

AWC Penang Results 2017.

The Penang Branch has consistently carried out count on two sites, one in Balik Pulau on Penang Island, and one on Mainland Penang, in the “Northern” District, at the Teluk Air Tawar – Penaga – Kuala Muda IBA, which is usually carried out along the coastal mangroves and mudflats and the other a more inland site at Permatang Bera, Titi Mukim, Penaga.



Sungai Burung rivermouth



Permatang Bera, Penaga

For Malaysia, MNS started the counts in 1999, a number of branches participated and Penang Branch submitted data for 5 sites. Penang Branch from 1999 to 2001 covered the same 5 sites for AWC, Pantai Aceh-Sungai Burong Coast, Jelutong-Batu Muang Coast, Kuala Juru, Mak Mandin and Telok Air Tawar-Kuala Muda IBA. Currently Penang Branch conducts at Pantai Aceh-Sungai Burong Coast and Telok Air Tawar-Kuala Muda IBA.

In 2006 Penang Branch at the request of Wetland International collected AWC data in Kuala Kedah (368 waders) and Kuala Perlis (60 waders)

For AWC 2017, the Penang Island, Balik Pulau count was carried out at Sungai Burung Rivermouth and mudflats, on the west coast of Penang Island on 30th January, the participant were Kanda Kumar, Pushpa and Choo Eng. This site consist of fairly extensive mudflats and coastal mangroves, and is not a fully protected area. Although the mangroves south of Sungai Burung Rivermouth is fully protected, being the 166 hectares Balik Pulau Forest Reserve – predominantly coastal mangroves. The area north of Sungai Burung Rivermouth is also coastal mudflats and mangroves but is non-protected stateland with fairly extensive aqua-culture ponds. Further north is the Penang National Park (previously part of which is the Pantai Aceh Forest Reserve).

The mainland count was carried out on 26th January at the Permatang Bera, Titi Mukim, Penaga, ricefields which includes a very small remnants peat swamp. This location is part of the Telok Ayer Tawar-Kuala Muda IBA. The location is good count site for herons and egrets and at one time the held 1% of world congregation of Chinese Pond Heron. This year's count was carried out by Kanda Kumar, James Ooi and Choo Eng. Counts at site is usually carried out at dawn till an hour or two after sunrise, because that egrets and herons fly out from their roosting site at the coastal mangroves towards the feeding ground of extensive rice

fields east of the count site. Black-crowned Night Heron can also be seen flying “the other way” towards their roosting ground in the mangroves after feeding at night in the rice fields.

AWC 2017 Penang		
District	S. Perai Utara	Balik Pulau
Site Name	Telok AyerTawar-Kuala Muda IBA	Sungei Burong
Wetland Type	Mangroves & Ricefields	Estuary, mudflats & ricefields
Area (km) or in ha	2 km square	1 km square
Coordinates	5deg28-34min N 100deg20-23min E	5deg19-26min N 100deg11-10min E
Threats	Destruction of mangroves, pouching, aquaculture & land use conversion	Land conversion for aquaculture & pouching
Time and Date	0700 to 0800 26th Jan 2017.	1000 to 1100 30th Jan 2017.
Weather condition	Sunny	Sunny
Tide Condition	Low	Low
Survey by	Kanda Kumar, Tan Choo Eng & Ooi Teik Kok (James)	Kanda Kumar, Tan Choo Eng & Pushpa
Counters	3	3
Note	Spot Count	Spot Count
Yellow Bittern <i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>	1	
Black-crowned Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	597	
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	90	55
Striated (Little Green) Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>	1	3
Little Egret <i>E. garzetta</i>	95	11
Great Egret <i>E. alba</i>	38	31
Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	3	
Unidentified pond-herons	26	
Unidentified egrets	33	1
Whimbrel <i>N. phaeopus</i>		44
Eurasian Curlew <i>N. arquata</i>		7
Redshank <i>T. totanus</i>		102
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>		2
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		3
Little Tern <i>S. albifrons</i>		15
Asian Openbill <i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	1	
Total	885	274

Number of species	9	10
Remarks	Count at Ricefields only	Count at Mudflats only

The trend is that the total number of pond-heron species seems to be down, although they are still abundant throughout this IBA and also the region, ie north-west peninsular Malaysia. The Black-crowned night heron numbers are stable. Flocks of various species of wagtails seen in previous years are down.

