

QUEENSLAND WADER

Newsletter of the Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG0, a special interest group of the Queensland Ornithological Society Incorporated

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Asian Wetland Under Threat

Threats to fishponds around Hong Kong's Mai Po wetland are intensifying, after an Appeal Court overturned a decision to reject a proposed development scheme. Seven more rejected applications are now expected to go to the Appeal Court, the developers hoping to secure similar outcomes.

Mai Po marshes and the associated tidal flats, mangrove forests and traditional shrimp and fishponds around Deep Bay are the largest remaining wetlands in Hong Kong. Recent counts (January 1994) recorded over 55,000 waterbirds and an estimated 20-30,000 birds stop over on migration (this is an important wetland for birds migrating to and from Australia with a number of Australian flagged birds being seen). Approximately 25% of the world population of Black-faced Spoonbill spend the non-breeding season at Mai Po: other globally threatened species include Nordmann's Greenshank, Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Saunder's Gull.

Although the marshes themselves are now a nature reserve, the 1200 ha of fishponds that surround the marshland, important feeding sites for many of the birds, are protected. The Appeal Court's decision to allow an 18 hole golf course and a residential development to go ahead, despite being turned down twice, has opened the door to other developers that have had their schemes rejected. If similar outcomes were secured 24% of the fishpond area would be lost to private developers. Government schemes threaten another 17%, meaning that up to 40% of this area could disappear in the near future.

Just over 18 months ago, at the Ramsar Convention in Japan, the Government of Hong Kong acknowledged publicly that Mai Po Marshes and Inner Deep Bay were eligible for designation as a Ramsar site, and promised a decision on designation by the end of 1994. In October 1994 they announced that this decision would be delayed until mid-1995. While the government procrastinates one scheme has been approved and another is going before the Appeal Court in early 1995 and six proposals are waiting in the wings. Local environment groups are campaigning for urgent production of a wetland conservation strategy to protect these sites.

Due to the importance of this site to birds that migrate to Australia it is worthwhile that we should take some action. If you would like to help, please write to His Excellency The Governor, Christopher Patten, Government House, Upper Albert Road, Central Hong Kong, requesting the Hong Kong Government urgently to come up with a land use strategy, to integrate conservation and development around the Deep Bay area and to designate the wetlands around Deep Bay and Mai Po as a Ramsar site.

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C. R. A. P. to hit Brisbane

by Brett Lane

Brisbane is about to be subject to a bout of the Constantly Recurring Acronym Problem as international environmental organisations migrate from their breeding grounds in Switzerland, Nairobi, Kuala Lumpur and New York to descend upon usually sleepy Brisbane. The language in town will change dramatically in March 1996 as it hosts the Sixth Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands of International Significance (the Ramsar Convention).

International environmental parlance is littered with "in" acronyms in a way that rivals, if not surpasses, the best efforts of the boffins in Canberra. These acronyms stand for a host of organisations that move about the world extolling the virtues of environmental protection. This brief dictionary is aimed at providing a ready

translator for those not yet familiar with the rich lexicon of the international environmental meeting circuit, or with the organisations that will be involved in the conference.

Australia, as a rich country, does not have all that much to do with most of these organisations. Their main function is to channel training, expertise and funds for environmental protection from developed, rich countries into developing countries that have very limited expertise and even less money for such activities. This is a particularly relevant issue for Australian shorebird enthusiasts, as the protection of our shorebirds depends on the developing countries of Asia protecting wetlands.

IWRB (International Waterfowl and Wetland Research Bureau)

IWRB is a non-government body formed in Britain in 1953 and was the first international Organisation to promote wetland conservation. It did so by promoting the co-ordination of migratory waterbird studies and site protection across international borders. It was IWRB's vision that led to the formulation and promotion of the Ramsar convention, first formalised in 1971. This history explains the full name of the convention: "the Convention on the Protection of Wetlands of International Significance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat".

IWRB has headquarters at Sir Peter Scott's Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge in Britain. It runs projects in Europe and Africa and has recently established an active program in eastern Europe to assist ex-Communist countries in protecting and managing their last remaining wetlands. IWRB has been instrumental in compiling detailed inventories of the world's wetlands, including Western Europe, Africa, Asia, North America and South America. The most recent inventories to appear as a result of this initiative are for Australia (produced by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency) and Oceania (produced by the Asian Wetland Bureau).

AWB (Asian Wetland Bureau)

AWB is a non-government body formed in 1986 to promote the protection and sustainable use of wetlands in the Asia - Pacific region. It grew out of the "Interwader" project which first studied the migration of shorebirds in east Asia (between 1983 and 1986). This shift in emphasis came from a growing realisation that to protect the wetlands that shorebirds need, a whole range of wetland values must be protected across the region.

AWB has headquarters at the University - of Malaya, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It has been developing programs in India, Indochina, Malaysia, Indonesia and Oceania. It has received substantial support from the Australian Nature Conservation Agency and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau.

