



## **Illegal and unsustainable legal hunting on shorebirds of the northern part of EAAF: assessment of hunting pressure in North-East Russia, 2019-2022**



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## The goal of the project

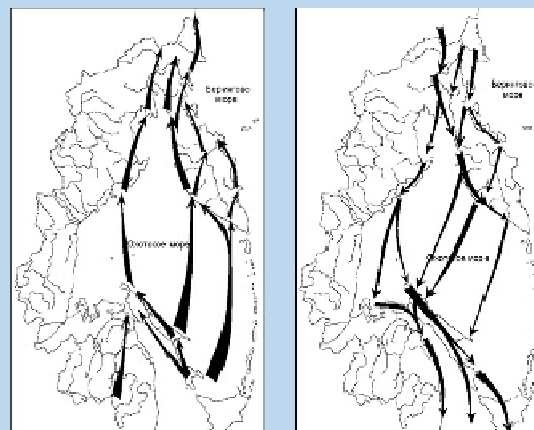
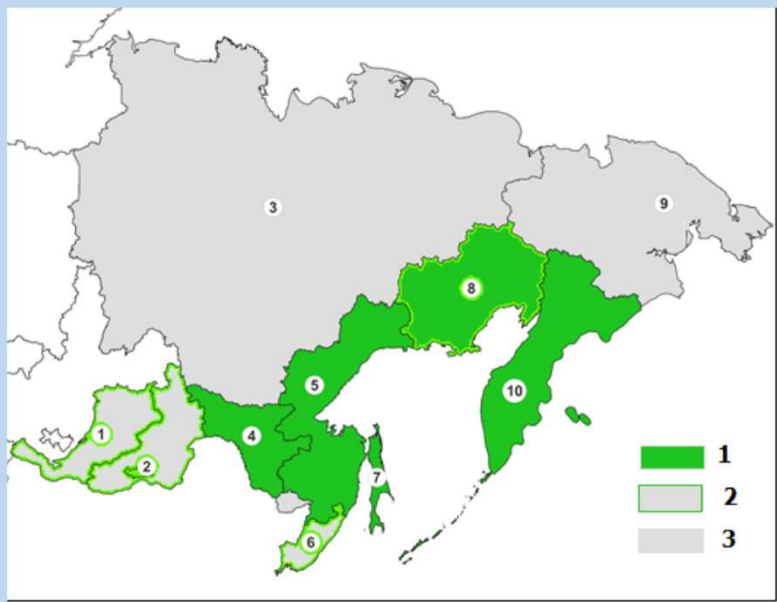
to assess hunting pressure on different species and ecological groups of shorebirds (incl. both legal and illegal bird harvest) with special attention to Far Eastern Curlew (FEC) and Spoon-billed Sandpiper (SBS)



## Methodology includes

- Analysis of literature, official statistics and data on rings recoveries of the Russian Bird Ringing Centre
- Detailed **interviews** with hunters
- **Anonymous questionnaires**
- **Direct observation** of hunting
- Consultations with regional ornithological experts





**Main northward (A) and southward (B) flyways of Dunlins in the Sea of Okhotsk region (Tiunuv et al., 2018)**

## Regions surveyed in 2019-2022 (1)

- 10 – Kamchatka (2019)
- 7 - Sakhalin Oblast (2020)
- 4 - Amur Oblast (2021)
- 5 - Khabarovsk Krai (2021)
- 8 - Magadan Oblast (2022)

## Need to be surveyed

### a) first priority (2)

- 1 - Republic of Buryatia
- 2 - Zabaikalsky Krai
- 6 - Primorsky Krai

### b) second priority (3)

- 8 - Chukotka
- 9 - Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)



