

# Tattler

Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways & Australian Shorebirds 2020 Project

No. 43 April 2017

## CONTENTS

First satellite tracking of Spotted Greenshank from Thailand	2
Tracking Pacific Golden Plover from Moreton Bay, Queensland	3
Tracking Red-necked Stint from Victoria – preliminary comments	4
Wing Threads: Flight to the tundra	6
9th EAAFP meeting of the partners – AWSG report	8
Transboundary collaboration to save Far Eastern Curlew	11
BLA Migratory Shorebird Conservation Action Plan update	12
Alaska Shorebird Group	12
Unusual roosting behavior of curlews in Tiaozini, China	13
Restoring shorebird habitat in Hunter Wetlands National Park	14
Shorebirds 2020 update	16
Birddata houses the Shorebirds 2020 database	16

## Editorial

With further developments in satellite transmitters, tracking of individual shorebirds has now spread to the smallest species. Preliminary results for Red-necked Stints tracked from Victoria to their breeding grounds are featured in this issue, along with the first tracking of a Spotted Greenshank from Thailand and initial tracking of Pacific Golden Plover in Moreton Bay, Queensland.

Efforts to conserve the diminishing population of Far Eastern Curlew have been ramped up in Australia and partners along the EAAF are also focusing on saving this species' habitat. A report on the 9th Meeting of Partners for the EAAF Partnership as well as articles on the Far Eastern Curlew provide background on the extent of international cooperation needed to save this species from continuing decline.

As individuals, we can all contribute to conserving shorebirds – whether it be through shorebird counts, recording shorebird behavior, banding efforts, habitat restoration, or supporting the Wing Threads project to fly to the tundra. Let's do it!

**Liz Crawford, Editor**

Contributions are welcome and should be sent to: [tattler@awsg.org.au](mailto:tattler@awsg.org.au)



Far Eastern Curlew on the alert (Photo by Rod Warnock)

Compiled and published by the Australasian Wader Studies Group  
[www.awsg.org.au](http://www.awsg.org.au)

A Special Interest Group of BirdLife Australia



## First satellite tracking of Spotted Greenshank from Thailand

The Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* (also known as Nordmann's Greenshank) is a globally endangered shorebird, and we have limited knowledge of its migration ecology. In our project, we plan to use satellite transmitters to follow at least four Spotted Greenshanks to increase our knowledge about its breeding areas and migratory route along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.



**Figure 1.** Satellite-tagged Spotted Greenshank at Mahachai Bay, Thailand (Photo by Chenxing Yu)

In March 2016, one Spotted Greenshank was captured by mist-netting and fitted with a 5 g solar-powered satellite transmitter at an aquaculture pond in Samut Sakhon Province in the central part of the Inner Gulf of Thailand (**Figure 1**). The tagged bird (named Frankie [sex undetermined], with black over green coloured rings on the right leg) stayed in the same area after it was released on 25 March. Then, we received the first signal that it departed from the Thai wintering area on 21 April 2016, and after a probable non-stop 2,700 km flight, it stopped near the small town of Shuitou in Weitou Bay, southeast of Fujian Province, China. Frankie left his first stop after five days' rest. Then, several fixes on 28 April placed the bird on the way from Rui'an City in Zhejiang Province to Rudong City in Jiangsu Province on 30 April. From 2 to 9 May, Frankie kept moving north, about 139 km, passing Dongtai mudflat, where approximately 1,000 Spotted Greenshanks are counted annually during the southward migration. Then, he stopped again in Dafeng City, Jiangsu Province, to fatten up for his last push up to the breeding grounds. After about one week, Frankie began his final trip of 2,755 km, passing the mudflat of South Hwanghae Province in western North Korea, and moved into Russia on 20 May 2016. The last confirmed position of the tagged bird we received was approximately 150 km from the coast, near the Sea of Okhotsk, about 30 km south of a small town named Udinsk in the Imeni Poliny

Osipenko District, Khabarovsk Krai of Russia. The tagged bird travelled about 5,963 km between its wintering ground in Samut Sakhon, Thailand and its final location in the Russian Far East, all within one month from 19 April to 20 May 2016 (**Figure 2**).

After Frankie last landed in Russia, the following positions came from almost the same locations. Thus, we supposed the bird had settled down to nest. However, with the subsequent several satellite messages, the sensor data of the transmitter showed a sudden temperature drop later on the arriving day, which suggested this tagged bird shed the transmitter or died after arriving. Consequently, it is difficult to confirm whether the final location is the breeding area of the tagged bird. The last transmission was received on 14 October 2016, still in the same vicinity as it was in May. After that, it may have been covered by snow, thus stopping transmission. We are continuing to investigate, and we are working on a more targeted bird-capturing plan to catch another three birds. We are also working on improving the transmitter harness attachment as it may have caused the premature loss of the transmitter.

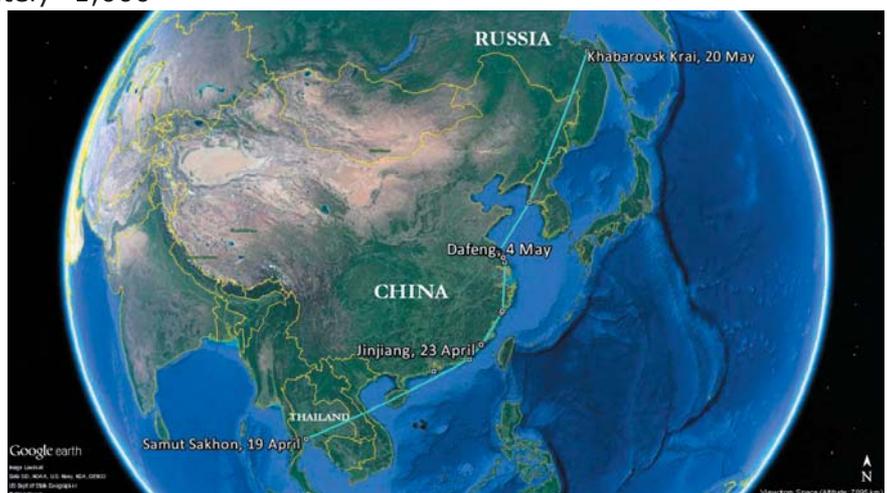
This project was supported by a Rufford Small Grant and a Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund. Special thanks to the catching team: Andy Pierce, George Gale and Philip Round.

**Chenxing Yu<sup>1</sup> and George Gale<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Email: [yuchenxing108@gmail.com](mailto:yuchenxing108@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Email: [ggkk1990@gmail.com](mailto:ggkk1990@gmail.com)

<sup>1,2</sup> Conservation Ecology Program, School of Bioresources and Technology, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, 49 Soi Thianthale 25, Bangkhuntien-Chaithaley Road, Tha Kham, Bangkhuntien, Bangkok 10150, Thailand



**Figure 2.** Migration route of satellite-tracked Spotted Greenshank from 19 April to 20 May 2016

## Tracking Pacific Golden Plover from Moreton Bay, Queensland

With financial support from the Port of Brisbane Pty Ltd, the Queensland Wader Study Group has placed 5-gram Platform Terminal Transmitters (PTTs) from Microwave Telemetry on four Pacific Golden Plover. The birds were caught at the Manly artificial shorebird roost, located near Brisbane, in Queensland, Australia.

Previous studies using geolocators in Hawaii and Alaska have provided detailed information on the migration of those central Pacific birds (Johnson *et al.* 2015) but there have been no corresponding studies from birds spending the non-breeding season in Australia. Leg-flag resightings of Australian-banded birds are sparse, with records in the Yellow Sea (Minton *et al.* 2006) and a more recent record in Japan (QWSG database). Occasional records of Alaskan-flagged birds in Australia suggest that at least some birds in Australia may originate from Alaskan breeding sites (Minton *et al.* 2006).

