

QUEENSLAND WADER

Newsletter of the Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG), a special interest group
of the Queensland Ornithological Society Incorporated.

Autumn 1994

Issue number 9

About Queensland Wader

Queensland Wader is a quarterly publication of the Queensland Wader Study Group. Contributions should be addressed to The Editors, 9/49 Maryvale St., Toowong Qld 4066. Contributions can also be sent via fax number (07) 870 9362 (please forewarn the Editors if you intend to use fax). Opinions expressed in Queensland Wader are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily those of the Queensland Wader Study Group, nor the Queensland Ornithological Society.

Advertising rates are \$15.00 for one quarter column, and \$20.00 for a third of a column.

Please check the number on your mailing label to see if your membership is up to date' If you have a '94, that means you have paid your dues for this year; a lower number, or no number, indicates that membership fees are owed. Please continue to renew your membership. We work on a 'shoe-string' budget.

Brisbane Bids for the Ramsar Convention

by Margaret Bernard

The Ramsar Convention will be held in Australia in 1996 and Brisbane, Newcastle, Perth and Darwin are bidding to host the conference. The Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for international cooperation for the conservation of wetland habitats.

Representatives from the QWSG and Queensland Ornithological Society were invited to attend a breakfast at the Travelodge Hotel on Wednesday, 2 March, to meet the team who are to advise the Federal Government on the most suitable venue. Mr Dan Navid, Secretary General of the Ramsar Bureau, Switzerland, its Financial Administrator, Ms Julia Tucker, and Dr Bill Phillips from the Australian Nature Conservation Agency were part of the team here to inspect Brisbane, its facilities and environs.

Representatives from a wide range of conservation groups attended the meeting, along with government officials. The final decision has not been made (but is very imminent), so we are hoping Brisbane is the final choice, as it would add impetus to our efforts to conserve the wetlands of Queensland, greatly benefit the QWSG, and bring financial benefits to the people of Brisbane. It is expected that 1500 delegates will attend the conference.

Migration gone wrong

by Natasha Taylor

During November, Andrew Geering and Peter Driscoll found an injured Ruddy Turnstone on their visit to St. Helena Island. Upon examination, the Turnstone was anorexic and had cleanly severed the distal right tip of the wing through the carpal joint. The initial discussion was to euthanase, as the bird would never fly again. However, the Turnstone turned out to be a 'pig', consuming more than its body weight in mealworms and meat mix daily. Interestingly, unlike the other waders I have cared for, the Turnstone showed no interest in earthworms.

In the last three months the Turnstone prepared for migration. It became very fat and began moulting into alternative plumage. Someone had evidently forgot to tell it that it could not fly. None of the fauna parks in south-east Queensland were capable of housing a wader - the Turnstone - had to migrate. So south it went, to Taronga Park Zoo, where it will be housed in the shorebird enclosure with one other Ruddy Turnstone (Taronga is hoping they will be of opposite sex).

Good luck Ruddy.

Greater Yellowlegs - A New Species for Australia

by Keith Brandwood

Pittown Lagoon is a large shallow lagoon on the outskirts of Windsor, north-west of Sydney, which is managed as a nature reserve by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The lagoon is flooded by run-off from the local catchment and occasionally dries during times of low rainfall. The NSW NP&WS have constructed islands within the lagoon which are utilised by some waterbirds and which provide shoreline and shallows for waders. Recent plantings of trees near the shores of the lagoon have also been undertaken by the Service.

Some notable species that have been recorded from this lagoon include Long-toed Stint, White-rumped Sandpiper, Little Curlew, Australian and Oriental Pratincoles to name but a few. It is a regular haunt for me living not far away, at Annangrove.

On 9th October, 1993, I noticed what I originally thought was a Greenshank about 400 metres away. I worked my way towards where it was standing at the eastern end of the lagoon and took a closer look at the lores and fore-crown area, these appeared thicker than those on a Greenshank. At this stage I noticed that the legs were pinkish of reddish-orange as the bird was standing preening, occasionally stretching one leg at a time out behind it in a fashion typical of waders. While observing it preening, the heavy dark-brown streaking from the crown to lower neck caused me to think that the bird was not a Greenshank. The sides of the face were fawn of light-brown, the bill, which was about one and a half times the length of the head and was slightly up-curved, had a two toned basal half, greyish with the remainder being black.

The bird was under observation for a period of about 10 minutes before it took flight. The flight was very erratic and at one stage revealed the tail which appeared all white above, contrasting with the dark wings and upper body, where the white stopped, unlike the Greenshank or Marsh Sandpiper that have white extending up the back.

