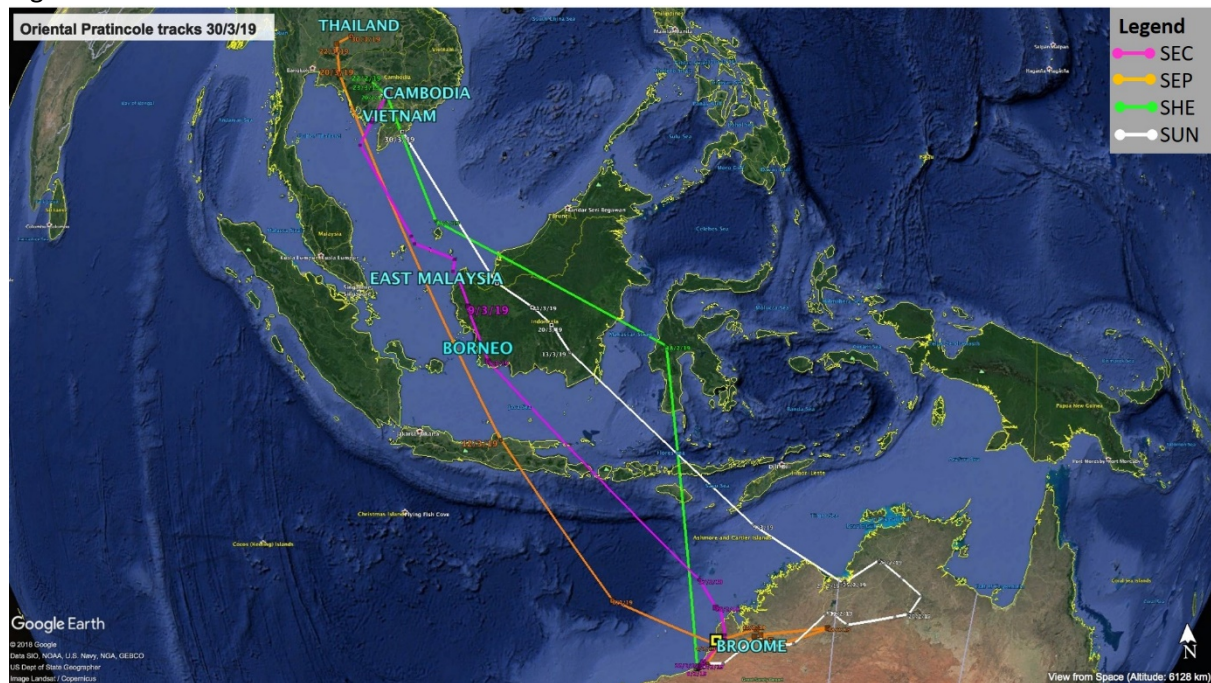


Oriental Pratincole – Almost Neighbours (by Grace Maglio and Clive Minton)

All four birds are now in Mainland South East Asia. SEC and SHE remain in Cambodia and SEP in Thailand, while SUN is now located in Vietnam. While SHE remains in the Tonle Sap Lake floodplains, SEC, SEP and SUN are all using areas of intensive agricultural and/or aquaculture use. It appears that the highly modified agricultural land does not seem to deter the birds remaining in these areas. The maximum distance between SUN, SHE, SEP and SEC are approximately 750km, (just down the road by Australian Outback standards!)

Figure 1: Tracks of the four Oriental Pratincole



With little onward movement of any of the birds since their arrival on the Asian mainland over the last month we suspect that most have reached their breeding areas (not necessarily, however, their exacting breeding location yet). It will be interesting to see what further movements do occur, if any, and when birds appear to actually start nesting. If they do start nesting at these locations soon it will be a strong indication that their departure from Australia in February is driven by the need to get back to the breeding areas to claim a territory etc. as early as the habitat becomes suitable (and in spite of it meaning that they left North-west Australia when there was a plethora of food available for them there).

Overall, we should perhaps expect very little further movement of any of the Oriental Pratincoles. It will be particularly interesting to see what we can detect of their breeding cycle via the satellite trackers.

