

[1] "*Gallinago megala* — Swinhoe's Snipe
Glossary SPRAT Profile
For information to assist regulatory considerations, refer to Policy Statements and Guidelines, the Conservation Advice, the Listing Advice and/or the Recovery Plan. EPBC Legal Status and Documents
Top EPBC Act Listing Status
Listed marine as *Gallinago megala* Listed migratory - EPBC Act as *Gallinago megala*, Bonn as *Gallinago megala*, CAMBA as *Gallinago megala*, JAMBA as *Gallinago megala*, ROKAMBA as *Gallinago megala*
Approved Conservation Advice
There is no approved Conservation Advice for this species
Listing Advice
There is no Listing Advice for this species
Adopted/Made Recovery Plans
There is no adopted or made Recovery Plan for this species
Adopted/Made Threat Abatement Plans
No Threat Abatement Plan has been identified as being relevant for this species
Wildlife Conservation Plans
Commonwealth of Australia (2015). Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds. Canberra, ACT: Department of the Environment. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/wildlife-conservation-plan-migratory-shorebirds-2016>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 15-Jan-2016.
Other Commonwealth Documents
Top Other EPBC Act Plans
EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21 - Industry Guidelines for avoiding, assessing and mitigating impacts on EPBC Act listed migratory shorebird species (Department of the Environment, 2015) [Admin Guideline].
National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife Including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds (Department of the Environment and Energy, 2020) [Admin Guideline].
Information Sheets
Migratory Shorebirds of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway: Population estimates and internationally important sites (Bamford M., D. Watkins, W. Bancroft, G. Tischler & J. Wahl, 2008) [Information Sheet].
Revision of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Population Estimates for 37 listed Migratory Shorebird Species (Hansen, B.D., R.A. Fuller, D. Watkins, D.I. Rogers, R.S. Clemens, M. Newman, E.J. Woehler & D.R. Weller, 2016) In effect under the EPBC Act from 29-May-2017. [Information Sheet].
Federal Register of Legislative Instruments
Marine: Declaration under section 248 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - List of Marine Species (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000c) [Legislative Instrument] as *Gallinago megala*
Migratory: List of Migratory Species (13/07/2000) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000b) [Legislative Instrument] as *Gallinago megala*
Wildlife Conservation Plan: Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006r) [Legislative Instrument] as *Gallinago megala*
Wildlife Conservation Plan: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - Section 285 - Instrument revoking and making a wildlife conservation plan (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016) [Legislative Instrument] as *Gallinago megala*
Non-statutory Listing Status
IUCN: Listed as Least Concern (Global Status: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: 2020.2 list)
NGO: Listed as Least Concern (The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2010 - non-threatened)
Naming
Top Scientific name
Gallinago megala [864]
Family
Scolopacidae: Charadriiformes: Aves: Chordata: Animalia
Species author
Swinhoe, 1861
Infraspecies author
Reference
Other names
Capella megala [66544]
Distribution Map
Top Distribution map
The distribution shown is generalised from the Departments Species of National Environmental Significance dataset. This is an indicative distribution map of the present distribution of the species based on best available knowledge. Some species information is withheld in line with sensitive species policies. See map caveat for more information.
Top Illustrations
Top Illustrations
Google Images
Other Links, Including Superseded Commonwealth Documents
Top
Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage (AGDEH) (2006f). Wildlife

Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds. Canberra, ACT: Department of the Environment and Heritage. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/migratory/publications/shorebird-plan.html>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 25-Feb-2006. Ceased to be in effect under the EPBC Act from 15-Jan-2016.

Commonwealth of Australia (2000b). List of Migratory Species (13/07/2000). F2007B00750. Canberra: Federal Register of Legislative Instruments. Available from: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2007B00750>.

Commonwealth of Australia (2000c). Declaration under section 248 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - List of Marine Species. F2008B00465. Canberra: Federal Register of Legislative Instruments. Available from: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2008B00465>.

Commonwealth of Australia (2007h). Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - Listed Migratory Species - Approval of an International Agreement. F2007L02641. Canberra: Federal Register of Legislative Instruments. Available from: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2007L02641>.

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) (2009aj). Draft Significant impact guidelines for 36 migratory shorebirds Draft EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/migratory-shorebirds.html>.

