



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.x
Migratory Species

Significant Impact Guidelines for
36 Migratory Shorebird Species

Month of publication, Year

1. Introduction

Thirty-six (36) international migratory shorebird species regularly visit Australia each year. These species are listed as migratory under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and are identified at Table 1. Listed migratory species are a ‘matter of national environmental significance’. Under the EPBC Act an action will require approval from the Minister if the action has, will have, or is likely to have a ‘significant impact’ on a matter of national environmental significance.

EPBC Act Policy Statement 1.1 – Significant Impact Guidelines for Matters of National Environmental Significance (May 2006) defines a ‘significant impact’ as: an impact which is important, notable, or of consequence, having regard to its context or intensity. Whether or not an action is likely to have a significant impact depends upon the sensitivity, value, and quality of the environment which is impacted; and upon the intensity, duration, magnitude and geographic extent of the impacts. You should consider all of these factors when determining whether an action is likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance.

This policy statement is designed to assist you to determine whether a proposed action is likely to have a significant impact on one or more of the 36 migratory shorebird species (i.e. whether or not the action is likely to be a ‘controlled action’ under the EPBC Act). The policy statement applies to the 36 species wherever they occur within Australia or its territories. The policy statement does not apply to migratory shorebirds when they are outside Australia.

This policy statement is based on the best available information, including:

- the EPBC Act Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory shorebirds (2006)
- scientific literature
- consultation with species experts, and
- application of the national environmental legislation (EPBC Act).

This policy statement builds on the information and explanations in *EPBC Act Policy Statement 1.1 Significant Impact Guidelines – Matters of National Environmental Significance*.

Table 1: The 36 migratory shorebird species covered by this policy statement (hereafter referred to as migratory shorebirds)

| # | Scientific name | Common name |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Scolopacidae | | Sandpipers |
| 1. | <i>Gallinago hardwickii</i> | Latham's Snipe |
| 2. | <i>Gallinago stenura</i> | Pin-tailed Snipe |
| 3. | <i>Gallinago megala</i> | Swinhoe's Snipe |
| 4. | <i>Limosa limosa</i> | Black-tailed Godwit |
| 5. | <i>Limosa lapponica</i> | Bar-tailed Godwit |
| 6. | <i>Numenius minutus</i> | Little Curlew |
| 7. | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> | Whimbrel |
| 8. | <i>Numenius madagascariensis</i> | Eastern Curlew |
| 9. | <i>Tringa totanus</i> | Common Redshank |

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10. | <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> | Marsh Sandpiper |
| 11. | <i>Tringa nebularia</i> | Common Greenshank |
| 12. | <i>Tringa glareola</i> | Wood Sandpiper |
| 13. | <i>Xenus cinereus</i> | Terek Sandpiper |
| 14. | <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | Common Sandpiper |
| 15. | <i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i> | Grey-tailed Tattler |
| 16. | <i>Heteroscelus incanus</i> | Wandering Tattler |
| 17. | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> | Ruddy Turnstone |
| 18. | <i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i> | Asian Dowitcher |
| 19. | <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i> | Great Knot |
| 20. | <i>Calidris canutus</i> | Red Knot |
| 21. | <i>Calidris alba</i> | Sanderling |
| 22. | <i>Calidris ruficollis</i> | Red-necked Stint |
| 23. | <i>Calidris subminuta</i> | Long-toed Stint |
| 24. | <i>Calidris melanotos</i> | Pectoral Sandpiper |
| 25. | <i>Calidris acuminata</i> | Sharp-tailed Sandpiper |
| 26. | <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> | Curlew Sandpiper |
| 27. | <i>Limicola falcinellus</i> | Broad-billed Sandpiper |
| 28. | <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> | Ruff |
| 29. | <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i> | Red-necked Phalarope |
| Charadriidae | | Plovers and Lapwings |
| 30. | <i>Pluvialis fulva</i> | Golden Plover |
| 31. | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> | Grey Plover |
| 32. | <i>Charadrius bicinctus</i> | Double-banded Plover |
| 33. | <i>Charadrius mongolus</i> | Lesser Sand Plover |
| 34. | <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i> | Greater Sand Plover |
| 35. | <i>Charadrius veredus</i> | Oriental Plover |
| Glaeolidae | | Pratincoles |
| 36. | <i>Glaeola maldivarum</i> | Oriental Pratincole |

