

The International Black-faced Spoonbill Census 2015



The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
Results Release
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Black-faced Spoonbill (*Platalea minor*) is the Hong Kong's best known globally threatened bird species, which is famous for its peculiar bill. Hong Kong supports its second largest wintering population, following that in Taiwan. The Spoonbill mainly inhabits East Asia. Over the last two decades, the number of Black-faced Spoonbill had risen from nearly three hundreds to two thousands and seven hundreds in 2014, and reaches a record toll of 3,272 birds this year, accounting for an increase of 20.0% from last year. It is a new high figure for the species, and also the first time that the population of Black-faced Spoonbill exceeds three thousands.

Mr. YU Yat-tung, Research Manager of HKBWS and coordinator of the International Census, said "The great increase is attributed to the increase in three 'traditional' major sites, the Tainan region, Deep Bay (including Hong Kong and Shenzhen) as well as Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan. The figure in Tainan region shot up from 1,621 to 1,997 (+ 23%) and remains the largest wintering ground of the Black-faced Spoonbill. Some small habitats in Tainan had a significant increase in spoonbill numbers and the Chinese Wild Bird Federation suspected that the major habitats in the region may close to the maximum capacity so some spoonbills may need to expand to other sites in the north."

In the Deep Bay area (including Hong Kong and Shenzhen), after experienced consecutive drop in the past four years, finally a great increase was recorded this year. A total of 411 spoonbills were recorded, which were 159 birds more than that of last year (+ 63%). The spoonbills were found utilizing various wetland areas in Deep Bay. Apart from Futian, Shenzhen and Mai Po Nature Reserve, a fair number of spoonbills were also found in Hong Kong Wetland Park, the mudflat at the junction of Kam Tin River and Shan Pui River in Nam Sang Wai, as well as

feeding in some drain-downed fishponds in Fung Lok Wai and San Tin. It shows that various wetland habitat types in the Deep Bay area act as an integral ecosystem, and have equal importance to the spoonbills.

Black-faced Spoonbills and many waterbirds feed in fishponds with low water level. Therefore, The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society has been carrying out the fishpond conservation project funded by the Environment and Conservation Fund, to encourage the drain-down of fishpond water level through a partnership with fish farmers, aiming to increase the feeding opportunities of Spoonbills and waterbirds in fishponds. During surveys, Spoonbills are often recorded in drained-down fishponds, feeding shrimps and fish at dawn and dusk, and its number could reach as high as nearly a hundred.

Despite the increase in the three abovementioned regions, the figures in Macau and mainland China had slightly decreased. At present, habitat deterioration could be the biggest threat to the survival of Black-faced Spoonbill. Development projects and habitat type alternation have been contemplated at many coastal areas in mainland China and South Korea. For example, Wenzhou once had tens of wintering spoonbills, and there was a record of two spoonbills only this year. The Deep Bay area in Hong Kong and Shenzhen is also under pressure for development. As such, the conservation of Black-faced Spoonbill still has a long way to go to its fruition.

As being migratory, conservation of Black-faced Spoonbill could not only be relied on local works, international cooperation between different countries and agencies are important to ensure long-term survival of this species. The Black-faced Spoonbill Working Group of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership was set up in October 2013, which comprises representatives from principal range states of this species. An EAAFP meeting was held at Kushiro, Japan in January 2015 and all participants agreed to promote regional cooperation through researches, monitoring and dialogue between governments for the conservation of this flagship species of East Asia.

Since 2003, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society began to coordinate the International Census of Black-faced Spoonbill. This year's census was

held on 16-18 January 2015 with the participation of over 200 volunteers, recording a total of 3,272 Black-faced Spoonbills. In this census, the numbers recorded in Taiwan, Deep Bay and Japan shot up, with a slight increase in South Korea while those in mainland China and Macau decreased. The gist of the census results is appended below:

- A total of 3,272 birds were recorded in 2015 census, having 546 birds more than 2,726 birds recorded in 2014, which means an increase of 20.0%;
- The largest wintering ground was found in Taiwan with a figure of 2,034 individuals, accounting 62.2% of the world population, which was 375 individuals (equivalent to 22.6%) more than the 1,659 individuals recorded in 2014;
- Deep Bay, including Hong Kong and Shenzhen, recorded 411 individuals, accounting 159 birds more than the 252 birds recorded in 2014, also 60 birds more than that of 2013. This year's figure represented 12.6% of the world population;
- Falls in numbers in mainland China and Macau were recorded, while South Korea had a slight increase of 5 and Japan still continued to record with increasing numbers from 350 individuals in 2014 to 371 individuals in 2015;
- A few birds were recorded in Thailand and Cambodia in the winter months but not during the period of this census. The sighting in the Philippines was not yet confirmed.