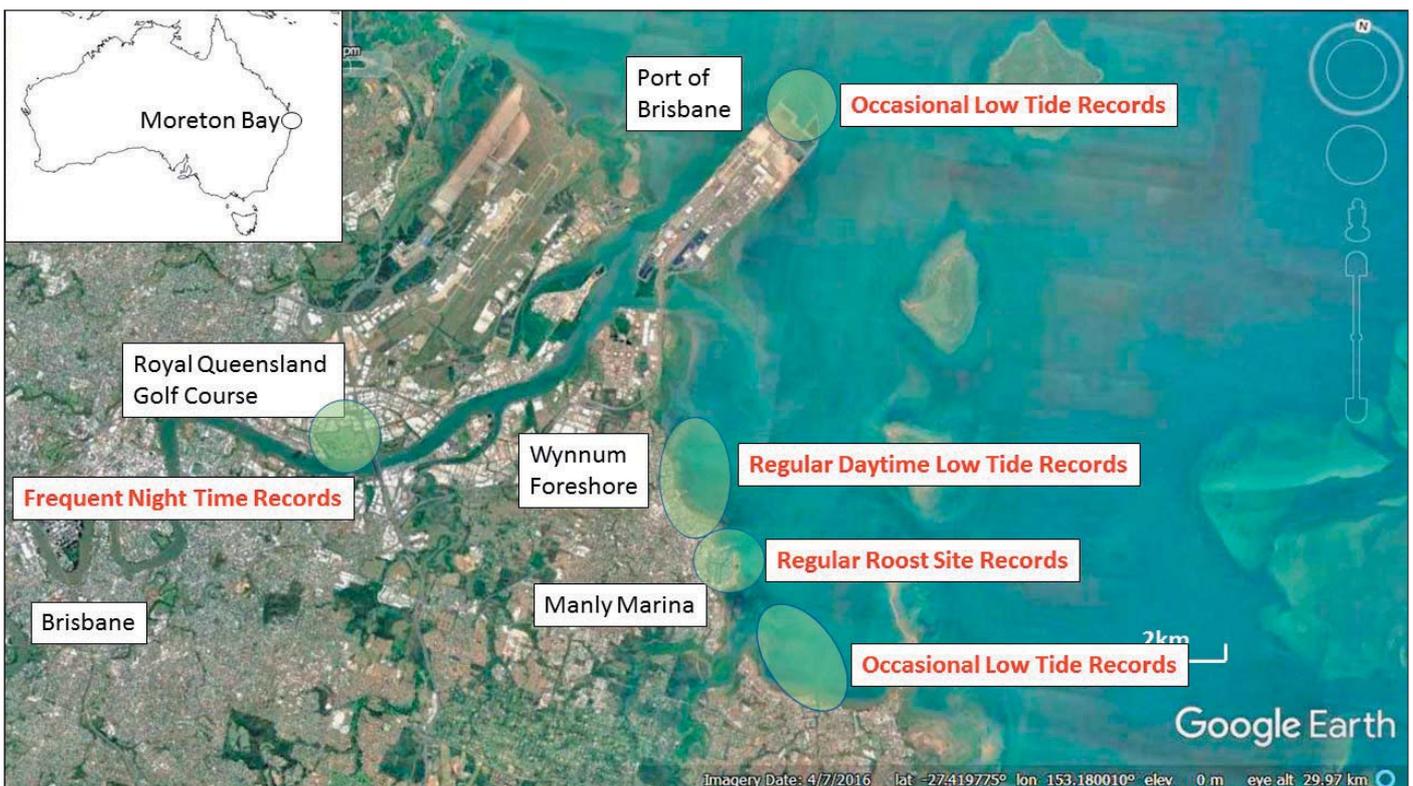
Two Pacific Golden Plover were caught on 29 November 2016 in mist-nets and have provided several months of data on the way the species uses Moreton Bay and the surrounding region for feeding and roosting. This tracking has already uncovered some behaviours that the wader study group were not aware of from leg-flag resightings alone. These two birds, carrying green leg flags engraved DAA and DAB, have continued to roost at Manly regularly with their daytime feeding areas being within 1-3 km of the Manly roost, mainly to the north in the Wynnum area. Both



**Figure 1:** Pacific Golden Plover DAA just prior to release at Manly

birds have occasionally moved further north, with records from the Port of Brisbane reclamation area (7 km north of Manly), at least once in the last three months.

Both birds are transmitting with the standard 10-hour transmit cycle and 48 hours off, which, although frustrating during the 48 hours' downtime, does allow the devices to cycle through a full 24-hour period over time. At night, both birds have been regularly flying inland and spending time at night on the Royal Queensland Golf Course, situated on the banks of the Brisbane River 10 km west-north-west of Manly, which gives a whole new perspective on golf courses!



**Figure 2:** Local movements of Pacific Golden Plover DAA and DAB between November 2016 and March 2017

## Tracking Pacific Golden Plover from Moreton Bay, Qld cont.

The final two PTTs were fitted on 12 March 2017 in a cannon net catch at Manly. These were put on birds with green leg flags BSA and BHM, weighing 168 and 146 grams respectively and well advanced in their breeding plumage. Both of these PTTs are transmitting so there are now four birds providing local movement data and at least two of them showing all the signs of preparing for migration.



**Figure 3:** Pacific Golden Plover BHM having its transmitter fitted

The same catch also resulted in both DAA and DAB being recaptured. Both birds were only showing traces of breeding plumage but weighed 146 and 142 grams respectively which was an increase on their November weights which were 131 and 132 grams respectively, so hopefully they are also beginning to prepare for migration. Catching two birds in the middle of the non-breeding season while the birds were still at their lean weights and catching the final two as they are starting to increase weight prior to migration will provide an interesting opportunity to compare the effectiveness of harnesses fitted at different times in the migratory cycle.

Regular updates with maps showing where the birds have been seen are being posted on the Queensland Wader Study Group website. <http://waders.org.au/studying-waders/banding-shorebirds/satellite-transmitters-and-geolocators/pacific-golden-plover-satellite-tracking/>

At this stage, these are only local movements, within the Moreton Bay area and the updates will be more frequent as the birds start migrating and leave our region.

Many thanks to the Port of Brisbane for their support and to the many volunteers at Queensland Wader Study Group who have helped with the catching. Particular thanks are due to Robert Bush who has developed an expertise in fitting these devices, as evidenced by four healthy, transmitting birds that are currently flying around the Brisbane area.

### References

Johnson, O.W., Porter, R.R., Fielding, L., Weber, M.F., Gold, R.S., Goodwill, R.H., Johnson, P.M., Bruner, A.E., Brusseau, P.A., Brusseau, N.H., Hurwitz, K. and Fox, J.W. (2015). Tracking Pacific Golden-Plovers *Pluvialis fulva*: transoceanic migrations between non-breeding grounds in Kwajalein, Japan and Hawaii and breeding grounds in Alaska and Chukotka. *Wader Study* **122**(1): 13-20.

Minton, C., Wahl, J., Jessop, R., Hassell, C., Collins, P. and Gibbs, H. (2006). Migration routes of waders which spend the non-breeding season in Australia. *Stilt* **50**:135-157.

