Shorebirds of the Kimberley Coast – Populations, key sites, trends and threats

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What are shorebirds?
• Small to medium-sized wading birds in the order Charadriiformes
June to July – Breeding in Siberia

Spring and autumn – migrating and staging in Asia

Sep to March – non-breeding season in Australia
Migration is a major undertaking

• Migration between Arctic breeding grounds and southern hemisphere is done in a small number of very long flights, involving several days and several thousand kilometres of non-stop flight

• It takes weeks of intense foraging for birds to build up the stores required for long-distance migration, and they almost double in mass.

• By the end of the flight the stores are used up and they have to fatten up again.

• Shorebirds need a chain of excellent foraging grounds to migrate successfully.
Shorebird numbers on the Kimberley coast

Coastal migrants:
• 28 species recorded
• 17 species in internationally significant numbers
• Kimberley population = c. 633,000

Resident Shorebird species
• 10 species recorded
• 5 species in internationally significant numbers
• Kimberley coast population = c. 16,000

Grassland migrants:
• 3 species, all in int. sig. numbers
• They only use the coastline as a thermal refuge. They are not dependent on tidal flats.
• Kimberley coast population = c. 3,067,000

In total:
Kimberley coast population = c. 3,717,000
National and international context

Population of the Kimberley coast expressed as % of Australian population
(for the 20 most numerous Kimberley coast shorebird species)

Population of the Kimberley coast expressed as % of flyway population
(for the 20 most numerous Kimberley coast shorebird species)
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