

24 June 2019

Cc World Heritage Centre Director Dr Mechtild Rössler
IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng
IUCN Acting Director General Dr Grethel Aguilar

Dear World Heritage Committee Member

Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea, Bohai Gulf of China (Phase I)

We, the undersigned, write to you to request that you consider supporting a decision, during the upcoming 43rd Session of the World Heritage Committee (43COM), to inscribe the property **Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea, Bohai Gulf of China (Phase I) ID. N° 1606** under criterion (x), in conjunction with requesting the State Party to undertake a series of timebound actions to follow up on such an inscription to ensure the property is more comprehensive and to encourage a trans-boundary approach within the Yellow/West Sea and Bohai Gulf ecosystem.

We recognize that the IUCN evaluation is a thorough evaluation of the property as nominated, under criteria (ix) and (x). While we understand the technical reasons for the IUCN recommendation to defer this nomination, we suggest this property can be inscribed now, helping thus to improve overall conservation of the Yellow/West Sea ecosystem, as well as the entire East Asian-Australasian flyway.

There are strong arguments to inscribe the property under criterion (x), “to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation”. Furthermore, we understand there is commitment from the Chinese government to comply with additional conditions necessary to complete all phases of the process.

We would therefore kindly request your Committee to consider our suggestions in the light of the following information.

The Yellow Sea ecosystem is globally outstanding, but is among the most threatened coastal ecosystems globally. It covers the world’s most important yet threatened coastal wetland site for migratory and resident birds. The IUCN evaluation states that *the Yellow Sea and the Bohai Gulf play an indispensable role in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF), a flyway linking bird populations of at least 21 countries and that the EAAF is among the most threatened worldwide and boasts the largest number of Endangered and, in some cases, Critically Endangered species.*

At the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) in both 2012 and 2016, the international conservation community adopted resolutions urging the countries of the Yellow/West Sea to take steps to protect and conserve this globally unique ecosystem. In response to the resolutions, spectacular progress has been made in conservation of the Yellow/West Sea by the three adjacent countries, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, for example in the introduction of coastal conservation initiatives and the restriction of land reclamation by China.

The present nomination by China - along with the nomination "Getbol, Korean Tidal Flat" (ID No 1591) by the Republic of Korea, submitted this year - is a direct response to IUCN resolution 26 adopted at the WCC 2016 to "consider the possibility of a future trilateral World Heritage nomination for the intertidal zone of the Yellow Sea".

Tiaozini, the area of intertidal flats added to this nomination, is the most important staging site in the world for the iconic and Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper, of which as few as 210 pairs remain in existence. Five Endangered species are also dependent on the Phase 1 nominated property (Red-crowned Crane, Far Eastern Curlew, Spotted Greenshank, Great Knot, Black-faced Spoonbill) and the sites are also visited by two other Critically Endangered species, Siberian Crane and Baer's Pochard.

We urge that this inscription be supported by a request to, and a commitment from, the State Party to extend the property, as soon as possible, with further areas as well, as outlined in the IUCN evaluation, in particular to include in a single revised nomination extension (Phase 2) the full range of the additional components of the proposed series as a whole, and other areas identified during the further process.

We strongly encourage that this be also associated with a request to the State Party to coordinate its plans for nominations with other State Parties of the Yellow/West Sea, in relation to the potential for future transboundary serial nominations, and/or extensions, that more fully reflect the habitat needs and patterns of use of migratory birds across the wider Yellow Sea region. We recommend that the State Parties coordinate such plans within the IUCN-facilitated Working Group on the Conservation of the Yellow/West Sea Intertidal and Associated Coastal Wetlands, established in 2017, which includes the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership.

Inscription of the property on the List would acknowledge the exceptional efforts of the Chinese government, its institutions and its people to protect and conserve these valuable areas and their biodiversity - which are of immense global significance.

We are ready to support the Yellow Sea governments in their further endeavours in this regard in any way possible.

Also, we remain available to supply any further information that would assist the Committee to reach a decision appropriate to the state party concerned, other state parties in the EAAF, and the wider global community concerned with the future health and heritage of the world's migratory bird fauna.

Please use nicola.crockford@rspb.org.uk as the point of contact on our behalf. She will be in Baku 30 June to 7 July.

