



SNR FACT SHEET

MIGRANT BIRDS FLY NORTH



Whimbrels

Towards the end of March and during April and May, as the weather starts to warm up in the Northern Hemisphere, many of our migrant waders – including Whimbrels, Greenshanks, Grey and Common Ringed Plovers, as well as Curlew Sandpipers – will begin the long journey back to their breeding grounds in Siberia and Russia.

Thanks to the dedicated work of the volunteers involved in the Coordinated Waterbird Counts (CWAC), we know that over 1,600 migrant waders spend the summer enjoying the warmth and nourishment of the Knysna estuary.

Some, like the Curlew Sandpiper, will probably stop to refuel three times during their 13,000km flight north. Others like the Whimbrel (a larger bird), travel up to 3,800km without stopping.

Do not be surprised to see some migrant waders here during our winter. Waders like the Curlew Sandpiper, Greenshank and Grey Plover do not breed in the first season after hatching. Instead these juveniles take a 'gap year' after their trip south, and only migrate north to their breeding areas with the adults during their second season.



Curlew Sandpiper



Greenshank

Photographs by Trevor Hardaker