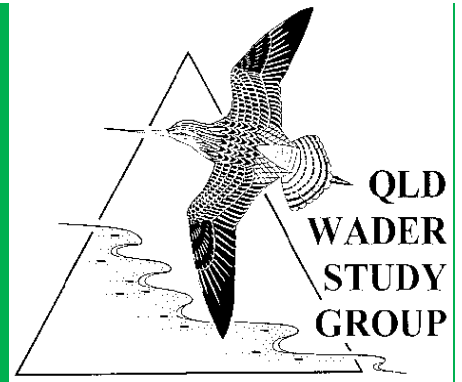


# QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue 128

June, July, August 2024

Newsletter of the Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG), a Division of  
*Queensland Ornithological Society Incorporated.* [www.waders.org.au](http://www.waders.org.au)  
<https://www.facebook.com/QueenslandWaderStudyGroup/>

## How the RAMSAR Wetlands at Toondah Were Saved from Development



On 9 April 2024, Federal environment minister Plibersek informed the Walker Corporation of her intention not to approve their application to develop a large retail and residential complex over the Ramsar protected wetlands at Toondah in Moreton Bay. The minister was responding to an environmental impact statement (EIS) submitted by the Walker Corporation in which it claimed the development would not have a significant environmental impact.

Under Commonwealth environmental law the minister is required to notify the developer of her proposed decision 10 days before a final decision is announced. But the minister took the unusual step to also inform the public at the same time, something she is not required to do. Her additional action was an indication of how successful the public campaign against the development had been. International, national, and local communities were watching. Australia's environmental reputation was at stake.

10 years ago, QWSG and Birdlife (Southern Qld) sat down with representatives of the Walker Corporation and pointed out that their proposed development was on wetland of international importance and protected under the Ramsar Convention.

At around the same time and without regard for the Ramsar Convention, the Queensland State Government declared a Priority Development Area over these protected wetlands. This would remove much of the environmental protection at the state level in favour of economic interests should the development proceed. The State Government, Redlands City Council and the developer then entered into a commercial-in-confidence agreement for the development. Developer initiated public consultations, conducted at this time, largely ignored the fact that the site was protected by international convention. Some elected representatives and the developer made claims about the benefits of the development, many of which did not stack up when fact checked. The scene had been set for a campaign to stop development at Toondah.

By 2015, Redlands 2030, Birdlife (Southern Qld) and QWSG had begun lobbying to stop the development, at times working independently and at other times together. Press releases, appearances on TV and radio, the mainstream press and social media multiplied over time, but it was clear a formal alliance of local and national organisations would be needed. If the developer had well organised access to governments, then an Alliance could gather local, national and international public support to counter this apparent influence. Birdlife Australia and the Australian Conservation Foundation joined the Alliance with their considerable professional resources. Others followed and the Alliance focused strategically on building local support through local activities, national support through offering opportunities for the public to respond and at the political level by counteracting one-sided advice from the developer.

Momentum grew. In January 2024 the minister received the last of several campaign petitions. This one had more the 77,000 signatures. Peak international organisations wrote formally to the Federal Government reminding them of their Ramsar obligations.

On 7 March, the Alliance made a formal in-person presentation to the environment minister. Disciplined, evidence-based and far-reaching, the presentation covered environmental law, international treaty obligations, local personal accounts, indigenous perspectives, and technical argument on the impacts on Shorebirds, Koalas and other species and habitat. The presentation exposed the limitations of the developer's EIS and the lack of a sound evidence-based analysis by the proponent.

Several weeks later the environment minister announced her intention to disallow the development and soon after this announcement the Walker Corporation withdrew its application. The attempt to destroy part of a Ramsar site by disregarding Australia's International wetland obligations had failed. It should never have been allowed to commence in the first place.

#### **Alliance Members.**

*Redlands 2030, Birdlife Australia, Birdlife (Sth Qld), QWSG, Bayside ACF, Australian Conservation Foundation, Stradbroke Environmental and Cultural Association, Redlands Koala Action Group, Australian Marine Conservation Society, local Indigenous leaders.*



## **Thanks, from QWSG Committee**

The Queensland Wader Study Group Committee wishes to extend its sincere thanks to all those who played a part in achieving this great result.

The organising of the notable events that helped to raise the profile of the proposed development needed some very committed people but it also required the presence of people at these events. Just your attendance made an impact.

The signing of petitions, the sending of letters of opposition to the EIS and just talking to family and neighbours all made a great impact on the outcome.

So, whatever your involvement many thanks.

David Edwards

Chairperson of QWSG,

On behalf of the QWSG Committee

## Port of Brisbane Count Results 2023 by Linda Cross

Over 2 decades of extensive counting has been conducted by the QWSG for the Port of Brisbane Pty Ltd (PBPL) at the Port of Brisbane complex. As with previous years, the counts were conducted the day after the scheduled monthly count set for the QWSG count programme.

The methodology for the counts has continued, as before, with numbers being listed under the appropriate habitat the birds were observed using: dry open area, wet margin, broken ground and bund wall. The overall count for the complex in 2023 was 71,280 waders, 5,817 terns/gulls and 4,713 waterbirds/raptors which do not include the figures for the Visitors Centre Lake (366 waders, 16 terns/gulls and 14,846 waterbirds/raptors). However, these figures of course are not the number of birds using the site at any one time, but the aggregate of the monthly totals. All 12 scheduled counts took place, and an additional un-scheduled count was completed in January during a king tide to ascertain the number of birds utilising the Port Complex. A report containing details on that count was included in the Queensland Wader Issue number 123.

The following table provides the total migratory and resident waders recorded at the complex over the last 21 years. Note: These figures do not include the Visitors Centre Lake.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
2023	9564 11891	7965	7209	3420	1646	1820	1410	1989	3247	5812	9173	6134	71280
2022	7017	4069	6966	4274	1730	2228	1860	1372	2483	8235	5601	9096	54931
2021	6931	4628	8836	1421	2729	NC	2863	NC	3494	10149	11123	8001	60175
2020	6082	4133	763	NC	NC	1021	908	783	4447	4222	6664	9061	38084
2019	8137	5641	5357	4108	1814	1458	NC	1358	2099 4908	5577	7599	9029	57085
2018	9969	4727	5899	4670	1825	864	1145	1110	4551	NC	8867	7626	51253
2017	8825	12479	7291	2000	2373	1392	2003	2179	4459	NC	8187	10697	61885
2016	5913	6386	6528	2793	4103	NC	1532	1356	4581	7544	8287	4911	53934
2015	9132	9233	14299	5618	3380	1737	2089	3352	7460	9994	9653	9953	85900
2014	8701	7673	6520	4809	1075	1022	1513	1839	7007	8145	7329	5567	61200
2013	NC	5897	7377	4312	4553	3989	2709	2934	4089	7793	7331	6506	57490
2012	6214	6676	6476	1335	1624	NC	1098	1267	2862	9461	10029	8389	55431
2011	NC	10173	NC	8108	2112	1552	1236	1488	2004	5430	8738	NC	40841
2010	7345	7099	6709	2864	1256	2145	1648	2568	5205	6942	5904	NC	49685
2009	10072	13243	7192	2293	NC	1200	1245	2439	4372	6478	6182	8003	62719
2008	5179	8935	4394	4204	2202	2793	2700	2724	5468	4069	6617	8286	57571
2007	8853	5264	8307	1120	1989	1543	1752	1629	3885	7609	6165	5664	53780
2006	12323	10573	7055	4230	2142	1969	2250	2635	5296	8051	8995	7514	73033
2005	4751	5609	3572	3317	2162	3034	2436	2096	3790	6173	6745	7731	51416
2004	11650	4528	7398	1607	2416	1617	1328	2410	2974	6026	5976	8194	56124
2003	7445	6922	6126	4021	2286	2107	2041	1720	4466	4118	8054	7996	57302

### NC – No Count

The following table provides the numbers for migratory and resident waders, terns, waterbirds and raptors for the complex and Visitors Centre Lake each month for 2023.

2023 Month	Port Waders	Port Terns/ Gulls	Port Waterbirds/ Raptors	Lake Waders	Lake Terns/ Gulls	Lake Waterbirds/ Raptors	Totals
January (15th)	9564	599	270	0	0	336	10769
January (22nd)	11891	847	117	No Count	No Count	No Count	12855
February	7965	1110	161	0	0	501	9737
March	7209	893	238	0	0	1222	9562
April	3420	202	415	5	0	1073	5115
May	1646	250	377	1	0	857	3131
June	1820	247	612	2	0	1631	4312
July	1410	206	442	1	12	1470	3541
August	1989	217	1144	15	0	1052	4417
September	3247	296	235	4	2	1848	5632
October	5812	242	150	225	1	1981	8411
November	9173	301	298	37	0	1600	11409
December	6134	407	254	76	1	1275	8147
Totals	71280	5817	4713	366	16	14846	97038

A table showing wader species and numbers at the complex during 2023 (except for the Visitors Centre Lake), has been included in this newsletter. Many other waterbirds were also recorded using the sites but lack of space in the newsletter does not allow their inclusion.

**R3** – In 2022, wader numbers were low at this site but in 2023 they tripled making this the most productive site within the complex and producing the highest counts for 6 months and the second highest for 3 months of the year. Over 4,000 waders were recorded on both January and February counts, with the highest count being 4,810 (40% of the total wader count for the whole of the complex) on the additional January count, which also happened to be the highest monthly wader count for the whole year.

Curlew Sandpiper was recorded every month with high counts of 3,065 in January, 2,300 in February, 1,340 in March, and 423 in September. Red-necked Stint was another species recorded every month with high counts of 1,276 in January 1,060 in February, 426 in March, 439 in August and 464 in November. Interesting counts for other species include 21 Grey Plover, 14 Broad-billed Sandpiper and 560 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in January, 227 Pied Oystercatcher in February, 2 Sooty Oystercatcher, 105 Greater Sand Plover, 82 Ruddy Turnstone and 482 Great Knot in March, 208 Pied Oystercatcher and 20 Double-banded Plover in May, 125 Red-necked Avocet and 26 Double-banded Plover in June, 34 Double-banded Plover in August, 652 Lesser Sand Plover in October and 104 Red-capped Plover in November. Terns and gulls continued to favour this pond with the highest counts for 10 months and the second highest count for 2 months of the year.

**C3** – With a 50% increase in waders numbers compared to 2022 (and just pipping Lytton Claypan No.1 for the second most productive site) it only recorded the highest monthly counts for the last 3 months of the year, with most other months having low numbers. November was the highest count of 4,357 waders being 47% of the total wader count within the complex.

A favoured site for Pacific Golden Plover that was recorded on site for 11 months of the year, with high counts of 519 in January, 373 in March, 315 in April, 315 in October, 270 in November and 198 in December. Siberian Sand Plover was recorded for 10 months of the year with 949 in January, 433 in March and 470 in December. Red-necked Stint was recorded during 9 months of counts with 395 in January, 727 in October, 1,650 in November and 750 in December. Other high counts included 31 Ruddy Turnstone and 430 Curlew Sandpiper in January, 95 Greater Sand Plover in April, 387 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and 1,819 Curlew Sandpiper in October, 473 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and 1,620 Curlew Sandpiper in November and 494 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in December. Other interesting species counts were 11 Red Knot in January, 10 Grey Plover in May, 2 Broad-billed Sandpiper in April and 76 Red-capped Plover in July.