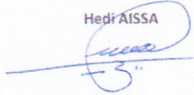
Yours sincerely

1. Mr Dian Agista, Executive Director, Burung Indonesia (BirdLife Indonesia)



2. Mr. Mohamed Hédi Aissa, Chairman, Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux" (AAO, BirdLife in Tunisia)

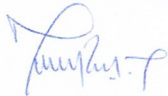
Hedi AISSA



3. Ms Sigrid Andersen, CEO, Danish Ornithological Society (BirdLife Denmark)



4. Achilles Byaruhanga, Executive Director, Nature Uganda (BirdLife Uganda)



5. Dr Mike Clarke, CEO, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife United Kingdom)



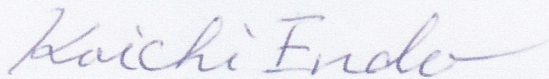
6. Dr Rob P. Clay, Director, Executive Office, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network; and Conference of the Parties-Appointed Convention on Migratory Species Scientific Co-Councillor for Birds



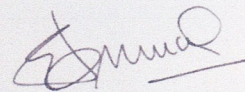
7. Professor Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Chairman, BirdLife International



8. Mr Kouichi Endo, Chairperson of the Board, Wild Bird Society of Japan (BirdLife Japan)



9. Mr Jens Enemark, former Secretary-General of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation



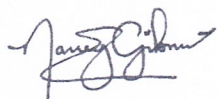
10. Professor Stephen Garnett, Professor of Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods, Charles Darwin University, Australia, Chair Threatened Species Committee, BirdLife Australia; and Conference of the Parties-Appointed Convention on Migratory Species Scientific Co-Councillor for Birds



11. Associate Professor Luke Gibson, Southern University of Science and Technology, Shenzhen, China



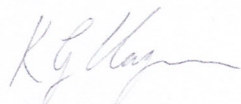
12. Ms Nancy Gibson, Director, Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BirdLife Thailand)




13. Mr Chris Goodie, Chairman, Oriental Bird Club



14. Mr Kevin Hague, CEO, Forest and Bird (BirdLife New Zealand)



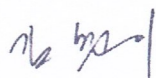
15. Dr. Gergő Halmos, Executive Director, MME/BirdLife Hungary



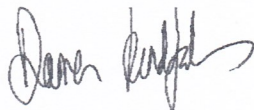
16. Professor Md. Anwarul Islam, CEO, WildTeam, Bangladesh



17. Ms Choony Kim, Vice Executive Director, Korea Federation for Environmental Movements



18. Mr Darren Kindleysides, CEO, Australian Marine Conservation Society



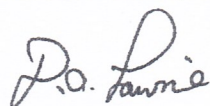
19. Professor Konstantin Klovov, Head of Arctic ethno-ecology and geopolitics research group, Saint-Petersburg State University, Russia



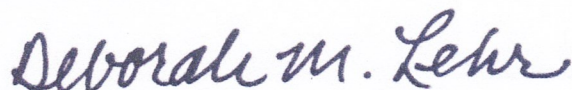
20. Mr Apache Lau, Chairman, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (BirdLife Hong Kong, China)



21. Mr David Lawrie, International Liaison, Pukorokoro Miranda Naturalists Trust



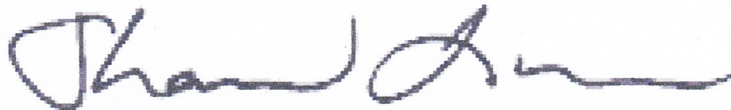
22. Ms Deborah Lehr, Vice Chairman and Executive Director, The Paulson Institute



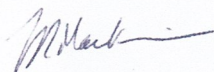
23. Dr Susan Lieberman, Vice-President International Policy, Wildlife Conservation Society



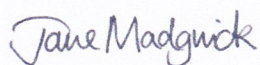
24. Dr Shawn Lum, President, Nature Society (BirdLife Singapore)



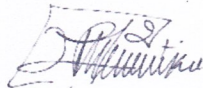
25. Dr John MacKinnon



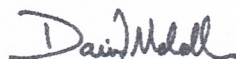
26. Ms Jane Madgwick, CEO, Wetlands International



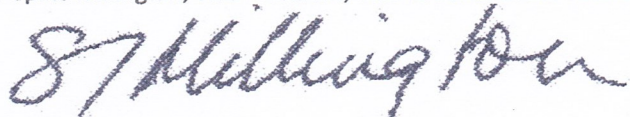
27. Dr. Paul Matiku, Executive Director, Nature Kenya (BirdLife Kenya)



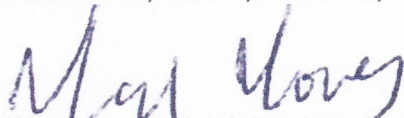
28. Mr David Melville, Global Flyway Network, New Zealand



29. Dr Spike Millington, Vice President, International Crane Foundation



30. Dr Nial Moores, Director, Birds Korea, Republic of Korea



31. Ms. Maria Belinda de la Paz, Chief Operating Officer, Haribon Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources (BirdLife Philippines)



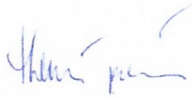
32. Mr Balu Perumal, Head of Conservation, Malaysian Nature Society (BirdLife Malaysia)



