New data about Great Knot stopover at Khairusova-Beloglovaya estuary.

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Last three summer seasons All-Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection organizes expedition to research large wader stopover on the Western coast of Kamchatka. For Great Knot this is a key place during southward migration.

Expedition starts last two years from the end of June. According to our data the peak of migration falls on the early beginning of July. Large numbers (up to 15-17 000) use this area in the end of June so the stopover starts forming at least from the middle of June. That means that this area is very important for non-breeders and failed breeders. Blood samples taken from birds caught in the end of July-beginning of August showed absolute majority of males. Males migrate after females that leave breeding grounds after hatching chicks. So there are four waves of migration – non-breeders, females, males and juveniles.

In 2015, we initiated a benthos sampling program, designed according the Synoptic Intertidal Benthic Surveys of the Royal NIOZ (SIBES, <https://www.nioz.nl/sibes>). The most abundant benthos species in the estuary are Macoma balthica, Anisogammarus kugi, Arenicola marina, Haustris arenarius, Marenzelleria sp, Nephthys kaeka, Pontoporea affinis and Scolelepis sp. The distribution of these species depends on salinity and type of mudflats. Great Knots prefer to feed on the mudflats with high densities of Macoma balthica.

During last three years we were focused on reading individually marked birds. In 2015 and 2016 we started marking Great Knots with black plain and yellow engraved flags. In estuary were registred Great Knots from 22 ringing sites along the whole EAAF from Chukotka (Russia) to Victoria (Australia). Great Knots marked in Khairusova-Belogolovaya estuary were observed mainly in Australia. The most interesting resight of our birds was made in UAE.