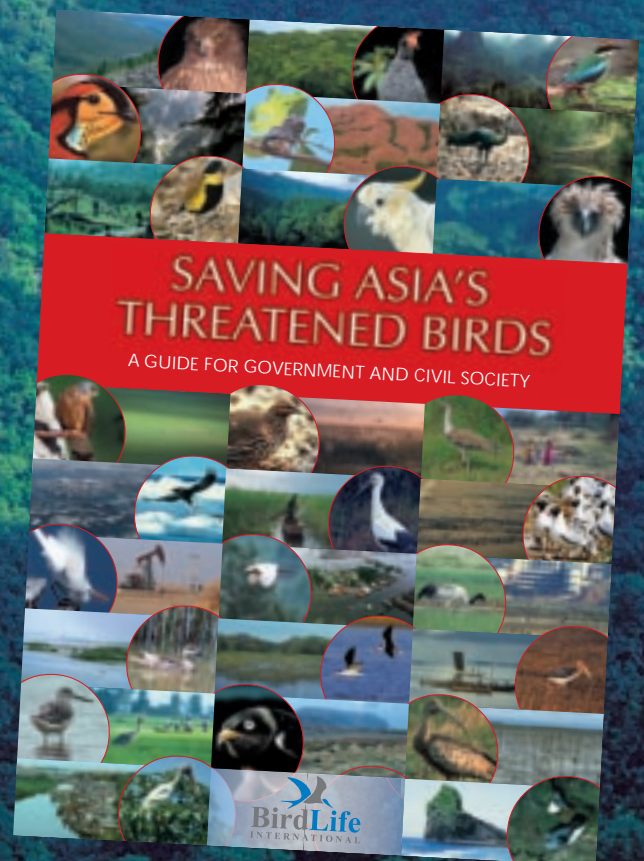


# Saving Asia's threatened birds

A guide for government and civil society

BirdLife's new guide, *Saving Asia's threatened birds: a guide for government and civil society*, sets out the priorities for the conservation of birds and habitats in Asia, based on the comprehensive scientific research published in BirdLife's Red Data Book, *Threatened birds of Asia*.

The guide is a celebration of the beauty of Asia's birds and the places that they inhabit, with many colourful photographs of birds and the region's forests, grasslands and wetlands. It is designed principally for decision-makers in government and civil society, in whose hands lies the future of the region's spectacular wildlife.



  
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Asad Rahmani



### Asia: birds, habitats and people

Asia has many diverse habitats, ranging from Arctic tundra to tropical forests, and including the highest mountains in the world. But the region is experiencing rapid environmental change as the human population and national economies grow, and many of Asia's diverse habitats and the immensely rich wildlife are under great pressure.

Every country in Asia has populations of threatened birds, and needs to take conservation action to protect them. The countries with the highest number of bird species facing extinction are:

- Indonesia (117 species)
- China (78)
- India (73)
- Philippines (70)



### Threatened birds

The BirdLife Asia Partnership published *Threatened birds of Asia: the BirdLife International Red Data Book* in 2001. It is a monumental work, documenting all that is known about more than 300 Asian threatened bird species. It contains thousands of conservation recommendations, which are further clarified and expounded in the new guide.

- Roughly a quarter of all bird species in Asia are of conservation concern.
- 324 species, about 12% of the Asian avifauna, is already at risk of global extinction.
- 41 of these are Critically Endangered—they face an extremely high risk of extinction on the immediate future.

### Key habitats

Analysis of the distributions and habitat requirements of Asia's threatened birds has identified nine forest, three grassland, and 20 wetland regions as priority areas for conservation. There is also a group of threatened seabirds. This focus on the key

habitats for the region's threatened birds and other wildlife has several advantages:

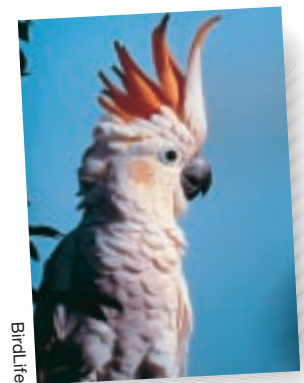
- It is more efficient to consider the conservation of the 33 regions than to individually cover more than 300 species.
- This approach makes it easier to relate bird conservation issues to land-use planning processes.
- The habitat regions can be related to other conservation analyses, including Conservation International's Hotspots and World Wide Fund for Nature's Ecoregions.