Figure 2: Oriental Pratincole, Mainland Southeast Asia locations

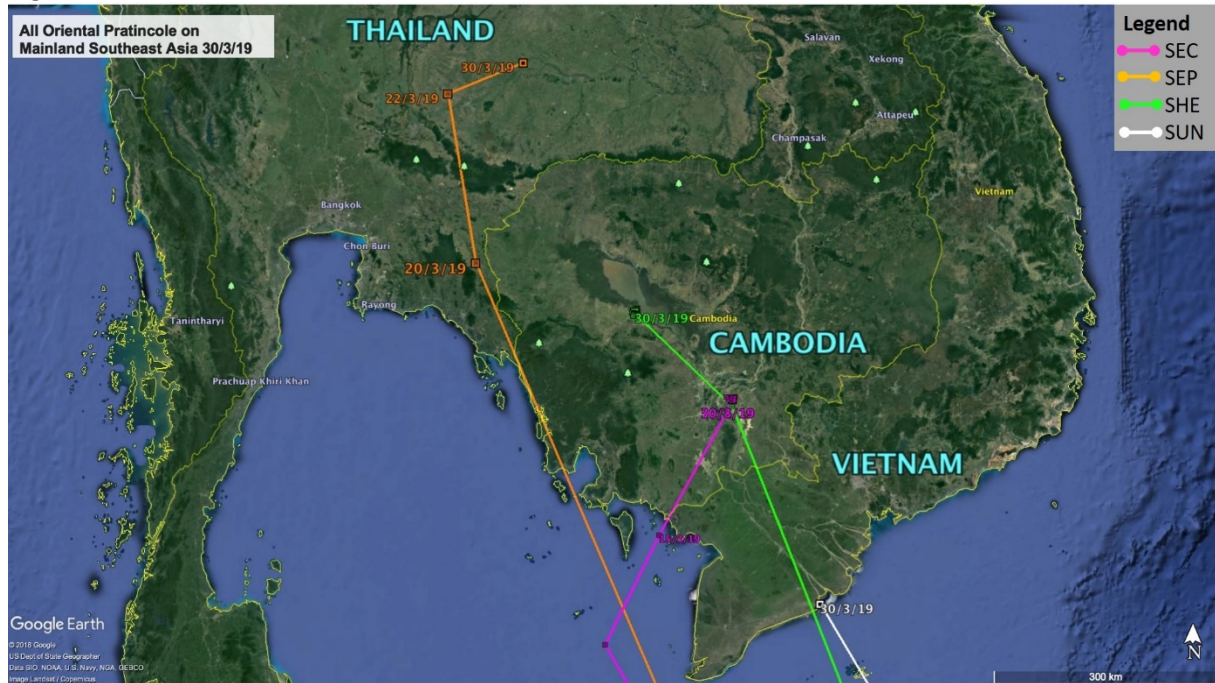


Photo 1: Close-up of an Oriental Pratincole (by Olivia Gourley)



Distance from release location 30 March

Engraved Leg-flag	Distance from 80 Mile Beach release location (approx.)
SUN	3,590km
SEP	4,350km
SHE	4,000km
SEC	3,840km

SUN - From around 23-28 March, SUN was located in the Sri Aman District of East Malaysia, situated on the Lupar River. This District is known for its trade in palm oil, rubber, pepper and timber.

On 30 March (and approximately 1,065km north), SUN is now in the Mekong River Delta region of Vietnam. SUN is located in the Tran De District, 25km east of Soc Trang - the capital of Soc Trang Province. The Tran De District is known for its mudflats - popular for bird watching - rice paddies and prawn farms and is situated along the banks of the Bassac River.

This location is approximately 3,590km from the release site at 80 Mile Beach in North West Australia.

