

# A MIGRATION JOURNEY



Sooty tern

- There are 20 species of seabirds found breeding on the Great Barrier Reef.
- Some of these birds fly long distances each year to reach breeding grounds, some fly half way round the world!
- One bird parent will usually hunt in the ocean to bring food for its chick. They can confuse marine debris with food.

## From little things, big things grow

### What can I do?

- Take care of the vegetation in dune systems and nesting areas.
- Protect nesting birds on beaches by walking your dog on a leash.
- Pick up litter so birds cannot eat it.

Share these tips with others.

Dr Chloe Schauble  
Reef scientist, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority



Seabirds are a very important part of an island's ecosystem. Islands with lots of birds improve island **biodiversity**. This is because birds pick up and spread the plant seeds they eat to different areas. Spreading more plants means more space for more birds and other animals to reproduce!



Bar-tailed godwits are a shorebird which are very common in the northern Great Barrier Reef. They travel all the way from Siberia and Alaska to Australia. They feed here before traveling all the way back to reproduce. This bird has a unique upward tilt at the end of its bill, making it easy to spot.



### What's that word?

**Biodiversity** – the variety of plant and animal life in the particular ecosystem (habitat).

Australia

Alaska

Bar-tailed godwit



Australian Government  
Great Barrier Reef  
Marine Park Authority

The Outlook Report 2019 states the breeding populations of six seabird species in the Great Barrier Reef Region have declined. One species is increasing! Birds are affected by climate change, exotic pests, human disturbance, and marine debris. Positive actions, such as picking up marine debris, can help give seabirds a better future.