**Jon Coleman**  
**Queensland Wader Study Group**

## Tracking Red-necked Stint from Victoria - preliminary comments

Although we had been anxious to obtain a better understanding of the strategies of the Red-necked Stint during migration, it was not until a special lightweight *Intigeo* geolocator (0.3g) was produced by Migrate Technology that this became a reality. The Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG) deployed 60 of these geolocators on Red-necked Stint at Yallock Creek on 9 April 2016. A team was successful in retrieving 7 of these on 7 Jan 2017 at Yallock Creek and an additional 3 from a catch on Barrallier Island (Westernport Bay) on 21 January making a total of 10 retrievals at this stage.

These miniaturised geolocators have reduced specifications to those we have normally used in recent years e.g. on Ruddy Turnstone. Some of the more critical features were:

- reduced battery life – a maximum of 6 months possible;
- light values recorded are truncated;
- temperature is not recorded; and
- conductivity is recorded differently.

Because the battery had expired the loggers were sent to James Fox at Migrate Technology for downloading. With his co-operation we obtained 6 tracks. Four of the instruments failed, mainly due to water ingress; it should be noted that these miniature loggers had not been used anywhere previously. I analysed these using the 'normal' threshold method. (The data was also sent to Simeon Lisovski for him to use his statistical methodology.) Of the 6 geolocators with data, one bird did not migrate (except to

## Tracking Red-necked Stint from Vic - prelim. comments cont.

South Australia and return). The following is a summary of the key features shown by the available data.

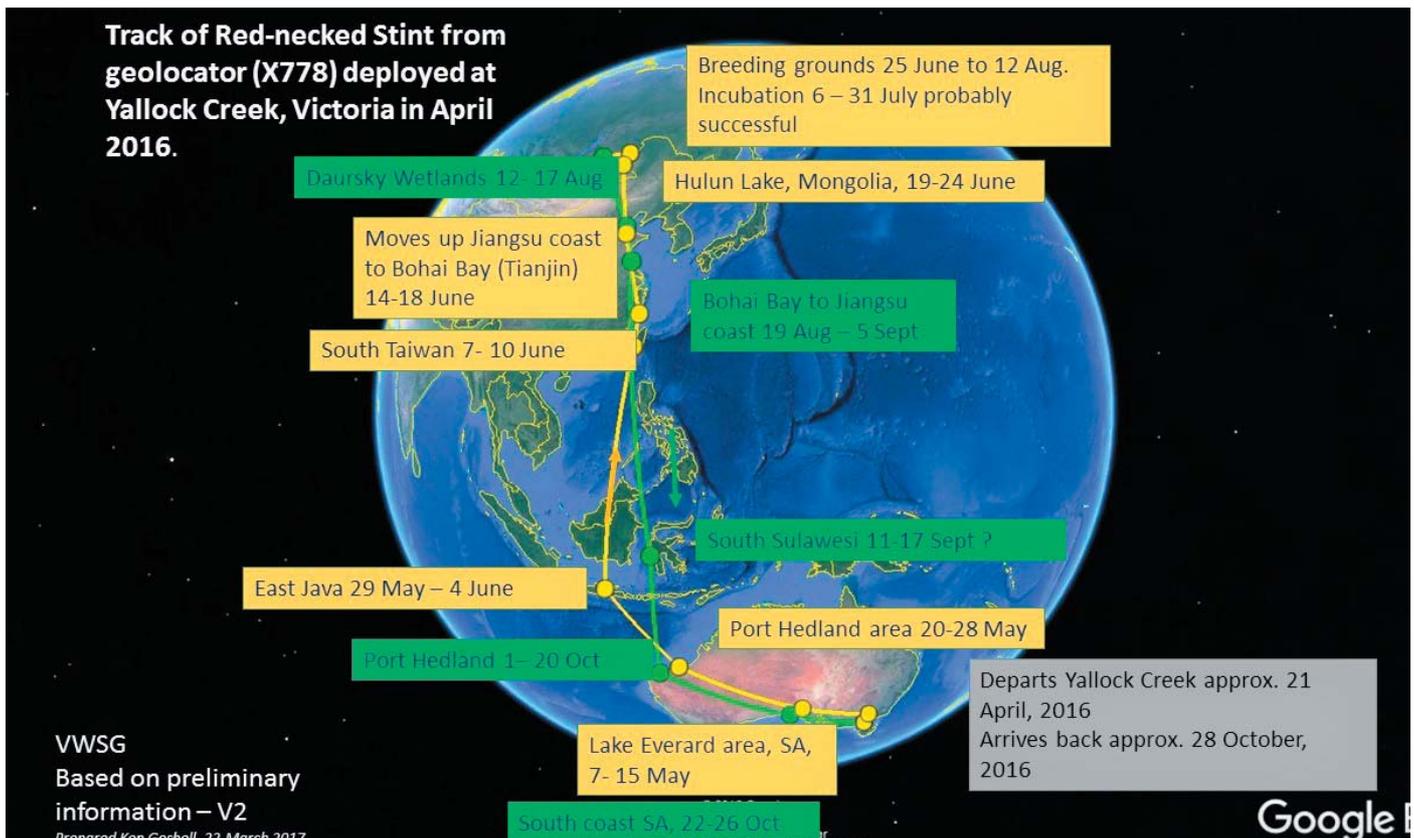
Overall the 5 birds that migrated did reach the Arctic breeding grounds and returned to Westernport Bay. Birds departed Yallock Creek between 11 April and 6 May 2016 with the majority between 11 and 22 April 2016. Naturally this small wader (approx. 38-44g at departure) would be expected to make more stopovers on its journey north than larger waders. In general terms the birds seemed to make several stops in Australia before departing our shores. Several of these appeared to be at inland lakes such as Lake Eyre although the data cannot show these locations with any accuracy. Most birds overflow Northwest Australia to either East Timor or Indonesia (Java and Sulawesi). After brief stops (4-8 days) they make the longest flight of their migration going to either Taiwan or Hainan (3000-3500 km). After 4-6 days they make their way up the coast of China to the area of the Shandong Peninsula and Bohai Bay where they might spend up to a week. From there they all fly inland to the lakes around the China/Mongolia/Russia border. As this is close to the Arctic circle, with 24-hour daylight, it is not possible to define tracks to the breeding grounds which appear to be in northern Siberia. Unfortunately, without full light values recorded it is not possible for Simeon to utilise his SGAT (or similar) method to define breeding

areas. Birds reached the Arctic between 8 June and 28 June 2016 (the last only stayed 5 days before commencing the return journey).

It is interesting that of the 5 records, 3 birds would appear to have successfully incubated and there is some indication of some brooding. Birds departed the Arctic between 3 July and 12 August 2016 (depending to some extent on whether they successfully bred). The majority return through the Daursky Wetlands near the Russia/China border where they spend 3 to 8 days before returning to the Yellow Sea region around Bohai Bay. They tend to move south along the China coast to areas such as Taiwan and Hainan before stepping south through Vietnam, Indonesia etc. The track south at this point is difficult to assess because of the effects of the equinox. It does seem that at least one bird returned to Australia via Port Hedland while several others came through western Queensland and NSW. They had all returned to Westernport Bay by the end of October.

Although limited in extent, this component of our geolocator program has enabled our knowledge of the migration strategy for our smallest wader to be significantly increased. We would again thank all those people who participated in the various fieldwork teams for their time and effort; these results could not be achieved without you.

**Ken Gosbell**



**Figure 1.** A simplified map showing the track and key dates for Red-necked Stint X778

## Wing Threads: Flight to the Tundra

Last year I shared with you my plans to fly the migratory path of the Red-necked Stint from Australia to Siberia along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway to raise awareness for shorebird conservation; a project I have called *Wing Threads: Flight to the Tundra*. My plans are still to first undertake a shorter cross-country flight from Melbourne to Broome at the beginning of 2019, arriving in March before the shorebirds depart on their northward migration. I then intend to work towards an international flight from Broome to Siberia in 2022, departing in March and arriving with the shorebirds on the Arctic Tundra in June/July for the breeding season.



