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### STATUS OF WADERS, TERNS AND ARDEIDS IN SARAWAK, 1994-96

Richard Gregory-Smith

#### ABSTRACT

Waders, terns and ardeids were surveyed in Sarawak from July 1994 to June 1996. The status of each species is defined as a result of these surveys.

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## INTRODUCTION

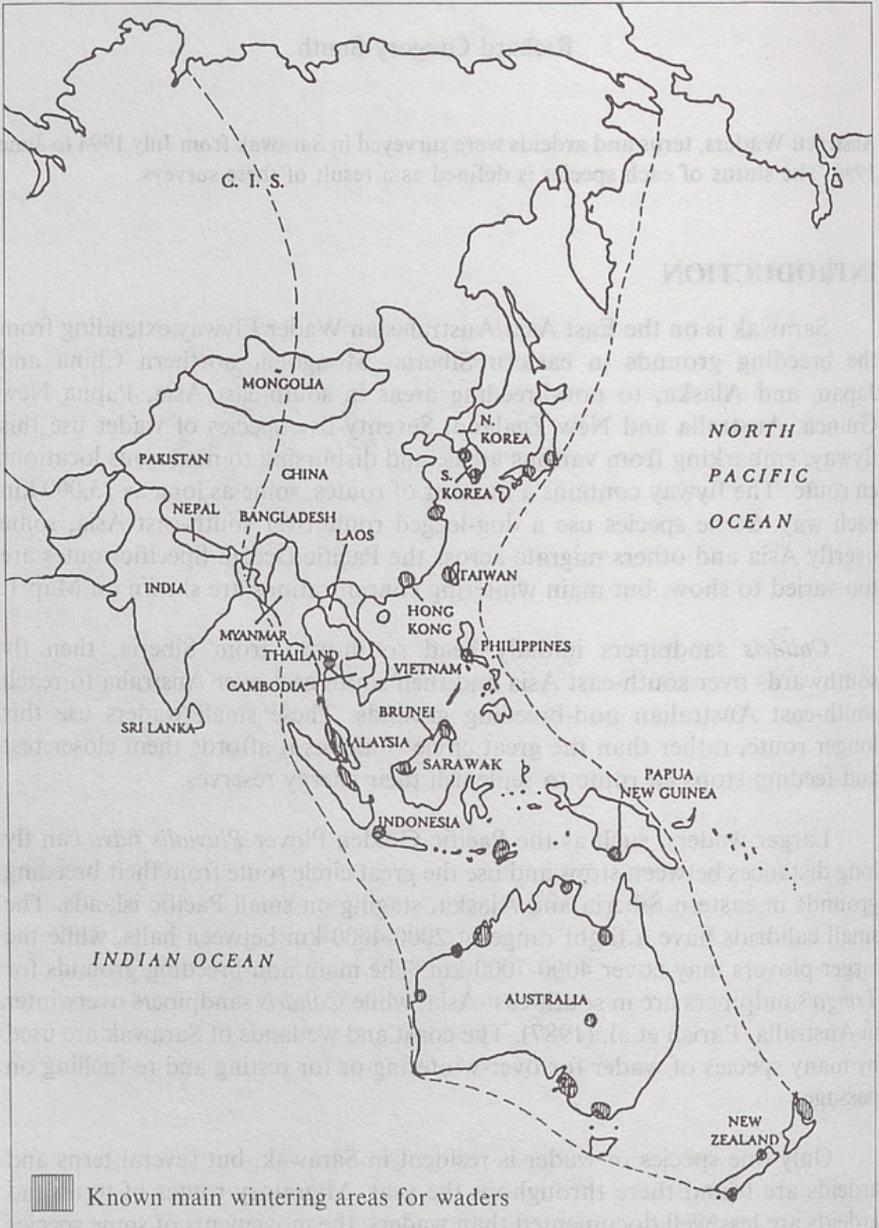
Sarawak is on the East Asia/Australasian Wader Flyway extending from the breeding grounds in eastern Siberia, Mongolia, northern China and Japan, and Alaska, to non-breeding areas in south-east Asia, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. Seventy-five species of wader use this flyway, embarking from various areas, and disbursing to numerous locations en route. The flyway contains a number of routes, some as long as 13,000 km each way. Some species use a dog-legged route over south-east Asia, some overfly Asia and others migrate across the Pacific Ocean. Specific routes are too varied to show, but main wintering concentrations are shown on Map 1.

*Calidris* sandpipers initially head south-west from Siberia, then fly southwards over south-east Asia and then south-east over Australia to reach south-east Australian non-breeding grounds. These small waders use this longer route, rather than the great circle route, as it affords them closer rest and feeding stops en route to replenish their energy reserves.

Larger waders, such as the Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* can fly long distances between stops and use the great circle route from their breeding grounds in eastern Siberia and Alaska, staging on small Pacific islands. The small calidrids have a flight range of 2000-4000 km between halts, while the larger plovers may cover 4000-7000 km. The main non-breeding grounds for *Tringa* sandpipers are in south-east Asia, while *Calidris* sandpipers overwinter in Australia. Parish et al. (1987). The coast and wetlands of Sarawak are used by many species of wader for over-wintering or for resting and re-fuelling on passage.

Only one species of wader is resident in Sarawak, but several terns and ardeids are found there throughout the year. Migratory routes of terns and ardeids are less well documented than waders: the movements of some species are relatively short from breeding grounds in the South China Sea, while

others, particularly terns journey many thousand kilometres. This paper seeks to record species of wader, tern and ardeid migrating to or through, or resident in Sarawak, and to define their status within Sarawak.



Map 1. Eastern Palearctic Migration to South-East Asia and Australasia.