At the time of the observation I had no idea what species the bird was. It wasn't until I was at home with my field guides that I identified it as Greater Yellowlegs. The three important criteria in identifying this species being the length of the bill, the colour of the legs and no extension of white up the back. The Greater Yellowlegs is a species of North America that has not previously been recorded in Australia.

No-one else has yet reported sighting the bird, I'm sorry to say, and my record is with the rarities committee for ratification. If you see any Greenshank-type birds anywhere, take a good look at them as it would be of great interest for me to have this record confirmed by someone else.

[This article is reproduced from NSW Wader Study Group Newsletter 4(,4).]

Green Island - Threatened by Coral Dredging

by Andrew Geering

It is perhaps a surprise to a lot of people that you do find coral reefs as far south as Moreton Bay. Mud island, St. Helena Island, Green Island, Peel Island and, Myora at North Stradbroke Island all have fringing reefs. The variety of coral in these reefs is less diverse than in the Great Barrier Reef, due to the cooler temperature and greater turbidity of the water, but nonetheless, you do find living corals such as Brain Coral. Unfortunately, the reefs of Moreton Bay are threatened.

Queensland Cement Limited (QCL) has been dredging coral from around Mud Island since 1936, and the environmental effects are all too clear. Wave action has caused the formation of a bund of coral rubble around the perimeter of the island, which is interfering with drainage of water from the mangrove forest growing on the island. The mangroves are slowly being ringbarked by wave-washed loose coral rubble. There is no easy solution to this problem, and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries has been left with the responsibility of cleaning up the mess. QCL is also extracting coral from around the eastern side of St Helena Island.

In 1991, QCL voluntarily relinquished rights to dredge areas around Wellington Point, Raby Bay and Cleveland Point, but in turn, requested a licence to dredge the eastern side of Green Island. Before this licence was given, the Government requested an environmental impact assessment. Connell Wagner were employed by QCL as principal consultants to do this EIS. Drafts of the EIS have been completed, and the final version is soon to be released.

QWSG opposes dredging of the eastern side of Green Island due to the impact on waders and other wildlife. We believe that this area is highly significant for a number of species such as Ruddy Turnstone, Pied Oystercatcher, Mongolian Plover and Large Sand-Plover. The populations of the former three species in Moreton Bay are considered to be either nationally or internationally significant, and on this basis, the Bay was listed as a Ramsar site. Surprisingly, the eastern side of Green Island was not included within the boundaries of the Ramsar site. Ramsar listing was subject to State Parliamentary Cabinet approval and I understand that inclusion of this area within the Ramsar site was vetoed by the Departments of Primary Industries and Minerals and Energy because of mining interests. There was no scientific rationale for excluding this area from the Ramsar site.

QCL are proposing to leave a buffer zone extending to a distance of 150 metres from the shore and they believe this should cater for the waders. However, in many cases, this is not a preferred feeding area for waders, as they normally feed along the low tide line. If dredging was to go ahead, there would be no low tide line but instead a great big hole. QCL are also proposing to use such technological innovations such as silt curtains which will minimise the impact of dredging on growth of surrounding live corals. The question still remains of where will the silt go? It won't disappear. And what if the curtains are removed at the end of the operation? If this technology is so great, why aren't they using it for their dredging operations around St. Helena Island? Unfortunately the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's experience with silt curtains is that they cease to work when the wind reaches 15 knots.

The economics of dredging around Green Island also seem questionable. A report by independent economic analysts suggests that in the light of recent mergers within the Australian cement industry, the new structure of the industry, and the age and inefficiency of QCL's kilns at Darra, the Darra plant will cease to be economically viable within a few years at most, and will close. QCL, by its own admission, has sufficient limestone resources within its existing Moreton Bay leases to supply Darra for at least that long.

Tom Bums, Deputy Premier, and opponent of dredging at Green Island, made a very pertinent point at a recent public meeting about the battle to save Green Island. The battle will be won on political grounds, as the conservation movement does not have the resources to fight on technical grounds. He stated that personal letters of opposition have the most impact, so please express your concerns to either the Premier, Hon. Wayne Goss (Executive Building, 100 George St. Brisbane Qld 4000), or the Minister for Primary Industries, Hon. Ed Casey (Primary Industries Building, 80 Ann St., Brisbane 4000).

Some interesting sightings

Rod, Hobson, Greg and Robin Czechura, Darryl Kirkup and Michael Strong were lucky enough to see a Ruff at Woodgate on 30th October 1993. Rod Hobson also reports seeing two Little Curlews at Lake Clarendon in the Lockyer.

Conservation news

by Peter Driscoll

Thanks largely to the work of the Boondall Wetlands Management Committee, a community based group, progress continues to be made with the establishment and management of the Boondall Wetlands Reserve. To be truly effective, the Reserve needs to be expanded to incorporate land beside the Kedron Brook Floodway and to the west of the Gateway Arterial Road. QWSG supports these proposed additions and is involved in the development of plans for appropriate use and access to sensitive pans of the Reserve used by waders.