**C4** – Formed in March 2020 and recording the lowest wader numbers within the complex for 2023. However, wader numbers more than doubled on site since the previous year with the highest count being 551 in October, of which 319 were Great Knot. Other counts of interest include 180 Pied Oystercatcher in January, 2 Black-fronted Dotterel and 76 Red-capped Plover in July and 22 Grey Plover in November. Low numbers for terns/gulls/waterbirds and raptors were recorded using the pond.

**BS2** – A significant drop in wader numbers using this site from the previous year, which is probably because from August onwards the site was being filled ready for construction. Red-capped Plover and Red-necked Stint were the common species using the site for the first half of the year. Counts of interest include 523 Red-necked Stint in January and 384 in March. The highest count for Red-capped Plover was 59 in June.

**BS3** – There was a continued dramatic decline (nearly 7,000 birds less than 2022) in wader numbers using this pond during 2023 with the yearly count being just 1,612, and most of them being counted in the first 4 months of the year. Red-capped Plover and Red-necked Stint were the species recorded the most. There was an unusual count of 169 Far Eastern Curlew recorded in February and a high count of 384 Red-necked Stint in March.

**BS4** – The fourth most productive site with an increase of nearly 5,000 waders since last year which is mainly due to the movement of Grey-tailed Tattler from the Outer FPE to this pond. In the early years this site was part of a larger Outer FPE and the tattlers frequented the rock walls on the outer perimeter, which they still do, but the boundary lines were changed. Grey-tailed Tattler accounted for 85% of the yearly wader count in this pond, with 672 recorded during the first January count, 1,116 during the second January count, 563 in February, 596 in March, 529 in April, 202 in November and 865 in December. In December 10 Terek Sandpiper was recorded in the flock of tattlers.

**FPE Outer** – This is the largest site within the complex with an expansive area of water, where wader numbers continued to decline and recording the second lowest bird counts for the year. Although Pied Oystercatcher still favour the large expansive bund walls around the site, and was recorded every month of the year, the numbers for this species have been much lower with the highest count being 59 in May. The uncommon Sooty Oystercatcher was recorded on 3 occasions with 4 in March, 2 in August and 1 in December. Grey-tailed Tattler is another species that favoured the rock walls around this site, however, it was only recorded 3 times with 183 being the highest count in October. Other counts of interest include 21 Ruddy Turnstone in January, 4 Double-banded Plover in July and 135 Pacific Golden Plover in November.

**PLDE** (Lucinda Drive drain east) – Although this drainage section does not have suitable wader habitat, the site did attract 3 species of waders during the year. Black-fronted Dotterel was recorded on 4 occasions, 4 in March, 2 in April, 2 in July and 4 in November.

Masked Lapwing was recorded 3 times, 2 in May, 5 in June and 1 in August. The only other wader recorded was a single Grey-tailed Tattler in April. Several species of waterbirds/raptors (13) were also recorded during the year but mostly in single digits.

**PBAR** (Artificial Roost) – A substantial increase in waders since 2023, although still relatively low, with the highest count of 595 waders in October. Waders of interest include, 16 Red-necked Avocet and 1 Black-tailed Godwit in September, 1 Black-tailed Godwit in October, 37 Red-necked Avocet and 2 Common Greenshank in October, 38 Red-necked Avocet, 4 Black-fronted Dotterel and 1 Broad-billed Sandpiper in November and 24 Red-necked Avocet and 6 Broad-billed Sandpiper in December. The site recorded the second highest waterbird/raptors count every month of the year.

**FICP** (Claypan) – There was a slight decrease in the number of waders using the site but there was a variety of species. Pied Stilt was recorded for 7 months of the year with high counts of 163 in April, 253 in May, 205 in June, 248 in August and 150 in November. Eurasian Whimbrel and Far Eastern Curlew numbers were much lower as the birds favoured another site within the complex. The highest count for Eurasian Whimbrel was 79 in March while the highest counts for Far Eastern Curlew were 327 in March and 137 in August. Other counts of interest were 216 Red-necked Stint in April, 180 Great Knot, 20 Red Knot and 242 Red-necked Stint in November and 1 Marsh Sandpiper in December.

**FIVC** (Visitors Centre Lake) – For the first 9 months of the year just 2 species of waders (Pied Stilt and Masked Lapwing) were recorded, both in single digits. In October, dry weather conditions saw the water level drop in the lake and 201 Pied Stilt, 4 Black-fronted Dotterel, 2 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and 18 Curlew Sandpiper were recorded. With the water level still low in November, the count produced 21 Pied Stilt, 2 Red-necked Avocet, 6 Black-fronted Dotterel, 3 Marsh Sandpiper, 2 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and 2 Curlew Sandpiper while December recorded 75 Pied Stilt. The site still recorded the most waterbird species for every month of the year with a monthly aggregate of 14,846 and the highest waterbird count for the year of 1,981 was in October. Breeding records recorded for the year include Magpie Goose, Black Swan, Dusky Moorhen, Australasian Swamphen, and Australasian Grebe. High counts for species, breeding records and other interesting sightings for this site appear further down in this article.

**LYN1** (Lytton No. 1 Claypan) – Running a close second with C3, this large claypan recorded the highest wader count for 3 months and the second highest for 9 months of the year. Several species of waders favour this expansive site with many recorded most months. Some high counts for Eurasian Whimbrel (recorded 10 times) include 172 in January, 209 in April, 168 in September, 157 in November and 148 in December. Far Eastern Curlew (recorded every month) include high counts of 438 in January, 272 in February, 179 in March, 111 in May, 138 in August, 359 in September, 338 in October, 238 in November and 221 in December. Bar-tailed Godwit (recorded 11 times) include the following high counts of 2,080 in January, 825 in March, 952 in November and 892 in December. Although in low numbers, all but 2 records for Black-tailed Godwit came from this site with the highest counts being 19 in January, 34 in November and 39 in December. Great Knot was recorded for 8 months of the year with high counts of 395 in January, 407 in February and 472 in December. Other counts of interest include 2 Marsh Sandpiper in January, 23 Masked Lapwing and 4 Common Greenshank in April, 11 Black-fronted Dotterel and 41 Red-capped Plover in May, 171 Pied Stilt, 12 Black-fronted Dotterel and 41 Red-capped Plover in June, 321 Pied Stilt and 12 Black-fronted Dotterel in July, 237 Pied Stilt and 43 Red-necked Avocet in August, 204 Curlew Sandpiper in September and 20 Red Knot in December.

### Leg flag sightings:

Only 2 birds (same number and the same species as last year) were seen with engraved green leg flags (flagged Moreton Bay) during the counts for 2023. One was a Grey Plover (ELF unable to be read) and the other was a Pied Stilt (FKU). Two other leg-flagged and banded birds were seen at the complex during the 2023 counts as follows:

March Engraved (8P) on white flag over blue flag on a Curlew Sandpiper (flagged Taiwan)  
 May Orange engraved flag (unable to be read) on a Caspian Tern (flagged Victoria).

### Breeding records:

Black-fronted Dotterel a pair mating in the lake in November  
 Red-capped Plover B3 recorded 2 juveniles in November.

**Some other interesting sightings (not waders) during the counts were:**

- January 15th** 326 Little Tern and 159 Silver Gull in R3 – 1 Pacific Reef Heron in B4 – 150 Chestnut Teal and 4 immature Australian Pelican in the Artificial Roost – Magpie Goose on a nest at the Lake.
- January 22nd** 590 Little Tern and 1 Peregrine Falcon in R3 – 1 Great Cormorant in the Outer FPE
- February** 792 Little Tern and 152 Silver Gull in R3 – 1 Pacific Reef Heron in C4 – 120 Chestnut Teal in the Artificial Roost – 160 Dusky Moorhen and 168 Magpie Goose at the Lake
- March** 723 Little Tern in R3 – 1 Pacific Reef Heron in B4 – 1 Pacific Reef Heron in the Outer FPE – 229 Dusky Moorhen, 436 Magpie Goose (9 nesting) and 290 Pacific Black Duck at the Lake
- April** 97 Australian White Ibis in B4 – 12 Pacific Black Duck in the Lucinda Drive Drain East – 26 White-faced Heron in the Artificial Roost – 26 Little Egret in the Claypan – 118 Chestnut Teal, 154 Dusky Moorhen, 234 Eurasian Coot, 353 Pacific Black Duck and 1 Little Eagle at the Lake
- May** 1 Pacific Reef Heron in the Outer FPE – 156 Dusky Moorhen, 164 Eurasian Coot, 3 Great Cormorant, 217 Magpie Goose and 1 Brown Falcon at the Lake
- June** 186 Little Black Cormorant in R3 – 1 Brown Goshawk (juvenile) in B3 – 48 Australian White Ibis in B4 – 3 Pacific Reef Heron in the Outer FPE – 1 Pacific Reef Heron in the Lucinda Drive Drain East – 1 Australasian Shoveler (female) in the Artificial Roost – 409 Little Black Cormorant, 251 Little Pied Cormorant, 472 Pacific Black Duck and 1 Brown Goshawk (adult) at the Lake
- July** 1 Lesser Crested Tern in R3 – 1 Brown Goshawk (juvenile) in C4 – 42 Australian White Ibis in the Outer FPE – 1 Pacific Reef Heron in the Lucinda Drive Drain East – 27 White-faced Heron in the Claypan – 99 Australian White Ibis, 173 Chestnut Teal, 4 Great Cormorant, 53 Great Egret, 382 Little Black Cormorant, 213 Magpie Goose, 97 Royal Spoonbill and 1 Striated Heron at the Lake
- August** 1 Black-shouldered Kite in R3 – 40 Australian White Ibis and 19 Little Egret in the Artificial Roost – 152 Royal Spoonbill, 201 Chestnut Teal and 31 White-faced Heron in the Claypan – 385 Chestnut Teal, 159 Grey Teal and 77 Royal Spoonbill at the Lake
- September** 3 Lesser Crested Tern in R3 – 1 Black-shouldered Kite (juvenile) in the Outer FPE – 238 Chestnut Teal, 520 Grey Teal, 479 Magpie Goose, 332 Pacific Black Duck, 85 Royal Spoonbill and 9 Straw-necked Ibis at the Lake
- October** 2 Brown Goshawk at the Artificial Roost – 574 Chestnut Teal, 1 Australasian Shoveler (female), 859 Grey Teal, 209 Pacific Black Duck and 1 Buff-banded Rail at the Lake
- November** 1 Whiskered Tern in C4 – 1 Black-shouldered Kite (juvenile) in the Lucinda Drive Drain East – 7 Whiskered Tern and 56 Australian Pelican in the Artificial Roost – 1209 Chestnut Teal in the Lake
- December** 236 Little Tern and 63 Australian Tern in R3 – 1 Pacific Reef Heron in the Outer FPE- 25 Australian Pied Cormorant, 1 Pacific Reef Heron in the Artificial Roost – 262 Chestnut Teal, 64 Hardhead, 458 Magpie Goose, 236 Pacific Black Duck, 1 Australasian Shoveler (female) and 1 Buff-banded Rail at the Lake.

QWSG would like to sincerely thank the PBPL for their ongoing support to the group and supplying their staff and vehicles during the counts. Michael Linde, Environment Manager, Penelope Webster, Environment Advisor and Michael Whitty Environmental Advisor shared the role in looking after our welfare and needs during the counts.