WA (Wetlands for the Americas)

WA is a non-government Organisation based in Massachusetts in the USA. It coordinated actions to conserve wetlands in the Americas. It was formed in 1991 and grew out of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), for similar reasons to the emergence of AWE from the Interwader project. The network has become a project within WA and is responsible for establishing a series of partner wetland reserves in North and South America and for encouraging inter-governmental co-ordination in their protection. This has proved to be a successful approach in achieving the appropriate protection of key staging areas along the migration routes of many migratory shorebirds.

The foregoing three organisations show how early concern about migratory waterbirds, particularly the shorebirds, have stimulated international concern for wetlands, leading to the establishment of three regional non-government organisations responsible for promotion; the protection of wetlands throughout the world, including their shorebird populations. These organisations have, between them, been particularly influential in assisting developing countries in the management of their wetlands.

IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources)

The IUCN is also known as the World Conservation Union. It is a non-government Organisation based in Gland, Switzerland. Its brief covers all nature conservation and about 25 percent of its budget is spent on promoting wetland conservation in developing countries. It is particularly active in initiating demonstration projects that show how governments and local communities can use wetland resources sustainably, and in assisting governments in developing countries in establishing better legal and institutional structures for environmental protection, including for wetlands.

WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)

WWF may be familiar to some as the World Wildlife Fund, a charitable organisation that raises money for the protection of endangered species. Consistent with the trend, it changed its name and moved into wider environmental protection issues, realising that wildlife conservation depended on tackling the big environmental issues, like ecologically sustainable development.

WWF International is based at Gland, Switzerland, and it has a number of national partner organisations (eg. WWF Australia, based in Sydney). It provides support to a range of organisations. As well, it runs its own

programs in developing countries that aim to protect natural resources and endangered wildlife. WWF International has provided considerable support to AWB, and WWF Australia has supported shorebird work by the RAOU and AWSG.

The Ramsar Bureau

The Ramsar Bureau is the official secretariat to the convention, responsible for ensuring that the convention is implemented and for serving the needs of member countries (all 83 of them). It is based at Gland, Switzerland, in the IUCN Building. It is an inter-governmental organisation, controlled by the member governments of the convention. It will play a crucial role in the Organisation of the Brisbane Conference. The Ramsar Bureau administers a fund made up of national contributions (calculated according to national wealth) for supporting wetland protection activities at sites nominated on the list of wetlands of international significance. (One of the conditions of signing and ratifying the convention is that member countries nominate at least one wetland of international importance and take all possible steps to protect that wetland.)

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)

The United Nations Environment Programme was established in the early 1970's and is responsible for promoting global co-ordination in addressing environmental problems. It is based in Nairobi, Kenya, with the Asia - Pacific office being based in Bangkok, Thailand. As part of the UN, it is an inter-governmental body which works closely with and through national governments to promote environmental conservation. It has a comparatively small budget although it has provided some support to wetland conservation activities related to the Ramsar convention.

UNESCO (United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation)

UNESCO has headquarters in Paris and, among its many functions, administers the World Heritage Convention. As some wetland areas are covered by this convention, UNESCO has some role to play in wetland conservation, particularly in developing countries.

For example, UNESCO is assisting in preparing a nomination to the World Heritage Convention of the Great Lake in Cambodia, one of the most significant waterbird habitats in south-east Asia, and a crucial part of the Mekong fishery which provides over 50% of the protein needs of over 40 million people in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

ANCA (Australian Nature Conservation Agency)

ANCA is Australia's national government body responsible for wetlands (and many other nature conservation matters), and for working with state conservation agencies in implementing Australia's obligations under the Ramsar Convention. ANCA issued the invitation for Australia to host the 1996 conference and has overall responsibility, together with the Ramsar Bureau, for the technical agenda of the conference. ANCA has provided support to a range of bodies related to wetland and shorebird conservation. It provided the core support to the RAOU for the shorebird studies program in the first half of the 1980's and has assisted Interwader and AWB shorebird research and conservation activities.

More information on the relevant organisations can be obtained by writing to them. Contact Brett Lane (289 0263) if you wish to obtain addresses.

A dream fulfilled

by Jill Denning

The ultimate uplifting experience for a devout wader-watcher must surely be to witness the departure or arrival of waders on migration.

I can now happily say that I have experienced both, and on each occasion I have, been deeply moved. I recall the tears that welled in my eyes when, in two consecutive autumns in Caloundra, Whimbrel circled, calling, over the entrance of the Pumicestone Passage at sunset and headed north.

I now write from the Broome Bird Observatory (2619/94) as three weeks of wader watching comes to an end for my husband, James Hall, and myself. Our visit was carefully timed to coincide with the arrival of the migrants from the north. On September 8, I settled myself down at Crab Creek, Roebuck Bay, at 6:00am, and counted 27 Black-tailed Godwit feeding diligently. No other waders were in the area. Slowly over the next hour I realised that I must surely be witnessing the arrival of migrating birds. By 7:00am there were 300 Black-tails, and still no other waders. Unlike waders moving from site to site locally, these godwit arrived singly, or in twos or threes, the maximum group being six. They all arrived from the direction of the sea. As soon as each

landed it began feeding instantly, and did not stop to preen or loaf whilst I watched. All birds wore partial breeding plumage.