Declaration of the Moreton Bay Marine Park on 18 February 1993 and the official listing of Moreton Bay and Pumicestone Passage as a RAMSAR site in December 1993, does not necessarily guarantee adequate protection of waders. The boundaries of these reserves do not incorporate a number of key roost sites on freehold land throughout the Bay. These are of special concern to QWSG and we are attempting to negotiate with the various landowners to consider the needs of the birds. Also, the various zones of use within the Marine Park are still being decided. Submissions have been made by QWSG and the point stressed that a conservation plan for the management of waders under the Nature Conservation Act is also needed. This would be a pro-active measure and bring together the research conducted on waders in Moreton Bay and indicate issues of conservation policy or areas in need of further research. The conservation plan would provide the context for future monitoring and wetland management.

The Coastal Protection Bill will have ramifications right along the coastline and is another important forum for ensuring protection of waders. QWSG has been participating with submissions to help improve what is currently a rather inadequate piece of proposed legislation.

Our conservation officer, Sandra Harding, deserves a vote of thanks for her efforts. Sandra has an appreciation of conservation issues within the broad framework of government policy and procedures. She has enhanced the value of contributions by QWSG to conservation issues.

Tattler identification (part 2)

by David Stewart

Although rarely seen in Australia, both species of Tattler have a bold but similar alternate (breeding) plumage. It is not uncommon, however, to see some birds beginning to moult prior to their departure for breeding grounds in March and April.

As with other plumages, tattlers in alternate plumage are easily distinguished from other species of wader by their uniform grey upperparts, straight bicoloured bill and yellow legs. In flight, the tail and both the upper and underwings appear uniform grey.

The alternate plumage in both species of tattlers consists of a uniform slate-dark grey crown, back of neck and upperparts and boldly patterned underparts. In the Grey-tailed Tattler, the underparts, are white with fine streaking on the ear-coverts and sides of the neck and V-shaped grey barring on the breast, upper flanks and sides of undertail coverts. The chin, throat, belly and central undertail-coverts are white. The underparts of Wandering Tattlers, on the other hand, are somewhat more heavily marked than that of the Grey-tailed Tattlers. Their ear-coverts, chin, throat and sides and front of neck are finely streaked grey, while the breast, flanks and undertail coverts are strongly barred with V-shaped markings, leaving only a small white belly patch.

Although the difference in the extent of barring may be useful when the birds are in full alternate plumage, there is considerable variation between birds and it is often difficult to obtain a clear view of the undertail coverts. Another problem arising is that the majority of Tattlers do not attain the full alternate plumage while in Australia.

As with basic plumage, there are some characters that maybe used to identify individuals of the two species. These characters are the same as those used to separate them in basic plumage, and include the size and shape of the white supercilium, the extent of pale fringing on the uppertail coverts and the wing length.

As in basic plumage, the supercilium of the Wandering Tattler is very much reduced compared to that of the Grey-tailed Tattler, being confined to the area in front of and above the eye. The supercilium on each side of the head does not meet above the bill. In the Grey-tailed Tattler, the supercilium extends well beyond the eye, and usually meets above the bill.

The uppertail-coverts of Wandering Tattlers are dark grey and with narrow pale edging. This pale edging is rapidly lost through wear, leaving uniform dark grey feathers. With Grey-tailed Tattlers, the uppertail-coverts have faint whitish barring.

When using wing length to identify a Tattler, great care must be taken to determine the age of the primaries. Prior to moult, these primaries may be much shorter due to wear than otherwise would be expected. In fresh plumage, the wing tips of Wandering Tattlers extend well beyond the tail at rest, whereas in the Grey-tailed Tattler, the wing tip only reaches the end of the tail.

New Zealand Wader Study Group

The 'Miranda Banders', a voluntary group that have been active studying waders in the Auckland region since 1979, have metamorphosed into the New Zealand Wader Study Group. We wish them every success in their future endeavours, and hope to closely cooperate with them. At present, we have the distinction of being the only people in Australia to have recovered their banded birds! For further details about the NZWSO, please contact Adrian Riegen or Stephen Davies.

Wader count program

by Jim and Ivell Whyte

The QWSG count program has continued to expand during the last quarter, with the emphasis continuing for the moment on the eastern coastline.

Following the approach from the Australasian Wader Studies Group, for state wader groups to take over co-ordination of the summer and winter national counts, we were supplied with some excellent contact names from the AWSG list. The AWSG has concentrated on Mackay, Cairns and Moreton Bay, and we now have groups led by Lindsay Bone in Mackay, and Dawn Magarry in Cairns. Marjorie Andrews is coordinating Proserpine for us, and John Wren from Bowen is endeavouring to get together a group there.

