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The spoon-billed sandpiper (*Calidris pygmaea*) is one of the most endangered and rare birds on the planet. In 2008, IUCN upgraded its conservation status from Endangered (EN) to Critically Endangered (CR), the highest endangered level. Census data shows that the number of adult spoon-billed sandpipers was 490 (95% CL = 360-620) and the total population was approximately 773 (95% CL = 569-978), declining at a rate of 8% per year. Therefore, the spoon-billed sandpiper is selected as flagship species for coastal wetland conservation along EAAF.

MCF's conservation project, Saving the Spoon-billed Sandpipers, was selected as one of the "Global Case of Biodiversity 100+" in CBD COP15.

Acknowledgments  
The projects are supported by:  
Alibaba Philanthropy and "Goods for Good" sellers  
Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology (SEE Foundation)  
Beijing Bytedance Foundation,  
Alipay Foundaiton  
Tencent Charitable Foundation

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## ⑤ Connecting wetlands and people

Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) are important instruments for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. CEPA provides the link from science and ecology to people's social and economic reality. Our goal is that "Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all."

### Ambassador of SBS "WANG KAI"

MCF launched a series promotion with Chow Tai Fook and Wang Kai during World Migratory Bird Day on Oct 2022 in order to inform our conservation works and the current status of Spoon-billed Sandpiper species. The promotion turned out a great success with about 116 million exposure rate.



### BLW National Nature Journal Rally

Launched to celebrate Agreement on the Protection of Migratory Bird and Their Habitats among China and Japan, Birds Love Week has been the most recognized conservation day by nature reserves, media and public in China since 1980s. Every year BLW will last from March to May to follow the path of spring migratory birds from south to north.

BLW National Nature Journal Rally links wetland and birds to emphasize its theme in publicity, and promote online participation through mobile internet vlog social media etc.

- 3 years
- 18 provinces, 25 wetlands, 43 NGOs, and nearly 200 schools
- 3000+ contributions
- Award Exhibitions in 8 wetlands
- 1 book



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Casebook of wetland education in China

### Youth volunteers

Youth participants in CEPA activities will create a pathway for young leaders in science and conservation to become involved in the wetland related career and potentially become future leaders.

"Wetland Spokesperson" has encouraged youth volunteers to convey their love for wetlands and call for wetland conservation through visual creativity. They make VLOGs, take photos, participate in birds surveys, manage the invasive species in the fields.....



Youth volunteers in Wanzuitou, Guangdong



Youth volunteers manage the invasive species in Wanzuitou, Guangdong



# The Social Participation of Spoon-billed Sandpiper Conservation in China





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## Spoon-billed sandpiper Conservation Network

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019, nearly 100 representatives from UN, NGOs, SBS-TF, protected areas, related personnel, universities and research institutes attended the “East Asia-Australasia Flyway’s Critically Endangered Waterbirds and Coastal Wetland Protection Forum”, and announce the establishment of the SBS conservation Network.

The SBS Network has set up its communication mechanism and five-year workplan. Each year an annual meeting for the network is held to promote communication and cooperation, skills training.



The establish of Spoon-billed sandpiper Conservation Network in Yancheng, 2019



Waterbird survey training in Zhanjiang, 2021

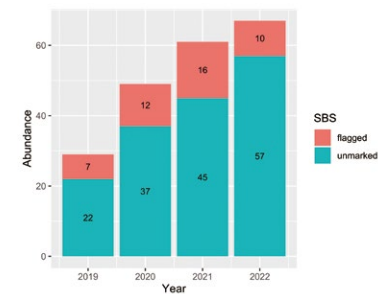
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## Spoon-billed sandpiper winter census

Systematic winter census in China started from JAN 2019, organized by Spoon-billed Sandpiper Conservation Network. Each year, over 100 observers from more than 20 organizations participate in the survey. The SBS winter census in China, covering most of the SBS wintering sites from Hangzhou Bay in the north to Beibu Gulf in the southwest, aims to assess the distribution and population of this critically endangered species, increase public participation and awareness raising as well. Till 2023, five SBS winter censuses have been conducted.



