

The untold journey of migratory shore birds

Flyways



Press Kit

A Randall Wood Film

antidotefilms

*'An Australian Aboriginal legend tells of
the moment birds arrived amongst us.*

*The breaking of a rainbow
scattered shards of colours.*

*As these shards fell to earth
they became glowing jewel-like birds'*



Flyways

Filmed over 4 years, Flyways tells the unknown story of migratory shorebirds, and their epic journey north for breeding every year.



Technical Details

Runtime: 85mins

Format: Feature Documentary

Screening Format: DCP

Aspect: 16:9

Resolution: 4K

Country: Australia

Year: 2023

Rating: E (exempt)

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Film Assets

[Trailer Link:](#)

[Dropbox:](#)

Screener:

[Website:](#)

A Randall Wood Film

Written and Directed by: Randall Wood

Composer: Cezary Skubiszewski

Narration: Mia Wasikowska

Production Manager: Jenine Olliver

Producers: Rebecca McElroy & Randall Wood

Additional Writers: Alex Barry, Suzanne Smith

Visual Effects: Andres Gomez Isaza

Cinematographer: Randall Wood

Editors: Scott Walton, Andrea Lang

Starring...

Far Eastern Curlew

Range: Australia to Nthn Asia
Lives 20yrs
Flies the distance to the moon over
its life



Bar-Tailed Godwit

Range: Sth America to Alaska
Powerful Flight
Breeds with the same partner over
consecutive years



Red Knot

Range: Global
Sub Species - Africa to Siberia



Logline:

With the world's migratory shorebirds and their epic Flyways under threat, scientists, in search of a smoking gun, race to map their journeys.



Short Synopsis

Shorebirds fly thousands of miles each year along ancient and largely unknown migratory routes called Flyways. Species travel from feeding grounds in the southern hemisphere to breeding grounds in the Arctic regions and back again, flying up to nine days non-stop without food or water.

They are the world's greatest endurance athletes and their navigational skills on these marathon migrations are as extraordinary as they are mysterious.

Long Synopsis

There are few creatures on earth more inspiring, more symbolic than birds. Each year, millions of shorebirds follow ancient flyways moving from the south of the planet to the north and back again. Like a rising and falling breath, the earth supports this mass movement of life. Yet many of us know little about them.

Shorebirds remain an untold story.

What routes do the birds take?

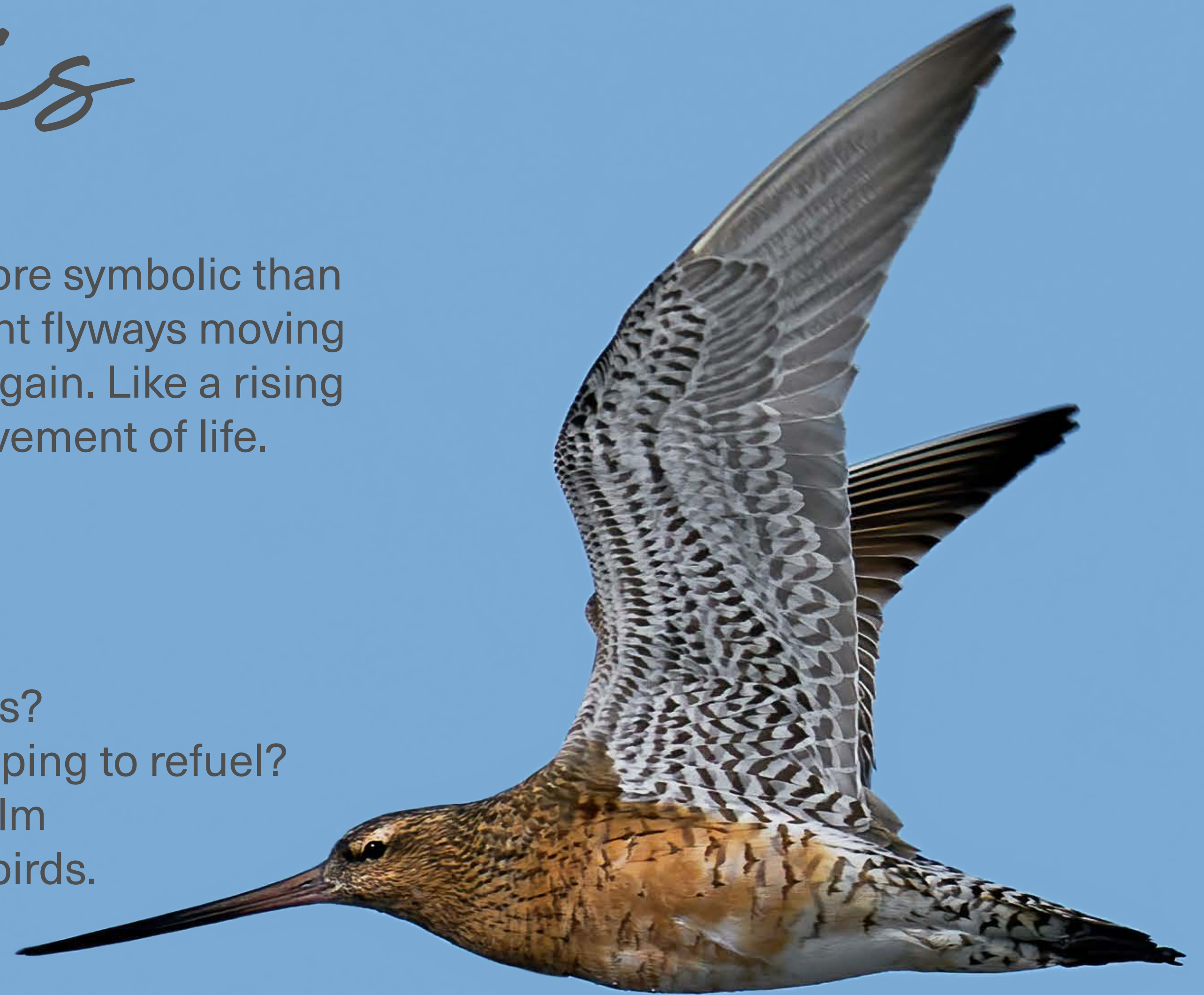
How do they navigate such mind-boggling distances?