We must also sincerely thank the following committed regular counters and other members for helping us obtain the results for the PBPL and QWSG database in 2023. Without people like these this would not have been possible. My apologies if I have omitted anyone from the list:

Mick Barker, Keyur Bhatti, Anne Buchanan, Michele Burford, Robert Bush, Deirdre Chrzescijanski, Rae Clark, Jon Coleman, Lucy Coleman, Ken Cowell, Linda Cross, Phil Cross, Detlef Davies, Leonie Davies, Peter Davies, Lindsay Delzoppo, David Edwards, Ofalia Ho, Laura Howe, Gary Kane, Arthur Keates, Sheryl Keates, Yee Lai, Penn Lloyd, Kris McBride, Robert Nicholson, Eva Plaganyi-Lloyd, Richard Ravell, Patrick Reed, Peter Rothlisberg, Patrick Shanley, Wendy Shanley, Harry Ting, Floss Wainwright, Melissa Whitby and Joshua Wilson..

The contract with PBPL continues throughout 2024, and our Database Manager Peter Driscoll has recommended that the monitoring of shorebirds within the complex continue with the same intensity. Given this recommendation, we seriously need a boost in the number of people to help spread the workload. We welcome all QWSG and BQ members to join us (particularly during the spring and summer months). As the PBPL insurance only covers their employees you will need to be either a QWSG or BQ member to attend these counts, so their liability insurance will cover you. Please also note that these counts are not recreational outings, but we are always looking for committed counters to join our team. The dates and meeting times for the counts are listed at the back of this newsletter. If you would like to participate, contact details are below.

Peter Rothlisberg email: peter.rothlisberg@csiro.au Home: 3822 3759 Mobile: 0419 702 674  
Or  
Linda Cross email: xenus69@bigpond.com Home: 5495 2758 Mobile: 0490 080 340

Date 2023	15.01	22.01	12.02	12.03	02.04	07.05	04.06	09.07	06.08	17.09	15.10	12.11	10.12
<b>Species</b>													
Pied Oystercatcher	144	240	239	218	45	63	31	16	15	46	55	28	35
Sooty Oystercatcher	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1
Pied Stilt	-	1	7	101	277	423	447	469	560	294	149	337	154
Red-necked Avocet	-	-	-	-	1	44	150	27	91	21	37	38	27
Grey Plover	8	21	12	20	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	23	20
Pacific Golden Plover	419	524	110	375	340	47	54	25	19	145	320	410	201
Black-fronted Dotterel	1	-	-	4	3	11	13	17	2	3	4	8	2
Masked Lapwing	12	7	4	6	29	15	14	16	11	4	5	4	13
Siberian Sand Plover	540	949	609	735	316	63	80	14	16	47	666	725	470
Greater Sand Plover	71	18	43	118	108	-	3	-	-	8	18	75	11
Double-banded Plover	-	-	-	1	6	20	29	21	34	-	-	-	-
Red-capped Plover	57	78	92	107	127	133	129	183	69	20	72	157	41
Eurasian Whimbrel	175	100	121	101	244	63	61	15	33	169	16	230	169
Far Eastern Curlew	504	357	328	514	63	111	113	9	276	383	363	276	295
Bar-tailed Godwit	1200	2115	544	976	243	107	98	165	72	544	290	1197	1098
Black-tailed Godwit	1	19	-	-	-	6	5	5	2	2	1	34	39
Terek Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Grey-tailed Tattler	673	1116	563	596	530	58	-	-	-	-	184	202	865
Wandering Tattler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marsh Sandpiper	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Common Greenshank	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Ruddy Turnstone	31	50	18	96	62	3	5	-	3	1	5	40	47
Great Knot	465	293	408	484	74	13	-	-	-	217	319	321	552
Red Knot	4	16	-	11	-	5	-	-	-	74	1	22	-
Broad-billed Sandpiper	13	14	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	79	696	443	131	192	2	-	-	-	67	501	562	602
Curlew Sandpiper	3202	3408	2691	1372	9	127	322	103	177	861	2011	1961	477
Red-necked Stint	1870	1867	1733	1234	731	331	266	325	607	339	793	2522	903
Unidentified wader	95	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	95
<b>Total Wader Species</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Total Wader Numbers</b>	<b>9564</b>	<b>11891</b>	<b>7965</b>	<b>7209</b>	<b>3420</b>	<b>1646</b>	<b>1820</b>	<b>1410</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>3247</b>	<b>5812</b>	<b>9173</b>	<b>6134</b>

Species list as per V14.1 IOC checklist. Note there are several changes in taxonomic order, family names and a common name change for Lesser Sand Plover – now Siberian Sand Plover.

## Birds of Prey Attacks on Shorebirds

By Arthur Keates

QWSG members, when conducting monthly counts, record information additional to shorebird species and numbers, including birds of prey observed at the site during the count. The presence of birds of prey is a factor of disturbance since shorebirds are hunted by birds of prey.

It has always fascinated me that a flock of roosting shorebirds are able to make a rapid identification, and assess the danger, of an approaching bird of prey. On countless occasions, I have observed an Eastern Osprey (*Pandion cristatus*) fly over a shorebird roost with little or no reaction from the roosting birds. Indeed, a study of roosting shorebirds on the northern beaches of Roebuck Bay, Western Australia revealed Eastern Osprey were never observed attacking shorebirds and were generally ignored by them (Rogers et al., 2006). That study showed the species of birds of prey that caused disturbance of shorebirds were: Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*), Whistling Kite (*Haliastur sphenurus*), Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*), White-bellied Sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*), Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*), Nankeen Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*) and Australian Hobby (*Falco longipennis*).

No doubt many other shorebird enthusiasts too have observed the impact of the presence of a bird of prey on a flock of shorebirds when feeding and roosting. In particular, a White-bellied Sea-eagle soaring above a flock of roosting shorebirds soon results in the whole flock taking to the air. Successful attacks I have observed were made by an Australian Hobby (taking a Red-capped Plover) and Peregrine Falcon (one taking a Great Knot and another taking a Curlew Sandpiper). In each case the shorebird was taken while on the ground. Generally, attacks are discontinued if a shorebird flock takes to the air (Rogers et al., 2006). However, I have seen a Peregrine Falcon continue to chase a Curlew Sandpiper it singled out and had managed to separate from the flock. Unfortunately, I did not see if the chase was successful.

I now report an attack by a Peregrine Falcon at the Manly Harbour shorebird roost while scanning a mixed flock of shorebirds on 31 March, just over 2 hours after the peak of the high tide. The birds were starting to stir before going to feed as the tide receded. Suddenly there was complete pandemonium as the birds noisily took to the air. The reason for the commotion was soon apparent: a Peregrine Falcon had swooped in and grabbed a shorebird in its talons. Where seconds earlier there were over 500 birds, there were now just the falcon and its unfortunate victim.

I managed to take a photograph of the raptor with the bird in its talons just after it took off. I suspected the falcon may not have flown far. Looking in the direction of flight my suspicions were confirmed: the falcon was on the rock wall where it proceeded to pluck and devour its prey. A view through the scope revealed the falcon, being relatively small, was likely a male and its prey was a Grey-tailed Tattler (*Tringa brevipes*). Peregrine Falcons are known to take much larger prey than the tattler having a weight of <140 gm were it about to undertake migration.

Not surprisingly, none of the of the migratory shorebirds returned to the roost after the attack; the only shorebirds remaining on site were the resident Pied Oystercatcher and Pied Stilt.

Peregrine Falcon have been reported several times at the Manly Harbour shorebird roost, leading one to speculate the observations were of the same bird making one of its regular sorties over the site.

### **Reference:**

Rogers, D.I. Piersma T. and Hassell C.J. 2006. Roost availability may constrain shorebird distribution: Exploring the energetic costs of roosting and disturbance around a tropical bay. *Biological Conservation* 133 (2006) 225-235.





## Queensland Wader Study Group Report for the Last Six Months

Monthly high tide roost site surveys.

Monthly Port of Brisbane surveys.

Identification days throughout the last six months

QWSG held a "Introduction to Waders" Course at the end of last year.

QWSG has continued with its program of Banding and Flagging, plus the placement of trackers. We had a trip to Hervey Bay and had a successful mixed catch placing bands, flags and trackers.

All are working well with some of our older trackers still providing useful information. We are well prepared for the next season.

We have an agreement with the Sunshine Coast Council to apply some trackers to Wandering Tattlers and Oystercatchers. The former were too smart for us but we managed to catch two of the latter which now have trackers working well

Supplying data to Toondah Alliance, plus support through finances and personnel at events.

Working with DESI Qld on roost site mapping.

Liaising with Port of Brisbane PL with regards to the long-term protection of claypan areas used by shorebirds. Plus, the possibilities of these areas in to the future as the Port is developed.

Met with The Nature Conservancy to discuss areas of mutual interest in order to understand each other's wants and desires to ensure that there is no conflict

Discussions with the Redlands City Council to assist with its Wildlife Program for 2024-25 and future collaboration. With particular interest is the RCC being involved the Birdlife National Shorebird Monitoring Project or hosting a guided Shorebird ID and Count Day at Thornside with QWSG.

Unfortunately, these talks have been cancelled

There has been consultation with Qld TMR Dept. over the master plan for Manly Harbour. QWSG wanting to make sure that any development is fully aware of the possible detrimental effects that this could have on the roost site.

An aside to this is that we have had very poor communication about any possible use of the Harbour during the Olympics.

QWSG hosted a working group delegation from South Korea. A World Heritage site was declared in South Korea a little over two years ago and various involved parties approached AWSG, through EAAFP, to organise. They were unable to do this and the QWSG, at very short notice, managed to play host.

The trip was over four days. Two days were presentations and the other two were field trips.

Many thanks to the presenters who gave so much of their time and knowledge. Plus, those organisations who made the group so welcome and made time to show them around their facilities.

As a result of this visit the QWSG was invited to talk at the 2024 Korean Getbol International Symposium, 17th to 19th April. I was able to attend. They gave me a topic to talk to but it was not in my realm. So, my presentation was 'An NGO's view on management and monitoring of Shorebirds in QLD'. Some very high-profile people spoke and I was impressed with the involvement of government on the ground but surprised by the lack of trust in their citizen scientists.

Agreement with NESP for the use of QWSG data in their project.

Discussions with the Moreton Bay Foundation on their future direction.

The QWSG is planning a wader survey in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria. Preliminary discussions have taken place with the CLCAC to form a partnership to enable this survey. In addition, an educational component to the survey has been proposed. We are looking into the various aspects of having a successful project.

## Great Sandy Marine Park Zoning Plan

A new zoning plan for the Great Sandy Marine Park commenced 21 May 2024.

The new zoning plan is in effect from **21 May 2024**. Further information and updates will be added to this page before the commencement date. Keep informed about what you need to know to prepare.

Located in Queensland's Wide Bay-Burnett Region, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) manages the Great Sandy Marine Park. The management arrangements for this marine park are detailed in its zoning plan.

The zoning plan identifies different zones within the marine park, what kind of activities can be undertaken in each, and levels of protection to maintain environments and habitats.

The new zoning plan came into effect from 21 May following a comprehensive review aimed at increasing the long-term conservation of marine life and their habitats. Read more about the development of the new zoning plan for the Great Sandy Marine Park.



### What will be in the new zoning plan?

Key changes that will be included in the new zoning plan for the Great Sandy Marine Park include:

- change in zoning to represent 12.8% of the area of the marine park in green zones contributing to a total of 28.6% of the marine park in highly protected zones (green and yellow zones)
- removal of commercial large mesh gill nets and ring nets from the Conservation Park zones within Baffle Creek, Elliott River, Burrum River system, the Great Sandy Strait and Tin Can Inlet
- measures to increase protection of threatened species, including shorebirds, turtles, dugongs and grey nurse sharks
- measures to protect cultural and amenity values
- zone changes to facilitate local government responses to increased coastal erosion from climate change impacts.
- 

The primary purpose of a marine park is to conserve the state's marine environment while providing opportunities for a range of sustainable uses by the community.