2. How to interpret and apply these guidelines

The significant impact thresholds outlined in this policy statement are not designed to be prescriptive, but rather to clarify the level and types of impact likely to be significant at a national level, having regard for the biology, ecology and status of the 36 species. The identification and protection of nationally important sites for migratory shorebirds, in addition to internationally important sites as defined under the [Ramsar criteria](#), is required due to the dispersed nature of shorebirds in Australia, and the limited availability of suitable productive habitat capable of supporting large numbers of shorebirds.

If you are planning to undertake an action in an area where migratory shorebirds may occur you should consider the following:

- Does the area where I plan to carry out my action or a nearby area support important habitat for one or more migratory shorebird species (see section 5)?

You will need to consider previous records and information from surveys on and near to the area where you plan to carry out your action (see section 6).

- What impacts, both direct and indirect, could result from my action?
- Could any of these impacts exceed the thresholds outlined in section 8?
- What measures could be taken to reduce the level of impact (see section 9)?

If you think that your action is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, or if you are unsure, you should refer the action to the Minister for the Environment. The Minister will make a decision within 20 business days on whether approval is required under the EPBC Act. Substantial penalties apply for taking an action without approval that has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact.

Further information on the EPBC Act, including guidance on the referral, assessment and compliance processes is available at: www.environment.gov.au.

3. What other laws protect migratory shorebirds?

All States and Territories have legislation that protects biodiversity and native species. Migratory shorebirds and/or their habitat may be protected through these various mechanisms. The listing of these migratory shorebird species on the EPBC Act Migratory list recognises their importance from a national perspective, and does not replace listing under state, regional or local legislation or regulations.

Judgments may differ between Commonwealth, State and local decision making processes, due to the different laws and requirements. If your activity could affect a migratory shorebird species, or individual animals, you should also contact the relevant State and local authorities regarding your obligations.

4. Ecology of migratory shorebirds

Ecology across the flyway

Most of the 36 migratory shorebird species breed in the northern hemisphere and migrate to the non-breeding grounds of Australia along the East Asian-Australasian flyway (EAA flyway). The EAA flyway stretches from Siberia and Alaska, southwards through east and south-east Asia, to Australia and New Zealand (see figure 1). The major exception to this rule is the Double-banded Plover, which migrates between Australia and its breeding grounds in New Zealand.



Figure 1: East Asian-Australasian flyway (prepared by Wetlands International)

Ecology in Australia

Australia plays a critical role in the EAA flyway, being both the destination for southward migrating birds, and the starting point for the subsequent northward migration. The coastal and inland habitats of Australia provide migratory shorebirds with essential foraging and roosting areas to feed and rest during the non-breeding period, allowing adult birds to build up the reserves necessary to support the upcoming northward migration and breeding season. Juvenile birds, fledged in the far northern hemisphere, and having flown over 10,000 km, may spend a number of years in Australia before reaching maturity and returning north to breed. The Roebuck Bay/Eighty Mile Beach region of north-western Australia for example, is a key staging area for migrating birds, but also supports large numbers of adult birds during the non-breeding period, and juvenile birds during the breeding season.

When are migratory shorebirds present in Australia?

The majority of migratory shorebird species are present in Australia during the non-breeding period, from October to March each year (excluding the Double-banded Plover, which is generally present from March to September). During this time they arrive in Australia from their long migration and disperse throughout the country to a wide variety of habitats where they feed to build up energy resources, before migrating back to their breeding grounds.

Immature birds of some species will remain at feeding and roosting sites in Australia until they reach maturity.

What habitats do migratory shorebirds use?