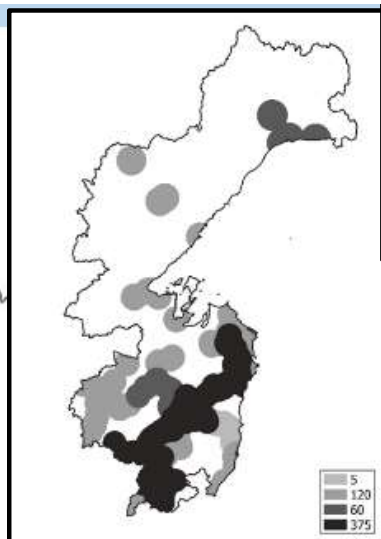
**Human settlements located at the seacoast of the Russian Far East and main areas of shorebirds hunting identified from data of rings recoveries (Russian Ringer Centre) and other sources**

## Results of the expert assessment of the number of harvested shorebirds

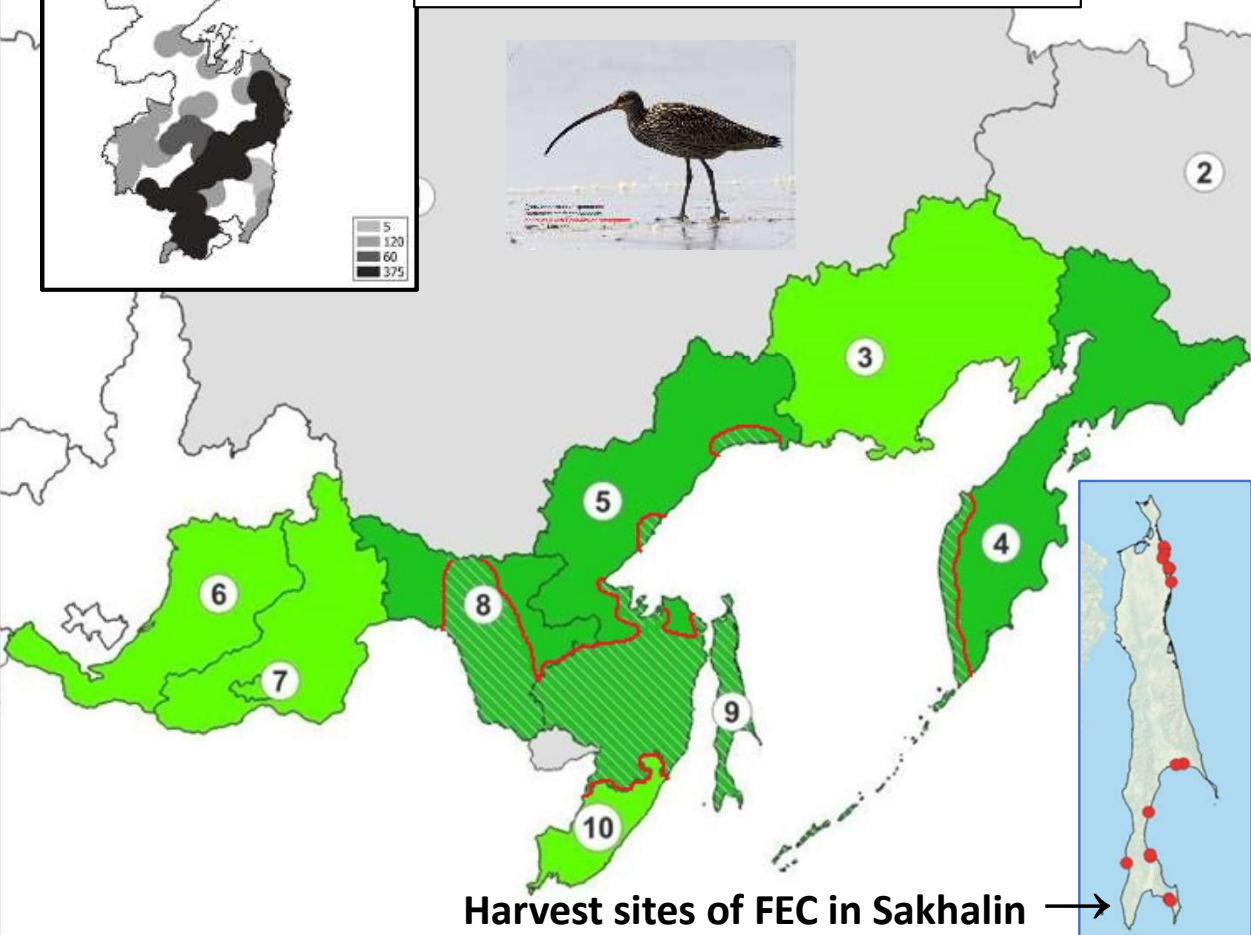
Species/Groups of species	Kamchatka	Sakhalin	Khabarovsk Krai	Amur Oblast	Magadan Oblast
Far Eastern Curlew (Numenius madagascariensis)	No data	1 100	560	200	20 – ?
Whimbrel (Numenius phaeopus)	37 000	20 000-38 800	1 410	100	3 500 – 7 000
Other big-sized shorebirds	1 600	2 700	610	4350*	1 200 – 2 500
Medium-sized shorebirds	6 000	11 900	28 670	600	2 400 – 3 500
Small-sized shorebirds		20 600	5 050	150	1 500 – 4 000
Total	45 000	56 300 – 75 100	36 300	5 400	8 600 – 17 000