How are they able to stay aloft for days without stopping to refuel?

Seeking to answer these and other questions, the film revels in the beauty and wonder of migratory shorebirds.

Facing the obstacles of ever-expanding human development, the birds are in serious decline.

Our film offers hope for the future - for both the birds and ourselves.



The stories

Flyways is a **global story** that explores the inspirational and extraordinary journey of migratory shorebirds.

From their summer feeding grounds in the southern hemisphere the birds set off on what seems an impossible journey across unforgiving oceans and landscapes toward their northern Arctic breeding grounds thousands of miles away. The film combines natural history, global tracking technology and the passion of scientists and the bird-loving community to better understand the epic flights of these endangered species. Despite the incredible challenges, this is a story of hope and discovery as these birds traverse oceans and continents.

A detective story, Flyways follows a conservation movement of bird-loving experts and citizen scientists as they mobilise to the grand challenge utilising the very latest technology and collaboration to understand, conserve, and champion the phenomenon of bird migration.

What is a Flyway?

Shorebirds fly thousands of kilometres each year along ancient and largely unknown migratory routes called **Flyways**.

They are the world's greatest endurance athletes and their navigational skills on this marathon migration are as extraordinary as they are mysterious.

Species travel from feeding grounds in the Southern Hemisphere, to breeding grounds in the Arctic regions, and back again!

Flying up to 9 days non-stop without food or water.

Shorebird Numbers are crashing



A recent study from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Centre and Collaborators reveal that we have lost one-third of our North American Shorebirds since 1970 - or 17 million shorebirds. 68% of shorebird species are in decline. Some species like Lesser Yellowlegs and Red Knots have shown 70-95% declines.

Flyways weaves scientific and conservation storylines through the stories of charismatic species found in different flyways habitats around the world.

Along the way, we tell the stories of the scientists battling to understand and save shorebirds, including the challenges of bird-tracking technology, the physiology of endurance flight, avian navigation and route mapping, citizen science and the diverse cultural perspectives through which communities view shorebirds along their routes.

Flyways tells the story of how shorebirds, through their incredible migrations across hemispheres, are bringing out the best in humanity and science, to help save them from precipitous declines.

The Scientists



Dr Richard Fuller
University of Qld

Richard Fuller is a Professor at the University of Queensland.

He studies how people have affected the natural world around them, and how some of their destructive effects can best be reversed.

Much of his work focuses on migratory birds and how we can create a world in which these incredible travellers can thrive.

See the lab website at www.fullerlab.org.



Prof. Dr Jan van Gils
Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research

Jan van Gils (1971) is an enthusiastic Dutch ecologist that has been studying migratory shorebirds for more than 30 years now.

The current focus of his work centers around the devastating effects of climate change on his beloved birds.

