

Satellite Tracking Report from North-West Australia 2019

Number 9

30.04.19

The last individuals have now joined the party with all adult birds carrying trackers now having set off northwards from Australia.

The last species to join the northward trek were the two Whimbrel – one from 80 Mile Beach and the other from Roebuck Bay, Broome. Both KU (from Broome) and LA (from 80 Mile Beach) have now passed over Indonesia on their way north. Overground travel speeds appear to be around 45-47km/hr. Let us hope both make the journey to their major stopover, likely to be in the Yellow Sea, uninterrupted over the next few days. Both these birds originally had their satellite transmitter attached in February 2017. Let us hope the rechargeable solar panel lasts long enough for them to at least complete yet another journey to their breeding grounds.

In contrast, all four Oriental Pratincoles may now be settled in their breeding areas and may have commenced their 2019 breeding season. We're probably in for a quieter period now in terms of news on this species (sticking my neck out like this is a sure way to get something dramatic and unexpected to happen!).

The Little Curlew situation seems to have clarified (rationalised) with only two birds (out of five) apparently now transmitting. It comes as quite a surprise and a big disappointment that so few of our Little Curlew transmitters (this is our fourth batch over the years) have survived even to get to their Arctic breeding grounds once (in their first year). With the rigors of the Yellow Sea still to be met it is not looking good at the moment for a successful migration season for Little Curlew.

The transmitters on the Eastern Curlew are being downloaded slightly less frequently and no new information has become available since last week's report.

(Contributed by Clive Minton)

ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE

28/4/19

Grace Maglio

It's time to focus on the task at hand – Breeding

After the excitement of the unpredictable and interesting journeys this project has treated us to so far, this week has been ‘uneventful’ overall.

Firstly, there was limited accurate data received, most likely due to the cloudy weather that occurred in most of the regions where the birds are currently situated. Secondly, the birds seem to have stopped migrating. Now this may be ‘boring’ in comparison to the great flight distances and habitat choices of recent weeks but we are at the most important stage in the Oriental Pratincole’s life cycle...Breeding. So, this week while the most reliable location readings were scarce, there is enough information in the data to suggest that all four birds may have reached their chosen breeding grounds.