Amelia learning to fly a microlight to follow the Red-necked Stint migration path

Moving forward towards this goal over the past six months has been a balancing act between working full-time, learning to fly, networking, applying for funding, planning for a crowdfunding campaign and finding time to fulfil my role as BirdLife's Shorebirds 2020 Southwest WA Coordinator, but so far, everything has continued to fall into place. Needless to say it has been a challenge, but all of the amazing places I have been fortunate enough to travel to and the people I have met have made it all worthwhile.

At the end of September 2016, I attended the Australasian Shorebird Conference in Auckland, New Zealand, where I gave a presentation on *Wing Threads: Flight to the Tundra* and received feedback from leading shorebird researchers, conservationists, students and enthusiasts. The project was incredibly well received and afterwards I was overwhelmed by the amount of support offered by people from throughout the Flyway who were inspired by the idea. I also came away with valuable input from Danny Rogers and Phil Battley for how the microlight could be utilised to record data on in-flight wind conditions and to ground truth geolocators as part of a research project. I was also excited to learn that for the first time, geolocators had been deployed on Red-necked Stint and I believe some have now been retrieved. It is with eager anticipation that I await the data showing their flightpath across Australia and beyond, on which I will base my flight!

Shortly after returning from New Zealand in October, I received an *Amelia Earhart Fly Now* scholarship from The Ninety-Nines International Organization of Women Pilots, established by Amelia Earhart in the 1930s. To receive such an award was an honour and I realise how much I am standing on the shoulders of so many

brave women pilots who have come before me, including Amelia Earhart herself. The award covers most of my flight training costs and will allow me to obtain my recreational pilot certificate much sooner. Between November and January, I committed myself to flying almost every weekend and passed all of my pilot exams.

The more I fly, the more I become addicted to it and I have also begun learning to pilot a fixed-wing Foxbat AP-22 ultralight aircraft as well as the microlight. When it is too windy to fly the microlight, my flight instructor Gordon and I go up in the Foxbat instead. It is great to keep my head in flight mode, practising radio calls and circuits. I now have 30 hours of flight time under my belt - 22 in the microlight and 8 in the Foxbat. I love the weekend routine of packing the car with my camping gear on Saturday morning, then driving the 2 hours east from Perth to White Gum Farm in York, arriving in time for a briefing with Gordon before the afternoon's flying lesson. At night time, I roll out the swag and camp under an expanse of stars. In the morning, I am woken before dawn by a chorus of magpie song and the chatter of ringnecks - or '28s' as they're known over here. White Gum Farm is a great place to go birding. It is not uncommon to see White-backed Swallows swooping near the dam, and Rufous Treecreepers, and White-browed Babblers in the Salmon Gums.

Sleeping in a swag



## ***Wing Threads: Flight to the Tundra cont.***

In between flying and working, I have been fortunate to travel around Western Australia by invitation to present shorebird workshops in Jurien Bay, Onslow and Esperance in my role as joint Shorebirds 2020 WA Coordinator. More recently, people have started asking me to speak about *Wing Threads* itself and in mid-March I presented at the WA Museum of the Great Southern in Albany for the South Coast Festival of Birds, and I also gave a presentation in northwest Australia as part of the wader expedition to 80 Mile Beach. The feedback I receive most often after a talk is that what I am setting out to do is brave and inspiring, which is rewarding, but not why I set out to do this flight. What I love most about these travels is meeting people and hearing about why shorebirds matter so much to them and having them share with me their favourite places to go and see shorebirds. Places that they so obviously care about and love and want to see stay that way. It is their dedication and commitment to look after and preserve local shorebird habitats for future generations that inspires me to keep going and their stories that I want to tell through film when I stopover along the way at important shorebird sites during the first Australian cross-country flight.

Weather permitting, I will do my first solo flight in the microlight and obtain my recreational pilot certificate before the end of April. A prospect that both excites and terrifies me at the same time! Once I have my certificate, I will need to complete a minimum of 15 hours further solo training to gain passenger and cross-country endorsements, which will allow me to fly more than 25 nautical miles (46 kilometres) from the site of take off. To then build up the 500-1000 hours of flight training needed to undertake a journey of the scale I'm proposing, I will need to continue solo flight training on shorter cross-country flights. There's just one catch. To train solo, you need to have your own aircraft... and I don't have one... and I can't fund one on my own.

So, I find myself now at the first big hurdle. For *Wing Threads: Flight to the Tundra* to become a reality, I need an aircraft ASAP to continue solo training. Until I am able to find the means to obtain an aircraft for solo flight training, *Wing Threads: Flight to the Tundra* will be grounded. In an effort to give this project wings (literally and figuratively) **I have launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise \$70,000 for an Airborne XT 912 Tundra model microlight aircraft**, designed for long-distance cross-country flight.

When the crowdfunding campaign ends on April 16th, it will be exactly one year to the day since I began learning to fly, which seems apt. If it turns out I'm unable to get an aircraft, at least I

will know I gave it everything I've got and it was worth it. Just to put this idea out there and get to where I am now over these last 12 months has meant finding the courage to face my fears over and over again and in doing so, I have learned so much about myself and my confidence has increased tenfold. But what I hope is that I will be looking back, having gone from never having flown, or even entertained the idea of flying before in my life, to being on the brink of becoming a pilot about to take on the adventure of my life - and all because of shorebirds and all because of you.

I know that what I have set for myself is ambitious and that it won't be easy and that there are risks involved but I am willing to take on those hurdles one at a time as they come. I believe that when you are really passionate about something, whether it be shorebirds, conservation, flying, art, science - whatever you really love - then others feel your energy and enthusiasm for it and that is how you begin to create change. There is a quote from Amelia Earhart that inspires me to keep going even though I have no idea where this whole thing will take me or how it will look to get there:

*"Some of us have great runways already built for us. If you have one, take off. But if you don't, realise it is your responsibility to grab a shovel and build one for yourself and for those who will follow after you."*

I am learning that choosing to build your own runway is not for the faint of heart, and it doesn't always look how you expect it to, but there is nothing more worthwhile. If you would like to help me build this runway for *Wing Threads: Flight to the Tundra* to take off, please head to **[www.chuffed.org/project/wingthreads](http://www.chuffed.org/project/wingthreads)** to donate to the crowdfunding campaign. Your support is much appreciated!

A big thank you to BirdLife Australia and the AWSG for their ongoing support as project partners. Special thanks to BirdLife Australia as well for generously donating merchandise and magazine subscriptions as incentives for the crowdfunding campaign.

**Amellia Formby**

Help give this project wings! Donate at:

**[www.chuffed.org/project/wingthreads](http://www.chuffed.org/project/wingthreads)**

To stay up to date with happenings from *Wing Threads: Flight to the Tundra*, enjoy short films and discover the *Meet the Shorebirds* cartoons visit: **[www.wingthreads.com](http://www.wingthreads.com)**



[@wingthreads](https://facebook.com/wingthreads)

## 9<sup>th</sup> EAAFP meeting of the partners - AWSG report

### Introduction

The following is a brief report on the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Meeting of the Partners (MoP) which was held in Singapore from 11-15 January 2017. Attending from AWSG were Doug Watkins, Chair of AWSG, Alison Russell-French, Secretary, and observer Connie Warren from BirdLife Australia. Phil Straw was also in attendance at the EAAFP Communication Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Working Group.