By breeding in the rapidly warming Arctic and wintering at tropical latitudes, his birds can be considered as canaries in our global coal mine, signaling ecological problems along their migratory flyway.

Jan studied Biology at the University of Groningen (1996), where he also defended his PhD thesis (2004), and where he currently holds an honorary professorship (2020).

He is appointed a senior scientist (2014) at the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ) and has published over a hundred peer-reviewed papers.



Jenny Linscott
Enviro. Cons PHD Student. Uni Massachusetts

Before becoming a biologist, Jenny received a B.A. in English from Hendrix College and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Mississippi. She was a Science Reporting Intern at Louisiana State University, where she interviewed researchers in the field.

Now Jenny's PhD research is focused on the migration of Hudsonian Godwits through mid-continental North America. She is hoping to understand how habitat quality and abiotic conditions during migration affect godwit stopover behavior, migratory performance, and reproductive success.

Jenny won the Wesley Lanyon Award from the American Ornithological Society in 2021. She is supported by a NASA Finest Fellowship in Biological Diversity and Ecological Forecasting.



Dr Nathan Senner
Assistant Professor Uni Massachusetts Amherst

Nathan Senner started studying birds at the age of 14 while growing up in Alaska.

After earning a B.A. from Carleton College, he was awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to follow Hudsonian Godwits on their annual migrations from the Arctic to the southern tip of South America and back again.

He continued this research while pursuing his PhD at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at Cornell University with Dr. John Fitzpatrick. From there, he traveled across the Atlantic for a postdoctoral fellowship with Dr. Theunis Piersma at the University of Groningen in The Netherlands studying the flexibility of Black-tailed Godwit annual cycles.

Now an Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Nathan's research group uses tracking devices, intensive field studies, and large-scale community science projects to investigate how shorebirds are responding to anthropogenic environmental changes across the globe.

Director's Statement

Growing up near Moreton Bay Queensland, I was introduced early to the beauty of shorebirds by my grandmother, a bird lover who lived on the shoreline of Redland Bay. An avid bird watcher and poet, she taught me to love these vulnerable creatures.

The wayfarers of the area, the 34 species of local shorebirds in Moreton Bay are amongst the most exquisite species on the planet. They are also the amongst the most threatened.

I felt a deep calling to make Flyways.



Director's Statement

As a filmmaker focusing on issues of ecology and science, I've realised one of the greatest threats to our existence lays in the precipitous global loss of biodiversity we all face.

