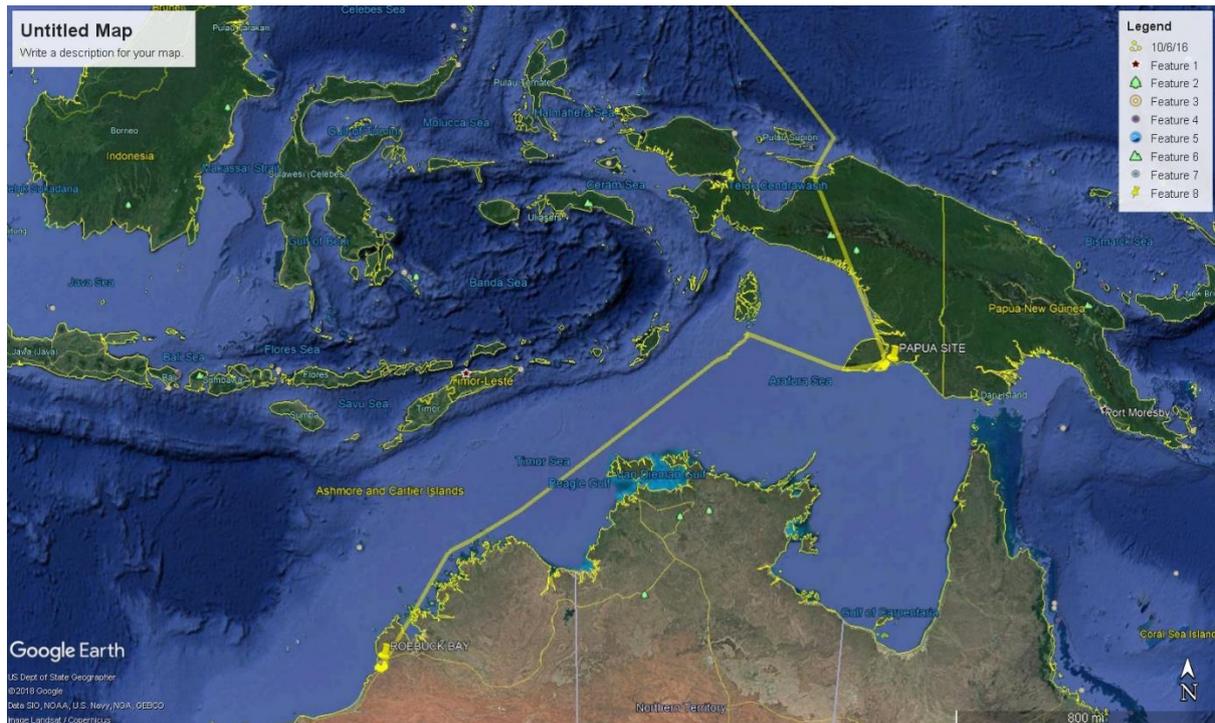


7YRYB GREAT (K)NOT FOLLOWING THE RULES

Most Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* are a site faithful species, once they are adults and have established their non-breeding site they return to it year after year. Most Great Knots banded at Roebuck Bay or 80 Mile Beach as adults return there after migration year in year out. Young birds may roam to other sites but even this is relatively uncommon.

So it was with some surprise when one of the GFN Great Knots equipped with a Platform Terminal Transmitter (PTT) (Ok nobody calls them that, a sat tag) on 29/09/2016 in Roebuck Bay changed its non-breeding location on 10/11/2017, in the middle of the non-breeding season, moving 2,110km north-east.



The birds track, above, showed she seemed to adjust her position about 500km west of her eventual landfall.

The bird was first banded, colour-marked with a unique code of a flag and four colour bands (7YRYB) and fitted with a sat tag on 29/09/2016 at Richards Point in Roebuck Bay. Richards Point is a regular roost for large numbers of mixed migratory shorebirds adjacent to the vast inter-tidal mudflats of Roebuck Bay.

She (has been sexed using DNA techniques) was an adult aged 3+ when banded, that is in the Australian aging system in its third year of life or older to all 'intents and purposes' an adult bird.

