



# Spoonbills Speak

*echoes across the Pacific*

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## SAVE JOINS KOREA FORUM

Four members of SAVE International jointly presented a paper at a symposium in South Korea in early June. The 2004 International Symposium for the Conservation of the Black-Faced Spoonbill in the East Asian Region took place in Seoul on June 4-5. Organized by the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM), Korea's largest environmental organization, this symposium included researchers from Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Macao, and Vietnam—almost every country that the endangered birds visit during their annual migration up and down the Pacific coast. SAVE's longtime advisor Dr. Malcolm Coulter, world expert on storks, ibises, and spoonbills, presented a fine paper of his own. Since most of the presenters were scientists, SAVE's voice of informed activism about land use planning stood out. The symposium provided an important opportunity for SAVE to expand its contacts among the other nations of the flyway.



*The Spoonbill Sisters*

In the days before and after the symposium, SAVE members and other attendees visited several sites important for the spoonbills, which come to Korea to nest and breed during the summer. The highlight was a rare—and heavily supervised—view of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea. After the symposium, the SAVE delegation accompanied members of KFEM and local residents on a two-day visit to the Saemangeum Tidal Flats. Saemangeum serves as a valuable stopover for hundreds of thousands of migratory birds and provides over 20,000 fishing-related jobs, but a government-backed plan would fill 100,000 acres (40,000 ha) of sea and mudflats to pro-



*A rare view of the DMZ*

vide extra (and by now extraneous) farmland. The "Three Steps, One Bow" protest in 2003 drew worldwide media attention to the Saemangeum project, which is widely considered Korea's worst environmental problem.

## TAIWAN UPDATE

Officials of Tainan County continue to push for heavy industry in the fragile coastal area, the most critical habitat for the black-faced spoonbill. In one of these areas, County Magistrate Su has proposed an international airport. Over 50 spoonbills now inhabit this site. This validates what SAVE researchers concluded several years ago: There is not enough habitat in the core roosting area to support the present population of spoonbills.



The good news in Tainan County is that spoonbills have settled in a new location, on former salt lands east of Chigu Lagoon, owned by the national government. We are advocating protection of this third site, which acts as stepping-stone habitat to expand spoonbill range further north along the coast.

Despite our advocacy efforts, industrial and ill-considered tourism development continues to pose a serious threat to the habitat of the black-faced spoonbill in Tainan County. Tourism development has expanded west of Salt Mountain with the construction of an automobile race track, and industrial proposals for the former salt lands in the coastal area include other manufacturing facilities. Proposals such as these directly threaten the third roosting area.

Officials of Tainan County have so far been unmoved by SAVE's research. We are continuing to press for habitat protection and are assessing our political options. Given the political difficulties in Tainan, SAVE is now faced with the reality that their longtime political ally, County Magistrate Su Huan-chih, is no longer interested in scientifically informed spoonbill protection.

## AUGO WETLAND A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

SAVE is now working directly with the Magistrate and planning officials of Chiayi County to develop a land use plan for the Augo Wetland, one of the most diverse coastal habitats in all of Taiwan. Of critical importance to dozens of species including endemic and endangered birds, it supports a small group of black-faced spoonbills. More important, it likely could serve as a primary roosting and foraging area for *Platalea minor* if redesigned with suitable open water geometry, water levels, and food supply. In an ongoing effort, SAVE is supplying the micro-geometries necessary for safe roosting and foraging. Chiayi County is committed to providing appropriate habitat for multiple species of birds, including spoonbills, and creating tourism opportunities for local residents.

Because of its unique, somewhat isolated location, Augo is an ideal "safe" wildlife refuge. This isolation also guarantees that local villagers can control tourism and reap direct benefits especially by limiting access to visitors guided by local people. The Augo plan will be carefully followed to see if authentic culture and nature based tourism work in Taiwan.

## SPOONBILL MIGRATION ON ITS WAY

On October 14, SAVE will hold its annual Great Spoonbill Migration at UC Berkeley in front of Boalt Hall, at the intersection of Bancroft and College. For the eighth year in a row undergraduate students in ED1 will display their visions for ecological and artful spoonbills. See some amazing art and celebrate the worldwide connectedness of a bird you can save from extinction. Join us!

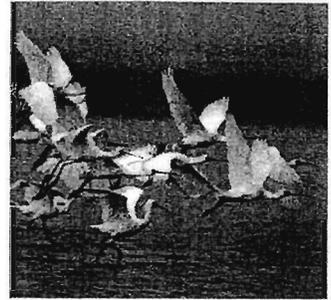
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## ACTIVISTS APPLAUDED FOR NSA EFFORT

SAVE International recently recognized the contribution of the Taiwanese community in establishing the Yun-chianan National Scenic Area. The National Scenic Area includes three counties on the west coast of Taiwan that provide important habitat for the black-faced spoonbill. SAVE anticipates that the National Scenic Area will facilitate the development of ecologically responsible tourism that will provide jobs and revenue to the local region.

Among those recognized were local activists from the Yunlin Wild Bird Society and the Taiwanese Environmental Protection Union (TEPU), representatives of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau, and Taiwan County Magistrate Huan-Chih Su.



## HELLO FROM CHI-CHAO THE SPOONBILL



Hi guys -- how are you? It was really amazing to see some of you in Korea! I didn't know you migrate too! I'm doing pretty good, enjoying the summer with my buddies. Pretty soon I'll be getting ready to head out on the long trip to Chiku again. Boy, that trip is tiring, but at least it's worth it—what a great place to spend the winter. Hopefully I'll get to see some of you again soon. Time to do some fishing. Gotta Go.

Love, Your Friend, Chi-chao