

# Workshop on nature conservation and biodiversity for transboundary cooperation

28-29 August 2024

Holiday Inn Incheon Songdo  
Incheon, Republic of Korea

## Concept note

### **Background**

North-East Asia contains some crucial habitats of critically endangered species across countries that form the ecological connectivity beyond national borders. In 2007, given this ecological importance, NEASPEC member States identified six flagship species (Amur tiger, Amur leopard, Snow leopard, Black-faced Spoonbill, White-naped Crane and Hooded Crane) for this subregion with the adoption of the NEASPEC Nature Conservation Strategy<sup>1</sup> at SOM-12.

The Strategy envisages more transboundary cooperation in geographical proximity. At the same time, the Strategy also emphasizes while these target species do not necessarily inhabit in all NEASPEC member States, the key species constitute a single ecological community, leveraging the potential to contribute to the national and global biodiversity goals and targets. To this end, the Secretariat has collaborated with member States and conducted several activities in align with the Strategy, agreed by the Senior Officials Meetings, mainly for two target areas: (1) feline species; and (2) migratory birds and their habitats.

### Conservation of Feline Species

From 2020 to 2023, the Secretariat conducted a project titled “Transboundary cooperation on the conservation of Amur tigers, Amur leopards and Snow leopards in North-East Asia” to conserve big cats in North-East Asia, initiated with approval in 2019 funded by the Russian Government. This effort involves collaboration on transboundary environmental cooperation with China, Mongolia, and the Russian Federation. A key workshop in October 2021 highlighted the necessity of cross-border protected areas and ecological corridors, alongside effective cooperation for habitat management. Following this, in 2022, an additional component was conducted to evaluate the status of transboundary snow leopard populations between Mongolia and the Russian Federation, marking a continued commitment and sustainability to these conservation efforts.

### Conservation of Migratory Birds and Habitats

Migratory birds and their habitats are crucial for ecological connectivity in North-East Asia. NEASPEC has conducted several studies on nature conservation as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> [Publication SavingNatureConservation 2.pdf \(neaspec.org\)](#)

- Studies conducted between 2014 and 2016, including in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and the Dauria International Protected Areas (DIPA), show that existing protected areas are insufficient for conserving these species and that domestic policies have failed to adequately protect key habitats.
- A 2017 study titled “Connectivity Conservation and Transboundary Cooperation in North-East Asia” recommended establishing a “North-East Asia Transboundary Protected Areas Network” for the conservation of endangered species and important landscapes, citing the Rason Migratory Bird Reserve and the lower Tumen River area as key sites for future research and conservation actions. There has been a push for enhanced coordination among member States for the conservation of these areas, including the creation of transboundary protected areas to safeguard migratory birds and their environments.

### Workshop on Nature Conservation and Transboundary Cooperation

In 2016, a workshop was organized with the primary goal of enhancing transboundary cooperation for nature conservation in North-East Asia. It aimed at assessing the current state of collaboration in the region, evaluating the outcomes of two pivotal NEASPEC projects focused on the conservation of Amur tigers and leopards and the preservation of critical habitats for migratory birds, and proposing subsequent actions. The workshop also sought to explore future directions in transboundary conservation, particularly through the lens of connectivity conservation and the development of cross-border protected areas. Participants comprised an array of stakeholders from NEASPEC project partners and national focal points to international organizations, NGOs, government representatives, protected area managers, and experts in the field. This diverse group included specialists from the Feline Research Centre of China's State Forestry Administration, WWF-Russia, the Land of the Leopard National Park in Russia, and entities involved in migratory bird conservation like the National Bird Banding Centre of China and the Wild Bird Society of Japan, among others.

Building on the previous projects and the workshop, this workshop aims to conduct a thorough review of previous projects on the NEASPEC flagship species, drawing lessons learned to be used as a guidance for further nature conservation activities under NEASPEC.