Figure 3 SUN, East Malaysia to Vietnam

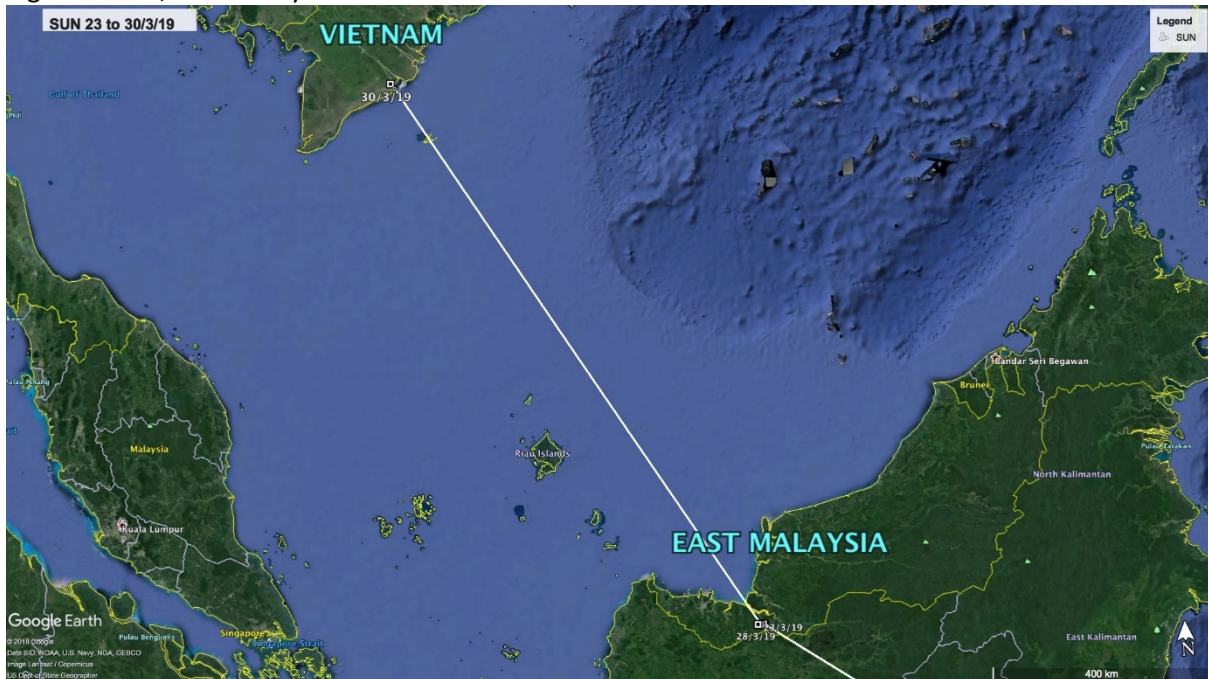


Figure 4: SUN in the Tran De District



SEP - In our last report, SEP was located in the Khan Thale So District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province in Thailand on 22 March. Since then, SEP has flown approximately 100km northeast and since 30 March, it has been in the north east part of this province, in the Khok Klang sub-district. Again, SEP is in an area dominated by agricultural use with rice, tapioca and sugar cultivated in this region.

Figure 5: SEP, track northeast to Khok Klang Sub-district

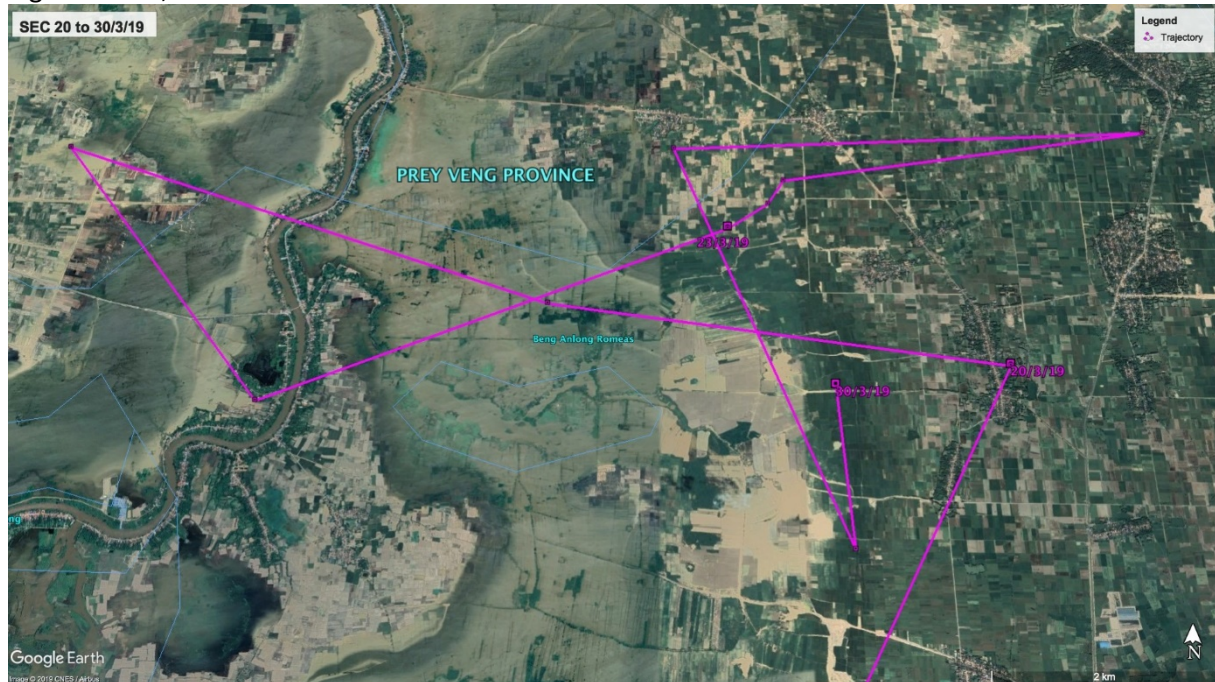


Figure 6: SEP, in agricultural land, Khok Klang Sub District.



