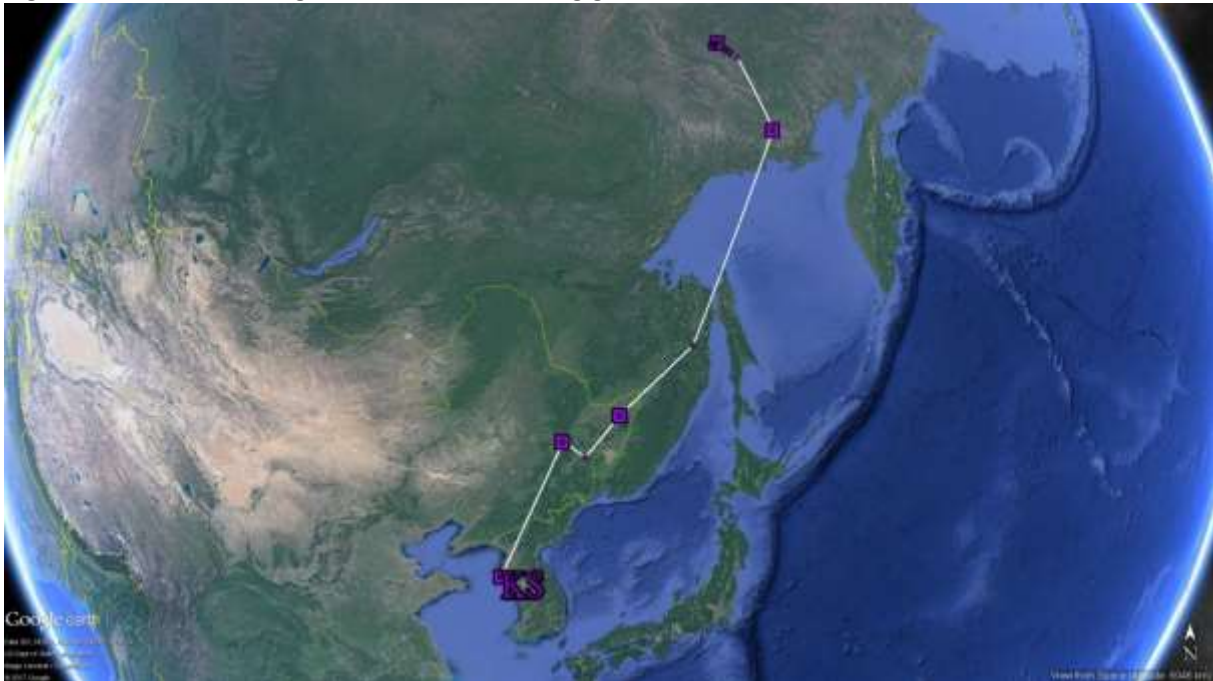


Surprising stop at the Yellow Sea

One of the privileges being a migratory bird might be the freedom to travel among countries without passport or visa. Thus, our Whimbrel KS decided to visit a country which might be a little bit difficult (for human) to enter – North Korea.

Sometime between 12-13 Aug, KS left Shuanfeng Reservoir in Heilongjiang where it had stayed for 4 days and headed to the Yellow Sea. After a 911km flight, it has chosen an extensive mudflat area at the west coast of North Korea as its next stop.

Fig 1: KS's southward migration from the nesting ground to China, then to North Korea



We do not have much information about this stop-over site in South Hwanghae Province, North Korea as it is not a listed Important Bird Area. Yet, from the satellite image, we can see very extensive mudflat area (14km long x 4km wide) which looks an excellent site for shorebirds. KS has also spent time at the north-west shore of this bay where there are agricultural lands. South Hwanghae Province is known to be not very mountainous and therefore a very suitable area for farming, including vegetables, fruits, grains, and rice.

Meanwhile, KU is about 370km north-west of KS, still staying at Yingkou in Liaoning Province, China where it has been for 13 days. We are now anxiously waiting to see when they will both start migrating south again.

Fig 2. Mudflat area in South Hwanghae Province where KS stop-over



As of 19 August 2017:

Migration tracks of our Whimbrels:



Migration summary on our Whimbrels

Leg Flag (track colour: N - S)	No. of days since deployment	No. of days since departing Australia	Distance travelled
LA (blue)	188 days	0 days	0 km
KS (purple - white)	176 days	125 days	14,420 km
KU (yellow - orange)	176 days	124 days	13,276 km
JX (pink - green)	147 days	121 days	6,124 km

Katherine Leung
19 August 2017