On the weekend of March 25-27th, Peter Driscoll, Andrew Geering, Margaret Bernard, Gary Harch and Roy Sonnenburg attended a meeting arranged by Alan Jeffrey of the Department of Environment and Heritage in Maryborough to discuss a count program for the Great Sandy Strait Region. The meeting and subsequent wader identification outing at Boonaroo were well attended, and prospects for a permanent count group there look good.

Our counters in Moreton Bay and Pumicestone Passage have continued with their excellent work, but we still need more people, both to cover current sites and as stand-bys for the regular counters. As one of our counters was moved to remark, "the harvest is vast, but the labourers few". If anyone is able to help, or knows of a site that is not currently being covered, please let us know. Contact can be made through Ivell Whyte, or Peter Driscoll. There are parts of Moreton Bay, especially at the southern end, which are still not being adequately covered. The winter national count will be on the week-ends of the 18th and 25th of June. Our designated count day here will be June 18th. We'll be looking to increase our coverage by then.

Thanks to all our counters for their involvement and prompt return of count sheets during the last quarter. This has enabled Peter to keep data right up to date, and also gives an immediate overview of the movement of wader populations in our area.

Thanks and good counting over the next quarter.

Timetable for Wader Counts

For the wader counts, please ring Ivell Whyte, the count coordinator on (07) xxx xxxx. All completed count forms must be returned to Ivell Whyte at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Qld 4xxx.

Date	Height and time of high tide
Sat. 9th April	High of 2.15 m at 8:30 am.
Sat. 23rd April	High of 2.28 m at 7.04 am.
Sat. 7th May	High of 1.99 m at 7:12 am.
*Sat. 18th Jun	High of 2.1 m at 5 pm. - AWSG winter count day. (This weekend or 25/6/94 - high of 1.9 m at 10:44 am)
Sat. 13th August	High of 2.05 m at 1:55 pm.
Sat. 10th September	High of 2.21 m at 12:43 pm.
Sat. 8th October	High of 2.42 m at 11:38 am.
Sat. 22nd October	High of 2.25 m at 10-52 am.
Sat. 19th November	High of 2.34 m at 9:58 am.
Sat. 17th December	High of 2.36 m at 9:03 am.

Finally, A Cannon Net Tailored for Godwits!

That's what we hope will be the result of trials conducted by the Victorian Wader Study Group in Broome this year. They are experimenting with different mesh sizes to determine which size results in least tangling of godwit feathers - a problem faced by all Queensland cannon netters.

Sightings of Leg-Flags

by Andrew Geering

A list of recent sightings of leg-flagged waders is given in Table 1. This list is a continuation of the list of sightings reported in QWSG Newsletter Number 4 (December 1992). The great majority of sightings are those of waders with green leg-flags. These birds were banded by the QWSG at various locations around Moreton Bay and Pumicestone Passage. There were three sightings of green leg-flagged waders outside southeast Queensland - a Great Knot that was sighted at Manukau Harbour, New Zealand, on 7 June 1993, a Bar-tailed Godwit that was sighted close to Bundaberg on 1 October 1993; and another Bar-tailed Godwit which was resident at Homebush Bay, Sydney between December 1993 and March 1994. Presumably, the Great Knot in New Zealand and the Bar-tailed Godwit in Sydney were banded by the QWSG during stopovers in migration. Also, the Bar-tailed Godwit at Bundaberg was presumably sighted whilst migrating south to Moreton Bay.

There were five sightings of orange leg-flagged Curlew Sandpiper at Nudgee Beach and Deception Bay: three of these sightings were during spring 1993 and this is the first evidence of southward passage of Curlew Sandpiper through Queensland. There was also one orange leg-flagged Red Knot sighted at Darling Point, Moreton Bay, on 20 October 1992.

Thank-you to all those people that have notified us of the sightings. Keep up the good work. Now is the best time to look for leg-flags as waders are actively migrating.

