

# GREAT KNOT SIGHTING UNTANGLES A MIGRATION MYSTERY

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Great knot *Calidris tenuirostris*. Photo: Special Arrangement

Unveiling yet another mystery of avian migrations, a great knot from Russia, belonging to the endangered *Calidris tenuirostris* (Horsfield, 1821), has found its way to Kerala's coast, flying over 9,000 km for a winter sojourn.

The migratory bird that traversed the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) is only one of the two — the other has been sighted at Jamnagar in Gujarat — great knots to be re-sighted in India among the nearly thousand ones tagged with MOSKVA rings in the Kamchatka peninsula in eastern Russia.

The bird was sighted by birdwatchers P.P. Sreenivasan, Kalesh Sadasivan and Samkumar P.B. while on a coastal migrant bird watching expedition on the Chavakkad beach in Thrissur district on November 15. It came calling in a flock of 14 great knots and about 150 migratory waders, including a rare straggler Caspian plover, grey plover, whimbrel, sanderling, lesser sand plover and about a hundred seagulls.

According to Mr. Sreenivasan, a veteran birder who has been monitoring the Thrissur coasts for over two decades, the engraving on the bird's ring that read TC 32469 MOSKVA provided a vital clue on its Russian connection.

The ring that established the Russian connection of the migratory bird. Photo: Special Arrangement

Mr. Samkumar and Dr. Sadasivan, who represent the Birders Sans Borders and the Travancore Natural History Society, nature conservation groups based in Thrissur and Thiruvananthapuram respectively, then managed to establish contact with Dmitry Dorofeev, whose team has been counting and ringing shorebirds in the estuary of the Khairusova-Belogolovaya River in Kamchatka.

The migratory path of the Great Knot

The Russian scientists confirmed the juvenile great knot had been tagged in the estuary with a

marked ring on its leg on August 12. These long-distance migrants stay at the Yellow Sea region and Thailand in southeast Asia before proceeding to their southerly winter grounds ,including Peninsular India along the CAF, one of the nine most important flyways of migratory birds. The migratory route suggested the bird that flew to Thrissur travelled over 9,000 km. Another bird that was tagged 6Z has been sighted at Jamnagar for the past three consecutive years.

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