### **Objectives**

- Lessons learned from previous projects
  - Review previous projects on the conservation of key feline species along with efforts to protect habitats crucial for migratory birds.
  - Assess the effectiveness of these conservation projects, pinpointing successes and areas needing improvement.
  - Foster a more coordinated conservation approach at local, national, and regional/global levels.
- Streamlined Strategic Approach
  - Discuss and develop strategies that align with and contribute to global conservation goals, particularly the Global Biodiversity Framework.
  - Strengthen overall conservation strategies to enhance biodiversity and ensure the sustainable management of natural resources.

- Promote a unified approach to achieving global biodiversity targets, reinforcing the commitment to preserving our planet's biological diversity.
- Kick-off of the migratory birds project
  - Invite key project members for them to learn from the previous projects, aligning their execution of the project with the Strategy under NEASPEC.
  - Provide avenues for project members to network with experts from previous projects and enhance synergies among them for future collaborations.

### **Outputs**

- Workshop report
- Document summarizing lessons learnt from previous projects, which inform the strategic direction for nature conservation under NEASPEC particularly the 2026-2030 Strategy

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Relevant experts are well acquainted for future collaboration
- Good practices and challenges are well extracted to inform the future planning
- More strategized guidance from the project members
- The migratory birds project is well initiated with momentum

## Tentative programme

[Day 1] 28 August 2024		
08:30 - 09:00	<b>Registration</b>	
09:00 - 09:50	<b>Opening session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Opening remarks</b></li> <li>• <b>Welcome remarks</b></li> <li>• <b>Keynote speech</b></li> </ul> <p>Group photo</p>	
09:50 – 10:10	<b>Break</b>	
10:10 – 12:00	<b>Session 1. (Plenary) Progress on policies and programmes for promoting transboundary environmental cooperation in North-East Asia</b>	
12:00 – 13:00 <b>Lunch</b>		
13:00 - 15:00	<b>Parallel Session 2.1</b> <b>Conservation of big feline species</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presentations</b> on the review of NEASPEC projects, national-level conservation efforts, and bi-/multi-lateral projects</li> <li>• <b>Discussions on follow-up activities</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Open discussion on follow-up activities (esp. based on NEASPEC project outcomes and recommendations)</li> <li>(2) Experts may want to present project proposals.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<b>Parallel Session 2.2</b> <b>Conservation of migratory birds</b> <p>The focus will be discussion on detailed action plans and activities for implementation of the newly approved NEASPEC project on “<i>Connectivity conservation for habitats of flagship migratory birds in North-East Asia</i>”.</p>
15:00-15:30	<b>Break</b>	
15:30-17:30	<b>Parallel Session 2.1 (cont.)</b>	<b>Parallel Session 2.2 (cont.)</b>
18:00 - <b>Dinner Reception</b>		
[Day 2] 29 August 2024		
09:00 – 10:20	<b>Parallel Session 2.1 (cont.)</b> <b>Conservation of big feline species</b> <p><b>Discussion points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we link to the global/regional policies?</li> </ul>	<b>Parallel Session 2.2 (cont.)</b> <b>Conservation of migratory birds</b> <p><b>Discussion points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we link to the global/regional policies?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we enhance knowledge sharing? (platform)</li> <li>• Technical issues</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement (local communities, CEPA (youth, gender, etc.))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we enhance knowledge sharing? (platform)</li> <li>• Methodologies</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement (local communities, CEPA (youth, gender, etc.))</li> </ul>
10:20 – 10:40	<b>Break</b>	
10:40 - 12:00	<b>Parallel Session 2.1 (cont.)</b>	<b>Parallel Session 2.2 (cont.)</b>
12:00 – 13:00	<b>Lunch</b>	
13:00 – 15:20	<b>Session 3. (Plenary) Roundtable discussion on coordinated actions and plans for systematic transboundary conservation in North-East Asia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderators’ report on each parallel session</li> <li>• Open discussion for 2026-2030 Strategic plans</li> <li>• CEPA (engagement of local communities, gender, youth)</li> <li>• Information sharing platform</li> </ul>	
15:20 – 15:40	<b>Break</b>	
15:40 – 17:30	<b>Session 3. (Cont.)</b>  <b>Closing</b>	

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