Migratory shorebirds do not breed in Australia but require habitat for foraging and roosting. The types of habitat used by migratory shorebirds in Australia vary across the 36 species. Migratory shorebirds use both coastal and inland habitats that most commonly include:

- coastal habitats - estuaries, mudflats, rocky inlets, reefs and sandy beaches, often supporting mangroves, and
- inland habitats – inland wetlands and grassland areas, often with ephemeral water sources.

Foraging sites vary depending on the species. Many migratory shorebirds have specialised feeding techniques that enable them to feed at specific foraging sites. Depending on the species, factors such as sediment type and size will influence foraging habitat selection.

Roosting sites provide areas for the birds to rest safely. The high energy demands on migratory shorebirds as a result of their migratory lifestyle means that resting is a critical part of their life cycle. Generally, migratory shorebirds prefer roosting sites in open habitat where they can watch for potential predators. Migratory shorebirds that use coastal habitats tend to roost during high tide, although flocks may also move a short distance inland to roost. Migratory shorebirds are known to use networks of connected sites (also known as site complexes). They move within these networks depending on the time of day, availability of resources and environmental conditions at the site. Some habitats represent important refuge sites during extreme high tides or when weather conditions prohibit occupancy of more commonly used sites.

Some inland wetlands and grassland areas also represent important habitat for migratory shorebirds in Australia. Many of these inland areas are ephemeral due to

variability in Australia's climate and rainfall. For this reason, some inland sites may not be used for a number of years. However, when these areas receive rain they can provide extremely productive and important habitat for migratory shorebirds (e.g. Lake Eyre).

What behaviours do migratory shorebirds show?

Behaviour varies across the 36 species of migratory shorebirds. For example, some species, such as the Red-necked Stint, tend to aggregate in large flocks while others such as Latham's Snipe usually disperse in small numbers across wide areas of habitat.

Generally, migratory shorebirds that use coastal habitats tend to congregate together in large flocks during high tide when their feeding habitat is submerged. In contrast, migratory shorebirds at non-tidal wetlands, such as inland systems, tend to show more dispersive behaviour.

More detailed information

More detailed information on each species is available in the background paper to this policy.

5. Important habitat for migratory shorebirds

Under the EPBC Act, 'important habitat' is a key concept for migratory species. Defining this term for migratory shorebirds in Australia is needed to ensure that sites necessary for the ongoing survival of the 36 species are appropriately identified and managed.

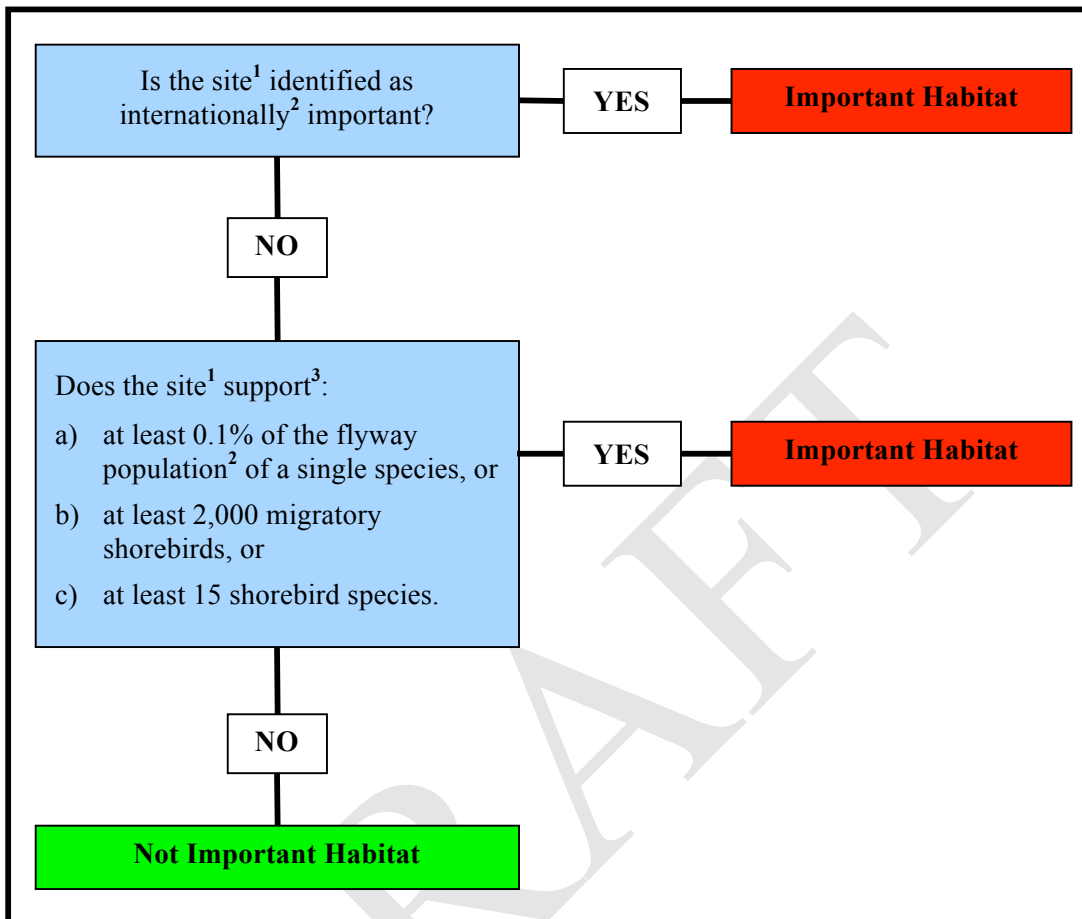
The widely accepted and applied approach to identifying internationally important shorebird sites throughout the world has been through the use of criteria adopted under the [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#). According to this approach, a wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports:

- 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird, or
- a total abundance of at least 20,000 waterbirds.

While the international criteria are effective in identifying important shorebird sites in many countries across the EAA flyway, they are insufficient to provide protection for migratory shorebirds within Australia. The distribution of migratory shorebirds in Australia is more dispersed than in other countries, due in part to unpredictable climatic conditions and the generally lower productivity (lower carrying capacity) of our wetlands. This situation is exacerbated by the recent and prolonged drought, in which many of the inland wetlands in southern Australia that once supported internationally significant numbers of shorebirds are drying up. As a result, shorebird areas identified in Australia by existing international criteria contain a much smaller proportion of shorebird populations than when applied in other parts of the world. To facilitate appropriate shorebird management and conservation in Australia, and ensure the maintenance of sustainable migratory shorebirds populations, there is a need to establish national criteria.

Figure 2 describes the process for identifying important habitat for migratory shorebirds under the EPBC Act. This process applies to each of the migratory shorebird species with the exception of Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) which is discussed separately below. More information on this decision process is available in the background paper to this policy.

Figure 2: Important habitat for migratory shorebirds (except Latham’s Snipe)



1. ‘Site’ is defined for migratory shorebirds as: *the entire (discrete) area of contiguous habitat used by the same group of migratory shorebirds, which may include multiple discrete roosts and feeding areas.* The area covered by a migratory shorebird ‘site’ may extend beyond the boundaries of a property or project area. Appropriate surveys can determine the extent of a migratory shorebird ‘site’.
2. The list of internationally important sites and flyway population estimates, as at 2008, are identified by Bamford et al. (2008) *Migratory shorebirds of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway: Population estimates and internationally important sites.* Available at:
 - <http://www.wetlands.org/WatchRead/tabid/56/mod/1570/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2012/Default.aspx>

Where population estimates are presented as a population range, the lowest estimate in the range should be used to calculate the population percentage.

Local and/or more recent information should be sought during the project planning phases to determine the likelihood of important habitat for migratory shorebirds being present within or near the proposed project site.
3. ‘Support’ is defined differently depending on whether the habitat is considered permanent or ephemeral.
 - For permanent wetlands, support is defined as: *migratory shorebirds are recorded during surveys and/or known to have occurred at the site within the previous 5 years.*

Refer to the background paper to this policy statement for information regarding survey methodology.

- For ephemeral wetlands, support is defined as: *habitat that migratory shorebirds have ever been recorded in, and where that habitat has not been lost permanently due to previous actions.*

Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)

Latham's Snipe does not commonly aggregate in large flocks or use similar habitat to many other of the coastal species. Consequently, habitat important to Latham's Snipe is not regularly identified using the process outlined in Figure 2. A different methodology for identifying important habitat for Latham's Snipe is presented below.

Important habitat for Latham's Snipe occurs at those sites that have previously been identified as internationally important for the species, or those sites:

- that support at least 18 individuals of the species, and
- that have the following characteristics: naturally occurring open freshwater wetland with vegetation cover nearby (e.g. tussock grasslands, sedges, lignum and reeds).

Definitions for 'site' and 'support' are as above.

While threshold criteria are recognised as a crude method to designate important sites, the practice has been shown to be effective in the absence of data sufficient for more rigorous methods.

Existing information

In addition to the internationally important sites for migratory shorebirds identified by [Bamford et al. \(2008\)](#), a number of sites supporting nationally important numbers of migratory shorebirds have been identified as part of the [Shorebirds 2020](#) project, a collaborative enterprise between Birds Australia, the Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG), WWF-Australia and the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust. These sites will be progressively made available through the [Shorebirds 2020 website](#) and the Department's [protected matters search tool](#).

Historic and recent survey data may also be available locally (e.g. bird observer groups), or through State/Territory government agencies.

6. Survey guidelines for migratory shorebirds

Important habitat is the key element which needs to be identified when assessing the significance of potential impacts on migratory shorebirds. In order to determine whether a site meets the criteria for important habitat (above) you will need to undertake the following investigation:

- check for existing suitable survey data collected from the site during previous monitoring activities
- if no suitable survey data exists, if it is too old, or if the site characteristics have changed (e.g. alterations to the wetland) undertake surveys of the site to establish the presence of migratory shorebirds, and
- assess habitat characteristics (e.g. type, quality, size and availability) and existing threats to the site in relation to its regional context.

An outline of suitable survey methodology for the migratory shorebird species is presented in the background paper to this policy statement. This guidance describes the survey principles and minimum requirements for the survey of migratory shorebirds in a particular area to support environmental impact assessment (EIA).

Alternatively, proponents may decide to designate all habitat areas in and around wetlands as important habitat, and design their projects in accordance with the avoidance and mitigation measures outlined below.

7. Principal threats to migratory shorebirds

While there are a range of threats to the 36 species internationally across the EAA flyway, the EPBC Act primarily focuses on activities within Australia. Consequently, this section is focused on those threats that are likely to occur within Australia.

Migratory shorebirds are sensitive to certain development activities due to their:

- high site fidelity
- tendency to aggregate (most species)
- very high energy demands, and
- need for habitat networks containing both roosting and foraging sites.

The principal threats most relevant to judgements on significance include habitat loss and degradation, disturbance and direct mortality.

Habitat loss

The loss or degradation of habitats that support large numbers of migratory shorebirds can cause disproportionate declines in shorebird populations, as displaced birds are unable to find suitable replacement habitat. In Australia, the loss of important habitat reduces the availability of foraging and roosting sites, affecting the ability of birds to build up the energy stores necessary for successful migration and breeding. Some sites are also important year-round for juvenile birds, with loss of these habitats affecting the future breeding populations of these species.

Habitat may be lost due to a range of activities that make the habitat unavailable to shorebirds. These include the clearing, infilling or draining of wetlands or structural changes near some roosting sites (e.g. increased cover).

Habitat degradation

Migratory shorebirds are sensitive to subtle changes to their habitat. In particular, many have specialised feeding techniques making them susceptible to slight changes to prey sources and their foraging environments. Any activity that reduces the ability of shorebirds to use an area for roosting or foraging, or reduces the availability of food, degrades habitat. These activities include (among others):

- substantial loss of marine or estuarine vegetation which is likely to alter the dynamic equilibrium of sediment banks and mudflats, as well as providing organic matter to support the invertebrates on which migratory shorebirds feed
- invasion of intertidal mudflats by weeds such as cord grass (*Spartina* species)
- water pollution and changes to the water regime
- artificial changes to hydrological regimes that affect the productivity of the feeding environment (e.g. changes in water depth), and
- exposure of Acid Sulphate Soils changing the chemical balance of the site.

