

Black-faced Spoonbill



VERTEBRATA

Order: Carnivora

Family: Felidae

Genus: Panthera

Category: 1 – critically endangered species at the territory of Russia

The black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*), a large migratory waterbird, has the most restricted distribution of all spoonbills, and it is the only one currently regarded as endangered.

Distribution and Population:

The Black-Faced Spoonbill population as of 2012 census was recorded at 2,693 birds (Yu Yattung *in litt.* 2012); with an estimation of 1,600 mature birds.

Black-Faced Spoonbill breeds on islets off the west coast of **North Korea** and **South Korea**, and Liaoning province in mainland **China** (Birdlife International 2001). Birds have been reported in the Tumen estuary of **Russia**, and breeding was recorded in South Primorye for the first time in 2006 (Litvinenko and Shibaev 2007). The three major wintering sites are the Tsengwen estuary of **Taiwan (China)**, the Deep Bay area of **Hong Kong (China)**, and the Chinese mainland and Hainan Island. It also winters in Cheju, South Korea, Kyushu and Okinawa, **Japan**, and Red River delta, **Vietnam** (Yu Yattung 2003), and there are recent records from **Thailand**, the **Philippines**, **Macau (China)** and inland China (Yu Yattung and Swennen 2005). The key known stopover sites used during migration include Yueqing Bay, Wenzhou Bay and Sanmen Bay (Ding Ping 2002), as well as Chongming Dongtian, Shanghai (Yu Yattung *in litt.* 2012).

Distribution of Black-faced Spoonbill



Source: BirdLife International 2012. *Platalea minor*. In: IUCN 2012

(References: BirdLife International (2013) Species factsheet: *Platalea minor*. In: IUCN 2012.)

Physical Features and Habitats:

The black-faced spoonbill is a white wading bird with a distinctively shaped beak - looking like a spoon. The facial skin is bare and black in color - hence its name. It is about 76 cm long and weighs about 1 kg. During the breeding season, adult birds also develop yellow ornamental feathers on the head and breast, and yellow patches of skin under the eyes.

In September, migrant black-faced spoonbills begin to congregate in reclaimed land in Taiwan, Province of China to pass the winter. They rest together in groups during the day and begin to search for food at dusk. In winter, they occur along the coast from Japan, Taiwan Province of China, Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site, Hong Kong, China all the way to northern Viet Nam. In late March or early April, the birds leave to return to their breeding areas. So far, the only known breeding area is on rocky islands off the west coast of the Korean Peninsula where about 30 pairs nest. The black-faced spoonbill inhabits shallow water like seashores, estuaries in coastal areas and areas near fish farms. They feed mainly on small fish and shrimp by striding quickly along, sweeping their partly open, spoon-shaped bill from side to side through the water, and feeling for aquatic animals to seize. A clutch usually contains three eggs, which take both parents to incubate. Chicks hatch one at a time rather than all together. The newly hatched need to be fed for a few weeks longer after the family leaves the nest. The species breeds on rocky islands off the coast and travel to the mainland to feed. When the breeding pairs have small chicks, the parents feed in freshwater areas, primarily in rice paddies near coast.

Priority actions for NEASPEC:

1. Encourage range countries to recognize the black-faced spoonbill as a conservation priority species and strengthen the management of its habitats.
2. Encourage and support range countries to develop a formal conservation network for the black-faced spoonbill with the help of existing network and coordinate activities.
3. Develop an action plan for collaborative monitoring and research in breeding or wintering sites, and implement the plan.
4. Promote awareness rising on conservation needs of the species in each Government as well as general public and international community.
5. Support range countries to work together in capacity-building on habitat management, population management, monitoring and research, law enforcement, environmental education and community development.