Table 1. Sightings of leg-flagged waders in Queensland in the period from December 1992 to 16 March 1994 (reported up to 6.4.94). Abbreviations used for birds are: EC (Eastern Curlew); BTG (Bar-tailed Godwit); GS (Greenshank); GK (Great Knot); RK (Red Knot); PO (Pied Oystercatcher); LGP (Lesser. Golden Plover); MP (Mongolian Plover); CS (Curlew Sandpiper); MS (Marsh Sandpiper); STS (Sharp-tailed Sandpiper), TS (Terek Sandpiper); RNS (Red-necked Stint); GTT (Grey-tailed Tattler), RT (Ruddy Turnstone), W (Whimbrel). Abbreviations used for observers are FA (Fred Armbrust); GA (Greg Anderson); MB (M. Bernard); JB (Julien Bielewicz); PD (Peter Driscoll); AG (A. Geering); GG (Gavin Goodyear), TH (Tony Habraken); BJ (Bob James); AK (Arthur Keates); GH (Gary Harch); JH (Joyce Harding); JN (John Noyce); GN (Greg Nye); DS (David Stewart); IT (Ian Taylor); HT (Harold Tilton); HiT (Hilary Tilton); JT (Jeremy Thompson); AT (Ann Turner); PW (Paul Wallbridge); IW (Ivell Whyte).

¹Numbers in this column are the number of birds which were observed to have colour bands/flags and the location in brackets is where the bird was banded.

Species	Location	Time & Date	¹ Flag/band Colour	Obs	Comments
RK	Darling Point, Moreton Bay	20.10.92	1-orange (Victoria)	MA	With 10 BTG, 3 LGP, and 2CS.
EC	Mirapool, Moreton Island	14.12.92	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD, GH	At high tide roost.
PO	Raby Bay, Brisbane	8.1.93	1-blue (Amity Point)	JH	
BTG	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	9.30 hrs 8.1.93	4-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high tide roost.
GK	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	9.30 hrs 8.1.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high tide roost.
PO	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	9.30 hrs 8.1.93	5-orange (St. Helena Is.) 2-yellow (Fisherman Islands)	PD	At high tide roost.
PO	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	10.1.93	1-yellow (Fisherman Islands)	JT	
Wh	Bell's Creek, Caloundra	29.1.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	AT	On sand-flat just inside the mouth of the creek. With 5 other Wh and 5 EC.
PO	Manly Boat Hbr, Brisbane	6.2.93	1-orange (St. Helena Is.) 1-yellow (Fisherman Islands)	PW RH	Total of 40 PO.
BTG	Donnybrook	9.00 hrs 20.2.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	JT JN	At high tide roost.
GK	Toorbul (Moreton Bay)	12.00 hrs 13.3.93	1-green	BJ	At high tide roost.

CS	Nudgee Creek, Brisbane	16.45 hrs 13.3.93	1-green(Moreton Bay)	FA	Feeding at mouth of creek. Partial breeding plumage. In small group of CS.
CS	Godwin Beach, Deception Bay	14.00 hrs 14.3.93	1-orange (Victoria)	BJ	Flag on left leg.
BTG	Toorbul (Moreton Bay)	13.00 hrs 14.3.93	1-green	BJ	At high tide roost.
BTG	Nudgee Beach, Brisbane	17.30 pm 23.3.93	1-green(Moreton Bay)	AG MB	Male. No breeding plumage. Feeding on mud-flat.
BTG	Nudgee Beach, Brisbane	14.30 hrs 24.3.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	AG	Female. No breeding plumage. Feeding on mud-flat.
GK	Woody Point, Brisbane	1630 hrs 28.3.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	GA	Foraging on exposed rocks/mussel beds at low tide with 20 RT, 1 Wh, 5 BTG, 1 GTT, 10 MP and 5 other GK. In partial breeding plumage.
CS	Godwin Beach, Deception Bay	4.4.93	1-orange (Victoria)	BJ	Flag on right leg. Bird within about 50 m of esplanade.
EC	Amity Spit, Nth Stradbroke Is.	8.5.93	3-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost
BTG	Dunwich, Nth Stradbroke Is.	19.5.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost
RK	Karaka, Manukau Harbour, NZ	7.6.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	TH	With 1 Victorian-banded (orange leg-flag) RK.
BTG	Reeders Point, Moreton Is.	23.7.93	3-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost. Roost site was west of Day's Gutter.
EC	Reeders Point, Moreton Is.	23.7.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost. Roost site was west of Day's Gutter. Possibly a second EC with green leg flag.
EC	Lytton 1 roost, Brisbane	21.8.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	AG	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Lytton 1 roost, Brisbane	21.8.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	AG	At high-tide roost.
EC	Mirapool, Moreton Is.	22.8.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Mirapool, Moreton Is.	22.8.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
EC	Reeders Banks, Moreton Is.	18.9.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
CS	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay	18.9.93	1-orange (Victoria)	GN IW	At high-tide roost.
CS	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay	18.9.93	2-green (Moreton Bay)	GN IW	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Kolan River, 25 km NW of Bundaberg	1.10.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	On major mudflat about 1 km upstream from the mouth of the river. With a flock of about 200 BTG.
CS	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay	2.10.93	2-orange (Victoria)	AG IW	At high-tide roost.
GK	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay	2.10.93	4-green (Moreton Bay)	AG IW	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay	2.10.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	AG IW	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Amity Spit, Nth Stradbroke Is.	16.10.93	4-green (Moreton Bay)	IG	At high-tide roost.
CS	Amity Spit, Nth Stradbroke Is.	16.10.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	IG	At high-tide roost.
GK	Toorbul	16.30 hrs 22.10.93	1-green, (Moreton Bay)	HT HiT	At high-tide roost. With 100+ BTG, 50+ GTT, 10.+ Whimbrel, 5 TS, and 5 RT.

