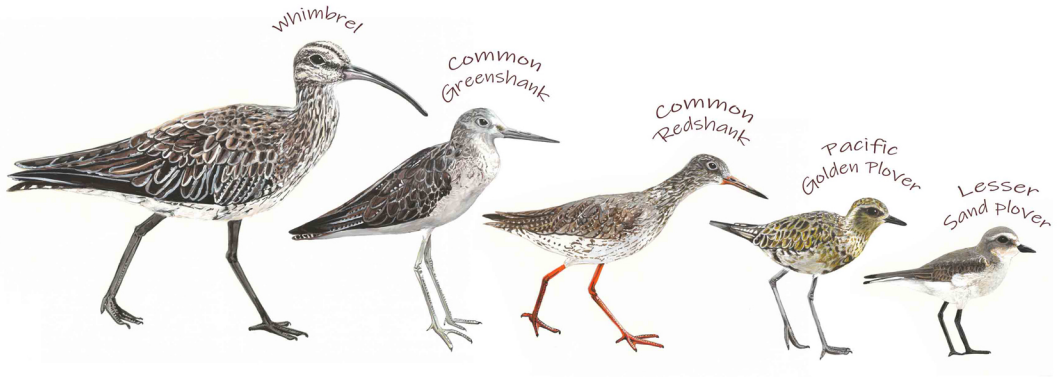


# 5 Common Migratory Shorebirds in Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve



## Shorebirds are the same as waders!

They are birds which:



- Use the wetlands (mangroves, mudflats, sandy shores) to roost, feed and breed.
- Have different bill shapes and lengths to feed on prey at different depths of the mudflats.
- Travel along a set flight path during migration. This flight path is the migratory flyway, which spans across oceans and continents.
  - Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve is on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, one of the nine flyways in the world!

Did you know?

There are two types of migratory birds!

- Passage migrants, which stopover at Singapore for a short period before continuing on to their next destination.
- Wintering visitors, which stay in Singapore throughout winter.

## Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*



My long down-curved bill is about twice the length of my head! This makes it easy for me to pick out food such as worms that hide deep in the mud.

### Characteristics:

- Large bird about 43 cm in length
- Has a long, down-curved dark brown bill
- Has long bluish-grey legs
- Has a dark brown crown with a white streak down the middle
- Uses its bill to probe into the mudflat for food like crabs, molluscs, and worms

## Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*



I can travel at a speed of 70 km per hour during migration. Together with other birds, I fly for thousands of kilometres before circling and "touching down" at a familiar mudflat.

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### Characteristics:

- Medium-sized bird about 35 cm in length
- Has a long, slightly upturned bill
- Has long, yellowish-green legs
- Uses its bill to sieve through water in a side-to-side motion for food like small fishes and prawns

## Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

I have a long, straight bill and distinctive red legs! I eat worms, shrimps, and fishes, which have fats that provide me with energy to travel to my next destination.



### Characteristics:

- Medium sized bird about 28 cm in length
- Has a long, straight reddish bill
- Has orangish-red legs
- Washes its food like worms, crabs, and molluscs in the water before swallowing it whole

## Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Despite my short bill and legs, I stand out from the other birds with my golden brown feathers! My favourite place is the mudflat at Sungei Buloh, where I eat and rest with other shorebirds.



### Characteristics:

- Medium-sized bird about 25 cm in length
- Has a short bill
- Has short, black legs
- Appears in two forms - non-breeding and breeding. Both forms have gold-spotted backs and wings. The non-breeding form (shown here) has a brown face, chest, and underparts, which are black in the breeding form.
- Picks at the surface of the mudflat for food like small molluscs and crabs

Lesser Sand Plover  
*Charadrius mongolus*



I have a short bill and dark grey legs. I migrate in a flock with other Lesser Sand Plovers, travelling day and night without stopping. Come to Sungei Buloh to see me!

Characteristics:

- Small bird about 20 cm in length
- Has a short bill
- Has dark grey legs
- Appears in two forms - non-breeding and breeding. Both forms have greyish-brown upperparts. The non-breeding form (shown here) has a white chest, which is red in the breeding form.
- Uses its bill to pick at the surface of the mudflat for food like worms and bivalves

# Bill Adaptation

How do their bills help them to feed differently?