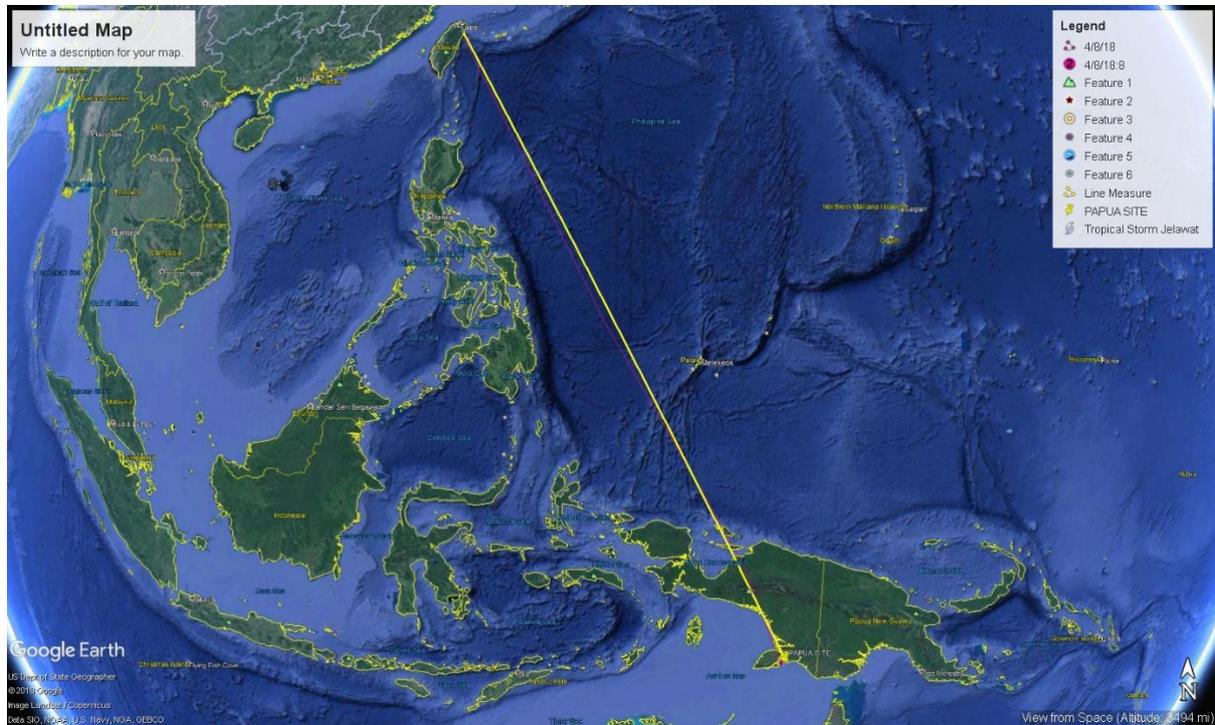
NB; However we don't age every bird correctly (I think about 95% correct) but this bird may have been one of the tricky ones at that time of year and was possibly a second year bird.

As this bird, unromantically known as 7YBYR after her colourband combination is carrying a sat tag we are able to track her movements and location without the need to resight her. She was only resighted once in Roebuck Bay after banding.

7YRYB did not migrate during the 2017 breeding season (another hint she may have been a second year bird at banding), but moved to Papua Province, Indonesia on the island of Papua New Guinea

arriving on 13/11/2017. She stayed there until she departed on northward migration on the 10/04/2018.

She undertook a direct flight of 4,085km north-west across the open ocean of the far-west Pacific (Philippine Sea) and landed on a beach in north-east Taiwan at Lian-Yung Estuary, I-lian County.



With some basic calculations the flight time was 76 hours at an average speed of 53.5km/hr and 7YRYB arrived at Lian-Yung Estuary at about 19:30 on April 14th.

This is not really the story that a Great Knot has flown 4,000km at about 50km/hr. What is rather cool though is that a local Taiwanese birder Mr Lin Jer An was out at the estuary on April 16 and he saw and photographed 7YRYB.



Image from April 16 2018. Mr Lin

Then the following day April 17th Mr Lin took some brilliant video footage of the bird.

You can view the short video here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OXU9ZUkjzQ&feature=youtu.be>

Resightings of sat tagged birds are very valuable to gauge how they are doing with the addition of a small 5g tag attached with a harness on their back. We can assess breeding plumage and body condition scores from direct observations.

One of the joys of studying migratory shorebirds, over and above the wonderful birds themselves, is the many people it brings in to contact with one another.

An e-mail from Lee in Alaska to a few shorebird researchers involved with the GFN sat tag project, an e-mail from me to Chung Yu and Emilia in Taiwan, from them to Andi Chen then to David Chang and hence Mr Lin and then, quick as a flash, images and video.

Simple in the modern communication age? Maybe. But a joy to me.

Chris Hassell

19/04/2018



Image 16/04/2018. Mr Lin

Please note this article is derived from raw data and has had no checking or statistical analysis applied to the PTT data.