Survey team at work in Beihai, 2019



SBS winter census result, 2022

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## Conservation case

Zhanjiang, Guangdong

Zhanjiang, holds the largest mangrove wetland reserve in China, located along coastal areas of the Leizhou Peninsula at the southernmost tip of China between the South China Sea and the Tonkin Gulf, adjacent to Hainan Island. Some 24 species of mangrove are said to be present, and at low tide large areas of exposed mudflats provide excellent support for migrating waterbirds. Leizhou Peninsula was home to 8% spoon-billed sandpiper, making it's the largest wintering site for spoonies in China.

Like other mangrove forests, the somewhat separate components of the site provide sanctuary for offshore fish, sustenance for birds and other fauna, and coastal protection from waves, tides, and storm surges. The coastal and inshore area supports economic fishing and aquaculture for local people.



Local communities learn about wetlands



Local community clear new grow invasive species on the mudflat

### ● NbS for biodiversity and Climate resilience

Co-designed with the local communities, nature reserve, and collaboratively implemented by all stakeholders, more than 20 ha of invasive species were cleared up. The restoration and management were adaptive to balance mangroves and waterbirds with sufficient monitoring and evaluation. The process led to biodiversity net gain, increased the carbon sink, improved the ecological service, and enhanced climate resilience. The multidimensional design of the project and the lessons gained on restoration methods make the project a good replicable model on mangrove ecosystem restoration.

### ● Waterbird friendly community and OECMs

Community patrol was continuously carried out to avoid deforestation. New growth of alien species was cleared by community patrols, which effectively maintained flat muds which benefit the waterbirds. Knowledge of wetlands and its value was integrated into traditional community culture.



Wetlands restoration in Zhanjiang

Yancheng, Jiangsu

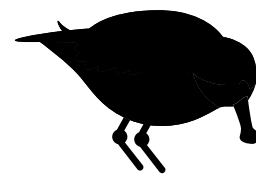
The Yellow Sea/Gulf of Bohai intertidal mudflat system is considered to be the largest in the world. These mudflats, as well as marshes and shoals, are exceptionally productive and serve as growth areas for many species of fish and crustaceans. The intertidal areas of the Yellow Sea/Gulf of Bohai are of global importance for the gathering of many migratory bird species that use the East Asian-Australasian flyway. Large gatherings of birds, including some of the world's most endangered species, depend on the coastline as a stopover to moult, rest, winter or nest. In 2019, Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China (Phase I) was list as a natural World Heritage.

### ● TZN 720, zero to one

At high tide, most waterbirds that feed in the intertidal zone are forced to sites known as high tide roosts. Waterbirds use a range of natural roost sites, including upper tidal flats, salt marsh, and claypans, but also artificial roost sites, including areas also used for human production activities like aquaculture ponds, agriculture areas, constructed roosts,

ports, salt production ponds, wastewater treatment (i.e. sewerage) ponds, etc.

TZN 720, an area of 45 ha, was reclaimed to be an aquaculture pond in the 2010s. TZN 720 was managed as a high tide roost for waterbirds since 2019. Based on the advanced experience at home and abroad and the distribution pattern of waterbirds in Tiaozini, we explored the management experience of plants, water levels and human disturbance activities in practice, formed *Implementing Regulations for TZN720*. TZN 720 can provide suitable habitat for more than 70000 waterbirds every year, and attracts more than 300000 audience, providing a chance to experience in nature .Practicing the concept of “Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets”, TZN 720 protects unique ecological resources, explores sustainable development paths of world natural heritage, promotes Yellow Sea Wetland to become a harmonious heritage site of "joint contribution, sharing and sustainable use", and contributes more Yancheng wisdom to global ecological governance and the construction of beautiful China.



TZN 720

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## “Shaohua” project

The “Shaohua” project focuses on the migratory birds represented by the spoon-billed sandpipers in EAAF, and supports the scientific research and conservation, so as to promote the collaborative conservation of birds and their habitats along the flyway.

### Priority Bird Species:

Spoon-billed sandpiper (*Calidris pygmaea*)  
Great knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*)  
Red knot (*Calidris canutus*)  
Bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)  
Eurasian whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)  
Yellow-breasted bunting (*Emberiza aureola*)  
Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)  
Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)  
Lesser white-fronted goose (*Anser erythropus*)  
Black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*)  
Chinese crested tern (*Thalasseus bernsteini*)  
Red-crowned crane (*Grus japonensis*)