### Why is the zoning plan changing?

Globally, marine biodiversity is under threat from a range of factors including climate change, population growth, pollution and increasing use. The Great Sandy Marine Park is being impacted by these global trends.

### The Great Sandy Marine Park:

- boasts 23 broad habitat types, however several of these are under-represented in the highly protected zones of the existing zoning plan, placing the marine park's biodiversity and critical species at risk
- has seen a significant decrease in its extent of seagrass habitat
- is seeing a significant increase in mature marine turtle and dugong strandings resulting from a range of causes including boat strike, poor health and flooding
- includes the only known gestation site on the east coast of Australia for the critically endangered grey nurse shark, however the existing zoning plan does not effectively protect sharks at this key aggregation site from being hooked or accidentally caught by recreational and commercial line fishers
- is seeing a decrease in the numbers of many migratory shorebird species, some by more than 10% per year.

- is subject to increasing coastal impacts from severe weather events caused by climate change
- is subject to a range of demands from competing uses.
- 

The new Great Sandy Marine Park zoning plan will help address threats to the long-term conservation of wildlife and their habitats and preserve and enhance the region’s lifestyle and economic strengths.

### **What are the opportunities and benefits?**

#### **Increased environmental protection**



#### **Improved recreation opportunities**



#### **Better positioned for nature-based tourism**



The new zoning plan provides the opportunity to:

- **better protect cultural values, respect and recognise** First Nations peoples' native title rights and responsibilities for caring for their sea Country
- **improve biodiversity and provide better protection of several iconic and threatened species**, which are significant nationally and internationally including whales, dolphins, dugongs, turtles, grey nurse sharks and shorebirds
- **largely maintain the use of the marine park by the commercial trawl, crab, line and harvest fisheries, and those components of the net fishery that are of a lesser risk to threatened species**
- **enhance the region's enviable nature-based and recreational fishing lifestyle**
- **support future economic growth** in the region based on nature-based tourism, recreational and charter fishing and, where appropriate, aquaculture
- **assist local councils to address coastal impacts of climate change.**

In addition to the new zoning plan, new and upgraded recreational fishing infrastructure such as boat ramps and artificial reefs are planned for the Great Sandy Marine Park region.



### How will it support nature-based recreation and tourism?

The new zoning plan provides an opportunity to secure the long-term sustainability of the region's natural and cultural assets, and the tourism and recreational industries they support, for generations to come.

These natural and cultural assets also underpin the enviable nature-based lifestyle and recreational opportunities the region is renowned for.

This includes recreational and charter fishing, nature-based tourism experiences, boating, surfing, kayaking, stand-up paddle-boarding, snorkelling, scuba diving, bird watching, beach four-wheel driving, and walking.

- Nature-based tourism, recreational and charter fishing business opportunities will improve due to the overall enhanced protection of the natural values of the marine park.
- Inshore recreational fishing opportunities will improve due to the removal of commercial fishing using large mesh gill nets and ring nets from certain areas and due to the spillover effect expected over time from additional green zones.
- New and upgraded existing recreational fishing infrastructure such as boat ramps and artificial reefs are planned.
- Supporting the long-term sustainability of the region's nature-based tourism and recreational fishing sectors positions the region to take full advantage of increased tourism associated with the 2032 Olympics.
- 

### About the Great Sandy Marine Park

The Great Sandy Marine Park covers an area of approximately 6,000 square kilometres and includes Hervey Bay, the Great Sandy Strait, Tin Can Inlet and Queensland coastal waters (seaward to three nautical miles).

The Great Sandy Marine Park surrounds the K'gari (Fraser Island) World Heritage Area and is an area of exceptionally high natural and cultural value, which includes:

- Great Sandy Strait—a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance
- species of international and national significance—marine turtles, dugongs, grey nurse sharks, humpback whales, Australian humpback dolphins and migratory shorebirds
- 11 declared Fish Habitat Areas protecting key fish habitats to support the state's recreational and commercial fisheries
- culturally and spiritually significant sea Country for the Bailai (Byellee), Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda, Butchulla and Kabi Kabi First Nations peoples.

### Did you know?

The Great Sandy Marine Park is home to:

- 22 threatened species
- 2 areas of international significance
- 23 habitat types
- 11 declared Fish Habitat Areas
- culturally significant sea Country.

## Korean Work Study Visit 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024

The QWSG was asked by EAAFP through AWSG to organise a study visit

### Objectives

The study visit aimed to contribute to developing strategies of Korea Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries to expand and activate citizen monitoring in South Korea's Marine Protected Areas, including world heritage sites in tidal flats. The activity intends to achieve the following goals:

- Object 1: Activate citizen monitoring and enhance capacity of local stakeholders in the Korea world heritage designated tidal flat sites to complement expert led survey data.
- Objective 2: Establish benchmarks for utilization of citizen monitoring data and enhance capacity of local stakeholders.
- Objective 3: Another objective focusing on the expected outputs that the participants will develop.

### Anticipated results

- Implement citizen monitoring initiatives in UNESCO Getbol sites to complement expert survey data and strengthen local capacity.
- Develop benchmarks for the effective utilization of citizen monitoring data.

### Participants

- 1) The Korean delegation (14 people)
  - Korea Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries - MOFK
  - Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation-KOEM
  - Four local governments from World Heritage Getbols and civil society organizations selected by each local government.
- 2) EAAFP Secretariat (2 staff)

### The Visit itinerary

#### Monday 26 February

Arrival Brisbane Airport (Terminal 1) 6:40

Airport to Walkabout Creek

Briefing by QWSG

Overview of Queensland, and sites in the state, Greater Moreton Bay, the authorities that have jurisdiction within the area, how QWSG surveys the area, plus records and the utilisation of data etc.

Light lunch and then from Walkabout Creek to their Hotel

#### Tuesday 27 February

We started with a Port of Brisbane site visit (very important site for shorebirds)

Presentation by Ms. Penelope Webster

- What does the port do to manage sites. With particular reference to waders)

Port of Brisbane to Walkabout Creek for the second day of **Presentations**

**1) Mr. Mike Ronan for DESI**

Provide a broad overview for shorebird planning, policy and management in Queensland. It will also talk to where and how citizen science monitoring and data collection can contribute to these processes. It will demonstrate the importance of information and touch on the resources and information available on WetlandInfo.

- The role of the State government related to the environment
- Interaction between the State and Federal governments.

**2) Kristy Murray for Qld Marine Parks**

Branch of the state government. Offshore area within Qld.

Introducing the Shorebird management plan that regulates the management of the park.

We had a lunch at Walkabout Creek followed by a presentation from a Park Ranger with animals

**3) Presentation by Prof Richard Fuller**

- Management of migratory shorebirds in Moreton Bay.
- Threats causing the species' decline and successful cases
- Role of University in citizen science, collaboration between the university, NGOs and local government in data collection and decision making.

**4) Presentation by Dr Simone Bosshard Sunshine Coast Council**

Introducing the shorebird conservation program on the Sunshine Coast, as well as touch on some of other environmental initiatives the Blue Heart, our wetland restoration project. Local government's work to manage and protect shorebirds and wider ecosystem)

Walkabout Creek          Dinner (Buffet)

**Wednesday 28 February**

Boondall Wetlands site visit facilitated by Ms. Natalie Costanzo

Presentation on the centre its history, that is governed by Brisbane City Council, usage by schools and the general public, plus a look around the Centre and staff area.

WE then went to short trip to Brisbane City Education Centre at Nudgee Beach

Presentation by MS. Allison Kerr-Hislop

Introducing their education program.

How to cooperate with local schools.

Shown around the various classrooms and hands on areas.

Short walk to the mangrove boardwalk unfortunately high tide

Then to Cleveland point for a fish and chips lunch picnic followed by Toondah Harbour.

The site visit was facilitated by Judith Hoyle Birds Queensland whose presentation covered:

The history of the Toondah Harbour development.

The threats that the development will present to the Toondah Harbor area.

The interactions of the various government bodies.

The work of the Alliance as a protest group.

Hoped outcome.

Arthur and Sheryl Keates were present to help with the presentation

**Thursday 29 February**

WE travelled up to Kakadu Beach (Bribie Island)

Presentation by Jessica Goring - Moreton Bay Council Environment officer.

Initiatives of shorebirds in the council area.

The Roost site history re off set area

High tide bird observation. Of course, the waders were all over at Toorbul

We did not visit Toorbul roost site because of time but called in at Osprey House on the Pine River.

We had a dash to the University of Queensland a quick lunch then:

Presentation by Dr Tatsuya Amano

Introducing the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science

Its work with reference to shorebirds and other species.

Good interchange of ideas.

Firstly, I would like to express my great gratitude to Peter Driscoll for all his help in organizing this work study group visit. Secondly my sincere thanks to all the presenters who gave their time and expertise so willingly and at such short notice.

Most of the delegation had not meet each other so that made things a little strange as they were working each other out. I think this showed as they became more talkative over the next two days.

The presentations covered everything that they needed to know. There are some differences in how things operate but it sounds as if the problems we have here are mirrored in Korea.

It was good for me to hear our intergovernmental linkages again and to re-cemented them in my brain!

I feel that our program covered the range of the situations in south-east Queensland. The field visits seemed to be spot on as they could see something practical that they could implement.

The delegation in general had a very low level of English, but far greater than my Korean. The two delegates from EAAFP acted as translators and did an amazing job. Translating words that even I did not understand. They were all a delight to escort around.

There were several difficulties that arose from the short notice of the trip. The fact that we did not know until a week out whether they had a flight booked and it was only on the week of their visit that we knew their hotel. Luckily these did not really affect us in the end but was a concern to Peter and I. The hotel was in Elizabeth Street so pick up and set down were very difficult.

I am sure that the visit has raised the profile and status of the QWSG both in Korea and here but it is not our core business and we should consider very carefully being drawn in to such arrangements in the future.

David Edwards and Peter Driscoll

## Bohai Bay 2024 Update 1

Well, that's a nice title to write after 5 years. I am back on the Luannan Coast with our work once again centred on the mudflats of Nanpu. Of course, we have had our colleague Katherine Leung keeping everything going in 2020, 21, and 23. And our excellent drivers and scanners Liu Jianfeng and Liu Yang who managed the work alone in 2022. The field team this year for the scanning is Katherine, The Lius and me. But the Nanpu mudflat and adjacent salt ponds has many visiting and regular Beijing Normal University (BNU) students studying various aspects of its ecology throughout the spring season. Katherine also had assistance from Fion Cheung for a few days at the start of the field work. Fion is from WWF- Hong Kong and they were involved in the set-up of the Luannan Zuidong Nanpu Provincial Wetland Park.

A thank you here too to the many and varied supporters who enables the work to continue during those years.

This year we are indebted, once again, to Professor Zhang Zhengwang of BNU for the funds to get Katherine and me to Nanpu and to cover our costs while we are here. Katherine and I are volunteering our time. Due to our fascination with the place and the hope for future studies to continue here.

And it goes without saying that we thank Theunis Piersma for still giving his time to Nanpu and the EAAF more widely when he is stretched, pulled, and has requested falling on him constantly. Theunis too, I know, loves Nanpu.

Katherine arrived on the Nanpu seawall on April 29 and I joined on May 6 along with Professor Zhang, Theunis, Zhu Bingrun and Lei Weipan from BNU. We did an extensive exploration of the coast of Hangu the first day. My first few minutes on the receding tide found me counting 1,351 Asian Dowitchers, a very nice introduction.

The following 2 days were visits to the Zuidong and Nanpu seawall, and the new visitor centre of the Wetland Park. Then Theunis and BNU left for Beijing and Theunis back to The Netherlands.