Locations included in this census include South Korea, Japan, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Jiangsu, Taiwan, Hong Kong & Shenzhen, Macau, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia.

The Society would like to take this opportunity to thank all regional organizations and volunteers for their participation in the census, contributing to the smooth conduct of this census throughout all years and therefore better conservation of Black-faced Spoonbill in the region.

表 Table 1 :

2015 年各地普查結果 Results of different locations in 2015 Census

地區 Place	2013 數量 No. in 2013 (佔總數% % to total)	2014 數量 No. in 2014 (佔總數% % to total)	2015 數量 No. in 2015 (佔總數% % to total)	趨勢 Trend (比較 2014 年 against 2014)
台灣 Taiwan	1,624 (59.6%)	1,659 (60.9%)	2,034 (62.4%)	+ 375 隻 birds (+22.6%)
香港和深圳 (后海灣) Hong Kong & Shenzhen (Deep Bay)	351 (12.9%)	252 (9.2%)	411 (12.6%)	+ 159 隻 birds (+63.1%)
中國大陸 Mainland China (浙江 Zhejiang、福建 Fujian、廣東 Guangdong、廣西 Guangxi、海南 Hainan、 上海 Shanghai、江蘇 Jiangsu)	363 (13.3%)	339 (12.4%)	330 (10.1%)	-9 隻 birds (-2.7%)
日本 Japan	277 (10.2%)	350 (12.8%)	371 (11.4%)	+ 21 隻 birds (+6%)
越南 Vietnam	39 (1.4%)	40 (1.5%)	40 (1.2%)	沒有改變 No change
澳門 Macau	48 (1.8%)	60 (2.2%)	55 (1.7%)	-5 隻 birds (-8.3%)
南韓 South Korea	23 (0.8%)	26 (1.0%)	31 (0.9%)	+ 5 隻 birds (+19.2%)
菲律賓 The Philippines	1* (0.0%)	3* (0.0%)	0* (0.0%)	沒有改變 No change
泰國 Thailand	1* (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1* (0.0%)	沒有改變 No change
柬埔寨 Cambodia	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1* (0.0%)	沒有改變 No change
總數 Total	2,725	2,726	3,272	+ 546 隻 birds (+20.0%)

附註: * 並非於普查日錄得，故不計算在總數之內。

Note: * Not included in the total as the toll was not taken on the survey date.

圖 Diagram 1 :

1989-90 至 2014-15 年冬季的全球黑臉琵鷺數量

Numbers of wintering Black-faced Spoonbill in the world from 1989-90 to 2014-15

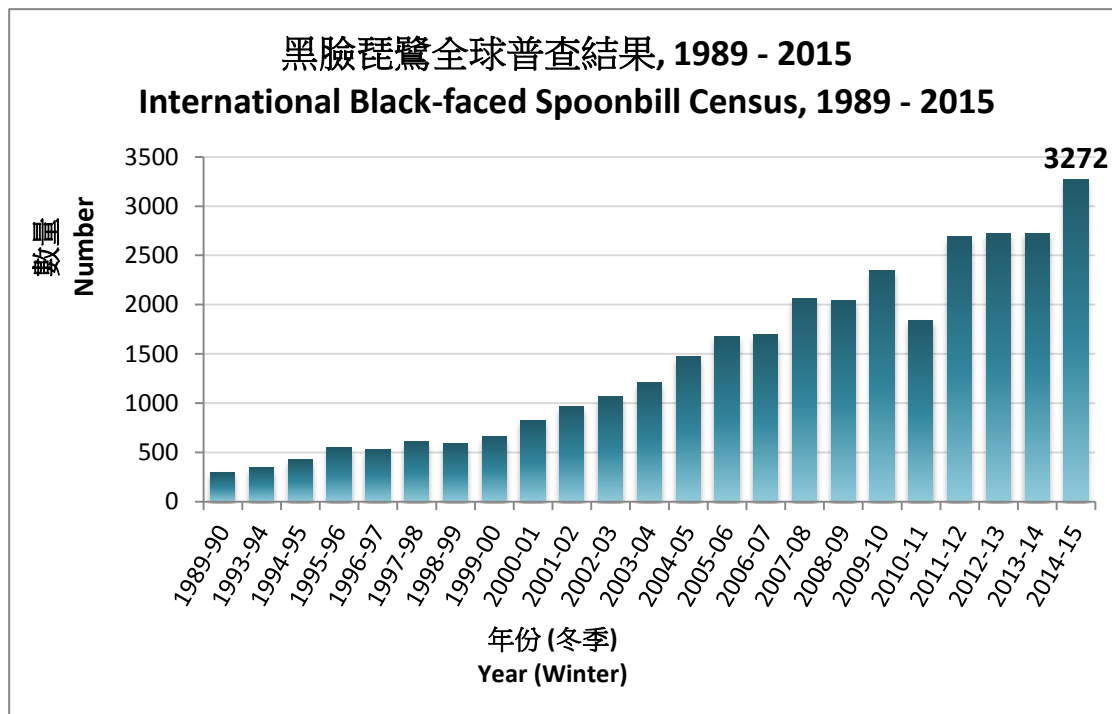


圖 Diagram 2 :

2015 全球同步普查期間黑臉琵鷺在不同越冬地的全球百分比

Proportion of wintering Black-faced Spoonbill at different locations to the global total in 2015 International Census

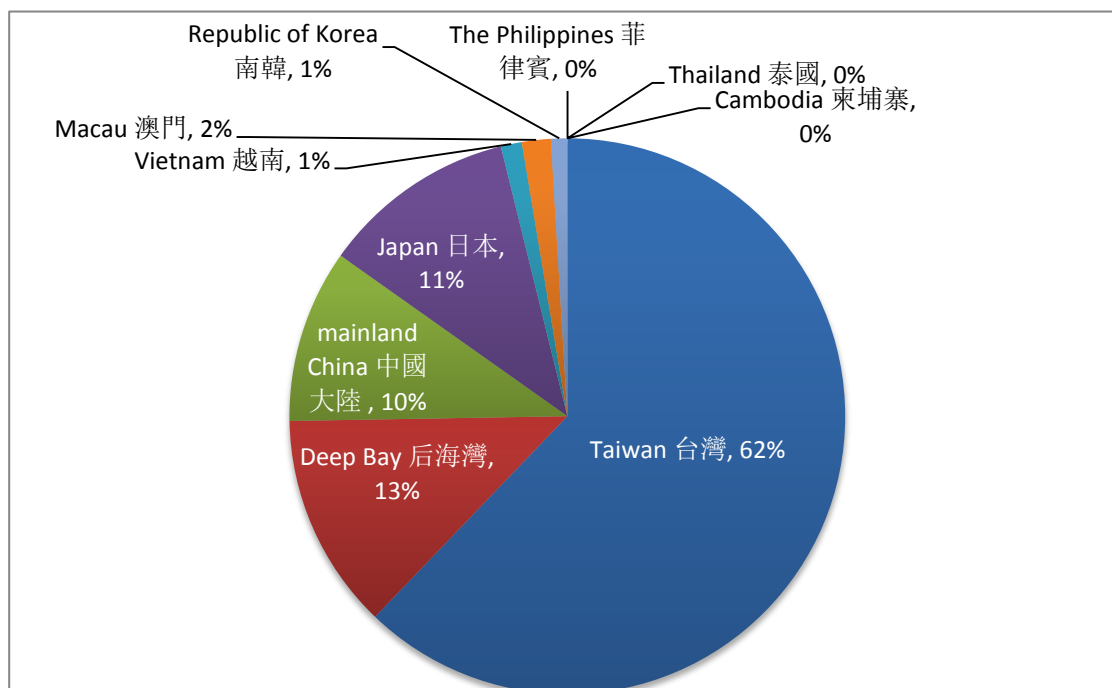


圖 Diagram 3 :

比較七個主要越冬地區的已知黑臉琵鷺數量趨勢

A comparison of the trends of the known global population of Black-faced Spoonbill at main wintering areas

