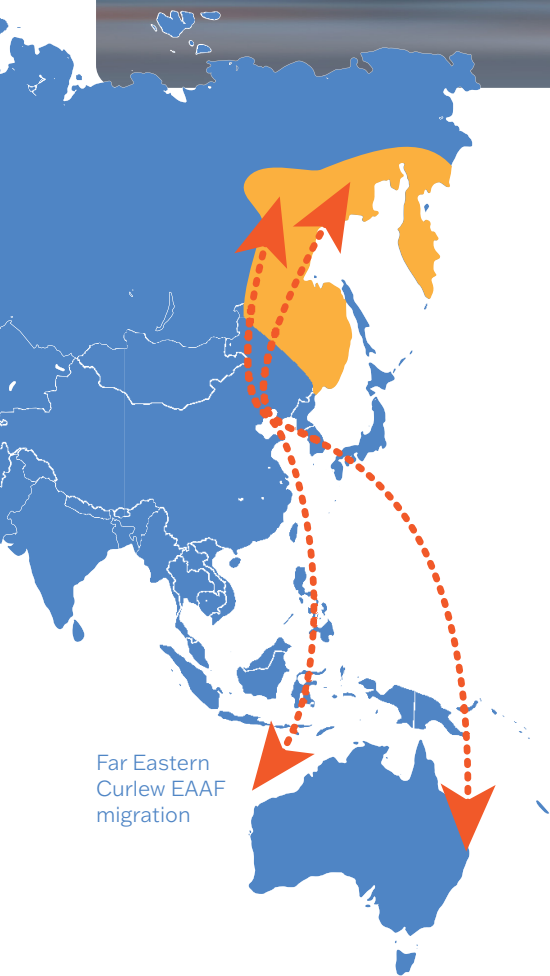


Important Habitat for Eastern Curlew in the Mackay Whitsundays

Numenius madagascariensis



OVERVIEW

Far Eastern Curlews are the largest migratory shorebird species in the world, travelling the East Asian-Australasian Flyway which connects their breeding grounds in the Arctic Tundra to their non-breeding grounds in Australia. Migratory shorebirds rely on our shores to feed and roost between September and April each year, recovering from one migration and preparing for the next.

The Mackay Whitsundays region forms part of a near-continuous chain of shorebird habitats along Queensland's central east coast, offering important foraging and roosting opportunities across mangrove-lined estuaries, sandy beaches and extensive intertidal flats. Far Eastern Curlews prefer soft substrates with little or no hard material that provide better access to prey, probing the sediment with their distinctive long bills to find crabs, prawns and shrimp.

SHOREBIRD AREAS

Birdlife Australia's National Migratory Shorebird Monitoring Program has a network of 530 established monitoring sites across the country. Within Reef Catchments' NRM area, there are 18 Shorebird Areas (SBA). This extends from Bowen SBA in the north to Carmila Beach SBA in the south.



KEY STATISTICS

73%

of the global Eastern Curlew population "winter" in Australia between September and April

8

Shorebird Areas (SBA) of national importance for Far Eastern Curlews

526

Peak Far Eastern Curlew count at Mackay SBA – surpassing the international importance threshold

SITES OF IMPORTANCE

Nationally important: >35 individuals, representing 0.1% of flyway population.

Internationally important: >350 individuals, representing 1% of flyway population.

For more information on all known Far Eastern Curlew feeding and roosting sites in Australia, visit the National Directory of Important Migratory Shorebird Habitat.

Shorebird Area (SBA)	Year	Threshold (Int / Nat)	Peak count	Int	Nat	Source
Repulse Bay	2015	350 / 35	270	0	4	QWSG; ASMP
St Helens Bay	2015	350 / 35	95	0	6	QWSG; ASMP
Seaforth	2017	350 / 35	61	0	6	QWSG; ASMP
Sand Bay	2018	350 / 35	330	0	6	QWSG; ASMP
Blacks Beach	2012	350 / 35	50	0	3	QWSG; ASMP
Mackay	2013	350 / 35	526	2	15	QWSG; ASMP
Ince Bay	2018	350 / 35	157	0	1	QWSG; ASMP
Armstrong Beach	2013	350 / 35	66	0	1	QWSG; ASMP

Data sourced from the National Directory of Important Migratory Shorebird Habitat (QWSG; ASMP).



MINIMISING DISTURBANCE

Australia supports around 2 million migratory shorebirds each year. Unfortunately, many species are in decline, both in Australia and along the Flyway. Far Eastern Curlews have declined by over 60% in Australia in the last 30 years. Key threats include habitat destruction in the Yellow Sea and human disturbance.

Far Eastern Curlews are very skittish and can be easily disturbed when feeding or roosting by humans and other animals, particularly off-leash dogs. Every disturbance which prompts a migratory shorebird to fly away is expelling valuable energy needed for their survival.

Did you know? If a Far Eastern Curlew were to fly 13,000km during their migration, this would be the equivalent of an 80kg human running 16 million kilometres almost non-stop and losing 32kg, twice a year.

When visiting the local beaches of the Mackay Whitsundays, please remember:



KEEP YOUR DISTANCE
Observe shorebirds from 100+ metres



LEASH YOUR DOG
Dogs off-leash cause significant disturbance



STAY OFF THE FOREDUNE
Avoid driving on beaches or in dune habitat



TAKE YOUR RUBBISH
Keep the foreshore environment litter free

References:

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