\* Mostly Common Snipe (Gallinago gallinago) & Woodcock (Scolopax rusticola)





Number of Far Eastern Curlews shot annually within Khabarovsk Krai (expert estimate). The total number of birds shot within the outline shaded by each colour is indicated



## Far Eastern Curlew

is shot most often by accident when hunting Whimbrel (in Kamchatka and Sakhalin), but less often on purpose (in Sakhalin).

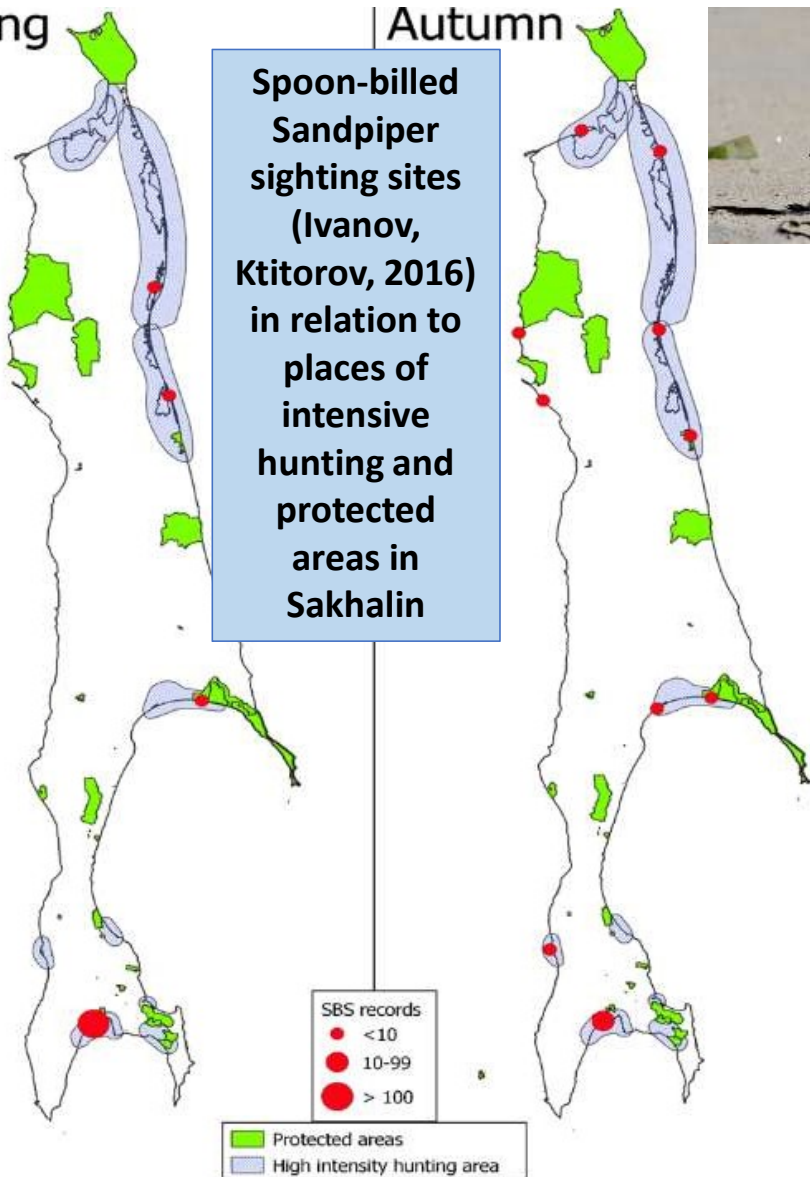
In Khabarovsk Krai, Amur and Magadan Oblasts, it is mainly hunted in spring and summer in breeding grounds.