Katherine, Liu Yang and I are now into the routine of early morning scanning on outgoing tides. Alarms going off at 03:30 isn't the greatest but once on the seawall, as the sunrises and the birds come back to the mud from their



pond roosts it is magical, and the early morning light helps our work as we scan vigorously for marked birds from throughout the flyway

The seawall is relatively quiet compared to last year. A few trucks rumbling by (of course) as a new platform for an oil derrick is constructed just behind the seawall. Not an ideal time to be building it during peak migration season but once the derricks are built, they are benign and don't disturb the birds at all.

This is just a brief introduction to GFN's 17<sup>th</sup> year (2007 to 2024 minus 2008) on the Nanpu Seawall. We will give more information on the Red Knots (spoiler – low but not the lowest ever numbers) in the next Update.

We wish you all in the north a productive spring and summer season and those in the south maybe enjoy a slight rest.

Chris Hassell and Katherine Leung.

May 12 2024.

Few places on earth stay the same.



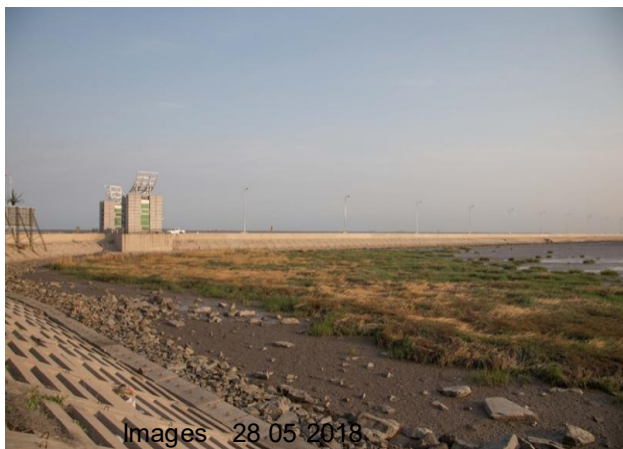
29 04 2011



10 05 2024

The images above are within 500 m of each other.

But sometimes change can be positive with carefully planned intervention. Spartina eradication has been a success.



Images 28 05 2018



12 05 2024



The GFN/BNU visit to Hangu May 6 2024.

## An Unprecedented Global Epizootic of Avian Influenza is Causing Mass Mortality of Wild Birds

From BirdLife

Editor's Note: This is a subject that I have been repeating but feel that the subject needs to be front of mind as we deal with migratory species, plus the devastation that we are seeing around the world and the disease's spread into mammalian species and a possible human case in the US.



The global outbreak of high pathogenicity avian influenza that started in 2021 has impacted more than 400 bird species, including numerous seabirds, waterbirds and raptors. Photo by Matauw/Shutterstock

In 2021, a new H5N1 variant of clade 2.3.4.4b Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) managed to survive the summer in Europe and replace the circulating H5N8 variant. Highly deadly, effective at circulating within wild bird populations, and able to infect a large number of species, the virus caused significant mortality of birds throughout the continent. From Europe, migratory birds carried the virus to Africa, Asia, the Americas and, most recently, the Antarctic region. Numerous cases of mass mortality among waterbirds, seabirds and birds of prey have been reported, in some cases resulting in significant population declines. While there is no quick solution, the BirdLife Partnership is working together to monitor the situation and minimise spread of the virus where possible.

Highly pathogenic strains of avian influenza (HPAI) first evolved in intensive poultry farms and have repeatedly spread to wild birds through lax biosecurity. The H5N1 strain of HPAI was first identified in domestic waterfowl in China in 1996, and has since evolved to become progressively more destructive. During the winter of 2020/2021 a new H5N1 virus started to be detected in Europe. Compared to other variants, this one is particularly well adapted to infecting wild birds, resulting in much higher levels of circulation within wild bird populations (James *et al.* 2023). There has also been a shift in the seasonality of the virus. Historically, outbreaks of HPAI have been mostly confined to the winter months, whereas the new H5N1 appears to have become endemic (present year-round) in many areas (Pohlmann *et al.* 2022, Harvey *et al.* 2023). Since its detection in Europe, the new H5N1 has spread worldwide along migratory flyways, resulting in an unprecedented epizootic that, at the time of writing, has reached every continent except Oceania. This global outbreak has led to the death or destruction of c.0.5 billion poultry (Klaassen & Wille 2023) and has impacted more than 400 bird species (CMS FAO Co-convened Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds 2023), in some cases resulting in significant population declines.

### Examples of species impacted by avian influenza during 2021–2023



### Eurasia

Some of the first reports of mass mortality from HPAI H5N1 in wild birds came from the coastlines of Scotland, UK. Towards the end of the 2021 breeding season, large numbers of dead and dying Great Skua (*Catharacta skua*) were reported on Scottish islands (Banyard *et al.* 2022). Over the next year, more than 2,200 Great Skua deaths were reported, representing 7% of the global population (Falchieri *et al.* 2022). Just a few months after the first cases were detected in Great Skua, in the winter of 2021/22, more than 13,000 Barnacle Geese (*Branta leucopsis*) (one-third of the Svalbard-breeding population) perished in southwest Scotland's Solway Firth (NatureScot 2023). While previous outbreaks of HPAI in wild birds have tended to be seasonal, this time occurrences continued into the summer. For example, in June 2022, HPAI was detected in Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) breeding on Bass Rock off the east coast of Scotland, resulting in a c.25% population decline at the world's largest breeding colony of the species (Scottish Seabird Centre 2023).

Meanwhile, outbreaks were also occurring throughout the rest of Eurasia. In Greece, an outbreak of HPAI in Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) breeding at Prespa Lake (the world's largest breeding site) during February–April 2022 wiped out c.60% of the colony (Alexandrou *et al.* 2022), while in the Hula region of Israel, more than 5,000 Common Crane (*Grus grus*) died after HPAI struck in December 2021 (Reuters 2022).

The following winter, HPAI was detected at the congregation of 12,000 Hooded Crane (*G. monacha*) and White-naped Crane (*G. vipio*) overwintering at Izumi, Japan, resulting in the deaths of more than a thousand of the former and dozens of the latter (EAAFP 2022). Outbreaks throughout Eurasia continued into the summer, with more than 20,500 Sandwich Terns (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) found dead around the coasts of northwest Europe during the 2022 breeding season, representing more than 17% of the total breeding population in this region (Knief *et al.* 2024).

## Africa

From Europe, the virus soon spread to Africa (Lo *et al.* 2022). Data on confirmed outbreaks are sparser in this region, but there have been several reports of mass mortality. The first reports came from countries in West Africa lying along the East Atlantic Flyway. For example, in Senegal 750 Great White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) were found dead at the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary in January 2021 (Lo *et al.* 2022). Further south, extensive mortality of Cape Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax capensis*) was recorded during 2021–2022 in South Africa's Western Cape (>20,000 deaths recorded; CapeNature 2021) and on the west coast of Namibia (>6,500 carcasses retrieved from Bird Island; Molini *et al.* 2023). In early 2023, thousands of dead seabirds were recorded around the coasts of Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, with the main casualties including Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*), Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) and Grey-headed Gull (*Larus cirrocephalus*) (BirdLife International 2023).

## Americas

In December 2021, HPAI H5N1 was detected in poultry in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Genetic analyses confirmed that the virus had originated from Northwest Europe, having most likely been carried by migratory birds travelling along the East Atlantic Flyway (Caliendo *et al.* 2022). Within months the virus had spread throughout North America, with more than 230 outbreaks recorded in wild animals during 2021 and the first half of 2022 (World Organisation for Animal Health 2022). Waterbirds and seabirds were particularly hard hit—the carcasses of more than 850 Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) were found along the St Lawrence waterway during the 2022 breeding season (Larouche 2022); more than 1,000 dead Snow Geese (*Anser caerulescens*) were recorded along the waterways of Colorado (Colorado Parks & Wildlife 2023); and the colony of Northern Gannet nesting at Rocher aux Oiseaux, Quebec had declined by 58% when counts were carried out in July 2022 (Fauteux 2023). Raptors also fared poorly—more than 300 Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) tested positive for HPAI in 2022 (Sidik 2023), resulting in high rates of nest failure and mortality (Nemeth *et al.* 2023); and at least 20 Critically Endangered California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) (7% of the wild population) died from the virus in early 2023 (Wetzel 2023).

It was only a matter of time until the virus was transmitted to Central and South America by birds travelling south along the Americas flyways. The first cases were detected in October 2022, with a subsequent rapid spread of the virus throughout Latin America. In Peru, more than 100,000 wild bird deaths due to the virus were recorded in the country's marine and coastal protected areas during November 2022–March 2023, with mortality across the whole country estimated to be more than double this figure (Gamarra-Toledo *et al.* 2023a). This included mass mortality of economically important “guano birds” such as Peruvian Booby (*Sula variegata*) (>47,500 deaths), Guanay Cormorant (*Leucocarbo bougainvilliorum*) (>28,900 deaths) and Peruvian Pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*) (>21,100 deaths).

## Antarctica

In October 2023, the first ever known cases of HPAI were confirmed in the Antarctic region. Brown Skua (*Catharacta antarctica*) on Bird Island, South Georgia, tested positive for the virus, having likely been exposed during their migration to South America (British Antarctic Survey 2023). There have since been a number of other cases confirmed among Brown Skua and Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) at sites across South Georgia, while Southern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialisoides*) and Black-browed Albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*) in the Falkland Islands have also tested positive (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research 2023). Birds aren't the only taxa at threat—symptoms of avian flu and widespread mortality have also been reported among Antarctica's Elephant Seal (*Mirounga leonine*) colonies (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research 2023), mirroring the spread to marine mammals seen in other parts of the world (e.g. Gamarra-Toledo *et al.* 2023b). Given the high density of birds and seals breeding in this region, and the lack of previous exposure to the virus, HPAI may have devastating impacts on Antarctica's wildlife.

While avian influenza is undoubtedly having significant impacts on many wild bird populations, there are some signs that populations can recover following an outbreak. For example, Northern Gannet populations on Bass Rock appeared to be recovering in 2023, with research suggesting that surviving individuals may develop immunity (Lane *et al.* 2023).

There is no quick solution to halt the virus, but the BirdLife Partnership is working around the globe to prevent and halt outbreaks. Preventative measures include the removal of dead birds from colonies (where appropriate); suspension of practices which result in an unnaturally high concentration of susceptible wild birds,

such as supplementary feeding (unless essential for their conservation); and restriction of public access to vulnerable sites. Monitoring of the virus through frequent and widespread testing, outbreak reporting and monitoring of background mortality is crucial to improving our understanding of which species are affected and the effects of the virus on their populations. Further research is also needed into the spread and evolution of the virus, the development of immunity in wild birds, and to test practical measures to prevent or minimise outbreaks. In the long-term, reformations of the poultry industry are needed to prevent transmission of diseases to wild birds.

## **Sustainable Visitor Capacity Management studies: Bribie Island, Cooloola and K'gari (Fraser Island)**

Study reports and government response

South East Queensland's Bribie Island, Cooloola and K'gari (Fraser Island) Recreation Areas are three of the most popular and iconic destinations for day and overnight visitors managed by the Queensland Government.

To assist in the long-term planning for these areas, Sustainable Visitor Capacity Management (SVCM) studies were commissioned by the Queensland Government.

SVCM studies are an important evaluation and planning tool to inform the development of management plans and visitor strategies, which aim to balance the community's contemporary uses and future needs and desires with conservation intent, socio-economic benefits and visitor satisfaction and wellbeing.

The studies have provided important insights into the challenges, opportunities and seasonal demands across these areas and will help inform future planning and enhanced management.