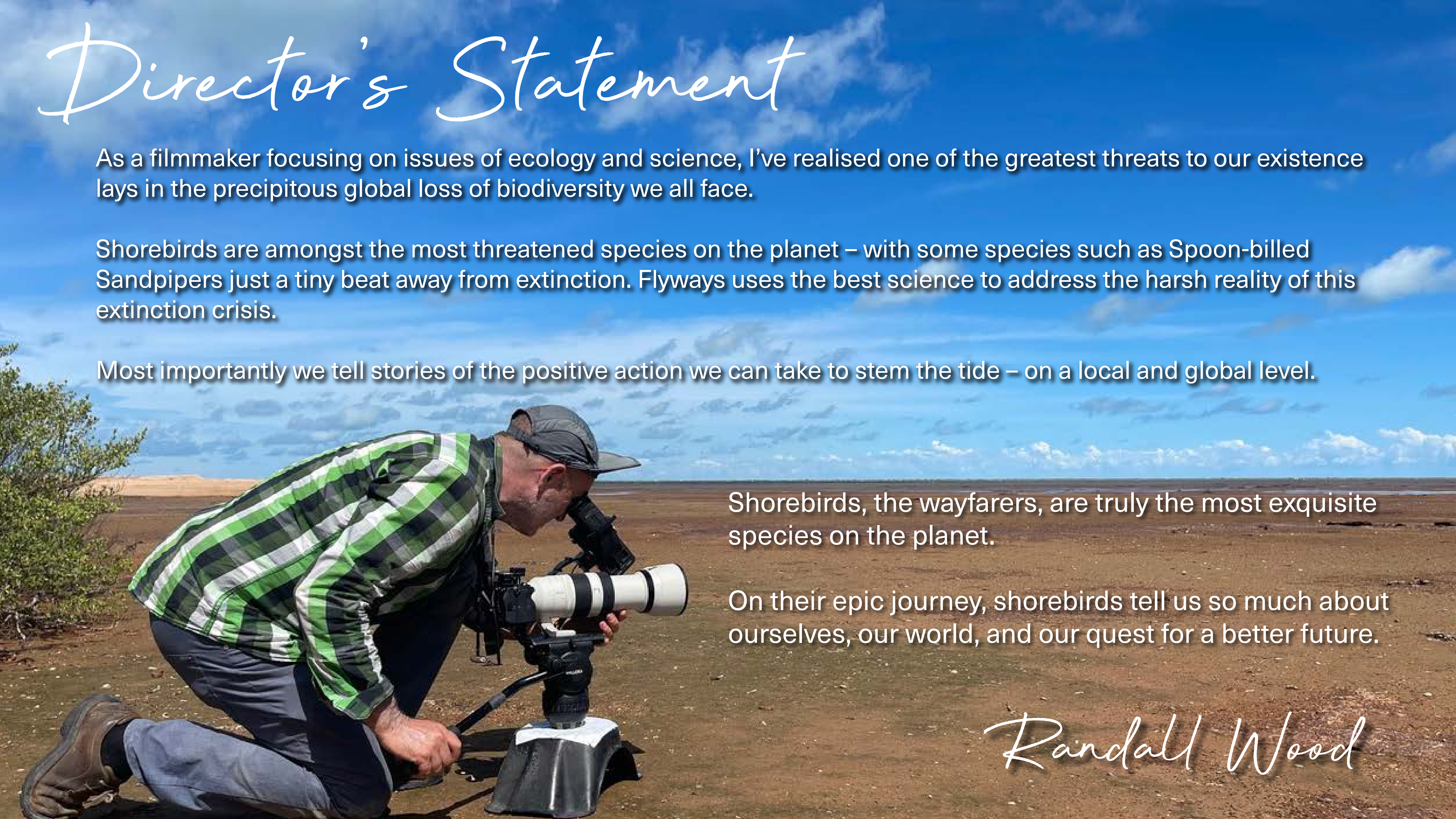
Shorebirds are amongst the most threatened species on the planet – with some species such as Spoon-billed Sandpipers just a tiny beat away from extinction. Flyways uses the best science to address the harsh reality of this extinction crisis.

Most importantly we tell stories of the positive action we can take to stem the tide – on a local and global level.

Shorebirds, the wayfarers, are truly the most exquisite species on the planet.

On their epic journey, shorebirds tell us so much about ourselves, our world, and our quest for a better future.

Randall Wood



Crew Bios



Randall Wood

Writer / Director / Cinematographer / Producer

Randall Wood is a multi-award-winning documentary film maker, accomplished concert pianist, scriptwriter and cinematographer with a unique eye for technology and storytelling.

His awards include an AFI for best Documentary Sound, an AWGIE for Best Australian Documentary, Special Jury Prizes at numerous film festivals including Sydney International Film Festival and Slamdance International, a Film Critics Circle award for Best Short Documentary, an ACS award for best Cinematography, an ATOM for best Vocational training program, and was a finalist in the 2012 AACTA Awards for best feature documentary.

His works include series and films for various networks including: ABC, Fox Movie Channel, SBS Television, Japan TV. Among his pieces are the highlights 'Restoration Australia', 'To be or not to be' 'Hello Birdy' starring William McInnes, 'Traditional knowledge and Climate Science' a 3 part series for the United Nations, 'Worm Hunters' for National Geographic, and 'Curse of the Gothic Symphony'.



Rebecca McElroy

Producer / Co-Writer

Rebecca co-wrote, co-directed and co-produced the highly successful ABBA: Bang-A-Boomerang for ABC 1, in 2013. In 2019 she was a producer and script editor for the documentary Lili directed by Peter Hegedus, which premiered at the Sydney Film Festival. In 2018, Rebecca was Field Producer for Smith and Nasht's Joyride directed by Randall Wood, which screened on ABC TV as well as internationally.

She was Line-Producer for Gulliver Media's 'The Lost Years: A Sea Turtle Odyssey', and The Worm Hunters again directed by Randall Wood for ABC TV, Nat Geo Channels US. She also Line Produced Virgo Productions Show Me the Magic and Rise of The Eco Warriors, both directed by Cathy Henkel. Rebecca was a Field Producer for the top rating Channel 7 series, 'RSPCA Animal Rescue'.

Over a long and diverse career, Rebecca has worked on projects for ABC, SBS, PBS, BBC and ARD Germany. Rebecca has written and directed short films, which have been screened at national and international festivals including Flickerfest and the St Kilda Film Festival.