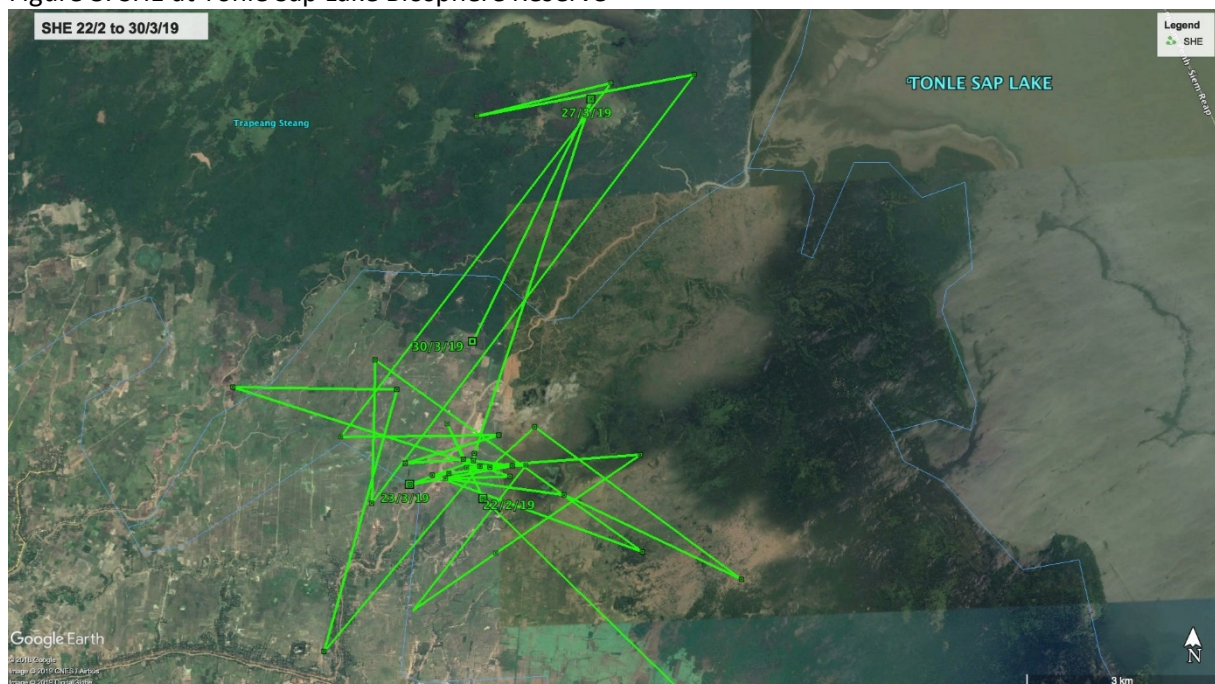
SEC – SEC has not moved since our last report, remaining for the past 10 days in the Prey Veng Province in Cambodia, 40km northeast of Phnom Penh. This area is known as the “great green belt” of Cambodia due to the plains in the area flooding during the monsoon season (May to October), depositing silts, which drives the regions high agricultural yields. SEC is probably feasting on the rich insect life in these fertile areas.

Figure 7: SEC, 40km north east of Phnom Penh



SHE – For the past five weeks SHE continues to inhabit the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, Cambodia. With the breeding season for Oriental Pratincoles expected between April to June, we wait with interest for SHE's next movements.

Figure 8: SHE at Tonle Sap Lake Biosphere Reserve



Whimbrel – Not leaving yet (by Katherine Leung)

A lot of shorebirds (Eastern Curlew, Greater Sand Plover, Great Knot etc.) have already departed from Broome. During the public Migration Watch event at the Broome Bird Observatory on 31 March, participants witnessed a couple thousands of shorebirds leaving Australia ([link](#)). However, our Whimbrels are not among them (yet).

Photo 2: BBO staff watching shorebirds departure from Broome (by Katherine Leung)