Together with the government response, they will inform the development of new management plans for each area, which provide the direction for on ground protected area management to ensure key values are conserved and activities are effectively managed.

Stakeholders and the community will have a further opportunity to provide feedback on the new draft management plans during each of the public consultation processes, some of which are due to commence this year.

Find out more

Further information about the SVCM studies is now available on the department's website. This includes the following information for each area:

Sustainable Visitor Capacity Management study report and technical appendices  
Summary of recommendations and government response  
Expected timings for draft management plan public consultation.  
Contact

For further information email Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Regards  
Department of Environment, Science and Innovation

## **Membership Secretary**

We welcome Andy Jensen as our new Membership Secretary.  
Andy will be learning what is required over the next few weeks.

We apologise for any delay and or mix-ups that have occurred in the last two months

**Please note our bank is no longer taking cheques.**

## Count Programme by Linda Cross

I typed this article 2 weeks before the deadline for the newsletter because I will be overseas. I thought I would have had time to get all the extracts from the April counts before I left, but sadly that was not the case, so details only include information extracted from counts to the end of March. Given the limited time I had, the article is shorter and mainly includes interesting counts and breeding records. My apologies for this.

Please remember to mark your calendar for the National Winter count on weekend of 29 and 30 June.

In the table below are records for juvenile Pied Stilt:

Site	Date	Species	Flock size	Juveniles in flock
Endeavour River claypan Cooktown	09.02.24	Pied Stilt	3	3
Manly Harbour	07.03.24	Pied Stilt	62	2
Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve	23.03.24	Pied Stilt	64	9
Manly Harbour	23.03.24	Pied Stilt	98	4
Port of Brisbane complex	24.03.24	Pied Stilt	78	1
Manly Harbour	29.03.24	Pied Stilt	90	4
Manly Harbour	31.03.24	Pied Stilt	98	2

Thank you to the counters who took the time to check and record juvenile birds.

The vagrant Nordmann's Greenshank was recorded at the Cairns Esplanade on 24.02.24, 23.03.24 and 25.03.24.

Double-banded Plover have started to arrive from across the ditch with records coming from Geoff Skinner Reserve (26) on 23.03.24, Bermuda Avenue Deception Bay (3) on 23.03.24, Manly Harbour (2) on 23.03.24 and Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve (1) on 23.03.24.

Extracts from counts for migratory species appear below. Additional extracts (resident waders and other birds) can be found in the "Interesting wader sightings" section of the newsletter.

Grey Plover: Boonooroo (12) on 29.03.24 and Port of Brisbane complex (9) on 25.02.24

Pacific Golden Plover: Port of Brisbane complex (351) on 25.02.24, Shellgrit Creek entrance Mackay (156) on 14.02.24 and Manly Harbour (98) on 10.02.24

Siberian Sand Plover: Port of Brisbane complex (1,304) on 25.02.24, Manly Harbour (383) on 23.03.24 and Shellgrit Creek entrance Mackay (215) on 14.02.24

Greater Sand Plover: Shellgrit Creek entrance Mackay (73) on 14.02.24, Queensland Aluminium Limited Gladstone (51) on 22.03.24 and Port of Brisbane complex (41) on 25.02.24.

Eurasian Whimbrel: Gregory Road Hays Inlet (210) on 23.03.24, Port of Brisbane complex (181) on 25.02.24, Shellgrit Creek entrance Mackay (139) on 14.02.24 and Toorbul (135) on 24.03.24

Far Eastern Curlew: Port of Brisbane complex (337) on 25.02.24, Geoff Skinner Reserve (331) on 24.02.24, Boonooroo (284) on 24.02.24 and Shellgrit Creek entrance Mackay (141) on 10.02.24

Bar-tailed Godwit: Port of Brisbane complex (2,785) on 24.03.24, Kakadu Beach Bribie Island (c 2,677) on 10.03.24, Toorbul (2,114) on 25.02.24, Port of Brisbane complex (1,596) on 23.03.24, Maaroom (1,140) on 23.03.24 and Manly Harbour (1,040) on 10.02.24

Black-tailed Godwit: Coolum Parade Wetlands Newport (267) on 06.03.24 and (223) on 12.03.24. Luggage Point (58) on 24.03.24, Redcliffe Airport northside (51) on 07.03.24 and Maaroom (8) on 23.03.24

Latham's Snipe: Nathan Road Wetlands Redcliffe (2) on 23.03.24 and (1) on 24.02.24. Garnets' Lagoons Susan River (1) on 24.02.24

Terek Sandpiper: Maaroom (155) on 25.02.24, Manly Harbour (38) on 07.03.24 and Boonooroo (29) on 29.03.24

Common Sandpiper: Queensland Aluminium Limited Gladstone (2) on 22.03.24 and (1) on 23.02.24

Grey-tailed Tattler: Port of Brisbane complex (941) on 24.03.24, Manly Harbour (395) on 31.03.24 and Godwin Beach (342) on 10.02.24

Marsh Sandpiper: Redcliffe Airport northside (45) on 07.03.24 and (25) on 24.02.24. Luggage Point (11) on 24.03.24 and Boonooroo (10) on 29.03.24

Common Greenshank: Manly Harbour (13) on 23.03.24, Coolum Parade Wetlands Newport (11) on 13.02.24, Gregory Road Hays Inlet (11) on 23.03.24, Geoff Skinner Reserve (10) on 17.03.24 and Port of Brisbane complex (9 – unusual within reclamation area) on 24.03.24

Ruddy Turnstone: Port of Brisbane complex (110) on 25.02.24 and Manly Harbour (59) on 10.02.24

Great Knot: Maaroom (740) on 23.03.24 and (526) on 25.02.24. Kakadu Beach Bribie Island (410) on 24.03.24, Cairns Esplanade (345) on 24.02.24 and Gregory Road Hays Inlet (299) on 22.03.24

Red Knot: Gregory Road Hays Inlet (148) on 23.03.24, Maaroom (31) on 23.03.24 and Boonooroo (12) on 24.02.24

Broad-billed Sandpiper: Port of Brisbane complex (7) on 24.03.24

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper: Port of Brisbane complex (638) on 25.02.24, Redcliffe Airport northside (242) on 24.02.24, Luggage Point (230) on 24.03.24 and Geoff Skinner Reserve (222) on 24.02.24  
Curlew Sandpiper: Port of Brisbane complex (1,862) on 25.02.24, Gregory Road Hays Inlet (560) on 23.03.24 and Luggage Point (370) on 24.03.24  
Red-necked Stint: Port of Brisbane complex (1,304) on 25.02.24 and (1,256) on 24.03.24. Gregory Road Hays Inlet (1,250) on 23.03.24 and Manly Harbour (740) on 23.03.24

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to include all articles in the paper version of the newsletter as there is a page limit for posting, so "Interesting wader sightings" and "Not waders but of interest anyway" sections may not appear. However, if you have an email address, please ask for the electronic version, which has all the articles that could not be included in the paper version. The electronic version is also in colour.

Although I have extracted a few high counts for Pied Stilt and Silver Gull, some waterbirds (particularly ducks) numbers are low. This is possibly due to parts of inland Queensland and other states receiving a lot of rain that has attracted them elsewhere.

### **Breeding records – resident waders:**

Beach Stone-curlew: Noosa River mouth sandbanks (egg found in last season's nest) on 30.01.24  
Pied Stilt: Manly Harbour (4 pairs nesting) on 10.02.24, (2 downy chicks) on 24.02.24, (2 downy chicks) on 23.03.24, (5 downy chicks) on 31.03.24. Port of Brisbane complex (2 adults with 3 chicks and 2 adults attacking counters suggesting nest or young close by) on 25.02.24 and (1 chick) on 24.03.24. All nests (>14) reported in the last newsletter at Manly Harbour on 06.02.24 were destroyed by flooding a few days later.  
Masked Lapwing: Manly Lota Esplanade (2 chicks) on 23.03.24  
Red-capped Plover: Queensland Aluminium Limited Gladstone (2 juveniles) on 22.03.24  
Comb-crested Jacana: Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (2 chicks) on 24.02.24.

We would like to remind members that the counter for Tweed Heads (Erina Forrest) is looking for anyone in the Gold Coast/Tweed Heads area that would be willing to help her conduct the counts. Please contact Erina by email at [erina.forrest@gmail.com](mailto:erina.forrest@gmail.com)

Counters not entering their counts online, please continue to send them to me at my email or postal address as follows: [xenus69@bigpond.com](mailto:xenus69@bigpond.com)  
 Snail mail: 40 Thompson Road, Bellmere. Qld 4510 Phone: 5495 2758 Mobile: 0490 080 340

A reminder that Leg flag sightings must not be entered online during count entry. Please note that you can now enter flagged and banded sightings on the new website. If you prefer, you can email sightings to Jon Coleman (email address [legflags@waders.org.au](mailto:legflags@waders.org.au)). You can also contact Jon, Phil or me for the Leg Flag Observation Report Form.

Happy counting.  
 Linda Cross.

### **Interesting resident wader sightings**

Beach Stone-curlew: Kakadu Beach Bribie Island (3) on 10.03.24 and 25.02.24, Noosa River mouth sandbanks (3) on 28.02.24 and 30.01.24. Other records of single birds during February came from Toorbul, Maroochy River Nojoor Road, Maroochy River Goat Island and O'Regans Creek westside Hervey Bay. A single bird was also recorded at Toorbul 1 km north on 24.03.24  
Bush Stone-curlew: Seaforth township north of Mackay (129) on 13.02.24  
Pied Oystercatcher: Manly Harbour (219) on 10.02.24 and Port of Brisbane complex (150) on 25.02.24  
Sooty Oystercatcher: Finlayson Point north of Mackay (3) on 13.02.24, Port of Brisbane complex (3) on 24.03.24, Manly Harbour (3) on 24.02.24 and Scarborough to Clontarf (1) on 25.01.24  
Pied Stilt: Luggage Point (470) on 24.03.24, Port of Brisbane complex (326) on 25.02.24 and Coolum Parade Wetlands Newport (276) on 23.03.24  
Black-fronted Dotterel: Queensland Aluminium Limited Gladstone (29) on 22.03.24, Redcliffe Airport northside (17) on 23.03.24  
Masked Lapwing: Boonooroo (34) on 24.02.24  
Red-capped Plover: Queensland Aluminium Limited Gladstone (155) on 22.03.24, O'Regans Creek westside Hervey Bay (83) on 23.02.24, Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve (61) on 23.03.24. Several other sites with numbers between 30 and 60  
Comb-crested Jacana: Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (13) on 24.02.24.

**Not waders but of interest anyway**

Wandering Whistling Duck: Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (5 – includes 3 ducklings) on 23.03.24

Black Swan: Toorbul (714 counted on the passage in front of the roost) on 25.02.24, Webster Road Deception Bay (318) on 17.03.24

Radjah Shelduck: Maaroom (1) on 23.03.24 and Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon (1) on 23.03.24

Buff-banded Rail: Kakadu Beach Bribie Island (3 – 1 adult and 2 chicks) on 25.02.24, Boonooroo (1 adult and 1 juvenile) on 24.02.24 and Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (1) on 23.03.24

Brolga: Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon (18 – courtship displays) on 24.02.24 and Wunjunga Wetlands Burdekin region (5) on 25.02.24

Little Tern: Port of Brisbane complex (386) on 25.02.24 and Noosa River mouth sandbanks (204) on 28.02.24

Caspian Tern: Port of Brisbane complex (65) on 24.03.24

White-Winged Tern: Wunjunga Wetlands Burdekin region (1) on 25.02.24

Common Tern: Sandbank No 2 Caloundra (230) on 20.03.24

Lesser Crested Tern: Manly Harbour (5) on 31.03.24 and O'Regans Creek westside Hervey Bay (4) on 23.03.24

Greater Crested Tern: Sandbank No 2 Caloundra (462) on 20.03.24

Silver Gull: Port of Brisbane complex (871) on 24.03.24

Black-necked Stork: Wunjunga Wetlands Burdekin region (6) on 25.02.24. Other records for single birds came from Queensland Aluminium Limited Gladstone in February and March and Garnet's Lagoons Susan River in February. Deception Bay south recorded an immature bird (unusual at site) on 23.03.24.