Prior to the Meeting, several pre-meetings were conducted, namely, the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (<http://www.caff.is/arctic-migratory-birds-initiative-ambi>), EAAF Workshop from 7-9 January, and on 10 January the EAAFP Shorebird Working Group and EAAFP Far Eastern Curlew Task Force met jointly. From all reports, holding these pre-meetings worked effectively in providing time for useful and timely discussion of issues while meetings convened in the margins of the MoP were difficult to arrange with inadequate time available.

The MoP was well attended by Partners and a number of observers indicating that the partnership is growing in support, maturity and engagement. The Meeting agenda was comprehensive with a number of important governance issues being presented to Partners for consideration and endorsement. Most Partners provided written reports to the Secretariat ahead of the Meeting on activities they had undertaken since the last MoP which was a substantial improvement on reporting to MoP 8 where a lot of time was taken up with Partners reporting at the meeting. Likewise, work plans had been provided to the Secretariat ahead of time to outline proposed activities over the next 2 years.

### Governance Issues

The major governance issues raised at the Meeting included:

- Revised Rules of Procedure for Meetings of Partners,
- Revised Terms of Reference for the Management Committee of the Partnership,
- Establishment of a Technical Committee, and
- Establishment of a Finance Committee.

The first 3 of these issues were sponsored by the Australian Government and the Finance Committee item was sponsored by the USA. All of these issues were endorsed by the Partners with some amendments.

In brief, the Rules of Procedure will provide a more disciplined approach to the convening of MoPs, development of agendas and papers to be provided.

The Management Committee will now have a more directive, rather than advisory, role in guiding the CEO. Its composition is USA (Chair), Singapore (Vice-Chair), RoK (Government Partner and Host of the Secretariat), Mongolia (Government Partner), AWSG (Doug Watkins and Alison Russell-French on specific issues) and WWT (non-Government Partners) and Ramsar (IGO Partner). AWSG will step down at the next MoP.

The Finance Committee will consider a range of financial needs of the Partnership and the Secretariat and will provide recommendations to the Management Committee and Partners on current levels of expenditure in the Flyway, fund-raising options, and opportunities to seek corporate and philanthropical support. The MoP supported the proposals for a voluntary fee from Partners to assist in meeting financial needs for activities and support of the Secretariat. The appointment of a fund-raising officer for the Flyway Partnership is proposed. Alison Russell-French will continue on the Finance Committee.

The Technical Committee has been established on an interim basis until the next MoP with the Management Committee charged with providing names of experts to serve on it until the next MoP where they, and possibly other named experts, will be recommended for formal appointment. The Management Committee will consult with Partners regarding the nominations to the Technical Committee.

### Development of the EAAFP Strategic Plan

Another significant issue dealt with was the process for developing the new EAAFP Strategic Plan. The existing Implementation Plan which expired in 2016 has been endorsed to continue in the interim until a new Strategic Plan is developed. AWSG (Doug Watkins) is taking the lead on this issue and it is likely that Martin Spray of WWT will Chair the Task Force established to manage this issue.

The Partners agreed to a proposed timeline for developing the Plan and accepted the Partners who have offered to participate in the drafting Task Force. The Australian Government has agreed to be involved. This will be a priority matter with a fairly ambitious timeline as the intention is to have the Strategic Plan developed 12 months before the next MoP so that it can

## 9<sup>th</sup> EAAFP meeting of the partners - AWSG report cont.

inform and guide the preparation of work plans to be submitted by Partners to the next MoP.

### Matters of Particular Interest to AWSG

#### (1) Waterbird Monitoring

Doug Watkins will continue to Chair the EAAFP Monitoring Task Force. A break-out discussion on this topic resulted in agreement on a process for working towards standardized monitoring with Wetlands International and BirdLife International working cooperatively on this. This is a significant step forward as this issue was not resolved at MoP8. A workshop is proposed to be held to progress monitoring in the Flyway. The Shorebird 2020 program has valuable insights that it could offer into the enhancement of monitoring in the Flyway.

#### (2) Shorebird Working Group

Phil Straw with support from Micha Jackson (Qld University), Eduardo Gallo-Cajiao (Qld University) and Connie Warren (BirdLife Australia) has volunteered at the Shorebird Working Group meeting to take the lead on "Restoration methods" and "Management of working coastal wetlands and intertidal zones – to gather expertise". Rick Lanctot, Chair of the Shorebird Working Group, will be communicating this through the SWG list serve.

#### (3) Far Eastern Curlew Task Force

This was established with Australia chairing and BirdLife Australia providing coordination.

#### (4) Yellow Sea Task Force

The Task Force meeting, chaired by Bruce McKinlay of New Zealand, focused on sharing information of activities implemented in the last 2 years and proposed future activities. Highlighted elements included:

the Coastal Wetland Conservation Blueprint Project in China (2015) ([www.eaaflyway.net/paulson-institute-and-chinese-partners-publish-blueprint-of-coastal-wetland-conservation-and-management-in-china/](http://www.eaaflyway.net/paulson-institute-and-chinese-partners-publish-blueprint-of-coastal-wetland-conservation-and-management-in-china/));

the shorebird survey collaboration in DPRK by the Pūkoro Miramira Naturalists' Trust (<http://www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz/miranda-publications/>); and

the April 2016 Yellow Sea-Bohai Sea region survey of waterbirds (<http://www.eaaflyway.net/latest-yellow-sea-bohai-sea-region-survey-of-waterbirds-highlights-continued-importance-of-this-global-bottle-neck-area/>).

#### (5) South East Asia Network

The Partnership welcomed the establishment of the South East Asia Network, recognizing that data on migratory shorebird populations and staging sites was more limited. National Government Partners in this part of the Flyway are keen to use regional frameworks (e.g. ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation [www.arcbc.org.ph/](http://www.arcbc.org.ph/)) to support migratory waterbird conservation activities. As Singapore is now the Vice Chair of the Partnership and the Chair of the network is a former Chair of the Partnership, it is anticipated that this area will become more actively involved in Flyway activities.

#### (6) CEPA Working Group

The Working Group through Lew Young of the Ramsar Bureau is pressing for greater engagement in Partners providing more updated information on Flyway sites. It was noted that most Partners need to address this, including Australia.

As a result of input at the meeting, the CEPA Action Plan presented to Partners will be reviewed out of session to take account of significant suggestions made in break-out sessions.

### Summary

Overall outcomes from this MoP were very positive and the involvement of so many dedicated individuals from the various partners, including some of the younger generation, was a very positive aspect. The Partnership is now diversifying and maturing and one of the challenges will be to encourage more interaction and engagement by Partners in the key needs for conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats. AWSG is continuing to take a very active role in supporting the Partnership especially in relation to governance and strategic planning.

**Doug Watkins** (Chair AWSG) and **Alison Russell-French** (AWSG Secretary)  
24 January 2017



The 9th Meeting of Partners of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership in Singapore, January 2017 (Photo Eugene Cheah)

## Transboundary collaboration to save Far Eastern Curlew

The Far Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* is one of the largest shorebirds in the world. Its very large size (900 g) and very long bill (19 cm) distinguish it from other similar species in Australia and the East Asian–Australasian Flyway. It is endemic to the flyway, breeding in Russia and China and migrating as far as New Zealand. Declining numbers at the species' staging and non-breeding sites prompted the Australian Government to list the species as 'Critically Endangered' under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* in May 2015. In large part, the observed decline in Far Eastern Curlew numbers stems from ongoing loss of intertidal mudflat habitat at key migration staging sites in the Yellow Sea. If the main threats continue, further decline or extinction is expected.