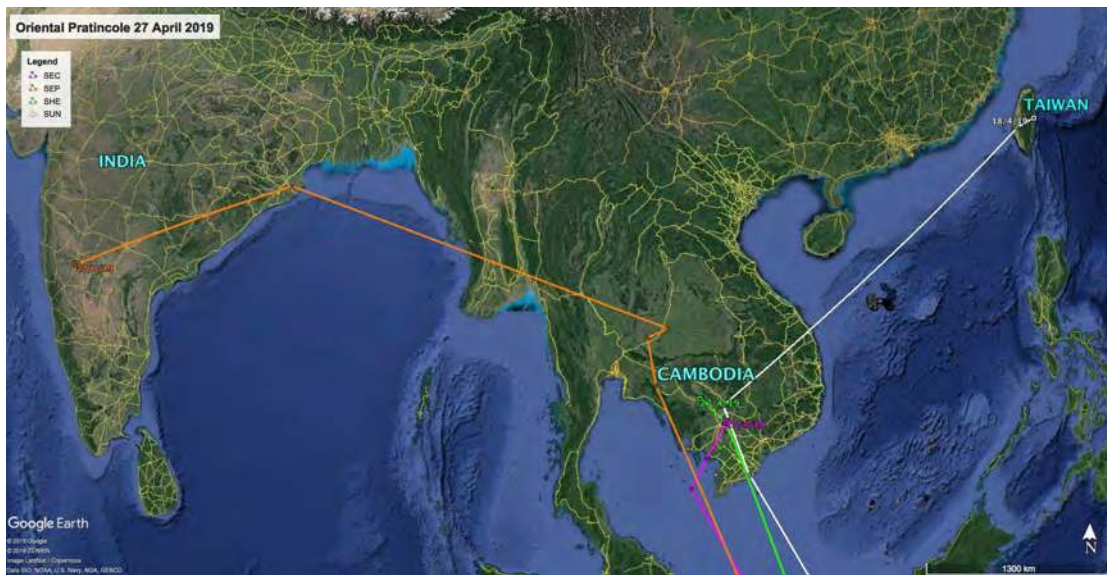


Figure 1 – Tracks of Oriental Pratincole from Mainland Southeast Asia - 28/4/19

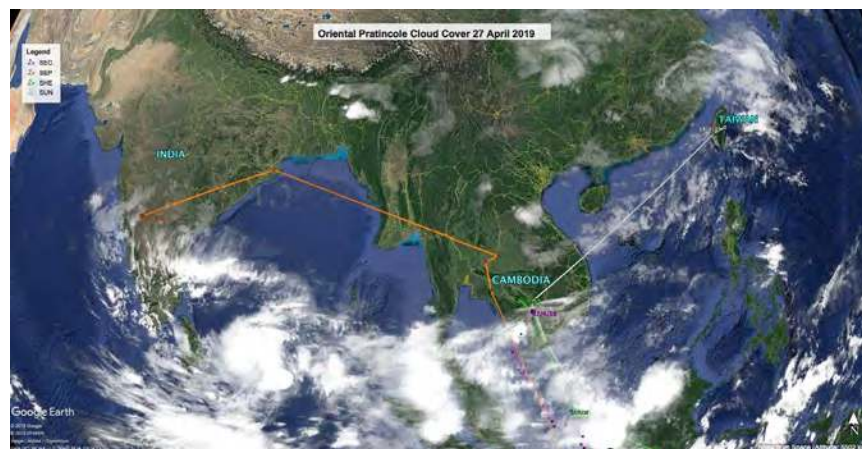


Figure 2 – Map of the cloud cover over the birds' current position (27/4/19)

DISTANCE FROM RELEASE LOCATION 28/4/19

Bird ID	Distance from 80 Mile Beach release location (approx.)
SUN	4800km
SEP	6350km
SHE	4000km
SEC	3840km

SUN (PTT 83591) – Early days yet.

With only inaccurate location data available this week we continue to assume that SUN is most likely situated on the dry riverbeds somewhere along the Shoufeng and Hualien Rivers in eastern Taiwan, where breeding attempts have occurred in previous years. We hope that more information will be made available within the next week or so.



Figure 3 - SUN – 28/4/19, approximate location Hualien County, Taiwan.
Note the location of 2018 breeding location recorded by Chung-Yu Chiang

SEP (PTT 83593) – River view.

After last weeks long awaited data to confirm SEP's location in South West India in the state of Karnataka, SEP seems to be making short local movements on the banks of the Krishna River, within the boundary of Heggur Village, Bagalkot District, Karnataka.



Figure 4 – Short local movements SEP Heggur Village, Bagalkot District, India

SHE (PTT 83595) – Lakeside living – raising chicks??

Nine weeks in the Tonle Sap Biosphere of Cambodia and SHE continues with short local movements further reinforcing our belief that SHE is breeding in this area.