Australasian Darter: Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (28) on 24.02.24

Australian Pied Cormorant: Port of Brisbane complex (45) on 25.02.24

Australian White Ibis: Gregory Road Hays Inlet (100 estimate) on 23.03.24, Combers Paddock Boonooroo (56) on 29.03.24 and Bishop's Marsh Toorbul (51) on 25.02.24

Glossy Ibis: Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (9) on 23.03.24

Yellow-billed Spoonbill: Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (1) on 24.02.24 and 23.03.24

Little Egret: Queensland Aluminium Limited Gladstone (44) on 22.03.24

White-necked Heron: Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve (1 – unusual at site) on 23.03.24 and a single bird at Kedron Brook Wetlands and Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon in February

Australian Pelican: Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (84) on 23.03.24

Brown Goshawk: Luggage Point (2) on 24.03.24

Peregrine Falcon: Maroochy River sandbanks (1) on 26.02.24, Queens Esplanade Thornside (1 – attacked Pied Oystercatcher unsuccessfully) on 04.03.24, Garnet's Lagoons Susan River (10 on 23.03.24 and Manly Harbour (1 – took and fed on Grey-tailed Tattler) on 31.03.24. See article.

## Wader Watch by Jon Coleman

Hi everyone,

Welcome to wader watch. For the period February to early May. Over this period a total of 931 records were received with the breakdown of those records shown below.

**Green Leg Flag sightings seen in QLD**

A total of 820 records of green flagged shorebirds were recorded during this period, many of these repeat resightings of birds recorded at roost sites in Moreton Bay with smaller numbers from Great Sandy Marine Park and other roost sites in Queensland.

**Green Leg Flag Sightings seen Overseas****Bar-tailed Godwit**

ADP – 07/04/2024, Asan Bay, South Korea: Soon-Kyoo Choi  
 CHA-13/04/2024, Gojan Tidal Flat, South Korea: via Facebook  
 DDY – 07/04/2024, Asan Bay, South Korea: Soon-Kyoo Choi  
 FCM – 07/04/2024, Asan Bay, South Korea: Soon-Kyoo Choi  
 FDC- 29/02/2024, Foxton Beach, New Zealand: Jesse Conklin  
 FFX – 07/04/2024, Asan Bay, South Korea: Soon-Kyoo Choi  
 EC – 23/04/21024, Mokpo, South Korea: Andreas Kim  
 PR – 23/04/21024, Mokpo, South Korea: Andreas Kim  
 AVB – 23/04/21024, Mokpo, South Korea: Andreas Kim  
 BAP – 23/04/21024, Mokpo, South Korea: Andreas Kim  
 BCC – 23/04/21024, Mokpo, South Korea: Andreas Kim  
 JBN – 23/04/21024, Mokpo, South Korea: Andreas Kim

**Green Leg Flag Sightings seen Interstate****Pied Oystercatcher**

A8- 14/03/2024, Ballina: ABBBS



**Orange Leg Flag sightings (Victoria) seen in QLD****Far Eastern Curlew**

Plain- 01/04/2024, North Stradbroke Island: Wayne Matthews

**Bar-tailed Godwit**

Plain – 13/04/2024, Lota Esplanade, Tony Cotter

**Great Knot**

Plain- 04/02/2024, Lota Esplanade: Tony Cotter

Plain- 06/02/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates

Plain- 10/02/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates

Plain- 13/02/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

Plain- 24/02/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Arthur Keates

Plain- 24/02/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Kristy Murray

Plain- 27/02/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

Plain- 07/03/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates

Plain- 02/03/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

Plain- 08/03/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Arthur Keates

Plain- 09/03/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

Plain- 18/03/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

**Green over Orange Leg Flag sightings (NSW) seen in QLD****Bar-tailed Godwit**

EBA – 29/02/2024, Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island: Phil Cross

EBA – 10/03/2024, Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island: Michael Strong

EBA – 10/03/2024, Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island: Terry Burgess

CYE – 21/02/2024, Maaroom: Chris Barnes

**Yellow Leg flag sightings (WA) seen in QLD****Great Knot**

Plain-11/02/2024, Kakadu Beach: Michael Strong

Plain-04/02/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Mick Barker

**Yellow Flagged Pied Oystercatchers from NSW**

K3- 06/02/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates

K3- 23/03/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

K3- 01/04/2024, Wellington Point: Caitlyn May

**Yellow Flagged Beach Stone-Curlew from NSW**

C5 – 31/03/2024, Tangalooma: Sandra Harding

**OVERSEAS FLAGGED BIRDS SEEN IN QLD****White over blue (Taiwan) leg flag sightings****Curlew Sandpiper**

6T-10/02/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates

6T-07/03/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates

**Terek Sandpiper**

588 - 12/02/2024, Maaroom: Terry Burgess

**Black over white or white over black (Shanghai, China) leg flag sightings****Great Knot**

AA1 – 04/02/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 10/02/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 13/02/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 25/02/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 27/02/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 02/03/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 14/03/2024, Rose Bay, Manly: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 18/03/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

J62 – 04/02/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter/Mick Barker

J62 – 25/02/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

J62 – 02/03/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

J62 – 17/03/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

J62 – 18/03/2024, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

J62 – 20/03/2024, Lota Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 C75 – 14/03/2024, Bushland Beach: John Lowry  
 CM8 – 14/03/2024, Bushland Beach: John Lowry  
 CV7 – 24/02/2024, Bushland Beach: John Lowry  
 V74 – 24/03/2024, Bushland Beach: Michelle Giulliani  
 Plain-20/02/2024, Maaroom: Chris Barnes  
 Plain-14/03/2024, Bushland Beach: John Lowry  
 V74-14/03/2024, Bushland Beach: John Lowry

**Curlew Sandpiper**

Plain-10/02/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates  
 Plain-31/03/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates  
 Plain-04/04/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates  
 Plain-04/04/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Athol Kleive (Blue flag on right Tibia)

**Terek Sandpiper**

Plain- 13/02/2024, Maaroom: Terry Burgess

**Lesser Sandplover**

C2- 23/03/2024, Manly Harbour: Ofalia Ho  
 C#- 08/04/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates

**Blue over White and Blue (Japan) leg flag sightings****Grey-tailed Tattler**

Plain – 10/02/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 02/03/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 03/03/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 03/03/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 14/03/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Christina Lake  
 Plain – 23/03/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 14/04/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 19/04/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tom Cotter  
 Plain – 19/04/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates  
 Plain – 21/04/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 22/04/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 25/04/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates  
 Plain – 28/04/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 Plain – 30/03/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Hidetoshi Kudo  
 Plain – 03/04/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Hidetoshi Kudo  
 Plain – 04/04/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Jun Matsui  
 Plain – 23/04/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Hidetoshi Kudo  
 H06-11/02/2024, Lota Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 H06-19/04/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates  
 H06-21/04/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 H06-22/04/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 H06-29/04/2024, Manly Harbour: Arthur Keates  
 E63 – 24/02/2024, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter  
 T57 – 15/03/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Hidetoshi Kudo  
 T57 – 25/03/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Hidetoshi Kudo  
 T57 – 31/03/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Jun Matsui  
 T57 – 02/04/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Hidetoshi Kudo  
 T57 – 03/04/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Jun Matsui  
 T57 – 23/04/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Hidetoshi Kudo

**Blue over Orange (Kyushu, Japan) leg flag sightings****Grey-tailed Tattler**

### - 29/03/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Greg Neill  
 ### - 30/03/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Greg Neill

**Black over Yellow (Kamchatka) leg flag sightings****Great Knot**

L2 – 13/03/2024, Bushland Beach: John Lowry  
 JH – 14/03/2024, Bushland Beach: John Lowry  
 A2# – 09/04/2024, Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island: Arthur & Sheryl Keates, Paul Cuddihy  
 LY – 11/03/2024, Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island: Terry Burgess

**Red-necked Stint**

Plain- 31/03/2024, Cairns Esplanade: Jun Matsui

**White over Yellow (Hong Kong) leg flag sightings****Great Knot**

DA-20/02/2024, Maaroom: Chris Barnes

White (New Zealand) leg flag sightings

**Terek Sandpiper**

Plain – 20/02/2024, Maaroom: Chris Barnes (Query missing black flag for Chinese Bird)

The following people and organisations contributed the data used in this report with apologies for any inadvertent omission:

A Buchanan, Andreas Kim, Arthur Keates, Athol Klieve, Brian Russell, Caitlyn May, Chris Barnes, Chris Chalker, Christina Lake, Craig Stephens, Emily Simpson, Frank Burch, Frank Pinto, Geoffrey Hui, Greg Neill, Hidetoshi Kudo, Jack Worcester, Jesse Conklin, Jo Freer, Johanness, John Lowry, Jun Matsui, Karen Gillow, Kristy Murray, Linda Cross, Lucy Coleman, Lynn Monaghan, Martin Taylor, Michael Strong, Michelle Giuliani, Michele Burford, Mick Barker, Sharon Holt, Nga Yee Lai, Nicola Udy, Ofalia Ho, Paul Cuddihy, Paul Woods, Penn Lloyd, Peter Johannessen, Peter Rothlisberg, Peter Sternes, Phil Cross, R Clark, Rob Kernot, Sandra Harding, Sheryl Keates, Soon-Kyoo Choi, Terry Burgess, Tom Cotter, Tony Cotter, Wayne Matthews

Every record received is incredibly valuable so thank you to everyone who contributed their sightings. Please remember if your submitting sightings to use our web site and enter your records there as we can process them online, they're easy to enter and far easier to manage through that way. The web site is [www.waders.org.au](http://www.waders.org.au) and click on the Report a Banded/ Leg Flagged Bird link on the home page. When completing a report only record what you see and don't assume anything in terms of which leg the flag is on, or any other details, we'll work with what you provide.

## The Asian Honey Bee has detected at the Port of Brisbane

Biosecurity Queensland have detected the Asian Honey Bee at the Port of Brisbane and we are supporting their efforts in eradication. The Asian Honey Bee is similar to the European Honey Bee but smaller (see link for photos and information). Of interest is the Rainbow Bee Eater, as the droppings can be analysed. If you happen to see a Bee Eater while at the Port, please let us know the location (ideally snap a photo).

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/biosecurity/animals/invasive/restricted/asian-honey-bees#:~:text=The%20Asian%20honey%20bee%20is,with%20other%20bees%20for%20resources>.

We appreciate your help,

MICHAEL LINDE

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### Some Asian Honey Bee Facts:

The Asian honey bee is native to South-East Asia. It is smaller and has less hair than the European honey bee, and has pronounced black/brown and yellow stripes.

The Asian honey bee is a possible carrier of bee diseases and pests, and feral infestations could also compete with other bees for resources.

Asian honey bees can be easily confused with common European honey bees (*Apis mellifera*), and some other bees and insects.

The Asian honey bee is restricted matter under the Biosecurity Act 2014.