Acknowledging the severe decline of Far Eastern Curlew, the Australian Government initiated the development of an International Single Species Action Plan under the auspices of the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) with the support of Australia's bilateral migratory bird agreement partners Japan, China and the Republic of Korea and the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (CMS). International Single Species Action Plans are an important instrument to promote and coordinate activities that seek to protect and restore habitat, and to mitigate obstacles to migration and other controlling factors that might endanger species. Australia also recently developed an International Single Species Action Plan for Loggerhead Turtles in the South Pacific Ocean that was unanimously endorsed by relevant Range States and CMS in November 2014.

For the past two years, all Range States, CMS Parties, EAAFP Partners, relevant non-government organisations and researchers have been actively engaged in developing the Action Plan for Far Eastern Curlew. The Action Plan was designed to outline an internationally agreed list of activities necessary along the flyway, to improve the understanding of the species' status, to halt its decline and support its long-term survival. The Action Plan addresses key threats at important sites along the flyway, ranging from the breeding grounds, to stop-over (or staging) and non-breeding sites.

The goal of the Action Plan is to return the Far Eastern Curlew to a positive population growth rate for at least three generations. Essential actions identified in the Action Plan to achieve this are to:

- (i) identify, protect and manage remaining sites used by the species during its annual cycle;
- (ii) reduce or eliminate illegal harvesting and incidental bycatch;
- (iii) robustly monitor the species' population trend;
- (iv) determine key demographic parameters to support population modelling; and
- (v) constitute a Far Eastern Curlew Task Force and

keep it functioning until the goal is achieved.

At the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Partners in January 2017, Australia introduced the final Far Eastern Curlew Single Species Action Plan for agreement, along with the revised Task Force Terms of Reference and an ambitious 2-year workplan. All papers were unanimously approved and Australia was re-elected as Chair of the Task Force, with BirdLife Australia elected as Task Force coordinator.

The mechanism of an International Single Species Action Plan has been proven to be effective in improving and coordinating conservation efforts. The Action Plan will be coordinated by the Far Eastern Curlew Task Force established under the EAAFP and is designed to be implemented by governments and non-government bodies. The Single Species Action Plan provides an important tool for promoting and coordinating conservation at an international, national and regional level. The Action Plan provides guidance for Range States, CMS Parties, EAAFP Partners, conservationists, researchers and habitat managers over the next decade, while also providing a model for further advancing migratory bird conservation throughout the flyway.

The development of the Action Plan demonstrates Australia's commitment to the conservation of transboundary species listed under the three migratory bird agreements and the CMS. The Far Eastern Curlew is one of 20 priority bird species identified by the Australian Government's *Threatened Species Strategy* and the Action Plan is an important mechanism to achieve lasting success. Australia also took the opportunity to announce the \$500,000 National Environmental Science Programme Threatened Species Recovery Hub research project focusing on Far Eastern Curlew recently approved by the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Energy.

All Range States must act quickly to halt the Far Eastern Curlew's imminent extinction. All threats must be minimised or preferably eliminated within the next decade. International and regional cooperation is essential to prevent extinction of this migratory shorebird. The Far Eastern Curlew Task Force will continue to work intersessionally with Range States, Partners and stakeholders to facilitate implementation of the Action Plan and report on progress at the next Meeting of Partners in 2019.

**Mark Carey<sup>1</sup> and Connie Warren<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Chair, Far Eastern Curlew Task Force

<sup>2</sup>Coordinator, Far Eastern Curlew Task Force

## Recovering the Far Eastern Curlew

The migration route of the Far Eastern Curlew falls within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF), which it shares with more than 50 other migratory shorebird species. The northern end of the EAAF (where migratory shorebird species breed) includes parts of Russia, China, Mongolia and Alaska, and its southern end (non-breeding habitat) includes parts of south-east Asia, Australia and New Zealand. In the middle lies much of east and south-east Asia, and some islands of the western Pacific.

As with all migratory species, if any one critical area in the life cycle is left unprotected, it could spell the collapse of the entire population despite the best efforts elsewhere. All countries along the migration route will need to enact conservation measures to achieve recovery of the Far Eastern Curlew, and these actions will also benefit many other species.



Far Eastern Curlew (Photo: Micha Jackson)

Tracking studies over the last 30 years have taught us much about the Far Eastern Curlew's life-cycle. These studies include the resighting, recording and reporting of bands and flags attached to the legs of curlews as they move through the flyway, and the use of geo-locators and satellite transmitters.

It breeds in marshy areas of Russia and northern China, and, as far as we can tell, the entire population passes through the Yellow Sea/Bohai Sea region, which includes coastal areas of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, during migration. This region is therefore a critical stopover area for curlews to rest and refuel while undertaking their gruelling long-distance migration flights.

During the non-breeding season, about three quarters of the birds wait out the northern winter in Australia, with others heading to the Philippines, Indonesia, PNG and likely elsewhere.

### Under a dark cloud

The Far Eastern Curlew has suffered rapid and dramatic population declines in recent decades. The IUCN Red List, which assesses the global status of species, listed it as Least Concern in

2004, but it was rapidly upgraded to Vulnerable in 2010 and to Endangered in 2015. Recent research confirmed an annual decline of almost 6% over the last two decades, and the species was listed as Critically Endangered in Australia in 2016.

A key driver of this decline is extensive loss of intertidal mudflat, particularly in the Yellow/Bohai Sea region – where more than half of this habitat has disappeared over the last 50 years. Causes of mudflat loss are multiple and include: coastal developments, which 'reclaim' soft, food-filled mudflats using seawalls and convert them into solid land; a reduction in sediment deposits from rivers that have been extensively dammed; and escalating sea-level rise.



The bill of this knee-height bird can be up to 20 cm in females, and is used to probe soft mud for food like crabs and marine worms (Photo Dean Ingwersen)

Other impacts on the species include reduced food supply on remaining mudflats, loss of and changes to breeding habitat, hunting, accidental catch in fishing nets, and pollution.

Within Australia, recreational beach goers and dogs are also having a major impact on curlews, disturbing them on 'roosting' habitat – important areas where they rest during high tide periods when mudflat feeding grounds are covered with seawater. This shy bird will generally flee from people and dogs when they are more than a hundred metres away and does not readily resettle when disturbed. Coastal developments are also impacting roosting habitat.

### Research for strategic planning

A new Darwin-based Threatened Species Recovery (TSR) project is addressing key knowledge gaps facing Far Eastern Curlew conservation. In particular, how the birds use different feeding and roosting habitats and which areas are most critical to conserve, particularly in the face of increasing coastal development.

Shorebirds will use some artificial habitats, including some wharves, commercial salt works

## Recovering the Far Eastern Curlew cont.

and aquaculture ponds. This project is working with the Darwin Port, where significant numbers of Far Eastern Curlew use the East Arm Wharf as a roosting area.

Filling knowledge gaps about feeding and roosting requirements will enable the project to develop conservation guidelines for developers, planners and regulators. Our hope is that improved management of 'accidental' habitats like East Arm Wharf, alongside conservation of intertidal mudflat habitat, could help the Far Eastern Curlew and other migratory shorebirds recover.

This project also complements a National Environmental Science Programme Marine Biodiversity Hub project, which takes a whole-of-north approach to conserving migratory species groups reliant on the marine environment.

### An international focus

The new TSR Hub project commenced just as key stakeholders from EAAF countries met in Singapore at the 9th EAAF Partnership 'Meeting of Partners'. This biennial meeting is the decision-making forum of the Partnership, which commenced in 2006 and is a voluntary, non-legally-binding agreement allowing countries,

local governments, NGOs, IGOs, and corporations from throughout the flyway to work together on shorebird conservation initiatives.