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) (2009bc). Draft background paper to EPBC Act policy statement 3.21. Canberra, DEWHA. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/migratory-shorebirds.html>.

Newsletters
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 EPBC Act email updates can be received via the Communities for Communities newsletter and the EPBC Act newsletter.
 Caveat
 Top
 This database is designed to provide statutory, biological and ecological information on species and ecological communities, migratory species, marine species, and species and species products subject to international trade and commercial use protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act). It has been compiled from a range of sources including listing advice, recovery plans, published literature and individual experts. While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, no guarantee is given, nor responsibility taken, by the Commonwealth for its accuracy, currency or completeness. The Commonwealth does not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of, or reliance on, the information contained in this database. The information contained in this database does not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth. This database is not intended to be a complete source of information on the matters it deals with. Individuals and organisations should consider all the available information, including that available from other sources, in deciding whether there is a need to make a referral or apply for a permit or exemption under the EPBC Act.

Citation: Department of the Environment (2022). *Gallinago megala* in Species Profile and Threats Database, Department of the Environment, Canberra. Available from: <https://www.environment.gov.au/sprat>. Accessed Tue, 18 Jan 2022 21:04:57 +1100.

Where available the sections below provide a biological profile for the species. Biological profiles vary in age and content across species, some are no longer being updated and are retained as archival content. These profiles are still displayed as they contain valuable information for many species. The Profile Update section below indicates when the biological profile was last updated for some species. For information to assist regulatory considerations, please refer to Conservation Advice, the Recovery Plan, Policy Statements and Guidelines.

	Taxonomy
Top	Scientific name: <i>Gallinago megala</i>
	Common name: Swinhoe's Snipe
	Description
Top	Swinhoe's Snipe is a medium sized member of the Gallinagoniidae family. It has a length of 27009629 cm, a wingspan of 38009644 cm and a weight of 120 g. The species has a long straight bill, short, broad and somewhat blunt wings, short tail and short legs. It is similar in size to Latham's Snipe, <i>Gallinago hardwickii</i> and the Pin-tailed Snipe, <i>G. stenura</i> . The species is distinguished by slight differences in size and structure, however, field identification is often not possible. There is no seasonal variation in plumage, the sexes are alike (Higgins & Davies 1996).
	Australian Distribution
Top	Few definite records exist for Swinhoe's Snipe in Australia. The species has been recorded in the north between the Kimberley Divide and Cape York Peninsula. In Western Australia the species has been recorded in Pilbara, the Kimberley region, Mount Goldsworthy, Mount Blaize and in the north-west regions around the Mitchell Plateau. In the Northern Territory the species is believed to be common and widespread in the Top End. Definite records exist from Darwin, Melville Island, Cannon Hill, Red Lily Lagoon and Mount Brockman. In Queensland specimens have

been taken at Normanton. The species has also been sighted at Mount Isa (Higgins & Davies 1996).

Global Distribution

Swinhoe's Snipe breeds in central and southern Siberia. Its breeding range is bounded by the Tym, Yenisei and upper Nizhnyaya Tunguska rivers. It is found in south-west Transbaykalia, northern Mongolia, the Altai Mountains, the north Sayan mountains, the Shegarta River and Kulunda region. The species is transient through east China and occasionally Japan. Its non-breeding range extends from southern China, eastern to southern India and Sri Lanka. They occur throughout the Philippines, through Indonesia, New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands. It has occasionally been recorded in west Micronesia, from Palau and east to Truk. The species is rarely recorded in Indochina, Sumatra and Indomalaya. Vagrants have also been recorded on Maldives Island and the north Caucasus Mountains (Higgins & Davies 1996).

Population Information

The EAAF population of Swinhoe's Snipe is estimated at 40 000 (Hansen et al. 2016).

Habitat

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During the non-breeding season Swinhoe's Snipe occurs at the edges of wetlands, such as wet paddy fields, swamps and freshwater streams. The species is also known to occur in grasslands, drier cultivated areas (including crops of rapeseed and wheat) and market gardens (Higgins & Davies 1996).

Habitat specific to Australia includes the dense clumps of grass and rushes round the edges of fresh and brackish wetlands. This includes swamps, billabongs, river pools, small streams and sewage ponds. They are also found in drying claypans and inundated plains pitted with crab holes (Higgins & Davies 1996).

