



## New exhibition at Slītere National Park dedicated to the Calidris waders and its main hero: the Curlew sandpiper

*You can learn to recognize and differentiate among various Calidris species, learn interesting facts and enjoy beautiful bird drawings by visiting this exhibition located on the 4th floor of Šlītere lighthouse, within the framework of the project “Baltic Wings”.*

A bird symbolizes freedom of movement and absence of borders. Some birds live in Latvia all year round; others spend the winter or dwell here during the summer. Part of them fly over the territory of Latvia, stopping by only for a short moment.

The Earth, if one can say so, is covered or “enveloped” in bird flight routes – migration routes. It is not possible to draw one narrow line along which the birds migrate; however, there are certain places where the birds tend to concentrate to rest, feed or wait for more favourable weather conditions. Such place is Cape Kolka, where it is possible to observe all birds found in Latvia. The coast side of Slītere National Park and Cape Kolka are part of the bird migration route White Sea–Baltic Sea–East–Atlantics. Bird migration routes, which “envelop” the globe, are depicted in this exhibition.

Who is the hero of our exhibition and why?

Curlew sandpipers can be observed mainly during the autumn migration period, when they feed, fluttering around the seashore. It is a beautiful bird and a great traveller; moreover, the number of this species tends to decline in the world. By choosing the curlew sandpiper as the centrepiece of our exhibition, we wanted to get under its



**Līkšņibītis**  
*Calidris ferruginea*

Latvijā caurceļo vasaras otrajā pusē un rudenī, mazāk pavasarī. Dažos pavasaros, piemēram, 2003.–2006. gadā, nav zināms neviens novērojums. Tas liecina, ka pavasarī līkšņiņu migrācija praktiski iet garām Latvijai, vai arī tie pārlido tranzītā. Rudenī novērojumu ir vairāk.

**IZSKATS** Ķermeņa garums 180–230 mm. Kājas un knābis melns. Pavasarī un vasarā pieaugušajiem putniem ir sarkanīgs vēders un galva. Pēc sarkanās krāsas līdzīga suga ir tikai lielais līkšņibītis, kas ir lielāks un ar zaļganām kājām. Līkšņibītim, jau pēc tā nosaukuma, knābis ir samērā garš un galā noliekts. Tieši pēc knābja formas var atšķirt arī rudenī tērpi no parastā līkšņiņa.

**BIOTOPS** Jūras piekraste, reti iekšzemes ūdeņi.



*At the exhibition you will find fascinating facts about the Curlew sandpiper and much more.*

skin and look at the world “through the eyes of the curlew sandpiper” – what it sees travelling around the globe and living in specific places. To see the threat to its existence. The exhibition, which interactively depicts a bird’s journey, is called “The Summer of Curlew Sandpiper in Two Hemispheres”.

Curlew sandpipers are born in the Northern Hemisphere, in our case – Taymyr peninsula. The researchers admit that success of survival of new birds depends on the lemming population – if it is low, snowy owls, skua-gulls and polar foxes are more likely to use easily caught younglings as their food. Furthermore, Taymyr peninsula is a place of intensive oil extraction works. Curlew sandpipers spend the winter in the Southern Hemisphere, in the beautiful, sunny and warm Langebaan lagoon on the coast of South Africa. Here, the counting of Curlew sandpipers shows significant decrease in population, in comparison to the 1970’s. Booming tourism, opportunities to relax in any part of the world and various water attractions compete with the feeding places available for birds. In recent decades, the coast of Latvia has also been used intensively for recreation, walks, travel and sports. We do not even notice that we disturb the birds with our presence – not only those that hatch on the seashore, but also at other times, when the bird migration occurs.

What do the birds do, when they stop and roam the seashore?

Calidris, including Curlew sandpipers cover huge distances (in overflights they have to cover 30000-50000 km distances), thus it is very important for them to “to fatten” and gain weight. Washed up algae and sea mud are like “fast food” or “gas station” for birds, where they must manage to fill themselves with nourishing food (gas up before the journey). Such stops are extremely important for the bird on its journey, and Cape Kolka is one of them. Fat birds accumulate fat which unlike us, humans, does not worry them too much, because when the fat breaks down, energy and water are released, so birds do not drink on their way.

Is there any correlation between the length of a beak and legs and can a bird get by with long legs and a short beak?

Birds feeding on the seashore have a special “equipment” – a long beak and legs. Long legs allow them to paddle in the shallow water comfortably without getting their feathers wet. The long beak is useful for fishing out the invertebrates, which bury themselves deep in the rotting algae. The tip of the beak is “equipped” with sensitive sensors, which allow it to sense food



*The impressive migration of the curlew sandpiper is clearly presented in maps at the exhibition.*



deep in the mud. Birds of such appearance are called the waders. The exhibition provides a look on different beaks of waders and various ways of how they obtain the needed food.

### Bird songs and sounds

During the bird migration, we hear the voices of different birds. The call of a migrating curlew sandpiper is short and not as distinct as during the mating period. The visitors can hear the voice of this and other well-known migrating birds in the exhibition, settling back comfortably on soft chairs.

## *Welcome to the exhibition!*

*Repair works of the 4th floor of Slītere lighthouse and the organization of the exhibition "Bird migration routes" have been carried out within the framework of the project of INTERREG Central Baltic sea region program "Baltic Wings – nature tourism for sustainable development of the countryside" (No. CB663).*



*Get those earphones on and enjoy the world of bird song!*



Dabas aizsardzības pārvalde



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Regional  
Development Fund