Rebecca's experience across a wide variety of projects continues to drive the development of her own projects; while she continues her successful collaboration with both Peter Hegedus and Randall Wood.



Aline Jacques

Executive Producer

Aline Jacques is a creative and strategic media executive who has developed and produced documentaries across a wide range of genres for many of the world's major broadcasters and distributors.

Her slate as a producer is diverse – ranging from musical feature doc, Slim and I, to cutting-edge science in The Living Universe; politics and money in The Big Deal; history with The Pacific in the Wake of Captain Cook with Sam Neill and contemporary journeys with Miriam Margolyes' Almost Australian.

Clients include the ABC, SBS, BBC, Netflix, Amazon, National Geographic, Arte, PBS and Curiosity Stream as well as theatrical distributors, Madman and Universal Pictures.

Crew Bios



Alex Barry

Writer

Alex has been making one-off documentaries and series for more than 15 years for cinema release, broadcast and streaming.

He has delivered to Australian networks ABC, SBS, Foxtel, Channel 10, and the 7 Network, and to international broadcasters and SVODs including ARTE, Al Jazeera, National Geographic Channels, Discovery Networks, Curiosity Stream, BBC, ITV and Channel 4. He has worked as a writer, director, and cinematographer on subjects as diverse as science & natural history, fine art, true crime, news & current affairs, music, religion, and sexuality.

For the ABC's international current affairs program Foreign Correspondent, he has covered dementia care in China, illegal logging in Papua New Guinea, child trafficking in Nepal, and more.

Theatrical credits include Living Universe (2018) and broadcast credits The China Century (2021), Waltzing the Dragon with Benjamin Law (2019), Search for Second Earth (2018), and Between a Frock and a Hard Place (2015). He is the winner of the Australian Director's Guild Award for Best Direction in a Documentary Series for The Surgery Ship (2016).



Suzanne Smith

Producer / Co-Writer

Suzanne Smith is a six-time Walkley Award- and two-time Logie award-winning journalist, author and writer. She has received numerous domestic and international awards for her reporting, scripting, directing and producing of podcasts, television stories, documentaries and digital long form online series. She was the script adviser for an A.F.I. winning episode of 'Frontline' and 'The Devil's Playground' on Foxtel.

Her narrative non-fiction best-selling book: The Altar Boys, has been published in the US, the UK, Ireland and Australia and was shortlisted for the Walkley, the Prime Minister's Literary Prize and the NSW Premier's Regional History prize for literature.

Her 33-year career in journalism includes senior editorial, writing and/or reporting roles at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, including on Foreign Correspondent, Australian Story, Background Briefing, 'Unravel True Crime' Audio investigations, Radio National, ABC News, and Radio Current Affairs. She was the senior investigative reporter and producer at Lateline on ABC TV for 15 years reporting many stories, which helped trigger a Royal Commission and many public inquiries. She is currently an editorial and script adviser for Audible and a screenwriter and producer for several independent film and television documentary and drama companies. She has also written for Crikey, The Australian, and The Griffith Review.

Crew Bios



Scott Walton

Principal Editor

Scott is a freelance screen editor with a committed focus to both documentary and drama. With a background in Architecture Scott found an affinity with the world of filmmaking and was compelled to make the move. Scott has over 30 years creative experience, and the majority of those years have been spent editing and collaborating with directors.

In 2018, the feature film 'Dancing the Invisible' was nominated for an AACTA Award, in the Best Feature Documentary category. In 2013 Scott was awarded an 'Ellie' by the Australian Screen Editor's Guild for Best Editing in a Documentary Feature for the film 'Show Me the Magic- The Adventures of Don McAlpine', and in the previous year he was also nominated for the same award. In 2008 Scott received an AFI nomination for Best Editing In A Documentary for the film 'Rare Chicken Rescue' which was nominated for a total four AFI awards including Best Documentary.

As a co-founding member of production house 50/50 Films, director/editor Scott Walton has received seven ARIA Award nominations for 'Best Australian Music Video' and collaborated with many great artists and institutions such as actor/director Russell Crowe, director Ron Howard, Australian rock band Powderfinger, World Champion Boxer Anthony Mundine, AFL star Ben Cousins, LIVID festival and music legends DEVO.



Andrea Lang

Principal Editor

Decades of experience, earning awards in Australia and internationally for her work making stories with purpose, beauty and drama, Feature documentaries include Cunnamulla, We Don't Need a Map (Opening night film SFF), BackTrack Boys.

Loves the bush, the sea and birds of all feathers.