Region	Estimation of number of harvested birds (per year)
Kamchatka	No data
Sakhalin	1 100
Khabarovsk Krai	560
Amur Oblast	200
Magadan Oblast	20
Primorskiy Krai	No data

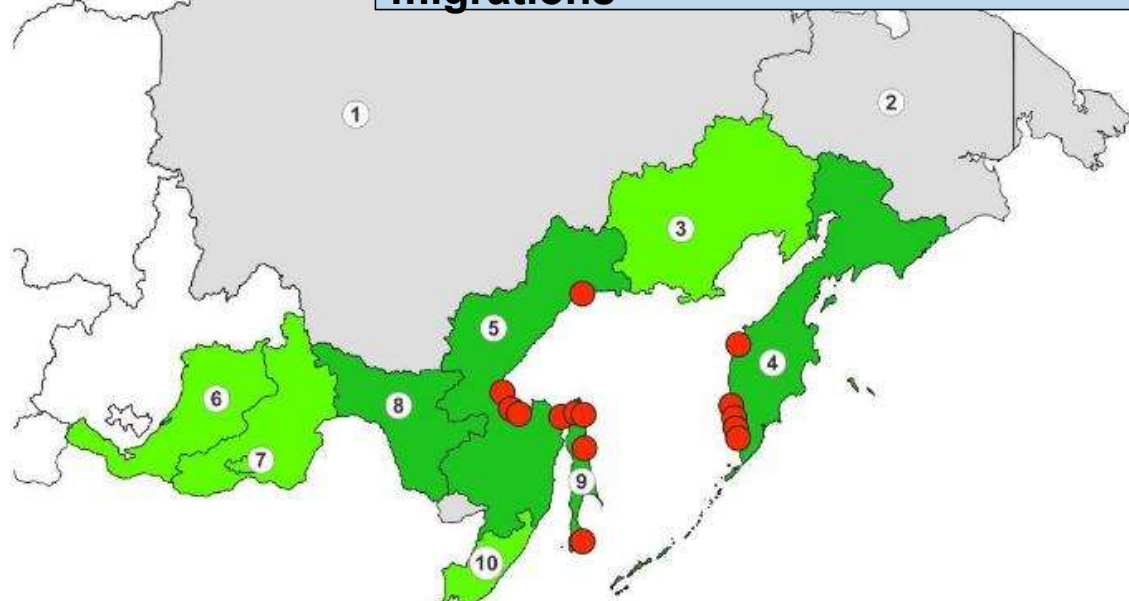
Spring

Autumn

**Spoon-billed Sandpiper sighting sites (Ivanov, Ktitorov, 2016) in relation to places of intensive hunting and protected areas in Sakhalin**



**Hunters often shoot against dense flocks of small shorebirds. There is a probability that SBS is inside these flocks. Areas of highest probability of SBS shooting during seasonal migrations**