Movement Patterns

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Departure from breeding grounds

Swinhoe's Snipe is migratory, breeding in central Siberia and Mongolia and moving south for the boreal winter. The species moves south-east through Russia from August to late September. It is recorded as a rare passage migrant in Korea from August to October and a regular transient in Japan. In China it is common near Beijing throughout August to September, the Lower Yangtze from August to September and the Foochow Valley from August to October. The species passes through Taiwan from September and Hong Kong from August to November. The species is an uncommon passage migrant through Micronesia. The main southern movement appears to occur through the Philippines throughout September. Swinhoe's Snipe is a rare passage migrant at Sumatra (only recorded once), Borneo, Wallacea (from November), Port Moresby (from late August) and the Torres Strait (Higgins & Davies 1996).

Arrival in Australia

Swinhoe's Snipe is recorded in north Australia, particularly the Kimberley region, from October to April. The species may occur in Pilbara from October to March. It is believed to be a common visitor to subcoastal Northern Territory during the wet season. It has been recorded in northern Queensland in November, March and April (Higgins & Davies 1996).

Return to breeding grounds

The species leaves Australia in April and is seen leaving Port Moresby by early May. It has been recorded at Wallacea and Bali in March. It is believed that the birds move north from the Philippines, following the coast of China until moving inland near the Gulf of Chihli. The species then moves further north before turning west to the Lake Baikal region, where it breeds (Higgins & Davies 1996).

Threats

Top

Global Threats

There are a number of threats that affect migratory shorebirds in the Flyway. The greatest threat is indirect and direct habitat loss (Melville 1997). Staging areas used during migration through eastern Asia are being lost and degraded by activities which are reclaiming the mudflats for development or developing them for aquaculture (Barter 2002, 2005c; Ge et al. 2007; Round 2006). This is especially evident in the Yellow Sea, where at least 40% of intertidal areas have been reclaimed. This process is continuing at a rapid rate and may accelerate in the near future (Barter 2002, 2005c). For example, in South Korea, the Mangyeong and Dongjin River estuaries each supported 5% of the combined estimated Flyway populations (and are the most important sites for this species on both northern and southern migration) but they are currently being reclaimed as part of the Saemangeum Reclamation Project (Barter 2002, 2005c). The 33 km sea-wall across these two estuaries was completed in April 2006, resulting in significant change in the 40 100 ha area (Barter 2005c).

Reclamation is also a threat in other areas of the Flyway, such as in Malaysia (Wei et al. 2006). In addition, water regulation and diversion infrastructure in the major tributaries have resulted in the reduction of water and sediment flows (Barter 2002; Barter et al. 1998).

Migratory shorebirds are also adversely affected by pollution, both on passage and in non-breeding areas (Harding et al. 2007; Melville 1997; Round 2006; Wei et al. 2006). Disturbance from human activities, including recreation, shellfish harvesting, fishing and aquaculture is likely to increase significantly in the future (Barter et al. 2005; Davidson & Rothwell 1993).

It is predicted that the rate of decrease in the intertidal area in the Yellow Sea will accelerate (Barter 2002). In addition, intensive oil exploration and extraction, and reduction in river flows due to upstream water diversion, are other potentially significant threats in parts of China where this species is present internationally.

significant numbers (Barter 2005c; Barter et al. 1998). Global warming and associated changes in sea level are likely to have a long-term impact on the breeding, staging and non-breeding grounds of migratory waders (Harding et al. 2007). Hunting is still a very serious problem for waders in China, and this species is sometimes caught (Ming et al. 1998).

Australia

Within Australia, there are a number of threats common to most migratory shorebirds, including Swinhoe's Snipe. Habitat loss

The loss of important habitat reduces the availability of foraging and roosting sites. This affects the ability of the birds to build up the energy stores required for successful migration and breeding. Some sites are important all year round for juveniles who may stay in Australia throughout the breeding season until they reach maturity. A variety of activities may cause habitat loss. These include direct losses through land clearing, inundation, infilling or draining. Indirect loss may occur due to changes in water quality, hydrology or structural changes near roosting sites (DEWHA 2009aj).

