

# Community-based conservation of the globally threatened Great Knot in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is home to key non-breeding sites for thousands of migratory birds, as it lies at the intersection of two major migratory flyways: the Central Asian Flyway and the East Asia-Australasian Flyway (Das et al. 2022). The intertidal mudflats of Bangladesh attract thousands of non-breeding shorebirds each winter, including 19 species of international conservation concern, such as the Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*.

The Great Knot is endemic to the East Asia-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) (Tomkovich 1997). Intertidal mudflats of Bangladesh are important non-breeding grounds for this species. Following dramatic population declines, the species has been listed as globally 'Endangered'

by the IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2019) and is protected under Schedule I of the Bangladesh Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012 (Khandakar & Jeny 2020).

In an effort to raise awareness about the conservation of the Great Knot, five community outreach and education programmes were conducted along the central coast of Bangladesh from October 2023 to March



Discussing the importance of conserving Great Knot and their habitats.  
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Students participating in a community sensitization program by drawing illustrations of the Great Knot. © Naim Khandakar.



Students drew and showcased their artwork on the Great Knot, highlighting their understanding and appreciation of the species and its conservation. © Naim Khandakar.

2024. These programmes marked for the first time a community-based approach which was used to promote the

Engaging the local community by distributing flyers underscoring the significance of conserving Great Knot and their habitats. © Naim Khandakar.



conservation of the Great Knot in Bangladesh.

The key objectives of these initiatives were to enhance local awareness about the importance of conserving the Great Knot and its habitats. The programmes engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including fishermen, farmers, school children, teachers and other members of the local community. Educational materials were distributed to reinforce the conservation message, highlighting the need to protect both the Great Knot and other migratory shorebirds.



A documentary video on the Great Knot and other migratory shorebirds of Bangladesh was shown to the participants. © Naim Khandakar.



Empowering school students through training sessions on species identification and the effective use of binoculars. © Naim Khandakar.

The central component of the awareness campaign was engaging school students. Through interactive discussions, students learnt about the ecological significance of the Great Knot and the critical role its habitat plays in supporting biodiversity. To encourage artistic expression, students participated in an art competition where they created drawings of the Great Knot and its habitat. This creative activity helped deepen their understanding and connection to the species, while winners were rewarded for their contributions, reinforcing the value of community engagement in conservation.

Additionally, students were empowered through hands-on training sessions on species identification and the use of binoculars. These skills will help the next generation of conservationists to continue protecting the Great Knot and other species in the future.

Overall, these community-based outreach efforts have contributed to building local capacity for the conservation of the endangered Great Knot on the central coast of Bangladesh,

fostering greater awareness and encouraging community participation in protecting this globally important species.

#### References

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A group photo with the participants was taken after completing the awareness programme. © Naim Khandakar.