Judy Yeh

Senior Editor

Judy is an experienced film editor, post-production specialist with over 10 years of successful projects demonstrated in the arts, documentary, television, film and media industry. Her background of different cultures not only made her highly adaptable, but have also enriched her creative language and experiences, which she expresses through her craft. Judy co-edited the feature documentary "Lili", which was nominated and premiered at the Sydney International Film Festival, and won the Best documentary for the Hungarian Film Critics Award. The short documentary, "Lost Contact" that Judy also edited, was the winner of Best documentary at St Kilda Film Festival, and official selection in the Flickerfest. She also edited "Good Times and That's Okay" a short drama that has embraced the festival circuit with many prestigious awards. Beyond broadcast and cinema, Judy has produced and edited numerous exhibition videos for the State Library of Queensland, and also the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art. Judy is passionate about stories and will embrace all creative possibilities through vision, sound and technology, to bring together an engaging and emotive film.

Crew Bios



Cezary Skubiszewski

Composer

Cezary Skubiszewski is a Polish-born Australian film and television composer whose work has received international acclaim winning numerous awards. Most notably Cezary is the recipient of three Australian Academy Cinema Television Awards and IFMCA (International Film Music Critics) Award for best film music.

In 2003 Cezary received the Centenary Medal "For Service to Australian Society and Australian Film Production" and in 2010 Film Critics Circle of Australia (FCCA) award "In recognition of contribution to Australian Cinema".

Cezary's film scores include Two Hands (with Heath Ledger), Death Defying Acts (with Catherina Zeta -Jones), Red Dog (with Koko), Bootmen (with Sam Worthington), The Sapphires (with Chris O'Dowd), Black & White (with Robert Carlyle), Women He's Undressed (with Jane Fonda), La Spagnola (with Lola Marceli) and Amazon TV series Picnic At Hanging Rock (with Natalie Dorman).

Most recently Cezary scored UK/USA film Falling For Figaro (with Joanna Lumley) , Polish historical epic film Truth Makes Free, USA/Polish film Mosquito State and Australian TV mini-series Halifax Retribution.

Skubiszewski has composed music for many television films and programs as well as the Sydney 200 Olympic Games, AFL Finals and the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

His music can be heard in the advertising campaign for Carton Draught Big Ad, VB Stubby Symphony and Wolf Blass "Silk Glove". Those ads became a sensation all over the world.

Cezary contributed to the recordings of Jebediah, Killing Heidi, The Cat Empire, Things of Stone and Wood, Rocky Horror Show and many more.



Andres Gomez Isaza

Special Effects/Animation

Andrés is an animator and motion graphics director with more than 20 years of experience and is the founder of the studios lafinka.tv and thebureau.tv.

His work spans broadcast, documentary, short films, as well as concert and museum visuals working for clients such as National Geographic, Animal Planet, Disney, Google, MTV, Foreign Correspondent and Australian Story among others.

His short film Butterflies/Mariposas has won multiple awards including the special award at the 2018 Annecy Film Festival.

Credits

Written & Directed by Randall Wood

Narration: Mia Wasikowska | **Composer:** Cezary Skubiszewski

Producers: Rebecca McElroy & Randall Wood | **Principal Editors:** Andrea Lang & Scott Walton A.S.E | **Editor:** Judy Yeh | **Writers:** Alex Barry & Suzanne Smith | **Director of Photography:** Randall Wood

Production Manager: Jenine Olliver | **Executive Producers:** Aline Jacques, Odilla O'Boyle, Trish Lake, David Elisco, Sean B. Carroll, Christine Le Goff, Manuel Catteau & Wuan-Ling Guo | **Visual Effects:** Andres Gomez Isaza

Supporters

SCREEN AUSTRALIA presents in association with SCREEN QUEENSLAND, ANTIDOTE FILMS and the AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION, A STORYLAND, HHMI Tangled Bank STUDIOS, ZED, PTS Taiwan and the WNET GROUP presentation

A RANDALL WOOD FILM



Randall Wood is founder of Storyland, a Queensland-based production company dedicated to making media for the heart and mind. Storyland's multi-awarded productions have screened across the globe in cinemas and homes.

HHMI Tangled Bank Studios is an Oscar-nominated impact and production studio that crafts films inspiring awe and wonder, where science is a lens for making sense of our natural world.

Antidote Films (previously Gil Scrine Films), is a Brisbane-based independent film distributor specialising in arthouse films, social documentaries, and award-winning films from all over the world.

Tame birds sing of
freedom.

Wild birds fly.

John Lennon