Marco Lambertini

### Policy approaches to biodiversity conservation

The guide focuses on the direct pressures facing Asia's birds and how these should be addressed, but ultimately the underlying and indirect causes of biodiversity loss will also need to be tackled. It outlines the fundamental changes in land-use and resource utilisation that are needed, through policy and planning.



BirdLife

### Conventions and related mechanisms

The guide outlines how international legal mechanisms can be applied to benefit threatened birds, and their key sites and habitats, for example:

- Inclusion of threatened species, sites and habitats in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans developed under the Convention of Biological Diversity.
- Regulation of the trade in threatened species through CITES.
- Designation of key wetlands for

threatened waterbirds under the Ramsar Convention.

- Protection of habitats through the Convention to Combat Desertification.



Takuki Hanashiro

### Priorities to prevent the extinction crisis

More than 100 bird species in Asia are currently close to extinction. This publication identifies the main reasons why this is the case and proposes the actions needed to avert the extinction crisis. The most serious threats to Asia's birds and their habitats include:

- Unsustainable and illegal logging and conversion of lowland forests for agriculture and plantations.
- Major infrastructure development, such as large-scale dam and irrigation projects, the construction of roads to remote areas.
- Large-scale reclamation of coastal wetlands.



### Action for threatened birds and habitats

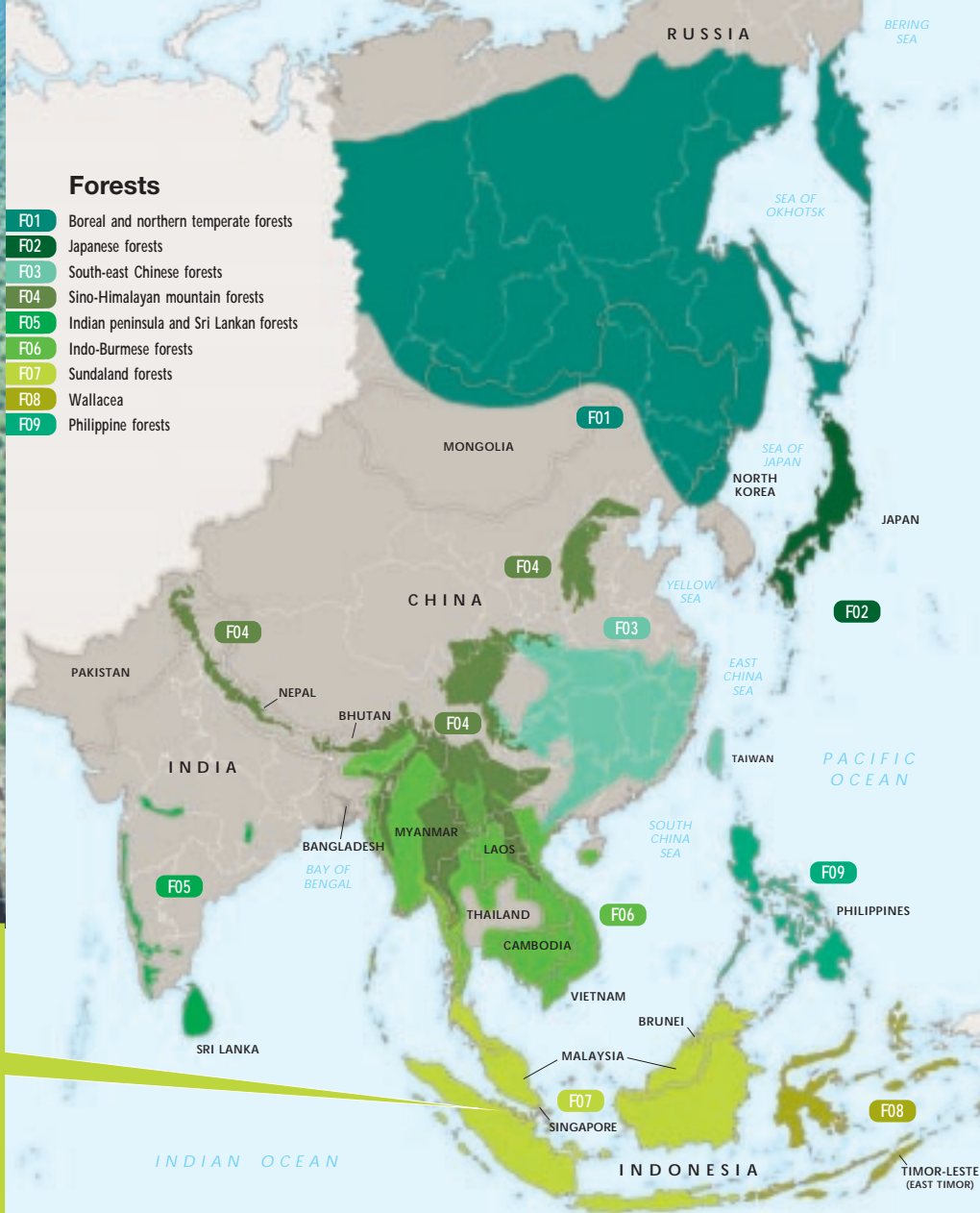
The guide makes proposals for reducing or eliminating activities that cause habitat loss and degradation, and direct threats to birds, including:

- Important gaps in national protected areas networks are identified, where new parks and reserves might be established.
- Recommendations are made for the control of unsustainable exploitation of threatened birds.
- Gaps in our knowledge of threatened species are highlighted.



Forest example: the Sundaland (or Sundaic) region (F07) has some of the most biologically diverse tropical forests on earth, but they are being very rapidly cleared for their timber, to make paper, and to make way for oil palm plantations (pictured) and agriculture.

(Marco Lambertini)



Grassland example: the Great Indian Bustard's *Ardeotis nigriceps* arid habitats (in G03) are under intense pressure from large-scale irrigation projects and conversion to agriculture, and urgent measures are needed if extinction is to be prevented.

(Asad Rahmani)



## Wetlands

- W01 Arctic tundra
- W02 Sea of Okhotsk and Sea of Japan coasts
- W03 Amur, Ussuri and Sungari river basins
- W04 Japanese wetlands
- W05 Steppe wetlands
- W06 Yellow Sea coast
- W07 Central Chinese wetlands
- W08 Lower Yangtze basin
- W09 Tibetan plateau
- W10 China Sea coast
- W11 Indus basin
- W12 North Indian wetlands
- W13 South Indian and Sri Lankan wetlands
- W14 Assam and Sylhet plains
- W15 Bay of Bengal coast
- W16 Myanmar plains
- W17 Thailand wetlands
- W18 Lower Mekong basin
- W19 Philippine wetlands
- W20 Sundaland wetlands



Wetland example: inter-tidal wetlands (in W06) around the Yellow Sea are vital for Spotted Greenshank (pictured) *Tringa guttifer*, Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* and other migrant shorebirds, but are severely threatened by coastal reclamation.

(John Holmes)

## Acknowledgements

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## CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

*Saving Asia's threatened birds* will be freely distributed to decision-makers within the Asian region. However, a few copies will be available at cost price from: NHBS Mailorder Bookstore, 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK. Tel. +44(0)1803 865913, fax +44(0)1803 865280, email sales@nhbs.co.uk

Seabird example: Disturbance at its breeding grounds is a major threat to Japanese Murrelet *Synthliboramphus wumizusume* and several other species of seabird in Asia.

(Koji Ono)



The full species accounts from *Threatened birds of Asia: the BirdLife International Red Data Book* can also be downloaded from: <http://www.rdb.or.id/>

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