

# Saemangeum – An Introduction





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## What is Saemangeum?

- q Saemangeum is the name given to the land reclamation project undertaken by the government of the Republic of Korea in the Yellow Sea.
- q A 33km long seawall was constructed across the confluence of the Dongjin and the Mangyeong estuaries. The wall cut off approximately 40,100 ha of tidal flats from the sea.
- q This enclosed area of 'reclaimed' land was to be used for agriculture purposes.





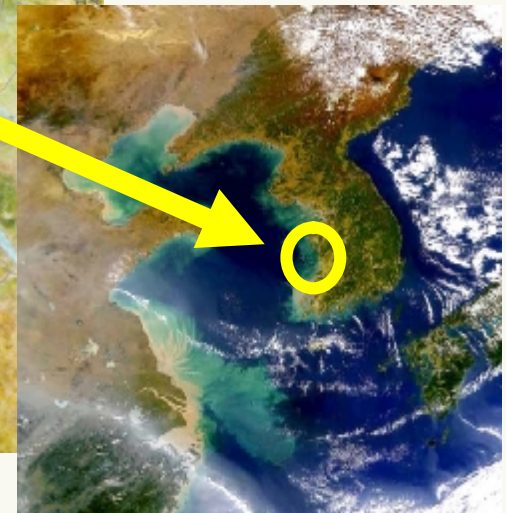


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# SAEMANGEUM



**Largest single reclamation in the world**



# The Construction of Saemangeum

- q The seawall was started in 1991
- q It was officially closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2006
- q The total area reclaimed is approximately 40,100 ha
- q It has two sluice gates with a total length of 540 m
- q Proponents of the reclamation project claimed that it would be environmentally friendly and that the shorebirds would relocate to other areas





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## Saemangeum after the sea-wall was closed





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## Saemangeum was the most important site for migratory shorebirds in the Yellow Sea.



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- q **The tidal flats of Saemangeum are some of the largest in the world.**
- q **Migratory birds used the area en route to Siberia and Alaska on northern migrations and to Australia and New Zealand on southern migrations.**
- q **Government data (collected between 1997 and 2003) confirm that Saemangeum supported 316,000 shorebirds on northward migration and 257,000 on southward migration.**
- q **The Saemangeum area was therefore recognised as ROK and the Yellow Sea's most important known shorebird site.**