Disturbance

Disturbance is emerging as a major conservation issue for migratory shorebirds. Certain activities may interrupt migratory shorebirds during their limited foraging periods, such as during low tide, and prevent them from foraging effectively. Disturbance can also affect roosting birds and cause them to waste energy stored for migration.

Disturbance can result from residential and recreational activities such as 4WD, skiing, power boating, fishing, walking, wind-surfing, kite-surfing, walking dogs, noise and night-lighting. While some activities may result in only low-levels of disturbance, it is important to consider the combined effects of disturbance with other threats when determining the level of potential impact of an action. Roosting and foraging birds are most sensitive to discrete, unpredictable disturbances such as sudden loud noises (e.g. from demolition activities) and from objects that approach them from the water (e.g. boats). High and sustained levels of disturbance can prevent shorebirds from using all or parts of the habitat.

Direct mortality

Direct mortality of birds may occur due to a variety of reasons. Activities that may result in direct mortality may include development of wind farms in migration or movement pathways, bird strike caused by aeroplanes, and chemical or oil spills.

8. What sorts of actions are likely to have a significant impact on migratory shorebirds?

Significant impact judgements must be made on a case by case basis and with consideration for the context of the action. The potential for a significant impact on a listed migratory species will depend on the:

- intensity, duration, magnitude and geographic extent of the impact
- sensitivity, value and quality of the environment on and around the site
- combined effects of on-site, off-site, direct and indirect impacts, and
- presence of this and other matters of national environmental significance.

There is a real chance or possibility of a significant impact on any one of the 36 migratory shorebird species if the action exceeds the following thresholds.

Table 2: Significant impact assessment for migratory shorebirds

| Ecological element affected | Impact threshold | Comment |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Important habitat (see section 4) | <i>Loss</i> of important habitat | The loss (e.g. clearing, infilling or draining) of important habitat is likely to have a significant impact on migratory shorebirds, particularly when that habitat represents the best or most frequently occupied area for migratory shorebirds in the local region. The context of the site and the scale of the loss will be important to consider when determining the extent of the impact on migratory shorebird populations. |
| | <i>Degradation</i> of important habitat leading to a <i>substantial reduction</i> in migratory shorebirds using the | Defining <i>substantial reduction</i> will need to be made on a case-by-case basis. Factors to consider will include: |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | site | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of migratory shorebirds historically using a site (based on surveys and historical data) • likely resultant changes in bird numbers and species richness • alterations to the value, quality, geographic extent of the site (e.g. will the site still be classed as important habitat) • the function and role of the site (roosting, foraging) and likely changes in ecology and hydrology • the regional and local context of the site, and • the nature, extent, duration of impacts, their likelihood and consequence. |
| | Increased <i>disturbance</i> leading to a <i>substantial reduction</i> in migratory shorebirds using important habitat | |
| | <i>Direct mortality</i> of birds leading to a <i>substantial reduction</i> in migratory shorebirds using important habitat | |

The elements and thresholds in the table above give guidance to the level of impact that is likely to be significant for migratory shorebirds at a site. They are not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive, but rather to highlight the need to maintain the ecological function of important habitat for migratory shorebirds (see section 4). The number of birds that the site supports will give an indication of the function and significance of the site in the region.

9. Mitigation measures

It is important to consider the environmental impacts of the proposed action early in the planning of the proposal. Careful planning of the action can avoid, or reduce, the likelihood of a significant impact. Where possible and practicable it is best to avoid impacts, particularly on sensitive environments such as wetlands. If impacts cannot be avoided then they should be minimised or mitigated.

Care should be taken to ensure that any mitigation and/or management actions implemented for migratory shorebirds do not have a negative impact on other matters of national environmental significance present at a site. The mitigation and management proposed at a site needs to take into account the needs of all matters of national environmental significance in a project area.

