

Hi all.

Another week has gone by and things are going well. Numbers and diversity of shorebirds has increased a lot and there are also more bush birds around to keep us entertained when the tide is unsuitable for scanning. As the bird numbers increased so did we as Jan van de Kam joined the team to better document the huge flocks of Knot and the destruction of habitat.

In the last week numbers of Red Knot have swollen to around 22 000 and are so far only concentrated in one of our study sites known as Nanpu. The tides at the start of this week were very good and combined with a bit of luck have made for some very successful scanning sessions despite the efforts of a regular hunting Peregrine. The last few days however have been less successful but this has given us an opportunity to explore other nearby areas looking for more Knot. Marsh Sandpipers have become very evident, particularly on the salt pans, with several thousand present. Numbers of Curlew Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint have also increased.

A single Nordmann's Greenshank has turned up at Nanpu and we see it most days, either in the roost or feeding on the mudflats and on the 28<sup>th</sup> 2 more were seen at Zuidong. 'Albo-plover' is also still around but can be surprisingly hard to pick out for such a conspicuous bird. A Long-billed Dowitcher found at a nearby freshwater wetland site could be the same individual we saw at this site last year.



'Albo-plover' blending in to the background and 1 of the 3 Nordmann's Greenshank in the area.

With more birds come more bands and flags. Exciting records from the last 7 days include 2 more Red Knots from Chukotka, a bird with a pale blue flag from the north and another with a pale green from further south. Another Red Knot has been seen sporting yellow and black flags from Kamchatka. 2 leg-flagged Saunders gulls have been seen regularly and a flagged Gull-billed Tern from Broome represents only the 3<sup>rd</sup> record overseas and the first engraved! Great views of birds have allowed us the opportunity to read lots of New Zealand engraved Flags although we are still waiting for a big arrival of Broome birds. So far we have amassed a total of 737 flag sightings from 12 regions.

Habitat destruction continues. This was very apparent when we visited Beipu for the first time this year where work filling the salt pans and reclaiming the adjacent mudflats has recently begun. On top of this there seems to be small amounts of oil washing up in various spots in the bay. Much of the tideline rubbish has at least some oil on it and we have noticed spots on some of the birds including Knots and Gulls. We have attempted to pass the message to the authorities so hopefully the source can be identified sooner rather than later.

Passerine migrants are also much more evident. Overhead migration along the sea wall has included good numbers of Wagtails, Pipits and Buntings. Our first Siberian Rubythroats were seen at Nanpu and Beipu a little over 2 weeks ahead of our first in 2010. Duck numbers at the lake have dwindled but we are hoping the water level will drop soon before the main arrival of freshwater shorebirds. The local park still attracts a few migrants. On the 28<sup>th</sup> over 35 Pallas's Warblers were present (up from 3 on the 24<sup>th</sup>!) along with 15 other species of migrant bird including Grey-backed thrush, Eurasian Sparrowhawk and Claudia's Leaf Warbler.

# STOP PRESS

We now have some very disturbing news that has recently been passed onto us. There currently are plans to reclaim the internationally important Nanpu mudflat that we are currently working on after the destruction of Beipu. This is the last site for the Red Knots and thousands of other Shorebirds as they have been pushed into the several Km strip of mudflat with the rest of the Northern Bohai Bay reclaimed. If you have not done so already I urge all people to write to their ministers to try and halt not only this reclamation but all that is occurring in the Yellow Sea at an alarming speed despite China signing an agreement with Australia CAMBA agreement.

## Article IV

Each Contracting Party shall endeavour, in accordance with its laws and regulations in force, to:

(a) establish sanctuaries and other facilities for the management and protection of migratory birds and also of their environment; and

(b) take appropriate measures to preserve and enhance the environment of migratory birds. In particular, each Contracting Party shall:

(i) seek means to prevent damage to migratory birds and their environment.

This is clearly not happening and needs to be addressed urgently before it is too late.

### People to write to:

#### **Mr Tony Burke**

Minister of the Environment

GPO Box 787, Canberra ACT 2601

#### **Mr Greg Hunt**

Shadow Minister of the Environment

PO Box 6022, Canberra ACT 2600

#### **Senator Bob Brown**

Leader of the Australian Greens

GPO Box 404, Hobart Tas 7001

#### **Dr Geoff Raby**

Australian Ambassador to China

21 Dongzhimenwai Dajie,

Sanlitun Beijing China

#### **Mr. Chen Yuming**

Chinese Ambassador to Australia

15 Coronation Drive

Yarralumla ACT 2600

#### **Mr Sam Gerovich**

Australian ambassador to the Republic of Korea

KPO Box 562 Seoul 110-605

Republic of Korea

#### **Mr Kim Woo-Sang**

Ambassador from the Republic of Korea to Australia

113 Empire Circuit

Yarralumla

ACT 2600

**Before and After! 3 changes since last year...**



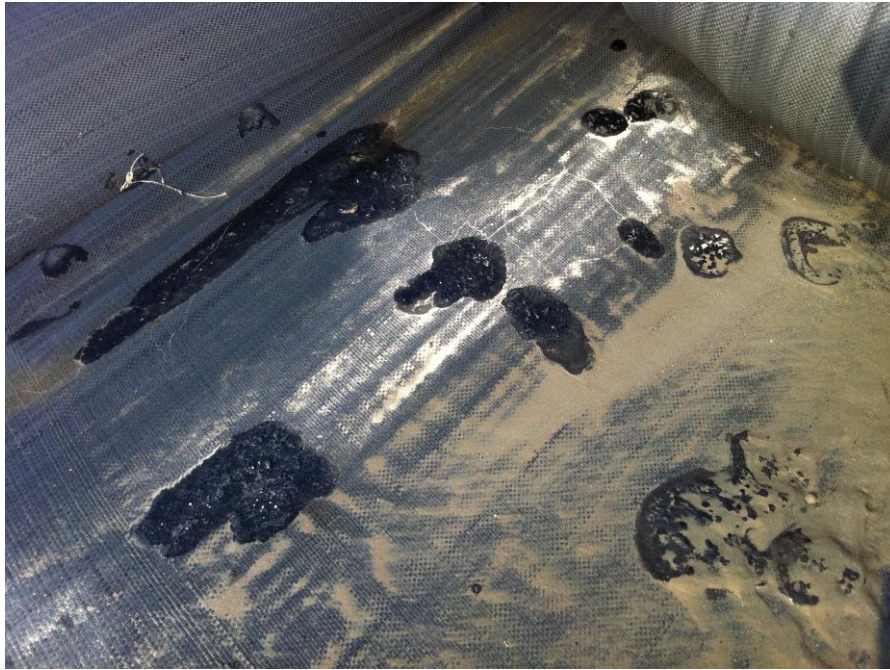
The migrant hotspot known as 'Tree Lane' in 2010 ... now to be known as 'Lane' in 2011



Telecommunications tower being erected in May 2010 ... Scrap metal in 2011 ... made in China!!!!



Zuidong in 2010 – mud pumping ... Zuidong in 2011 – mud pumped!



Blobs of washed up oil on a sea wall at Zuidong



Part of a large flock of Red Knots at Nanpu