Photo © Jan van de Kam / Birds Korea



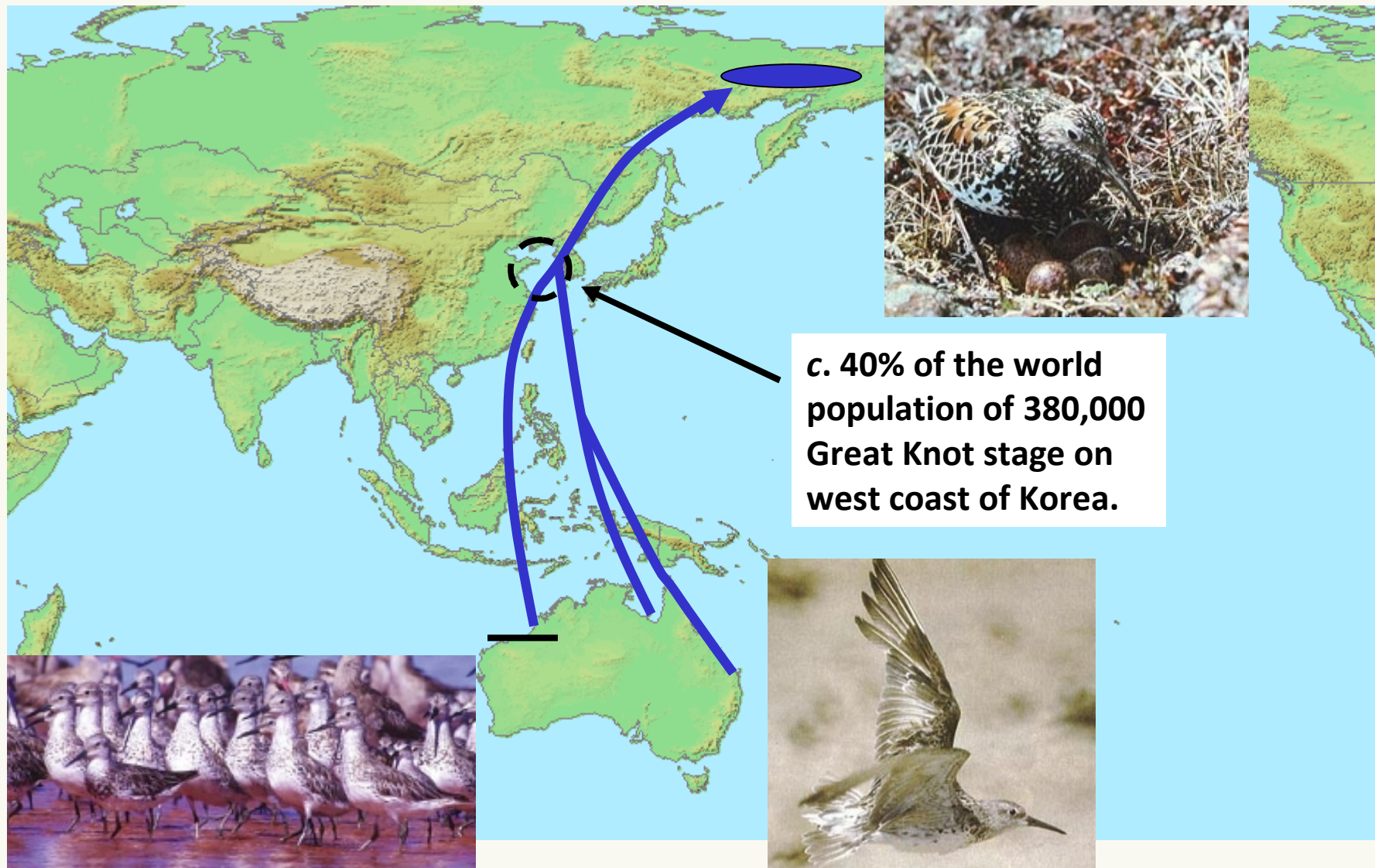


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## Saemangeum supported the livelihoods of 20,000 people.



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The primary purpose for the reclaimed land created by the sea-wall was agriculture. A special law was introduced in 2007 to allow other uses for the land, including industrial and residential development.







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**The 33-km seawall was closed on 21 April 2006**







**Prior to sea-wall construction, the tidal range was over 7 m.**

**Once the wall was closed in 2006 the tidal range was reduced to less than 1m on most tides.**

**As a result some tidal flats completely dry out and never become inundated and others are permanently wet.**





**The Saemangeum sea-wall has had a huge impact on the livelihoods of the people the area supported. At the time of sea-wall closure 1207 fishing boats were active. By 2007 less than 100 were in use. Sea-wall closure has had a dramatic effect on the ecology of the region.**