**SBS is hunted in flocks of small waders. This hunt is most common in northern Sakhalin, western Kamchatka and in several districts of Khabarovsk Krai - Nikolayevsky, Tuguro-Chumikansky and Okhotsky districts**



## MAIN CONCLUSION

1. There is no reliable official data on the number of harvested shorebirds in Russia. **Our study of shorebirds hunting is the first big research** in this direction carried out both **in the Russian Far East** and throughout Russia. The methodology demonstrated good results. However, it requires a significant revision in each new region.
2. Far Eastern hunters' bag includes **at least 24 shorebird species**. As a rule **hunters cannot determine species of harvested shorebird**, with the exception of some species, like Whimbrel. Many of them know Far Eastern Curlew.
3. Only **Whimbrel is a special object** of hunting. Hunting for Whimbrel is popular in Kamchatka and Sakhalin. In both regions, significant numbers of **Far Eastern Curlews (FEC) are shot between Whimbrels**. Often young FEC are mistaken with adult Whimbrels as they have shorter bill. However on Sakhalin, **many hunters intentionally shoot FEC** and it is desired trophy for them.





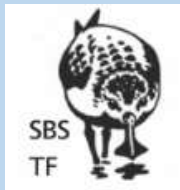


## MAIN CONCLUSION (CONTINUED)

4. In total in the 5 surveyed regions, hunters shoot **at least 150,000 shorebirds** a year, of which about 40% are Whimbrel. The **highest hunting pressure** has been revealed **in the places of shorebird seasonal concentration** in the west coast of Kamchatka, northern Sakhalin, Schastya Bay, Tuguro-Chumikanskiy and Okhotskiy districts of Khabarovsk Krai and Olskiy district of Magadan Oblast.
5. Small and medium shorebirds are harvested either by teenagers, either in the absence of other game, either by some gourmet hunters who consider small shorebird soup as a delicacy. To save cartridges hunters harvest small shorebirds **by shooting dense flocks**. In this case, the total mortality of birds is 2-3 times higher than the number of birds used by hunters.
6. The greatest pressure from hunting is experienced by populations of **Whimbrel, Far Eastern Curlew**, and a number of species that form high-density local concentrations during migrations – Great Knot, Red Knot, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit. There is also **a high risk of accidental shot of rare endemic species Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Nordmann's Greenshank when shooting at flocks of birds.**







## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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**We thank the official nature management organisations and their staff who provided valuable logistical and informational support for this study:**

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**Department for Fauna Protection, Control and Regulation of Use of Animals of the Sakhalin Oblast Forestry and Hunting Agency**

**Department of hunting sector of the Government of Khabarovsk Krai**

**Department for the protection, control and regulation of wildlife species and habitats of Amur region**

**Department of State Hunting Supervision of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Magadan region**

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**We express special thanks to S.P. Kharitonov who provided information on findings of marked waders from the materials of the Russian Bird Ringing Centre.**

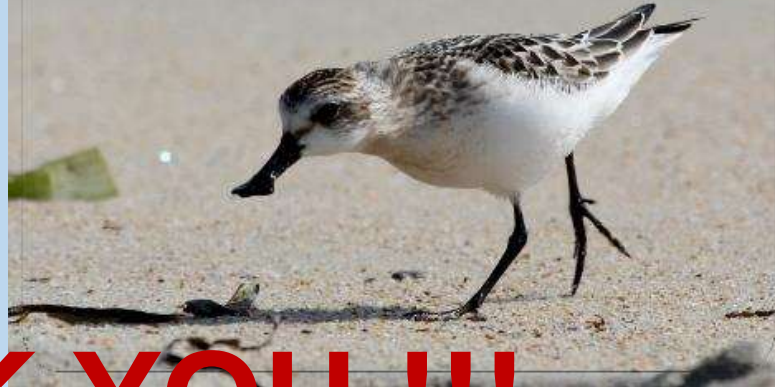
Whimbrel

Средний крошчел – *Numenius phaeopus*  
Фото А. Вялков



Spoon-billed Sandpiper

Лопатень – *Eurostomus rufus*  
Красная книга Российской Федерации  
Фото В. Шохрин



