

# The Indian Sunderbans: an important wintering site for Siberian waders

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Zöckler, C., Balachandran, S., Bunting, G.C., Fanck, M., Kashiwagi, M., Lappo, E.G., Maheswaran, G., Sharma, A., Syroechkovski, E.E. & Webb, K. 2005. The Indian Sunderbans: an important wintering site for Siberian waders. *Wader Study Group Bull.* 108: 42–46.

Keywords: shorebird, India, Sunderbans, population size, conservation

We report the first systematic survey of wintering waders in the Indian Sunderbans, West Bengal, during Jan and Feb 2005. One object was to search for the globally-endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper. However, none were found. In the area surveyed, 7,758 waders were counted of 32 species. Long-distance, arctic-breeding migrants comprised more than half the species and 70% of total numbers. Extrapolation to all areas of suitable habitat suggests that the nine most abundant species have a combined wintering population of about 35,000 and that the total wader population is not less than 40,000. This figure and the fact that the populations of all nine abundant species are estimated to exceed 1% of their flyway populations indicate that the Indian Sunderbans is a key site for wintering waders in south Asia.