Different bill shapes and lengths help the birds to feed at varying depths of the mudflat.

You can spot these birds from September to March in Singapore, especially at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve.



## Bird Ringing

How do we keep track of migratory shorebirds?



Bird ringing is the technique of fitting rings or tags onto the legs of birds. This enables us to study their movement and migration patterns. Different coloured tags indicate the different countries where the bird was tagged - birds with green-over-white tags were tagged in Singapore!

The tags are also engraved with alphanumeric characters unique to each individual. This allows researchers to identify individual birds without recapturing them, and search for information such as their estimated ages.

Tracking bird migration patterns is a long term research and monitoring effort. Let us know if you spot a bird with an engraved green-over-white tag, either in Singapore or overseas!

# Activity 1

## Spot them all!

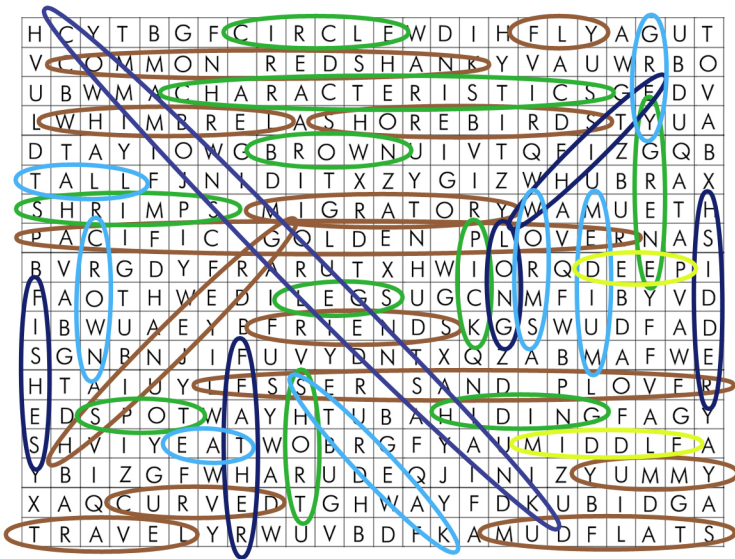


**migratory**  
**shorebirds**  
**worms**  
**characteristics**  
**pick**  
**greenish**  
**curved**  
**long**  
**short**  
**yummy**  
**feather**  
**reddish**  
**common redshank**  
**whimbrel**  
**pacific golden plover**  
**lesser sand plover**  
**common greenshank**  
**crown**  
**energy**  
**circle**

**white**  
**grey**  
**reddish**  
**medium**  
**legs**  
**tall**  
**hiding**  
**brown**  
**streak**  
**deep**  
**middle**  
**friends**  
**fly**  
**spot**  
**eat**  
**travel**  
**fishes**  
**shrimps**  
**mudflats**

# Activity 1

## Spot them all! - Answers

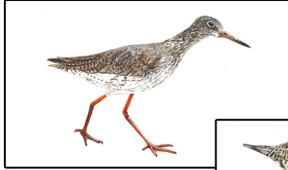


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## Activity 2

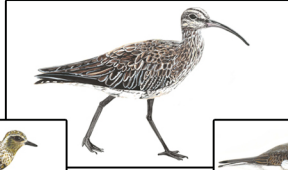
### Who Am I?



(A) Common Redshank



(B) Pacific Golden Plover



(C) Whimbrel



(D) Lesser Sand Plover



(E) Common Greenshank

1. I stand tall and have a long down-curved bill.  
Who am I? Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
2. I always charm my observers with my beautiful  
orange-red legs and straight reddish bill.  
Who am I? Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
3. I am a small greyish-brown bird and I have a  
short bill. Who am I? Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Look at me! I look rich in my golden brown suit!  
Who am I? Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
5. With my yellowish-green legs, I walk gingerly on the  
mudflat. Who am I? Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Answers: 1. (C) Whimbrel 2. (A) Common Redshank 3. (D) Lesser Sand Plover  
4. (B) Pacific Golden Plover 5. (E) Common Greenshank