

A call to help save the enigmatic Spoon-billed Sandpiper

The Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* is one of the world's most unusual birds. The species is listed by IUCN as Critically Endangered on the basis of an extremely small population, estimated at 120-200 hundred pairs, and due to an annual decline of 27%. This means that it is at an extremely high risk of extinction in the next few years. Hunting and habitat loss on the non-breeding grounds, combined with the loss of important intertidal feeding areas during its migration, have all contributed to this precipitous decline.

An International Action Plan for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper has been produced on behalf of BirdLife International and the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS). Along with actions related to habitat protection, site management, awareness raising and education particularly in the non-breeding grounds, the possibility of a establishing a captive breeding program was explored. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) in conjunction with RSPB, British Trust for Ornithology, Birdlife International and Birds Russia have now embarked on an ambitious breeding program. This will entail extensive field operations in Chukotka, Russia, in the forthcoming summer of 2011. Ongoing husbandry will be carried out through WWT facilities in the United Kingdom. The cost of this program is very high and, while it is being funded in the short term by RSPB and WWT, the EAAF Partnership has invited Partners to provide financial assistance to enable ongoing support and the success of this critical program.

Although this species is not one that we see in Australasia it is, nevertheless, the most iconic wader species in our flyway.

Its current critical conservation situation should be of concern to every shorebird lover wherever they live. Moreover, the problems faced by this species are common to many of the shorebirds that migrate through our flyway. In many ways this is a flagship species that is demonstrating to the world the significant issues that are faced by these long distance migrants.

The Australasian Wader Studies Group of Birds Australia supports this program and invites anyone interested in saving this species to provide financial assistance. Donations may be made by cheque, payable to Birds Australia and forwarded to Suite 2-05, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia or by credit card by phone 1300 730 075 or +61 3 9347 0757 or by returning the attached form (please **do not** make your donation online at the Birds Australia website). Please specify the Spoon-billed Sandpiper fund when making your donation.

YES! I would like to make a donation to help save the Spoon-billed Sandpiper from extinction, by making a contribution to the captive breeding program initiated by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Email _____

I would like to make a donation of:

\$30 \$ 50 \$100 \$250 other \$ |_____|

I enclose a cheque/money order payable to Birds Australia, or

Please debit my: Visa MasterCard

(We cannot accept Amex or Diners Club cards)

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____

_____ / _____

Expiry date: _____ / _____

Cardholder name: _____

Signature: _____

Donations over \$2 are tax-deductible, a receipt will be forwarded.



**The
Spoon-billed
Sandpiper -**

on the way to extinction?