

Ups and downs on Migration

People says “Life is like a roller coaster with ups and downs”. This also applies to our Whimbrel satellite tracking project.

Hurray to KU’s return to Australia after its more than 19,800km migration journey of 195 days to and from the breeding ground! KU departed its breeding ground around mid-July, after making 3 stops in Northern China, Sulawesi in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, it arrived Australia Mainland on 29-Oct-17.

Fig 1: KU’s complete migration journey



Instead of heading back to Roebuck Bay in Broome, KU chose to stopover at Dampier Peninsular near Beagle Bay. It would be very interesting to see if it will finally come back to Roebuck Bay later in the season.

Fig 2: KU at Dampier Peninsular



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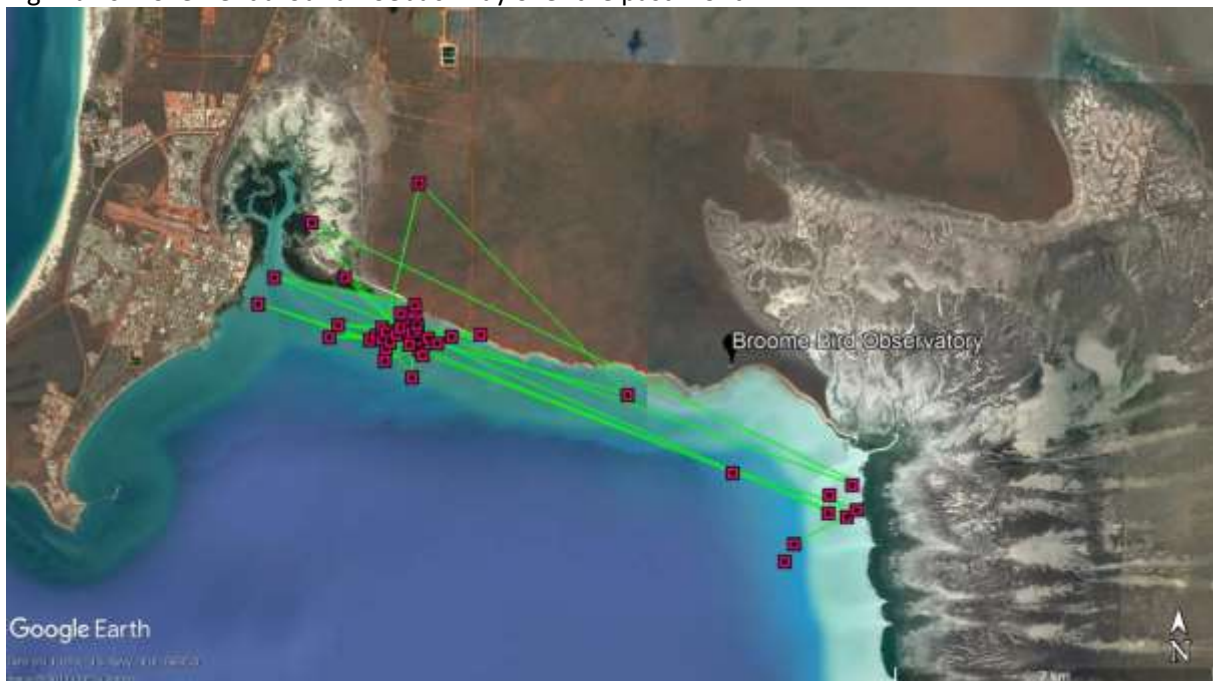
On the downside, we are very disappointed to confirm that we've lost signal from KS since late September. Based on the fact that transmissions from the satellite tag has been less constant in the final few weeks since KS arrived South-east Sulawesi, we do hope that it was the transmitter which failed rather than anything bad has happened to the bird itself. It is hoped that KS might be seen again in Roebuck Bay later this season to prove that it is safe.

Fig 3: KS's movement between reefs and farmland in September at SE Sulawesi



Meanwhile, JX and LA are still doing very well at Roebuck Bay and Eighty Miles Beach respectively. At Roebuck Bay, JX regularly utilizes the Dampier Creek, West Quarry and the saltmarshes south of Crab Creek. Amazing that it has managed to escape from birders' eyesight since August. On the other hand, at Eighty Miles Beach, LA remains at its favourite patch of the beach 40-50km south of the Anna Plain station entrance.

Fig 4: JX's movement around Roebuck Bay over the past month



As of 6 November 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 away from Australia	Distance travelled	No. of days since arriving back to Australia
LA (blue)	267 days	0 days	0 km	-
KU (yellow - orange)	255 days	195 days	19,802 km	8 days
JX (pink - green)	190 days	114 days	6,124 km	86 days
KS (purple - white)	217 days (transmission ceased on 29-Sep)	166 days	19,631 km	-

Katherine Leung
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