Photo © Andreas Kim / Birds Korea

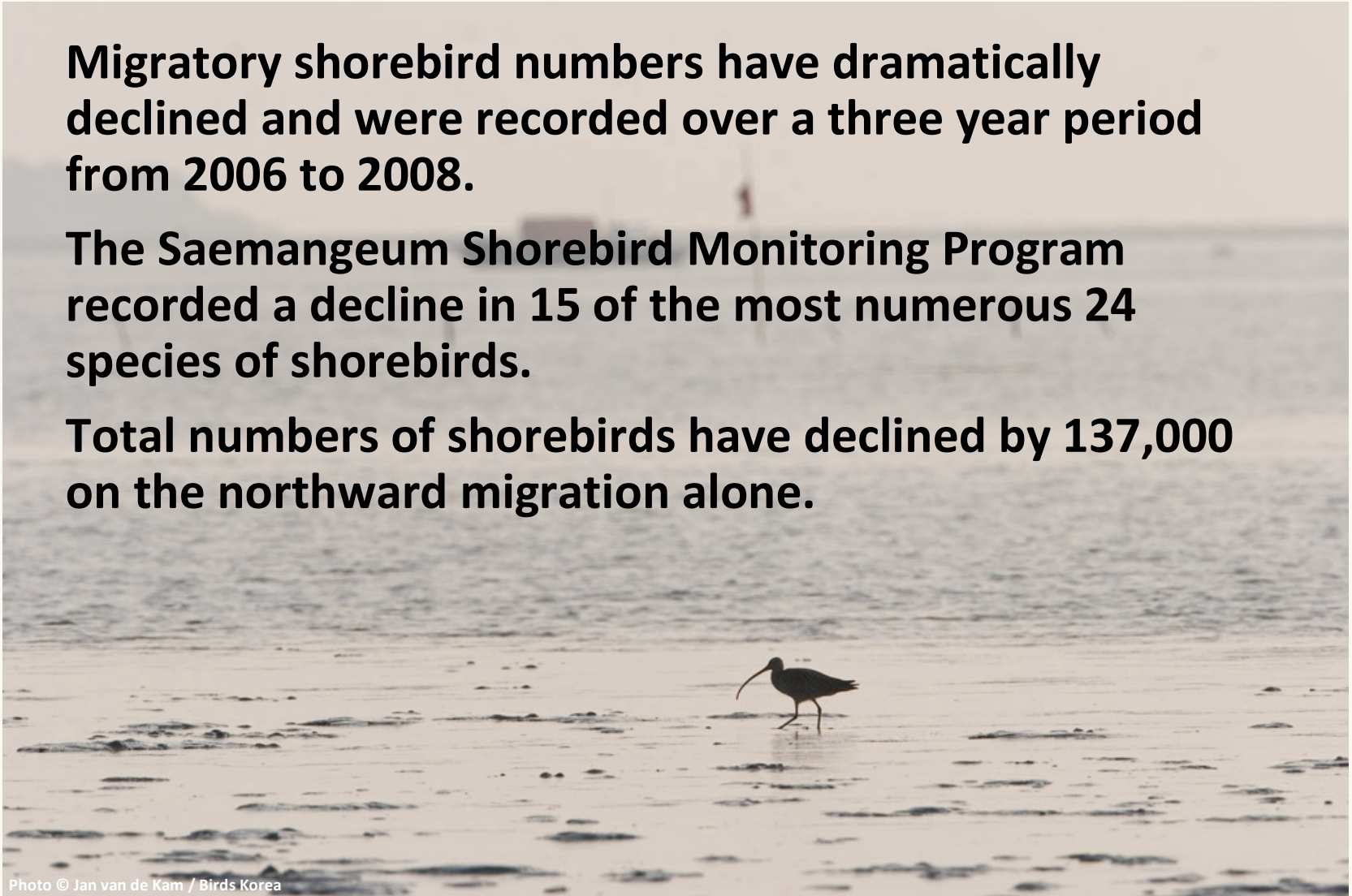




**Migratory shorebird numbers have dramatically declined and were recorded over a three year period from 2006 to 2008.**

**The Saemangeum Shorebird Monitoring Program recorded a decline in 15 of the most numerous 24 species of shorebirds.**

**Total numbers of shorebirds have declined by 137,000 on the northward migration alone.**





- q The reclamation at Saemangeum is having a huge impact on migratory shorebird species travelling along the flyway.
- q We have measured changes in shorebird numbers through the Saemangeum Shorebird Monitoring Program (SSMP) 2006 – 2008.
- q We intend to count shorebird numbers again in 2010 to persuade decision makers to return the tidal flow to Saemangeum.
- q Please join us in this important program.



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