

Project Update: April 2016

There are many ways to catch a bird, but not greenshanks! We have tried to catch greenshanks several times by cannon-netting and mist-netting on mudflats and salt pans where spotted greenshanks usually roost, and only one individual was caught in March 2014. After many difficulties with import permits and logistics of the shipment of the solar PTT satellite transmitters we ordered, we eventually have four tags in hand and could head to the field for birds catching in March 2016. There is only a small window to catch shorebirds with mist nets, as we have to wait for a suitable tide level, moon phase and the weather as well. Finally we caught one adult spotted greenshank on our second try of mist-netting in an aquaculture pond in Samut Sakhon, Thailand. After the ringing proceeding, 'Frankie', the spotted greenshank named by the team, was successfully released with a working satellite transmitter at the catch site. As of 19 April 2016, we had in total 70 wintering locations in Samut Sakhon over 25 tracking days. Most locations did not range over a distance of more than 2-3 km, suggesting strong site fidelity at least during late winter. We received the first signal that it departed from the Thai wintering area on 21 April 2016. The first stopover site was 2275 km away in a small river mouth on the southern coast of China, and it continued to head north along the coast 7 days later. It is with keen anticipation that we await further information of its 5400 km journey to its breeding grounds in Russia. And we wish Frankie the best of luck with his (or her) future migration and breeding.

