Other News on Waterbirds

Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy website

Dr. Taej Mundkur, Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy Coordination Officer, Wetlands International
taej@wiap.nasionet.net

Across the Asia-Pacific region, a large number of interesting activities, projects, publications and other news about migratory waterbirds and wetlands are being generated and being reported in a number of different media.

A news page for the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy website has been launched in March at <http://www.wetlands.org/IWC/awc/waterbirdstrategy/News.htm>. This web page offers a forum for news and announcements on waterbird activities in the Asia-Pacific region. This page will also contain interesting updates from the international site networks in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Kindly visit the website for more information.

This web page will be regularly updated, and we look forward to your contributions to this page by providing related news and images for updating of this website.

Wetlands International has also updated the calendar page for the event related to the waterbirds in 2003 and 2004, visit <http://www.wetlands.org/IWC/awc/waterbirdstrategy/Calendar.htm> to view the details.

Globally Threatened Waterbirds discussion forum

Dr. Baz Hughes, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Baz.Hughes@wwt.org.uk

In 2000, BirdLife International supplied the information published in *Threatened birds of the world* for the 2000 IUCN Red List. In 2002, BirdLife International through consultations with various networks including the Specialist Groups, updated this information for 25 species for the 2002 IUCN Red list.

BirdLife International is now in the process of reviewing and updating the status of all birds globally to a revised standard (including

improved IUCN criteria for assessing extinction risk) and these results will be supplied to the 2004 IUCN Red list.

The following waterbird species are currently being considered for revised threat categories:

Ducks, swans & geese:

Madagascar Pochard, Laysan Duck, Chubut Steamerduck, Flightless Steamerduck, Torrent Duck and Baikal Teal

Hérons, storks & ibises:

Madagascar Heron, Madagascar Pond Heron, Giant Ibis, Spot-breasted Ibis, Puna Ibis, Madagascar Sacred-Ibis and Shoebill Stork

Shorebirds:

Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Sociable Lapwing, Javanese Lapwing, St Helena Plover, Madagascar Plover, Piping Plover, Madagascar Pratincole, Madagascar Snipe, Giant Snipe and Javan Woodcock

Rails:

Sakalava Rail, Madagascar Rail, Austral Rail, Okinawa Rail, Sharpe's Rail, Brown-banded Rail and Woodford's Rail

Other threatened waterbirds:

Aloatra Grebe, Dalmatian Pelican, Franklin's Gull and Black-bellied Tern

To facilitate this process, a set of web-based discussion forums have been set up, in collaboration with Wetlands International. Visit http://208.185.149.227/WebX?13@131.7LfCaNljaje.0@_2cba28ad (or click the Globally Threatened Bird (GTB) Update on www.birdlife.net and follow the link to the forums) to browse through the topics to see the changes being proposed and the information being requested, and then post up any comment or information pertinent to the proposed reclassification. This can also be done by e-mail if preferred.

We encourage you to contribute to GTB Update and take part in this important project.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Stuart Butchart <stuart.butchart@birdlife.org.uk> at BirdLife International.

Refer to Waterbird Population Estimates (third edition) for Latin names of all species mentioned in this Newsletter.