The following are a general set of measures which may assist in avoiding or minimising impacts on migratory shorebirds associated with important habitat loss, important habitat degradation, disturbance and direct mortality of birds using important habitat. They should be used with the aim of reducing the impact of an action to below the thresholds laid out in this document. Avoiding impacts should be given priority.

Habitat loss

Given the serious threats associated with loss of migratory shorebird habitat, proposed developments should ideally be designed to avoid any loss of important habitat.

Habitat degradation

Efforts should be made to avoid the degradation of migratory shorebird habitat which may occur through processes associated with the introduction of exotic species, changes to hydrology or water quality (including toxic inflows), fragmentation of sites and exposure to Acid Sulphate Soils. Developments should be designed to consider

these processes and measures to avoid or manage the impacts incorporated into the design.

Disturbance

Measures to mitigate against the impacts of disturbance need to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Options for mitigating impacts from disturbance include:

- The use of buffer zones around areas important for the migratory shorebirds. The appropriate buffer will depend on the nature of the individual circumstances, including the species present and location. For example, previous studies have recommended buffer zones ranging from 165 m to 255 m.
- Construction of appropriate barriers, such as fences around important habitat, to restrict access. Ideally, there should be no public access (by humans and/or domestic animals) to areas identified as important to migratory shorebirds. Where this is not feasible, particular recreational activities may need to be excluded from the area or it may be necessary to limit the number of people using an area at one time and/or to limit activities during the period between October and March (when the majority of birds will be present at the site).
- Landscape and urban design, including sympathetic lighting strategies and sound attenuation.
- Community education through mechanisms such as interpretive signs at access points to shorebird habitats.

Direct mortality

A number of developments may lead to direct mortality of migratory shorebirds. Consideration should be given to the location and design of these developments to avoid the possibility for direct mortality. For instance, effort should be made to locate structures with potential migratory shorebird collision risks (e.g. wind turbines) away from known migratory pathways. Other potential causes of mortality, including toxic chemical release and domestic pets, must also be addressed.

10. What does this mean for actions in or near migratory shorebird habitat?

If you plan to undertake an action that may have a significant impact then you should refer the proposal to the Minister *before* commencing the action. The Minister will decide, within 20 business days, whether assessment and approval is required under the EPBC Act. More information on referral and assessment is available at <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/assessments/process.html>.

11. Where can I get more information?

The background paper for this policy statement provides a biological and ecological context for the identification of important habitat, significant impact thresholds and mitigation measures.

Internationally important sites and current flyway population estimates have been identified by Bamford et al. (2008), *Migratory shorebirds of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway: Population estimates and internationally important sites*. This paper is available at: <http://www.wetlands.org/WatchRead/tabid/56/mod/1570/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/2012/Default.aspx>

There are also a number of organisations in Australia involved with migratory shorebird monitoring and conservation. For instance, the Australasian Wader Studies Group has been surveying migratory shorebirds for over 20 years and the Shorebirds 2020 project, coordinated by Birds Australia, aims to facilitate shorebird monitoring across the country. The Australasian Wader Studies Group website can be found at <http://www.awsg.org.au/> and the Birds Australia website can be found at <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/>. More information on the Shorebirds 2020 project is available at: www.shorebirds.org.au.

Other EPBC Act policy statements are available to help you to understand the EPBC Act and your obligations. They are available from the Department's website at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/guidelines-policies.html>, or by contacting the Community Information Unit by email: ciu@environment.gov.au or by phone: 1800 803 772.

The [Protected Matters Search Tool](#) can provide a good starting point for determining the likelihood of having matters of national environmental significance in your area. State and Territory Government agencies may also hold relevant information including habitat and species distribution information.

Information on listed threatened species and ecological communities is available at the Department's Species Profiles and Threats Database (SPRAT) at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl>.

Copyright

© Commonwealth of Australia 2008

This work is copyright. You may download, display, print and reproduce this material in unaltered form only (retaining this notice) for your personal, non-commercial use or use within your organisation. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, all other rights are reserved. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Attorney General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 or posted at <http://www.ag.gov.au/cca>.