GTT	Toorbul	16.30 hrs 22.10.93	2-green (Moreton Bay)	HT HiT	At high-tide roost. Details as for GK.
CS	Toorbul	8.30 hrs	1-green	HT	Feeding on Toorbul mudflats close to shoreline.
BTG	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay	6.11.93	3-green (Moreton Bay)	GN IW	At high-tide roost.
GK	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay	6.11.93	4-green (Moreton Bay)	GN IW	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Coochiemudlow Is, Moreton Bay	13.00 hrs 27.11.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	On south-west side of island. Feeding on shoreline with ca. 150 other BTG on failing to low tide.
BTG	Toorbul	8.00 hrs 30.11.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	HT HiT	On Toorbul mudflats close to shoreline, with 8 CS, 14 GS. 4 RCP, 180+ BTG, 1 PO, and 150.+ GTT.
BTG	Homebush Bay, Sydney	?12.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	IT	This bird was resident at Homebush Bay from Dec. 1993 to March 1994.
EC	Lytton 2 roost, Brisbane	1.12.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	1.12.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
GK	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	1.12.93	3-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Woody Point, Redcliffe Peninsula	4.12.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	JB	
BTG	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	14.1.93	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	Feeding near south side of new bund.
BTG	Toorbul (Moreton Bay)	19.12.93	2-green	BJ	At south end of Toorbul, Esplanade.
BTG	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	11.1.94	1-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
BTG	Thornside, Brisbane	6.2.94	1-green (Moreton Bay)	DS	At high tide roost in front of houses to the north of Thornside. With ca. 70 other BTG.
BTG	Amity Spit, Nth Stradbroke Is	12.2.94	2-green (Moreton Bay)	IG	At high-tide roost.
GK	Wynnum/Manly foreshore, Brisbane	20.2.94	2-green (Moreton Bay)	AK	Feeding with 12 other GK, 20 BTG, 10 RNS, 7 TS, 8 RT, 6 CS, 100 GT, 3 MS. 40 MP, 4 LGP, and 1 EC.
BTG	Toorbul	15.00 hrs 20.2.94	2-green (Moreton Bay)	BJ	At south end, of Toorbul Esplanade.
BTG	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	24.2.94	2-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At corner of the south-east bund wall.
BTG	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	14.3.94	2-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
GK	Fisherman Islands, Brisbane	14.3.94	2-green (Moreton Bay)	PD	At high-tide roost.
GK	Godwin Beach	12.00 hrs 19.3.94	1-green (Moreton Bay)	HT HiT	At high-tide roost. With about 40 other GK, 10 BTG* and small numbers of CS and TS.

Nial Moores is international coordinator for Japan Wetlands Action Network (Jawan). He visited Australia in January this year to publicise the dire plight of wetlands in Japan. QWSG was privileged to have NM deliver a lecture, the content of which is summarised below

The campaign to protect Hakata Bay has provoked one of the most vigorous citizens campaigns in Japan in recent years. From the beginning, local activists have vociferously opposed the project to build the artificial island because of the impact on this critical wetland. Economic reasons for opposition to the project include the fact that only 30 percent of the present container docks in the current port are being used and that housing built on re-claimed land is proving too expensive to market. The activists plead that Hakata Bay be maintained in its present state to preserve the luxuriant wildlife there.

Hakata Bay in Kyushu, southern Japan, meets all criteria for recognition as a wetland of international importance, fulfilling a vital role as a stopover site for migratory waterfowl - including several globally endangered species such as the Black-faced Spoonbill (world population approximately 300), Saunders' Gull, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Spotted Greenshank, and Chinese Egrets (estimated at approximately 1000 pairs worldwide). More than 100,000 waterbirds use the Bay annually.

However, the City of Fukuoka has jurisdiction over Hakata Bay, and is pushing, along with the National Ministry of Transport, for the construction of a superdock and 401 hectare (1,000 acre) artificial island in the Bay's eastern part - devastating the area with greatest concentration of wildlife.

