

Re-sighting of a Russian-tagged Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* at Jamnagar

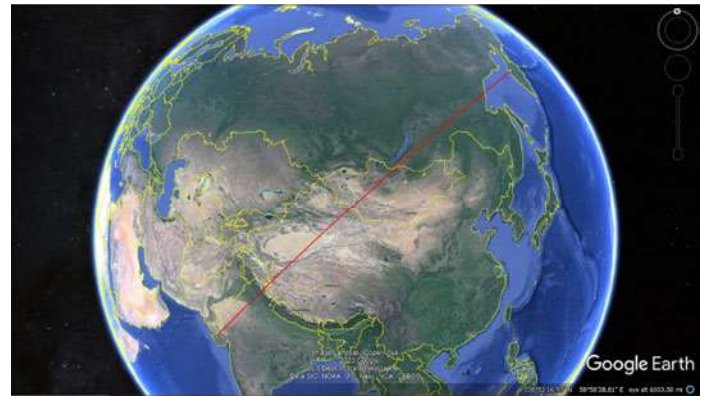
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they spotted a tagged Great Knot at the Balachhadi Beach, Jamnagar. They, along with other bird watchers, took many photographs of the marked bird in an attempt to identify the tag details. The bird had a yellow coloured flag on its left leg with 6Z inscribed on it. The right leg had a metal ring. However, the inscriptions on the metal ring were not legible in any of the photographs.



The first author informed the second author about this find of the tagged Great Knot. The second author in turn sent the images and the re-sighting information to many ornithologists, including Simba Chan of BirdLife Asia Secretariat at Tokyo. A response was received from Dmitry Dorofeev, who had marked this Great Knot at Khairusova-Belogolovaya Estuary in the Kamchatka Peninsula of Russia. The straight-line distance between the marking location and re-sighting location is a whopping 7732 kilometers (see the tagging and re-sighting details in Table).

The Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*) is an uncommon winter visitor to Gujarat, with sightings from coastal areas of Jamnagar, Porbandar, Bhavnagar and Kachchh (Ganpule 2016). BirdLife International (2020) has recently listed the species as 'Endangered' in the IUCN Red List. The justification for this is cited as 'This species has been uplisted to Endangered owing to recent evidence showing a very rapid population decline caused by reclamation of non-breeding stopover grounds, and under the assumption that further proposed reclamation projects will cause additional declines in the future'.

The first author and his father Usmanbhai Mulatani are guides for bird watchers visiting Gujarat. It was during one of their birding trips with few bird watchers on 5 March 2020 that

Tagging and re-sighting details of a Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*

Tagging details	Re-sighting details
Date of ringing: 17 July 2019	Date of sighting: 5 March 2020
Metal ring: HS14026	Metal ring: Not legible in images
Flags: Black and Yellow	Flag: Black and Yellow
Code: 6Z	Code: 6Z
Ageing: Adult	Ageing: Adult, in non-breeding plumage
Tagging location: Khairusova-Belogolovaya Estuary, Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia	Re-sighting location: Balachhadi, near Jamnagar, Gujarat, India
Ringing latitude: 57.07° N	Re-sighting latitude: 22° 36' 26.55" N
Ringing longitude: 156.69° E	Re-sighting longitude: 70° 12' 03.39" E
Ringer: Dmitry Dorofeev	Observer: Abdulbhai Mulatani
	Distance from ringing site: 7732 km
	Remarks: Looked healthy, feeding with other waders and Great Knots
	Heading direction: 279.84 degrees

Dmitry Dorofeev and his team are marking waders in this far eastern part of Russia and the largest part of their marking activities are dedicated to research on Great Knots. They use yellow flags with black engraving as per the 'Colour Flagging Protocol for Migratory Shorebirds' in the East Asian - Australasian Flyway (https://eaaflyway.net/wpcontent/uploads/2017/12/Protocol_birds-marking.pdf). The East Asian-Australasian Flyway website (<https://www.eaaflyway.net>) mentions that they have had re-sightings of Great Knots colour-banded or flagged in Australia, China and Kamchatka. It also mentions that a tagged Great Knot (flag number EI) was seen in Dubai! (<https://www.eaaflyway.net/overview-of-kamchatka-field-season-2017>)

There have been few sightings of tagged Great Knots in India. One bird each, marked in Chongming Island (31° 28' N, 121° 57' E), Shanghai, China, was reported from Henry's Island, Bakkhali in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal (<http://www.kolkatabirds.com>) and one was re-sighted at Chinchani Beach, Tal. Dahanu, Dist. Palghar, Maharashtra (Babre & Kasambe 2016). The first one was marked on 22 April 2007 and was re-sighted on 3 February 2008, about 3505 km away from the tagging location whereas the second bird was re-sighted on 18 August 2016 (the flag details could not be read). One bird ringed and colour flagged by BNHS scientists in Point Calimere, Tamil Nadu, was re-sighted near Tianjin (30° 01' N, 118° 19' E), on the eastern coast of China, on 22 April 2017 (Balachandran *et. al.* 2018). A bird tagged in Sakhalin Island (49° 19' N, 143° 40' E), Russia, was re-sighted at Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, on 6 December 2016 (Balachandran *et. al.* 2018).

For Gujarat, there has been a sighting of a tagged Great Knot in Jamnagar earlier; an individual tagged at Kamchatka by Dmitry Dorofeev (mark on flag VM) was seen near Jamnagar, in October 2018 (Varu & Varu 2018). The tagging location and the re-sighting location was almost the same and hence, this is the second record of a Great Knot tagged at Kamchatka in Far East Russia being seen in Gujarat. Thus, this sighting further establishes a migratory link between the Russian Far East and the western part of India.

Though the Great Knot is reported from the western coast of India, from Kerala to Gujarat (<https://ebird.org/india/species/grekno/IN>) more often than previously believed (Ali & Ripley 1983, Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), it is important to understand the migration of this species. Sightings of tagged birds will help us in understanding the distribution, the migration route as well as suggest conservation measures towards the protection of this species.

Acknowledgements

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