The Teluk Air Tawar – Penaga - Kuala Muda area (location named after villages from South to North) consists of mudflats and coastal mangrove, paddy fields and small patches of remnants peat swamp and it is Penang State’s only Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA). It is nearly 8kms from South to North, with State and Private land of about 200 hectares, however if mangroves, annex-mangroves including fish ponds at Pasir Jebu are considered, the size could be up to 600 hectares. The bordering paddyfields are considered as habitat for shorebirds and waterfowls, the reason why paddyfield ecosystem has been included in this IBA

Important waders, shorebirds and waterfowls to this area are, Spoon-billed Sandpiper 1-2 have been recorded sporadically, Nordmann’s Greenshank, Chinese Egret, Far Eastern Curlew, Lesser Adjutant (not sighted for a number of years), Great Knot and Asian Dowitcher. And congregation, Chinese Pond-herons (counts are down but still in large numbers over, north-west Peninsula Malaysia).

And in the (West) Malaysian context, large number of Brown-headed Gulls, and a “first” for Slender-billed Gull, Black-tailed Gull have also been recorded.

This year counts in the mudflats was done by Dave Bakewell and Neoh Hor Kee from a boat to cover a much more extensive area of survey of this IBA. The Branch co-organize a AWC Workshop at this IBA, and the members and trainees were able to carry out a count over two days on the mudflats, using a “spot count” method. For the two days count, the first day was just to identify the species and on the second day the species and the numbers were counted. Data is from the second day count.





AWC Species ID Workshop 2017 Penang		
District	S. Perai Utara	S. Perai Utara
Site Name	Telok AyerTawar-Kuala Muda IBA	Telok AyerTawar-Kuala Muda IBA
Wetland Type	Coastal Mudflats, Beach, Estauries, Coast, Mangroves, Paddyfield	Coastal Mudflats, Beach, Estauries, Coast, Mangroves, Paddyfield
Area (km) or in ha	2 km square	2 km square
Coordinates	5deg28-34min N 100deg20-23min E	5deg19-26min N 100deg11-10min E
Threats	Destruction of mangroves, pouching, aquaculture & land use convection	Land convection for aquaculture & pouching
Time and Date	15-Jan-17	21 – 22 Jan 2017.
Weather condition		Sunny
Tide Condition		Low
Survey by	Dave Bakewell & Neoh Hor Kee	MNS Penang Branch and Trainees at AWC Workshop
Counters	2	18
Note	Boat Count along coast	Spot Count on Mudflats
Black-crowned Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	10	
Chinese Pond Heron <i>A. bacchus</i>		12
Javan Pond Heron <i>A. speciosa</i>	2	

Striated (Little Green) Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>	5	6
Little Egret <i>E. garzetta</i>	100	15
Great Egret <i>E. alba</i>	50	19
Grey Heron <i>A. cinerea</i>	20	3
Unidentified herons and egrets	10	
Pacific Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	45	
Grey Plover <i>P. squatarola</i>	70	
Kentish Plover <i>C. alexandrinus</i>	1	
Mongolian Plover <i>C. mongolus</i>	300	
Greater Sand Plover <i>C. leschenaultii</i>	60	
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	20	
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>L. lapponica</i>	300	1
Whimbrel <i>N. phaeopus</i>	60	29
Eurasian Curlew <i>N. arquata</i>	30	1
Redshank <i>T. totanus</i>	700	140
Marsh Sandpiper <i>T. stagnatilis</i>	50	2
Greenshank <i>T. nebularia</i>	60	3
Nordmann's Greenshank <i>T. guttifer</i>	10	
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>	600	1
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	5	3
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	1	
Asiatic Dowitcher <i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>	40	
Red Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	15	
Great Knot <i>C. tenuirostris</i>	300	
Red-necked (Rufous-necked) Stint <i>C. ruficollis</i>	80	
Curlew Sandpiper <i>C. ferruginea</i>	200	
Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	15	
Brown-headed Gull <i>L. brunnicephalus</i>	290	2
Black-headed Gull <i>L. ridibundus</i>	2	
Whiskered Tern <i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	3	3
Little Tern <i>S. albifrons</i>	3	3
Unidentified terns	25	4
Total	3482	247
Number of species	32	16

These two counts gave us an opportunity to compare a boat count with a “spot” count. The boat count gave a total number of 3,482 waders, shorebirds and waterfowl, compared with a “spot” count of 247. The number of species counted by boat was nearly doubled to that of the “spot” count. During the 2017 AWC count, the following threatened species were recorded, Nordmann's Greenshank , Asian Dowitcher and the Great Knot.

The Branch have been advocating for the protection of this IBA with the relevant authorities, example, federal and state government and agencies, and the local stakeholders, in particular the fishermen. The Branch is a member of the Seberang Perai Local Council (MPSP) eco-tourism task force.



MNS Penang Branch with MPSP Director of Landscape Dept and Councilors



Engagement with Fishermen at the Tik Air Tawar – Kuala Muda IBA by MNS