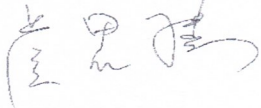
33. Mr Pyae Phyo Aung, Director (Operations), Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BirdLife Myanmar)



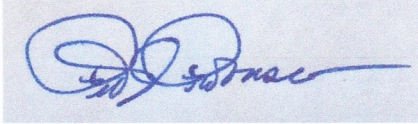
34. Professor Dr Theunis Piersma, Rudi Drent Chair in Global Flyway Ecology, University of Groningen, The Netherlands




35. Mr. Lo Sze Ping, CEO, World Wide Fund for Nature China Office



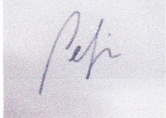
36. Mr Pete Probasco, Chair, East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership



37. Dr Peter Prokosch, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Linking Tourism & Conservation



38. Dr. Bernhard Seliger, Resident Representative, Hanns Seidel Foundation, Korea



39. Dr Martin Spray, CEO, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, United Kingdom



40. Mr Paul Sullivan, CEO, BirdLife Australia



41. Professor William J Sutherland, Miriam Rothschild Chair of Conservation Biology, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom



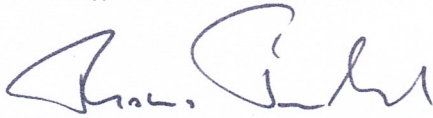
42. Dr Evgeny Syroechkovskiy, Russia
Chair Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative of the Arctic Council's Working Group on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna,
Chair Technical Advisory Group for the China-Russia Bilateral Convention on conservation of migratory birds and their habitats



43. Ms Eveling Tavera Fernandez, Chair, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group (WHSG)



44. Mr Thomas Tennhardt, Vice-President, Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) (BirdLife Germany)



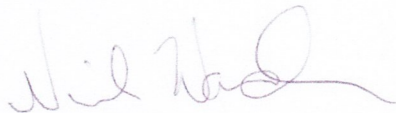
45. Ms Ishana Thapa, CEO, Bird Conservation Nepal (BirdLife Nepal)



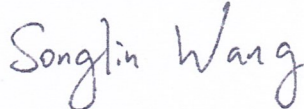
46. Mr Lo Waiyan, General Manager, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (BirdLife Hong Kong, China)



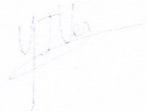
47. Dr Nils Warnock, former Executive Director of Audubon, Fellow of the American Ornithological Society, USA



48. Mr. Wang Songlin, Chair of Qingdao Marine Conservation Society (QMCS), China



49. Dr Yvonne I. Verkuil, Chair, International Wader Study Group (IWSG), on behalf of the Executive Committee of the IWSG



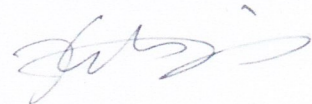
50. Ms Vera Voronova, Executive director, Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK, Birdlife Kazakhstan)



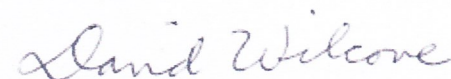
51. Mr Doug Watkins, Chair, Australasian Wader Studies Group (a special interest group of BirdLife Australia)



52. Dr Wen Xianji, Assistant Director Mai Po Nature Reserve and Regional Wetlands, WWF Hong Kong



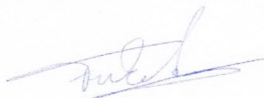
53. Professor David S. Wilcove, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Princeton University (New Jersey, USA)



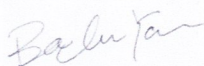
54. Ms Linda Wong, Deputy Secretary General of China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development



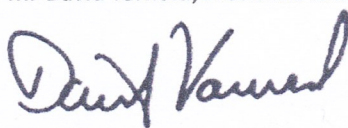
55. Mr Fred Wouters, CEO Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife Netherlands)



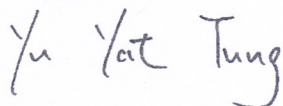
56. Dr Baohua Yan, Secretary General, Mangrove Foundation, China



57. Mr David Yarnold, President and CEO, National Audubon Society (BirdLife in the USA)



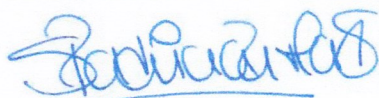
58. Mr Yu Yat-tung, Coordinator, East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Black-faced Spoonbill Working Group; Research Manager, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (BirdLife Hong Kong, China)



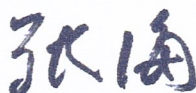
59. Dr Christoph Zöckler, Coordinator, East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force



60. Ms Patricia Zurita, CEO, BirdLife International



61. Mr Alex Zhang, Secretary General of Eco Foundation Global



62. Dr Jinfeng Zhou, Secretary General, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation

