

UPDATE 2 LUANNAN COAST 2025

After reading the last update you probably got the impression that we were wandering around birdwatching non-stop.

Well, there was a bit of that for sure. But then the tides turned in favour of scanning and we are on a run of 7 days of 03:30 alarms. Which gives time to make coffee and drive to the Nanpu seawall before sunrise.



2025 05 15

The weather plays a big part in the success of a morning's scanning and we have had everything from clam sunny days to a rainstorm and one day with 60 kmph wind! That was bad for scanning but great for watching passerine migration. Our eBird list for that day on the seawall was 77 species. The highlight was 30 Critically Endangered, Yellow-breasted Bunting both flying by and landing on the seawall.



Female, Yellow-breasted Bunting 2025 05 17

K. Leung

Overall, these 7 days have been productive for colour bands from the GFN project birds banded in north west Australia and for many other sites from throughout the EAAF and a few Indian birds in the mix. We do not get the total numbers of marked birds that we used to get in the peak years of 2010 to 2019. This is because some of the main marking projects in the EAAF have, for some years now, been marking much smaller numbers of birds. They have started to focus on more targeted tracking projects.

As of May 19, we have made 809 observations of marked birds from 20 banding locations.

We have recorded 67 individual Red Knot from the GFN project and just 2 Great Knot and 1 Bar-tailed Godwit. But the godwit 1YLYB is an old friend now. He has been seen here, within a 4 km stretch of mudflat for the last 16 years. He possibly departed Nanpu on May 16 this year.

The earliest we have recorded him at Nanpu is April 11 and the latest May 21. But note not all fieldwork has started in early April each year. With the longest know length of stay being 38 days. A remarkable 348 resightings 6, 400 km away from his capture location and 'only' 64 resightings from Roebuck Bay, NW Australia.

SPECIES	CODE
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	1YLYB
BANDED DATE	BANDING SITE
17/02/2007	Roebuck Bay, NW Australia
AGE AT BANDING	AGE NOW
2+	20+



1YLYB on 'his' mudflat at Nanpu 2025 05 16 K. Leung

AT NANPU	FIRST SIGHTING	LAST SIGHTING	# RESIGHTS	MINIMUM # OF DAYS PRESENT
2010	20-Apr	22-May	9	32
2011	14-Apr	15-May	10	32
2012	14-Apr	28-Apr	4	15
2013	11-Apr	18-May	10	38
2014	12-Apr	16-May	14	35
2015	17-Apr	13-May	5	27
2016	14-Apr	10-May	3	27
2017	14-Apr	13-May	7	30
2018	25-Apr	4-May	2	10
2019	22-Apr	2-May	6	11
2020	15-May	21-May	3	7
2021	15-Apr	17-May	8	33
2022	13-May	13-May	1	1
2023	23-Apr	9-May	4	17
2024	29-Apr	15-May	3	17
2025	1-May	16-May	7	16

On May 18 we helped Beijing Normal University with a coordinated waterbird count, and we counted Nanpu mudflat as we are so familiar with it. We had been doing rough estimates of numbers most days as we are focused on scanning for marked birds. And the largest number of Red Knots we have estimated is 25,000. For the past 3 days we have estimated 20,000. The total for the careful count was 20,707! We have had this conversation many times with many shorebird researchers. Why bother with the 3-hour count when a 5-minute estimate at the end of the day seems to be pretty accurate!

We had a total of all shorebirds on the count of 26,345 and 498 terns and gulls. The terns and gulls were dominated by Little Tern (284) and Gull-billed Terns (132). Both breed in the adjacent ponds and forage at the Nanpu coast.



The moon above the mudflat and knots while the sun rises over behind us 2025 05 16

K. Leung

Chris, Katherine and Yang Liu

19-05-2025



Pink and shining skin is obviously important to Barn Swallows 2025 05 15

C. Hassell