In response to the dire situation facing the Far Eastern Curlew, a special task force was established at the 2015 Meeting of Partners and at the 2017 meeting, a Single Species Action Plan was endorsed and launched, to guide priority conservation and research actions to help the species recover throughout the flyway.

Given the current status of Far Eastern Curlew and its recent dramatic declines, the survival of all individuals remaining in the population is crucial. Australia's role is to design and implement effective conservation measures at home to protect non-breeding habitat from disturbance and loss of roosting habitat, and to work cooperatively with other flyway countries.

*For further information:*

**Micha Victoria Jackson**

email: [m.jackson@uqconnect.edu.au](mailto:m.jackson@uqconnect.edu.au)

This article sourced from <http://www.nespthreatenedspecies.edu.au/news/recovering-the-far-eastern-curlew>

## BLA Migratory Shorebird Conservation Action Plan update

In December 2016, BirdLife Australia (BLA) hosted a two-day workshop attended by a range of national and international stakeholders to finalise the Migratory Shorebird Conservation Action Plan, a process which commenced in May 2016. The Plan seeks to operationalise several of the Very High and High priority actions outlined in the Australian Government's Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds, including ensuring protection of significant migratory shorebird habitat across the flyway, improving management at important sites in Australia and addressing important knowledge gaps in migratory shorebird ecology.

The outputs of the second workshop included detailed work plans for each of the priority actions. These work plans provide clear and specific guidance pertaining to the staffing, timelines and costs associated with the

implementation of conservation actions identified in the Wildlife Conservation Plan. A steering committee was also established to oversee the implementation of the Migratory Shorebird Conservation Action Plan.

The Conservation Action Plan will see BirdLife Australia working closely with other stakeholders to implement the Plan which will be reliant on Shorebirds 2020 continuing as Australia's national shorebird monitoring program.

BirdLife is currently in the process of drafting the Plan, which will then be reviewed and endorsed by the steering committee before being made available to a wider range of stakeholders.

**Dan Weller**

## Alaska Shorebird Group

The Alaska Shorebird Group (ASG) held its annual meeting on 6 December 2016 in Cordova, Alaska. Papers and posters on shorebird studies were given over the following few days at the 2016 Alaska Bird Conference; abstracts can be found in the conference's scientific program at: <http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Alaska-Bird-Conference-2016-Abstracts.pdf>

The annual summary of new or ongoing studies of Alaska shorebirds is found at:

[https://www.fws.gov/alaska/mbsp/mbm/shorebirds/pdf/2016\\_ASG\\_annual\\_summaries.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/alaska/mbsp/mbm/shorebirds/pdf/2016_ASG_annual_summaries.pdf)

Revisions to the 2008 Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan are underway. We hope to finalize Version III by year's end. Version II can be found at:

[https://www.fws.gov/alaska/mbsp/mbm/shorebirds/pdf/ascp\\_nov2008.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/alaska/mbsp/mbm/shorebirds/pdf/ascp_nov2008.pdf)

**Chris Harwood**

**Chair, Alaska Shorebird Group**

## Unusual roosting behaviour of curlews in Tiaozini, China

On 13 March 2017 I was surveying the waterbirds at Tiaozini, southern Dongtai as part of the regular China Coastal Waterbird Census.

After the Chinese New Year in late January, a new project is underway near the southern end of the present seawall (see Roost 1 on **Figure 1**). This project aims to strengthen the base of the seawall against the strong tide. It has changed the mudflat landscape dramatically.

Throughout the winter, when the mudflat is flooded, almost all the waders choose to roost inside the seawall near the southern end (see Roost 2 on **Figure 1**). This area is leased by some people for fish farming but the human activity is not extensive and the water level has been low for more than a year. In the whole reclamation area there are many more artificial ponds which are either dry or full of water and not favoured by waders for roosting.

When the tide came in and I had finished counting all the small waders, I drove north along the seawall to look for the gathering of big waders. Before the last patch of mudflat was flooded (see Roost 3 on **Figure 1**), I counted 5100 Eurasian Curlew, with five Far Eastern Curlew as early migrants. They moved back and forth looking for shallower water and finally decided to take off. I drove south to Roost 2 expecting to see them again. At first they all flew there, but only a few chose to roost while many others flew out of the seawall. I followed them along the seawall and found a few of them roosting with large gulls on top of the new 'wall' extending from the base of the seawall to the mudflat at Roost 1.



**Figure 1** – Roost sites at Tiaozini



Roost 1 at high tide, with birds congregating on remaining exposed 'walls' (Photo by Zhang Lin)



Roost 2 in early 2016. The farthest lines of roosting birds are Great Cormorant. The middle line is Far Eastern Oystercatcher. The closest line is mainly Eurasian Curlew (Photo by Gu Jidong)



Roost 1 before high tide showing new 'wall' out on the mudflat (Photo by Zhang Lin)

## Unusual roosting behaviour of curlews in Tiaozini, China cont.



Eurasian Curlew at Roost 2 in early 2016 (Photo by Gu Jidong)

The majority of curlews were obviously not roosting at Roost 1. When I reached Roost 3, good numbers of curlews were roosting in shallow water. This is not a stable place to roost as it's only 50 m from the seawall and waders are often disturbed by vehicles running on top of the seawall, or even, sometimes, by birdwatchers and photographers. I didn't stop to photograph or count them. The weather was bad and there was almost nobody on the seawall. Hopefully, they would go on roosting there. From my glimpse of them, I estimated the number to be about 2000, so there was still a large number of them missing.

Then I drove close to a carpark for a sight-seeing spot where tourists have easy access down to the mudflat. Scanning the dry ponds inside the seawall, I found no waders roosting but noticed some curlew-sized waders flying low out of the seawall. I passed the carpark where there were only three cars parked and no people walking around. Within a few hundred metres north, I realised that the curlew-sized waders were mostly Eurasian Curlew with some Far Eastern Oystercatcher, and they were not out of but actually roosting on top of the seawall (some were on the slope), which is a very unusual scene for me. At this point, the surface of the seawall is gravel, not bitumen. As I drove on, they were

quite reluctant to leave and I could get as close as 20 m. When I drove a little closer, they just moved a few metres to keep their distance from me. There was still a large area to survey so I had to speed up and flush them. I estimated the number to be 1000+. As I proceeded, they immediately came back to the seawall (see Roost 4 on **Figure 1**).



Birds lifting at Roost 4 as I drove past. They returned to roost on the gravel road (Photo by Zhang Lin)

In my years of birdwatching in the Dongtai-Rudong area since 2008, I often see Eurasian Curlew roosting at the base of the seawall in Yangkou Town, Rudong County. The mudflat here is narrower and lower than that of Tiaozini due to earlier reclamation and the seawall is paved. Human activities along the seawall are far more extensive (even in winter) so it's not surprising that I have never seen curlews roosting on top of the seawall. In Dongling, Rudong County, the mudflat is higher and the water of spring tides in winter is not deep, so curlews mostly roost on the mudflat.

Eurasian Curlew on China's eastern coast may tend to roost on seawalls more than I can imagine, but extensive human activities for sure stop them from doing that.

**Zhang Lin**

[zhanglinastro@163.com](mailto:zhanglinastro@163.com)

[www.shanghaibirdingtour.com](http://www.shanghaibirdingtour.com)

## Restoring shorebird habitat in Hunter Wetlands National Park

Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) is engaging communities to conserve wetlands including vital shorebird habitat, through the Revive Our Wetlands program. Launched on World Wetlands Day 2017, Revive Our Wetlands is a national initiative that will expand CVA's role in engaging communities to conserve wetlands and their catchments for nature and people.

