

Stopover strategies drive potential adaptability under changing environments

Kyle G. ^{a,1} and Yuting Deng

Across the globe, billions of migratory birds traverse hundreds to thousands of kilometers (1, 2), embarking on journeys that may take them across oceans, large landmasses, mountains, forests, plains, cities, and more. These birds traverse distances but it is the stopovers that fuel the journey. Stopover strategies are equal in importance to the journey itself. While some migratory species can travel thousands of kilometers in single days (3), most species must stop and refuel multiple times throughout their migration. Stopover allows migrants to replenish essential energy reserves physiologically recover, and at times, escape unfavorable weather (5). A network of stopover locations serves as pitstops along an arduous path toward breeding grounds. For example, the Red Knot migrates from the Delaware Bay to the Chesapeake Bay, where it lays its eggs (6). For upward of 2 weeks, the Red Knot feeds on Horseshoe Crab eggs that blanketed the Delaware Bay shorebirds. In that time, knots will nearly double their body mass and tend to stay longer in fewer stopover sites. However, this linkage is fragile. The status of the Red Knot population is a strong indicator of Red Knot population health. Stopover is a keystone of the entire migration.

Jumping halfway around the world, where the Red Knot can also be found, the Eastern Shore of the United States is one of the most important flyways for many environmental law more than 600 species. Unfortunately, coastal lands and wetlands are threatened migratory bird flyways. In the United States, countries from Russia to New Zealand are working to protect the most dense population of migratory birds in the world. The extensive coastal foodplain wetlands, in particular, are the most important inland wetlands, annually providing food for an estimated upward of 50 million migratory birds (7). The Eastern Shore of the United States is home to 20 shorebird species in the Eastern Shore of the United States. Concern, with 10 listed as Endangered or Threatened on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List (10), including the Great Knot, the least of the shorebirds as human disturbance, aquaculture, and other factors. The loss of river flow, construction, and other factors, and climate change significantly contribute to habitat loss and degradation.

The Yellow Sea and Bohai Gulf region occupy a crucial position along the EAAF, bordered by China and the Korean Peninsula. This area is heavily utilized by shorebirds for nonbreeding, and crucially, migration. Between the 1980s and the late 2000s, 28% of the Yellow Sea and Bohai Gulf region disappeared, declining by 1.2% annually (11). Further, maps suggest that up to 65% of the Yellow Sea and Bohai Gulf region have been lost in the past 50 y, gradually turning this important area into a migration bottleneck and responsible for 81% of the population decline of shorebirds.

narios. Stopover locations alterations, whether through like forest fires (14), hurricanes (16), or other anthropogenic factors such as pollution (17), development (12). Regardless of the cause, it is essential to recognize species' vulnerability during this critical phase of

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