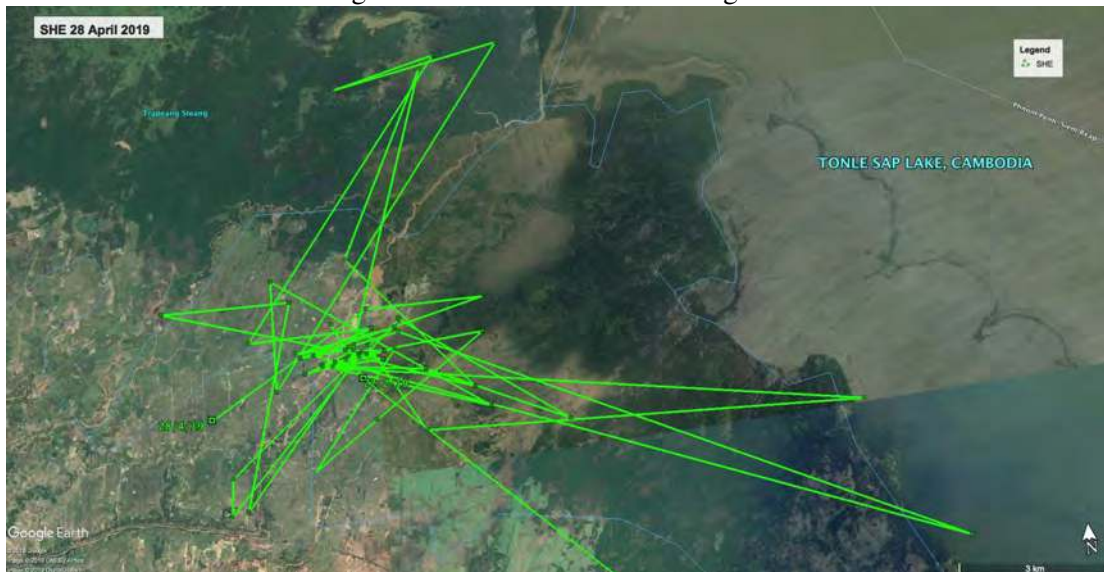


Figure 5 – SHE, 9 weeks in the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve

SEC (PTT 83596) – So where's a good place to nest?

Day 40 and SEC is still in Prey Veng Province, Cambodia. It seems its movements may be becoming even more localised. Another week or so of data will hopefully help paint a better picture.



Figure 6 – SEC, Day 40 in Prey Veng Province, Cambodia

LITTLE CURLEW

29/4/19

Inka Veltheim

Little Curlew LS has reached the coast of China, having flown non-stop from Australia, similarly to LU. These individuals are about 170 km apart, and LS is near Mianlin, in an agricultural area adjacent to a river. LU has moved 35 km north east and is in proximity to the Quixiang River and appears to be also using agricultural fields. Poor accuracy fixes from 28th April suggest this individual is continuing on its northward migration, about a week after its first stop over.



Figure 1 – Tracks of Little Curlew LS and LU



Figure 2 – Track of Little Curlew LS



Figure 3 – Track of Little Curlew LS



Figure 4 – Track of Little Curlew LU

WHIMBREL

29/4/19

Katherine Leung

Whimbrel – Airborne!

Finally, Whimbrel migration is on!

Whimbrel KU departed from Broome on 25 Apr (3 days later than previous year) after spending 205 days for the non-breeding season in Australia. KU made a change from previous two years northward migration by making a stop-over for one day at the coast of Sumbawa Island in Indonesia, about 400km east of Bali. KU made this 1,082km flight in less than a single day, with minimum speed of 47km/h. On 27 Apr, it started again to migrate travelling another 1,004km to pass the equator at Central Sulawesi on 28 Apr morning at a similar speed.

LA left Eighty Mile Beach a day later on 26 Apr (2 days late compare to previous year) after spending the whole 201 days non-breeding season within a 10km section of Eighty Mile Beach at 40-50km south of Anna Plains Station entrance. Within 2 days it has already travelled 2,272km, crossing the equator with a minimum speed of 45km/h on 28 Apr evening.

We are looking forward to see whether they will make their landing on Mainland China at the same location as previous year(s).



Figure 1 – First leg of northward migration for KU and LA

Migration summary of Whimbrels (as of 29 Apr 2019)

Leg Flag (track colour)	No. of days since transmitter deployment	No. of days since departing Australia (2019)	Distance travelled (2019)
LA (blue)	806 days	3 days	2,272 km
KU (yellow)	794 days	4 days	2,086 km

Eastern Curlew

No further downloading of satellite tracks has taken place since last week's tracking report (No. 8).