One of the key program targets is Shorebird Conservation through protecting and restoring critical sites on the East Asian-Australasian

Flyway. CVA is working towards this target through the *Restoration of Migratory Shorebird Habitat – Hunter Wetlands National Park* project, which began in July 2016 and is assisted with funding from the NSW Environmental Trust.

Created in 2007 and covering an area of 4,257 hectares across the Hunter Estuary, the Hunter Wetlands National Park contains a Ramsar Site and Important Bird Area, and is the most significant migratory shorebird habitat in NSW.

## Restoring shorebird habitat in Hunter Wetlands Nat. Park cont.

Thirty-one species of migratory shorebird have been recorded in the Hunter Estuary, thirty of which are listed in international treaties for the protection of migratory birds between the Australian Government and Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA). Seven species of migratory shorebirds and four species of resident shorebirds regularly recorded in the estuary are listed under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, and the Hunter Estuary supports more than 1% of the world population of Chestnut Teal, Red-necked Avocet and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.



Tom Clarke from Hunter Bird Observers Club shows CVA volunteers the shorebirds (Photo by CVA)

Saltmarsh is one of the main vegetation communities in the Hunter Estuary, providing essential foraging and roosting grounds for shorebirds. The low vegetation in saltmarsh communities ensures shorebirds have a clear line of sight to spot predators while feeding or roosting. As saltmarsh is invaded by dense and high-growing weeds like spiny rush *Juncus acutus* and mangroves, shorebirds will avoid these areas.

Spiny rush had severely degraded saltmarsh communities on Ash Island and Hexham Swamp in the Hunter Wetlands National Park, leading to a loss of habitat and foraging grounds for shorebirds. Mangroves were also increasing in the estuary and transforming saltmarsh into mangrove habitat.

The *Restoration of Migratory Shorebird Habitat – Hunter Wetlands National Park* project has made significant gains for the health of the Hunter Estuary by reducing both these weed species at Ash Island and Hexham Swamp. Professional bush regeneration teams, Green Army participants and Better Earth volunteers have been clearing spiny rush and removing mangroves under licence, encouraging the return of native saltmarsh communities.



CVA volunteers helped remove mangroves to restore saltmarsh for shorebirds at the Hunter Estuary Wetlands Ramsar Site (Photo by CVA)

A monitoring program was established in June 2015 to research the effectiveness of *Juncus* control methods and rate of saltmarsh recruitment. Twelve plots and corresponding photo points were established in June 2015 with monitoring undertaken quarterly throughout the life of the project. There was a trial to ascertain the best method of *Juncus acutus* control with minimal impact on the saltmarsh. Of the four control methods trialled at the site, the most successful was treatment with the herbicide Glyphosate in a 1:50 ratio with Surfactant, averaging a 78% kill of *Juncus acutus* over baseline levels. This treatment also recorded the least percentage cover of re-sprouting *Juncus*, and the most saltmarsh regeneration over the other treatments. These findings were presented at the Coast-to-Coast conference in Coffs Harbour in November 2016 by Senior Project Officer Tim Mouton and Boyd Carney from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

In addition to controlling weeds the project has fostered community engagement with the Hunter Estuary Wetlands through interpretive walks and talks for volunteers, Citizen Science activities including mapping *Juncus acutus*, and shorebird monitoring with our partner Hunter Bird Observers Club, who play a lead role in conserving shorebirds in the estuary. The data gained in these activities will be compared with data collected over recent years to interpret and predict changes in bird numbers with improvements in habitat, and inform future planning and management in the estuary. Our major project partner is the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, who manage the land and oversee the project. Stage 1 of the project is now complete, with the project now in its second year.

### Louise Duff

Program Manager – Revive Our Wetlands, Conservation Volunteers Australia  
 m. +61 432 688 775  
 e. LDuff@conservationvolunteers.com.au  
 w. cva.org.au

## Shorebirds 2020 update

The annual summer shorebird count window has now come to a close. Survey data is still in the process of being submitted so at this point in time we don't have an accurate assessment of the percentage of sites that have been covered. If you have not yet entered or submitted your survey data please do so in the coming weeks through the Birddata portal <http://birddata.com.au> or by sending your survey results directly to us via post or email. Please do not use other online databases to submit shorebird specific survey data because: a) they are not set up to capture adequate survey details; and b) we have no idea if your shorebird survey data is going elsewhere unless you notify us.

The next national count is the winter count, which is scheduled for 1 July 2017. As with other years, conditions may not be suitable on this date, and therefore surveys conducted between 15 May and 30 August are also regarded as winter counts. If you are scheduling a shorebird monitoring survey, try to aim as close to 1 July 2017 as you can. It is a good idea to start planning and scheduling your surveys now!

Chances are there is a Shorebird Area near you regardless of where you live, especially if you are situated in proximity to the coast. To see if there is a site near you, simply visit the BirdLife Australia website and download the just-updated survey areas map for use in Google Earth - <http://birdlife.org.au/projects/shorebirds-2020/counter-resources> - you can also view individual site details including the date of the last survey in the Birddata portal.

In most cases, each designated "Shorebird Area" will have a nominated site coordinator, someone who schedules the surveys and coordinates a team of counters, especially at the larger sites. If you are keen on conducting surveys and don't know where to begin can you please email [shorebirds@birdlife.org.au](mailto:shorebirds@birdlife.org.au) beforehand so we can put you in touch with the local survey coordinator(s) in your area.

To get involved with Shorebirds 2020 again and be updated on volunteer opportunities, training workshops and to get involved with field work please contact [shorebirds@birdlife.org.au](mailto:shorebirds@birdlife.org.au).

Similarly, if you intend on undertaking surveys for S2020 as part of the upcoming winter count, can you please send a quick email to the above address so we are able to monitor where surveys will be undertaken and channel resources/counters to areas in which there have been limited or no surveys conducted in recent years.

## Birddata houses the Shorebirds 2020 database!

Many of you will have noted that the old Shorebirds 2020 database has now been decommissioned and any attempts to access it via old internet links will take you to the Birddata portal. Please note that this is supposed to happen! All Shorebirds 2020 surveys now get entered through Birddata. The web address for the new data portal is <http://birddata.com.au>

The new Birddata includes a dedicated app for your handheld Apple or Android device, which allows for data entry in the field for a number of key BirdLife Australia monitoring programs. This is available through the App Store or Google Play Store.

Some important things to note:

- If you have a current Shorebirds 2020 database account or login, this will not work for the new Birddata. To login to the Birddata app and portal you need a BirdLife Australia username and password. To create a login go to <http://support.birdlife.org.au/portal>. Note: your BirdLife Australia username is not the same as your Shorebird database login, Atlas number, or member number, although you can choose this as your new username.
- For existing S2020 database accounts, all your own historic shorebird survey data will be transferred over to the new Birddata and be available to you once you have setup a new BirdLife Australia username and password – if this has not yet happened for you, please send me an email [dan.weller@birdlife.org.au](mailto:dan.weller@birdlife.org.au) and I will find it for you.
- We will still accept the paper shorebird count forms; these can be sent to BirdLife's current postal address.
- There is no longer the requirement to enter the same survey data in separate databases for that data to be held in each of those databases, as was the case previously. All data entered into the Shorebirds 2020 database through Birddata automatically gets fed into the Atlas & Birddata database.

Please contact [shorebirds@birdlife.org.au](mailto:shorebirds@birdlife.org.au) if you have any questions or queries about the new shorebirds database or data handling, or would like assistance setting up a user account.

**Dan Weller**