Local people and the international environmental movement are deeply concerned - over 120,000 Fukuoka people signed a petition to get the Island plan scrapped, and there has been frequent coverage of the issue on TV and by the media. Indeed, the Hakata Bay Island, along with the controversial Nagara River Dam, is fast becoming a test case of national environmental policy at a time of change in Japanese politics: how sincere are National Government pledges to protect the environment, when it itself continues to fund the destruction?

Japan still even lacks genuine mandatory environmental impact assessment (EIA). Lacking such mandatory EIA at home, Japanese ODA often lacks understanding of environmental requirements in mega-projects overseas; and other countries in the region have been quick to imitate a style that has led to economic power - and environmental devastation.

The impact of such projects is having a direct negative impact on the shared natural heritage of the West Pacific Flyway the migratory route taken by millions of birds each year - some migrating annually through Japan from Siberia in the north to Australasia in the south.

The birds using this flyway should be protected by several international treaties signed at the highest level (eg. Ramsar, "the wise use of wetlands treaty" [next to be hosted by Australia in 1996], the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, the US-Japan Migratory Bird Agreement and the Rio Bio-Diversity Treaty) but instead continue to decline sharply due to Nationally funded Public Works projects which have left half of Japanese homes without a sewer system, but over half of the nation's coastline covered in concrete.

Cannon Netting

For netting activities, please confirm with Peter Driscoll (07 xxx xxxx) three days in advance for confirmation of time and place. In the case of weekend trips please confirm at least one week in advance.

Sun 8 th May	St Helena Island. High of 1.97 m at 7:52 am.
Sun 22 nd May	Cabbage Tree Creek mouth. High of 2.13 m at 6:29 am.
Sat 25 - Sun 26 th June	Joint weekend outing with Royal Geographical Society of Qld to Nth Stradbroke Island - Amity Spit. High of 1.88 m at 11:30 am on Sunday.
Fri 15 th - Sun 17 th July	Moreton Island. High of 2.01 m at 3.22 pm on Saturday. This is also the weekend of a Moreton Island Protection Committee whale watch. Come and do both!
Sat 13 th August	Fisherman Islands. High of 2.05 m at 1:55 pm.
Sat 24 th September	Dux Creek, Bribie Island. High of 2.11 m at 11:52 am.
16th Oct.- 31 st Oct.	During this two week period an Earthwatch team will be helping QWSG with wader studies in the Bay. Anyone interested in helping out should ring Peter Driscoll. Netting sites will include Fisherman Islands, Amity Point, Cabbage Tree Creek and Moreton Island.

Trip Reports

Nudgee Beach (15 January)

by Andrew Geering

The memory that most sticks in my mind about this trip is the rain. It pelted and we all got very sodden. We caught 40 Bar-tailed godwits, of which three were retraps. Residents of Shorncliffe, who were no doubt sensibly curled up in their lounge-rooms, would have thought that they had had one brandy too many when they saw a group of 16 or so people pushing wheel-barrows across the mudflat, which was quickly submerging under the rising tide. Yes, a wheelbarrow is our answer to carrying cannons over long distances.

Mirapool - Moreton Island (28-30 Jan)

by Meredith Hall

Well, this was my first experience with cannon netting and to sum it up - *I had a great time and at the end of the weekend felt happily exhausted and ready for a radox bath!* After arriving at the barge just in the nick of time, Jenny and I got the run down on what the weekend held for us. We nearly left then and there, people all around us started discussing early rises (4:30 am!!), working dawn 'til dusk and being run off our feet. We may have done all those things but the weekend flew by in a whirl of sand, sea, nets, birds and sun.

Arriving late Friday night we all appeared to have enough gear to stay for a fortnight and Peter not so quietly pointed out - "I picked a nice small campsite". We all somehow squeezed into two vehicles and 15 minutes later were madly setting up camp, wanting to get to sleep as the word spread that it was a 4:30 am start. The morning went quite smoothly with three nets being set up before the deadline of around 9am. After having breakfast and a much needed cup of coffee, we all headed back to the beach. At high tide the area looked completely different but we located the nets and waited for Peter, Greg, Andrew and Paul to contact us. The first of these four we spotted was Paul, undertaking what was finally identified as the ritual prayer to the cannon netting god. Sighted through binoculars, Paul could be seen on all fours swaying slightly, head down and obviously concentrating, occasionally he would kneel and wave his arms slowly in the air. This was a canny thing to do as it also seemed to keep the birds from flying out the end of the lagoon!?!?