Nordmann's Greenshank

Охотский улит – *Tringa guttifer*  
Красная книга Российской Федерации  
Фото А. Вялков



Far Eastern Curlew

Дальневосточный крошчел –  
*Numenius madagascariensis*  
Красная книга Российской Федерации  
Фото Е. Мамаев



**Priority  
species of  
shorebirds  
to be  
studied and  
protected in  
our project**

**THANK YOU !!!**











## REASONS FOR HUNTING SHOREBIRDS

1) For **food** : Intentional hunting (Whimbrel, Snipe) and incidental hunting (in the absence of more desirable game).

More than 90% of the respondents consider wader meat a delicacy

2) **Training in shooting** for beginner hunters and children

3) For sable **trap bait**

4) Harvesting for **sale**



## The scope of the survey

Sakhalin Oblast

Magadan Oblast

Amur Oblast

Khabarovsk Krai

Amur Oblast

Kamchatka Krai

1 - surveyed settlements

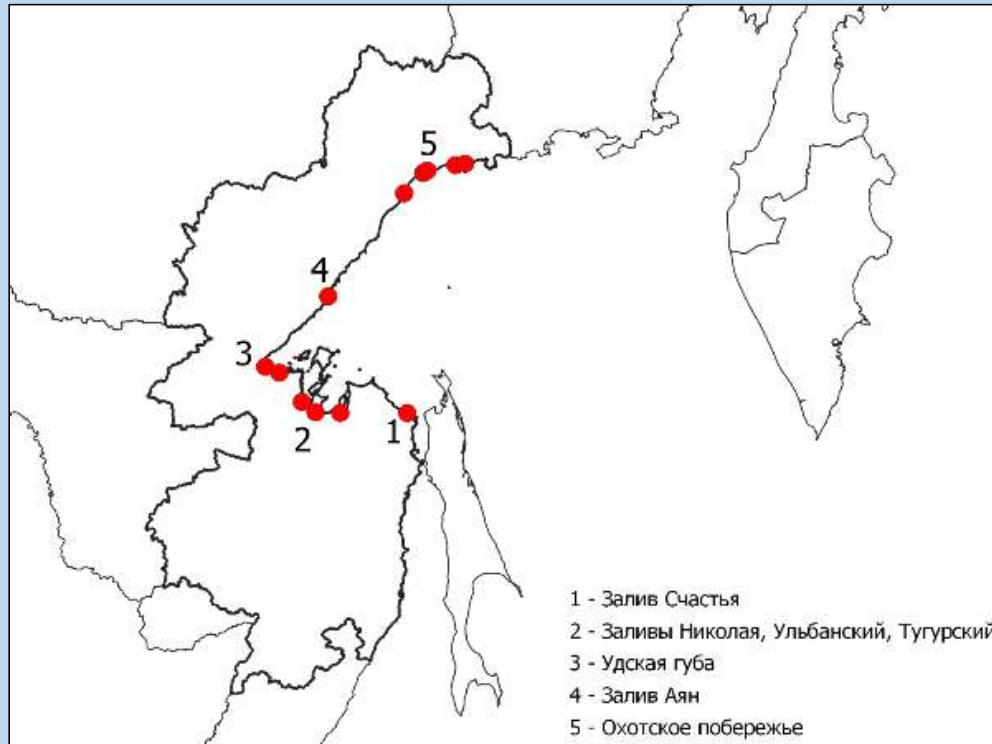
2 - unsurveyed settlements

– fieldwork areas and places

– questionnaires send by mail and phone interviews

– no data

1  
2



The most important stopover sites for migrating shorebirds in Khabarovsk Krai.

- 1 – Schastya Bay;
- 2 – Nikolay, Ulbansky and Tugurskiy Bays;
- 3 – Uda Bay; 4 – Aian Bay;
- 5 – coast of the Sea of Okhotsk