Habitat degradation

As most migratory shorebirds have specialized feeding techniques, they are particularly susceptible to slight changes in prey sources and foraging environments. Activities that cause habitat degradation include (but are not restricted to): (1) loss of marine or estuarine vegetation, which is likely to alter the dynamic equilibrium of sediment banks and mudflats; (2) invasion of intertidal mudflats by weeds such as cord grass; (3) water pollution; (4) changes to the hydrological regime and (5) exposure of acid sulphate soils, hence changing the chemical balance at the site (DEWHA 2009aj).

Disturbance

Disturbance can result from residential and recreational activities including; fishing, power boating, four wheel driving, walking dogs, noise and night lighting. While some disturbances may have only a low impact it is important to consider the combined effect of disturbances with other threats. Roosting and foraging birds are sensitive to discrete, unpredictable disturbances such as loud noises (i.e. construction sites) and approaching objects (i.e. boats). Sustained disturbances can prevent shorebirds from using parts of the habitat (DEWHA 2009aj).

Direct mortality

Direct mortality is a result of human activities around the migration pathways of shorebirds and at roosting and foraging sites. Examples include the construction of wind farms in migration or movement pathways, bird strike due to aircraft, hunting, chemical and oil spills (DEWHA 2009aj).

Threat Abatement and Recovery

Top Governments and conservation groups have undertaken a wide range of activities relating to migratory shorebird conservation (AGDEH 2005c) both in Australia and in cooperation with other countries associated with the Flyway.

Australia

The Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (AGDEH 2006f) outlines national activities to support the Flyway shorebird conservation initiatives and provides a strategic framework to ensure these activities and future research and management actions are integrated and remain focused on the long-term survival of migratory shorebird populations and their habitats.

Since 1996, the Australian Government has invested approximately \$5 000 000 of Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding in projects contributing to migratory shorebird conservation (DEWHA 2007e). This funding has been distributed across a range of important projects, including the implementation of a nationally coordinated monitoring programme that will produce robust, long-term population data able to support the conservation and effective management of shorebirds and their habitat, migration studies using colour bands and leg flags, and development of a shorebird conservation toolkit to assist users to develop and implement shorebird conservation projects.

Birds

Australia is currently co-ordinating the Shorebirds 2020 project, which aims to monitor shorebird populations at important sites throughout Australia. Birdlife International is identifying sites and regions which are important to various species of birds, including shorebirds, and the processes that are affecting them. The aim of these activities is to inform decisions on the management of shorebird habitat. It may be possible to rehabilitate some degraded wetlands or to create artificial wader feeding or roosting sites to replace those destroyed by development, such as by creating artificial sandflats and sand islands from dredge spoil and by building breakwaters (Denig 2005; Straw 1992a, 1999).

The Significant impact guidelines for 36 migratory shorebirds Draft EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21 (DEWHA 2009aj) provides guidelines for determining the impacts of proposed actions on migratory shorebirds. The policy statement also provides mitigation strategies to reduce the level and extent of those impacts. The policy aims to promote ecologically sustainable development that allows for the continued ecological function of important habitat for migratory shorebirds (DEWHA 2009aj).

International

Australia has played an important role in building international cooperation to conserve migratory birds. In addition to being party to international agreements on migratory species, Australia is also a member of the Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and the Sustainable Use of their Habitats in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (Flyway Partnership), which was launched in Bogor, Indonesia on 6 November 2006. Prior to this agreement, Australia was party to the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy and the Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network.

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site Network, which is part of the broader Flyway Partnership,

promotes the identification and protection of key sites for migratory shorebirds. Australia has 17 sites in the network (Partnership EAAF 2008): Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory (1 375 940 ha) Parry Lagoons, Western Australia (36 111 ha) Thomsons Lake, Western Australia (213 ha) Moreton Bay, Queensland (113 314 ha) Hunter Estuary, NSW (2916 ha) Corner Inlet, Victoria (51 500 ha) The Coorong, Lake Alexandrina & Lake Albert, South Australia (140 500 ha) Orielton Lagoon, Tasmania (2920 ha) Logan Lagoon, Tasmania (2320 ha) Western Port, Victoria (59 297 ha) Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria (16 540 ha) Shallow Inlet Marine and Coastal Park, Victoria Discovery Bay Coastal Park, Victoria Bowling Green Bay, Queensland Shoalwater Bay, Queensland Great Sandy Strait, Queensland Currawinya National Park, Queensland

Species Profile References Top

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