



















temporal insights into the distribution patterns of migratory birds, which are essential for the design of species-specific conservation plans, habitat restoration and protected area management; this information is challenging to obtain through traditional survey methods. Importantly, the Locally led East Asian Flyway Acoustics network will connect local initiatives across a hemispheric scale, enhancing our understanding of migratory bird ecology and drawing greater attention to the Flyway.

The Locally led East Asian Flyway Acoustics network recently launched a website and blog that can be used to monitor progress (birds.cornell.edu/ccb/locally-led-east-asian-flyway-acoustics-leafa). The project is co-organized by BISA Indonesia, Universiti of Malaysia Terengganu, and the K. Lisa Yang Center for Conservation Bioacoustics. Initial funding for this project comes with generous support from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology through the H. Elliot McClure Fund for the Research and Conservation of Birds in Asia.

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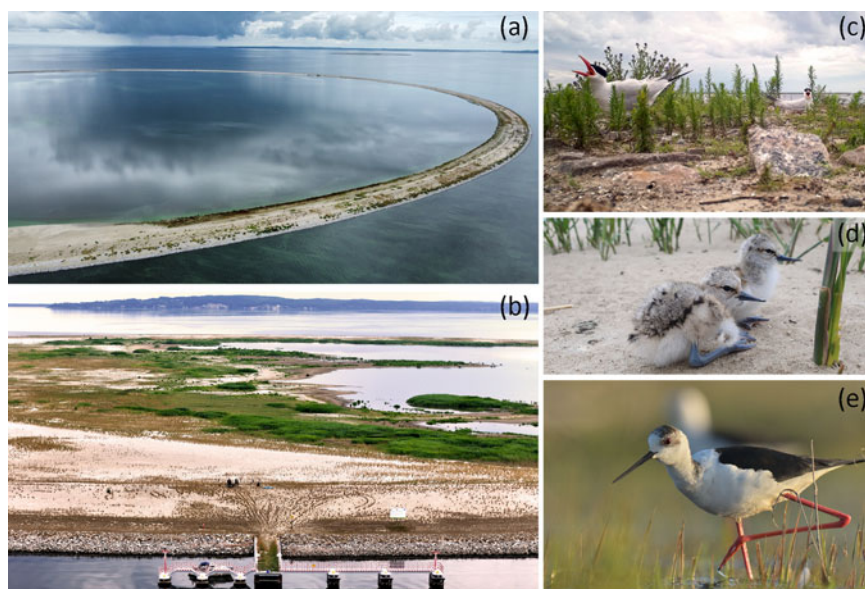
New habitats for birds: rapid population growth and new breeding species in Poland

Recent efforts to create artificial islands in the Szczecin Lagoon in the Oder estuary, Poland, demonstrate that appropriate environmental management can promote the expansion and stabilization of bird populations. These islands, created during a project to deepen the waterway to the port of Szczecin, have seen a dramatic increase in breeding birds, including species that are new to Poland.

The number of breeding birds on the islands increased from 185 pairs in 2021 to nearly 5,000 pairs in 2024. This increase underscores the effectiveness of protecting early successional stages of vegetation on newly established habitats. Among the most notable achievements is the first recorded breeding of the Caspian tern *Hydroprogne caspia* in Poland, with an incubating bird observed on 7 June 2024, marking the southernmost breeding site for this Baltic population.

Other bird species that have benefited from habitat conditions on the islands include the black-winged stilt *Himantopus himantopus*, a species previously uncommon in this region that has begun to expand from the south, and the pied avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, which usually breeds in the Wadden Sea area but has expanded eastwards to these islands.



These changes are a response to the loss of natural habitats, partly driven by climate change. Creating new habitats that support early successional processes is crucial in combating biodiversity loss (Gómez-Serrano, 2024, *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 8, 1201–1202). Birds respond quickly to environmental changes and therefore reflect the overall health of ecosystems. These increases in bird populations and the presence of new breeding species on these artificial islands is testament to the success of such interventions, and



Artificial islands in the Szczecin Lagoon, Poland: (a) Śmiecka and Brysna; (b) Brysna Island; (c) camera-trap image of a Caspian tern *Hydroprogne caspia*, a new breeding species in Poland; (d) chicks of the pied avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, a species that established a colony of 44 pairs in 2024, nesting ephemerally in this zone; (e) one of two pairs of black-winged stilts on Brysna Island in 2024. Photos: Maciej Sobieraj (a), Maciej Przybysz (b), Łukasz Jankowiak (c), Marcin Sołowiej (d) and Miłosz Kowalewski (e).

this model of integrating environmental restoration with infrastructure projects can serve as an example globally. Further management should focus on predator control and maintaining early successional stages to ensure long-term population stability (Marchowski et al., 2023, *Ornis Polonica*, 64, 273–287).

Two years ago, the Oder River, into which these artificial islands extend, experienced an unprecedented ecological disaster that resulted in the death of millions of animals (Marchowski & Ławicki, 2023, *Oryx*, 57, 9). The use of these islands by bird populations highlights the potential for ecological recovery.

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Conserving the Bengal florican in Nepal: a collaborative education and awareness campaign

The Bengal florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*, a Critically Endangered ground-nesting bird native to Nepal, India and Cambodia, is at high risk of extinction because of habitat loss and anthropogenic disturbance. In Nepal, the species is confined to three protected areas: Chitwan and Shuklaphata National Parks and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, with the latter an important stronghold. However, significant anthropogenic disturbances persist, driven by

the dependence of local communities on natural resources within the Reserve, cattle being abandoned in foraging areas and a lack of awareness about the Bengal florican and its habitat.

In response, our team implemented a series of education campaigns, supported by the Conservation Leadership Programme and in collaboration with the Koshi Bird Society, during 8 May–3 June 2024. The campaigns targeted students across 11 schools (six in Koshi, two in Chitwan and three in Shuklaphata), focusing on the distribution and ecology of the florican, and threats to its conservation. A drawing competition was also held to stimulate conservation interest, and pre- and post-campaign surveys unequivocally demonstrated a positive shift in awareness.

To reinforce these efforts, we distributed bookmarks featuring conservation messages, and selected bio-monitors from each workshop to promote birding and conservation in their communities. Additionally, we conducted four community workshops (two in Koshi and two in Chitwan), engaging > 250 stakeholders, including farmers, teachers and fishers, in discussions of conservation challenges and solutions. Overall, our campaigns engaged > 900 students and > 250 community members, contributing to Bengal florican conservation in Nepal.

To broaden our conservation outreach, we launched the Bengal Florican Project (bengalflorican.org), which aims to engage people in Nepal, India and Cambodia in the conservation of the species.

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