One of the three nets was washed out, another must have been very unattractive to the waders and the final seemed to have made up for both or those and at one stage approximately 1000 individuals were within firing range. As the cannons went off we all converged on the site and started the job at hand. Margaret organised the holding cages, everyone else who knew what they were doing started to collect the birds (which seemed a mysterious and earned skill) and the rest of us did as much as we could to help. This meant being runners and I had my first experience with handling waders. This in itself would have been enough to have made my weekend. The day progressed steadily and, with 3 teams banding, quite quickly. In all there were 204 Bar-tailed Godwits and 3 Eastern Curlews (this was a real treat). The moult score was noted, as was the tail barring, head bill length, age, sex and breeding plumage. More detailed notes were taken of the Curlews. Other species that were sighted on the day included Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings, Mongolian Sand-Plovers and Large-Sand Plovers. There were 6 recaptures with QWSG bands and one that had a flag also, identified again as a QWSG recapture.

With a long day behind us, we made the bumpy ride back to camp and arrived tired and hungry but satisfied with a successful day. It was when we arrived back at camp that we discovered that a projectile was missing - I personally think the waders were getting us back and took off with it! After two unsuccessful searches of the beach, lagoon and all three netting sites it still did not show up. If you are ever at Mirrapool, keep your eyes peeled for it, one day it may emerge from either the incoming tide, the lagoon or a very big wader that isn't flying particularly elegantly.

Sunday was a day for ourselves. It dawned very prettily I'm sure, but nobody but Peter, Sam and Meg saw much of it - the rest of us slept - well the clever ones anyway! After another search for the projectile and a leisurely breakfast, those of us who felt like a bush-walk headed off for the Little Sand Hills. I was soon to discover that these are, in fact, not 'little' at all. I very nearly decided that half way up a sand dune was quite far enough! We traipsed across the island from west to east and were rewarded by a beautiful view, looking north to the tip of Moreton Island, across to Brisbane and the mainland, south to North Stradbroke Island and southern Moreton Bay and east to the ocean and sky. We headed back to camp, strolling along the beach, quietly chatting and enjoying the peace and quiet.

Thank you to all involved for a very enjoyable and educational weekend. I am looking forward to the next trip as, I am sure, most of those who participated in this weekend are.

Maryborough trip (March 25-27)

by Margaret Bernard

The QWSO was invited to present a talk to interested bird-watchers in and around Maryborough on the weekend of 25-27 March. A group travelled to Maryborough on the Friday afternoon, including Peter Driscoll, Andrew Geering, Gary Harch, Roy Sonnenberg, Fiona Johnson and Margaret Bernard.

The evening was well attended and it was encouraging to see so much enthusiasm. The venue for the meeting was at the Department of Environment and Heritage office and many thanks goes to Allen Jeffrey and others for organising the evening. Andrew started by discussing the importance of banding, monitoring wader numbers and some of the information that these activities provided. Gary encouraged people to join the group and informed everyone on what was involved in starting up a wader group. Peter focused on the activities of the group, especially collecting the count data. Maps of the Great Sandy Straight were shown to identify the roost sites where people could start counting waders. Allan Jeffrey has indicated that he will coordinate the counting and be a contact person.

A trip to the Boonaroo roost site was arranged for the Saturday morning and it was great to see so many keen birdos with their telescopes. A dedicated Ivell White and Polly Cutcliffe joined the group at the roost site after driving all the way from Brisbane. A few hours were spent identifying the waders on the mudflats. Even if only a few interested people start monitoring the waders, valuable information will be obtained for this region, which is sadly lacking at the moment.

The trip was worthwhile and everyone had a good time. The hotel accommodation and free street entertainment, during the night provided a lot of breakfast-table conversation. Just ask Gary Harch who stayed in the hotel with the all night disco bumping beneath his room!

Clean Up Australia Day (March 6)

by Margaret Bernard

Heavy rain deterred all but the hardiest to help clean up the Cabbage Tree Creek roost, site at Nudgee beach. Eight people in total turned up to represent the QWSG on Clean Up Australia Day, which was a rather disappointing turn-out since so much media attention was given to the event. Participants included Jan Bell, Diane O'Connor, John and Lorraine Harbison, Andrew Geering, Margaret Bernard and another QOS member who I apologise to for not writing his name down. I hope you participated in your local area or at least plan to do so next year; as it is a very worthwhile and satisfying event. The QWSG joined in with the Boondall Wetlands Management Committee to clean up the Nudgee Beach area. Approximately 80 people in total registered for the area. Our specific aim was to remove rubbish from the roost site where regular counting is done, along with cannon netting. Twenty five bags of rubbish, numerous old tyres, two 44 gallon drums and a plastic swimming pool were collected. The morning ended with a free barbecue provided by the Wetlands Committee.

World Environment Day

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland is celebrating World Environment Day (5 June) by holding a 'Champagne Brunch on the River' between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon. For further enquiries and bookings, please ring the WPSQ office on (07) xxx xxxx.