### Scientific name

*Apis cerana*

### Similar species

European honey bee, little black bush bee, halictidae family, blue banded bee, leafcutter bee, resin bee

### Description

Bee approximately 10mm long.

Body is smaller and less hairy than that of European honey bee.

Abdomen has pronounced black/brown and yellow stripes.

Aggressive, protects nesting sites and stings.

### Habitat

Found nesting in tree hollows, under eaves, in walls, under floorboards, and in letterboxes, cable reels, compost bins, and various other urban locations.

Have a tendency to abscond or 'move' from nest sites. Absconding colonies may travel up to 10km.

Asian honey bees that have been detected in North Queensland have relatively small colonies of up to 5,000 bees.

### Distribution

Asian honey bee can be found throughout Asia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Australia.

Known to infest the far northern Queensland area around Cairns.

The Asian honey bee known infested area (PDF, 407KB) spreads north to Wonga Beach, west of Southedge and Dimbulah, south to Cardwell.

### Life cycle

Generally, grows slightly more quickly than European honey bee.

Workers develop in 19 days, drones in 23 days, and queens in 13–16 days (compared to 21 days, 24 days and 13 days respectively for European honey bees).

### Impacts

#### Environmental

Is natural host for varroa mites (which can destroy European honey bee colonies) and Asian honey bee colonies could encourage the spread of mites.

Is a vector for other bee diseases and pests.

May compete with other bees for floral resources.

#### Social

Stings could cause anaphylactic reaction in allergy-prone people.

## Wader ID Days

It is that time of year when the Wader ID days goes into recess.  
Check the web site or the next newsletter for future days out

## ID Day Reports

### **Toorbul Wader ID Day Report 29 February 2024** By Linda Cross.

Eight members joined us at the Toorbul roost for this ID session. Weather conditions were dry and sunny. The mangroves obstructed the easterly wind to a slight breeze, making it quite hot viewing the birds.

Waders were stretched out along the foreshore from the picnic table to the main roost and many of the migratory species were showing various amounts of breeding plumage. No small wader species were seen.

The birds were disturbed once and went up but thankfully they returned and did not continue across the passage to the Kakadu roost as had happened on previous ID sessions, which was good for the attendees to have more time to study the birds. Birds could be seen on the Kakadu roost and toward the end of the viewing session more birds arrived from across the passage, which would suggest that there was disturbance at the Bribie roost sending the birds to Toorbul.

There was a large flotilla of Black Swans on the passage and a few attendees tried to count them with estimates of between 600 and 800 birds. Eventually the heat got to the group and forced us to retire for a late lunch to the picnic table, shade and a cooling breeze.

In total, 10 (6 migratory and 4 resident) wader species were viewed at the roost. A count was conducted and recorded for the QWSG database. A lot of time was spent trying to read the letters on engraved flags attached to two individual birds. One was a Bar-tailed Godwit with an orange over green flag (flagged in NSW) and the other was on a Great Knot with a black over yellow flag (flagged in Russia). Numerous green flags (flagged Moreton Bay) were attached to several whimbrels, godwits and knots.

Birds seen at the main Toorbul roost and environs:

600 to 800 Black Swan (in the passage), 6 Maned Duck, 3 Peaceful Dove, 2 Bar-shouldered Dove, 1 Beach Stone-curlew, 15 Pied Oystercatcher, 44 Pied Stilt, 2 Masked Lapwing, 328 Eurasian Whimbrel, 223 Far Eastern Curlew, c 1580 Bar-tailed Godwit, 4 Common Greenshank, 247 Great Knot, 3 Red Knot, 1 Caspian Tern (F/O) 1 Australian Pied Cormorant F/O 25 Australian White Ibis, 3 Straw-necked Ibis, 5 Royal Spoonbill, 2 Little Egret, 1 Eastern Cattle Egret, 1 Great Egret, 7 Australian Pelican, 1 Osprey F/O 1 Brown Goshawk (immature male) 1 Whistling Kite (F/O) and 1 Brahminy Kite (F/O).

(F/O – Flying over, H - Heard):

### **Manly Boat Harbour Shorebird Roost Report 3 March 2024** by Arthur Keates

World Wildlife Day is held annually on 3 March and this year it coincided with this outing to the critical high tide roost at Manly Boat Harbour.

Not surprisingly, because of the relatively low peak of the high tide, the number of birds and diversity of species observed was relatively low with only small numbers of most species apart from >200 Grey-tailed Tattler. However, good views were obtained of 4 resident species of shorebirds and 11 species of migratory shorebirds. Notably absent were Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Great Knot and Curlew Sandpiper.

A lone Greater Sand Plover in near full breeding plumage was a standout among the Lesser Sand Plover all showing less breeding plumage. Also observed were a Grey-tailed Tattler and a few male Bar-tailed Godwit and Pacific Golden Plover in well advanced breeding plumage. At least 2 young juvenile Pied Stilt were feeding along the water's edge under the constant supervision of a parent.

Only green leg flags on several species fitted in south-east Queensland by QWSG's banding team were observed. One of them was a male Bar-tailed Godwit that had been banded at this site aged 2+ on 30 October 2010. So, it is at least 15 years old and likely travelled tens of thousands of kilometres on migration alone.

The following species were observed at the roost:

Chestnut Teal, Royal Spoonbill, Great Egret, Little Egret, Australian Pelican (including 2 immature), Little Pied Cormorant, Pied Oystercatcher, Pied Stilt, Masked Lapwing, Pacific Golden Plover, Red-capped Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Greater Sand Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Whimbrel, Far Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Silver Gull and Australian Tern.

**Kakadu Beach Bribie Island Wader ID Report 12 March 2024** By Linda Cross.

With a 2.55m high tide due at 10:59 (Brisbane Bar) a lot of waders were already at the roost when we set up the scopes. Weather conditions were fine and dry with a moderate south-east wind, making for good viewing conditions for the 10 attendees who joined us.

A couple of flocks of Far Eastern Curlew and more flocks of Bar-tailed Godwit kept arriving as we viewed the birds. Eventually the flocks stopped arriving, and the birds settled in, so we delayed the count for the Godwit until after the high tide time, we believed that we then had the largest quantity in attendance at the roost. During the next couple of hours, the flock was spooked and lifted twice, but returned to the roost and finally looked settled.

Once again, the variety of wader species was low with no smaller species on the roost. The smallest wader we found was a single Red Knot that was with the Great Knot, everyone got to see both species, but some might have missed the lone Eurasian Whimbrel that has been frequenting the roost for the last few months.

Toward the end of the session, a Bar-tailed Godwit sporting an engraved (JBC) green leg flag and a satellite transmitter (banded at Toorbul in December 2023) was seen and shown to everyone in the group. Other engraved green flags were seen on other birds and recorded for the QWSG leg flag database.

We observed 5 migratory and 4 resident wader species at the roost and a count was conducted and added to the QWSG count database.

2 Chestnut Teal, 1 Spotted Dove, 6 Buff-banded Rail (includes 4 chicks) 3 Beach Stone-curlew, 5 Pied Oystercatcher, 11 Pied Stilt, 4 Masked Lapwing, 1 Eurasian Whimbrel, 107 Far Eastern Curlew, c 1,253 Bar-tailed Godwit (underestimated), 114 Great Knot, 1 Red Knot, 1 Australian Tern, 1 Caspian Tern, 2 Greater Crested Tern, 1 Little Pied Cormorant, 1 Australian White Ibis, 1 Royal Spoonbill (F/O) 1 Little Egret, 1 White-necked Heron (F/O) and 1 Great Egret.

Birds seen: (F/O – Flying over)



Spooked waders waiting to settle

photo Mike Barker



Satellite tracker on Bar-tailed Godwit (JBC)

photo Mike Barker

**HELP NEEDED PLEASE**

If you have a QWSG shorebird sign near your place or near a roost, would you mind checking it and clean it if necessary.

Best to use dishwashing liquid and water with a cloth and rinse with water. Thank you.

Sheryl Keates  
0410 960 955

**Please note our bank is no longer taking cheques.**

**Other Conservation Activities of Interest**



QWSG is a special interest group of the Birds Queensland Inc. whose object is: "To promote the scientific study and conservation of birds by all means possible, with particular reference to the birds of Queensland". Separate membership is required.

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The BQ AGM takes place this month so some details may change

## QWSG CONTACTS

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The Official Quarterly Publication of Queensland Wader Study Group

Website [www.waders.org.au](http://www.waders.org.au)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/QueenslandWaderStudyGroup/>

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS Please notify the Membership Secretary as soon as possible of any change of address so that your Newsletter can be dispatched correctly.

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                                  SOUTH BRISBANE,  
                                  QLD 4101.

Members are reminded their membership expires on the date shown on the newsletter address label, and the membership joining/renewal form is now on the back page. Note: that your subscription will fall due twelve (12) months after date of joining the QWSG or date of renewal, and only one further newsletter will be sent after expiry of your subscription.

Copy Deadline for the next issue of Queensland Wader is **August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

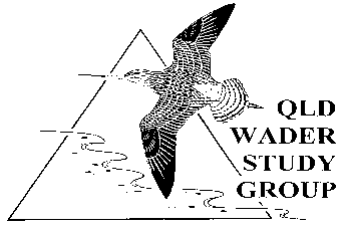
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# Count Activities – 2024

## QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Program 2024

Sat 29 Jun	1.99m at 15:51	<b>National Winter Count</b>
Sat 27 Jul	2.04m at 14:18	
Sat 24 Aug	2.19m at 12:58	
Sat 21 Sep	2.38m at 11:46	
Sat 5 Oct	2.19m at 10:48	
Sat 9 Nov	2.17m at 15:14	

Counters Rockhampton and north – please select a date as close as possible to the count programme Sat day with suitable tides to enable you to complete your counts.

## QWSG Port of Brisbane – Monthly Count Program 2024

Sun 30 Jun	2.12m at 16:59	Meet	15:00	
Sun 28 Jul	2.07m at 15:23	Meet	14:00	<b>National Winter Count</b>
Sun 25 Aug	2.16m at 13:52	Meet	12:50	
Sun 22 Sep	2.34m at 12:34	Meet	11:30	
Sun 6 Oct	2.18m at 11:22	Meet	10:20	
Sun 10 Nov	2.21m at 16:22	Meet	15:00	
Sun 8 Dec	2.28m at 14:41	Meet	13:40	

## MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

A reminder to members: please check to see if your renewal is due and please let the Treasurer know if you change your contact details.

Details may also be entered and/or updated on the QWSG website:  
[www.waders.org.au](http://www.waders.org.au) where you may pay your subscription via PayPal

I / We wish to join / renew: (Single: \$15; Family: \$25; Student/Pensioner: \$10)

Title:..... First name: ..... Surname: .....

Address:.....

..... Postcode:.....

Membership: \$..... Donation: \$.....(see below for payment methods)

Phone: (Home) ..... (Work) .....(Mobile).....

Email .....

How did you hear about QWSG?.....

Are you a member of Birds Queensland? .....

What activities do you wish to participate in? (Please circle)

WADER COUNTS, FIELD TRIPS, SCIENTIFIC DATA COLLECTION, SURVEYS, CLERICAL,  
 OTHER (specify :.....)

You will receive your newsletter (colour version) by E-mail.....

Signature ..... Date:.....

Please email this form to: [membership@waders.org.au](mailto:membership@waders.org.au)

Direct funds transfer to:  
 Qld Wader Study Group  
 BSB: 313 140 (Bank Australia)  
 Account number: 08305297

OR Please post this form to: QWSG Membership Secretary  
 PO Box 3138,  
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 QLD 4101.

Please note our bank is no longer taking cheques.