

Red Knots at Anna Plains Sanctuary Zone, 80 Mile Beach Marine Park

None of the information below is very startling but I see no reason not to share it with you.

It might be of interest to those of you who have worked on the Anna Plains section of 80 Mile Beach or have a particular interest in Red Knots.

We conducted dedicated scanning work on 80 Mile Beach between 0 and 60 km south of 'The Anna Plains access track' in October 2020, April 2021 and October 2021. The 60 km stretch of beach was split into 5 km sections for recording purposes. Scanning was undertaken during similar tide cycles for each trip.

Red Knots are not equally distributed along the beach when they roost. Between 0 -50 km south, typical counts are in the 10s within each 5 km section. As expected the numbers of Red Knot were much higher in the southern sections of our regular study area. During our most recent survey, we recorded several thousand within the 50 - 55 km section, and up to 20,000 (estimated) in the 55 to 60 km section. This distribution was reflected in the number of colour-banded individuals observed in each section.

0-5	0
5-10	0
10-15	0
15-20	1
20-25	0
25-30	0
30-35	0
35-40	0
40-45	0
45-50	0
50-55	27
55-60	54

The total of 82 individuals recorded during October 2021 was lower than both the October 2020 and April 2021 surveys. Of the 82 individuals recorded during October 2021, 80% had been recorded in one or more years in Bohai Bay.

	2020 October	2021 April	2021 October
Individual Red Knot	96	116	82
Seen in Bohai Bay one or more years %	78%	72%	80%

As we have not colourbanded any individuals since 2019, all marked Red Knots are now part of the adult, migrating population. The oldest bird observed was a minimum of 17 years old (17+ in our aging parlance).

Banding and resighting studies have shown that some Red Knots spending the bulk of the non-breeding season (September to May) on Eighty Mile Beach make the short hop (about 200 km) to Roebuck Bay during northward migration. Here they finish fuelling up in preparation for the first major leg of their migration, which usually takes them to southern China. Why Red Knots choose to move between both places is an interesting question, and it appears individuals have differing strategies.

One statistic that did surprise me was that 44% of marked individuals we recorded in this trip of October 2021, stopped off briefly in Roebuck Bay on southward migration back to Eighty Mile Beach in one or more years, whereas only 39% stopped in Roebuck Bay on northward migration.

We recorded all marked shorebirds encountered, not just colourbanded birds. 171 shorebirds were marked at either Eighty Mile Beach or Roebuck Bay, with the majority of these being Red Knot. Additionally, 56 shorebirds banded away from Eighty Mile Beach and Roebuck Bay were seen on this trip, from 13 banding sites. Of these 23 were individually identifiable.

Banding Site	Colour code	Position on legs
Northern Territory, Australia	Yellow/Blue	Right Tibia
Victoria, Australia	Orange	Right Tibia
Chongming Dongtan National Nature Reserve , Shanghai, China	Black/White	Right Tibia
Dongtai county, Jiangsu Province, China	Green/Blue	Right Tibia
Rudong county, Jiangsu Province, China	Green/Blue	Left Tibia
Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve, Dandong, China	Green/Orange	Right Tibia
Hong Kong	White/Yellow	Right Tibia
Miyagi Prefecture (north east Honshu), Japan	Blue/White	Left Tarsus
Obitsu, Tokyo Bay, Japan	Blue/White	Left Tibia/Tarsus
Kamchatka (west coast), Russia	Black/Yellow	Left Tibia
Taiwan	White/Blue	Right Tibia
Ko Li Bong, Thailand (south west)	Black/Green (clipped)	Left Tibia
Gulf of Thailand (northern), Thailand	Black/Green	Right Tibia

To read about the previous dedicated scanning trips to Eighty Mile Beach click here;

<http://globalflywaynetwork.com.au/scanning-on-80-mile-beach-at-anna-plains-station/>

<http://globalflywaynetwork.com.au/a-scanning-trip/>

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The shorebirds are the main attraction at Anna Plains, ah hold on, the shorebirds are the main attraction ANYWHERE! But there is always more than just shorebirds. This trip two examples were one or two sea jellies and Brolgas on the beach.

Thanks to Kandy Curran for all images.

Chris Hassell 01-11-2021