Curious, I repeated the exercise the following morning. At 6:30am in the same location there were 230 Black-tails. At 6:45am, there were 403. At 7:00 am, there were 578, and as before, the manner of their arrival was in very small numbers. At this stage the birds were spreading behind mangroves so that I was no longer able to count but they just continued to arrive. That evening at low tide I passed the site without a counter of scope, but estimated close to 1,000 Black-tailed Godwit were feeding.

On the third day it was a different story. At peak count there were only 430 Black-tails, and many were loafing or preening. Many arrived at the site in larger groups in the common manner of waders moving, locally.

I discussed my observations with the people at the bird observatory, and they confirmed that what I had described for Days One and Two was classic wader arrival behaviour, and that by Day Three the birds were seemingly more settled, and ready to move on.

Update on the QWSG Banding Project

by Peter Driscoll

The QWSG runs a banding project to monitor wader populations and movements in Queensland. The specific objectives are:

- a) To determine local movements and site fidelity of migratory and resident wader species,
- b) To determine migratory routes and timing of migration and moult of migratory species,
- c) To determine population trends, age structure, and morphological characteristics and variation of populations,
- d) To complement an intensive program of high tide roost counts that aims to determine seasonal and spatial variation in habitat utilisation and wader numbers.

Cannon netting is the primary method of capture and together with regular banding Pied Oystercatchers are being colour banded and a selection of migratory species are being fitted with dark green leg flags. More recently, cannon nets have been used to capture Eastern Curlew for fitting with radio transmitters.

Cannon netting locations and dates for July 1993 to February 1995 are as follows:

Reeders Point, Moreton Island (MI)	24/7/93
Dynah Island at Nudgee Beach (NB)	4/9/93
St Helena Island (SH)	19/9/93
Dux Creek, Bribie Island) (DC)	17/10/93
Yamba with NSW WSG (their records of 268 captures)	14/11/93
Fisherman Island (near Bishop Island) (BI)	4/12/93
Dinah Island at Nudgee Beach (NB)	15/1/94
Mirapool, Moreton Island (MI)	29/1/94
Fisherman Island (near Bishop Island) (BI)	8/5/94
Dinah Island at Nudgee Beach (NB)	22/5/94
Amity Point on Nth Stradbroke (AM)	26/6/94
Dinah Island at Nudgee Beach (NB)	27/8/94
Mirapool, Moreton Island (MI)	4/10/94
Mirapool, Moreton Island (MI)	7/10/94
Amity Point on Nth Stradbroke (AM)	13/10/94
Dinah Island at Nudgee Beach (NB)	20/11/94
Mirapool, Moreton Island (MI)	2/12/94
Mirapool, Moreton Island (MI)	20/12/94
Little Sand Hills Moreton Island (SN)	23/1/95
Yaamba with NSW WSG (their records of 6 captures)	11/2/95
Inskip Point (IP)	27/2/95

Four of the outings listed above were with other organisations, ie. the NSW Wader Study Group at Yamba in November 1993 and February 1995 (banding records not included in the table below), the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland to North Stradbroke Island in June, and Qld Dept of Environment and Heritage to Inskip Point in February 1995. See Table 3 for a summary of banding results for the year.

Over 70 people have been on one or more trips throughout the year. Some individuals have come from out of Brisbane to cannon net and to see how feasible it might be to start projects in other parts of Queensland. They include Robyn Wilson (University of Central Qld), Don Arnold (Qld DEH in Gladstone) and Paul Clayton (James Cook University).

Registered banders collaborating in QWSG (A8017) activities include Peter Driscoll (A778), Andrew Geering (C1899), Gary Harch (C1717), Roy Sonnenburg (A1607) and David Stewart (A906). Other banders who have participated at least once over the last 12 months include Julien Bielewicz (registered?), Paul Clayton (registered?), Pat Comben (C1870), Richard Johnson (A1482), Brett Lane, Lester Roy (C1712), Jeremy Thompson, and Robyn Wilson (A1477).

The data are being entered on computer and transferred every six months to the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme on disk. So far data analysis has been superficial and reporting on the results limited to tabulation of recaptures and related comments in various reports. More detailed analyses of the banding data are currently being undertaken.

The details in this newsletter of band recoveries (Table 2 and Figure 2) and long distance sightings of flagged birds (Table 1 and Figure 1) are gradually adding to our knowledge of the migratory behaviour of waders from a local perspective, but also in the context information gathered from throughout the flyway.

Some points of interest include:

1. The Ruddy Turnstone recaptured was one of only 13 banded in New Zealand. The same bird was caught again in New Zealand one month later by the New Zealand Wader Study Group
2. The Red Knot recoveries include two from New Zealand that were banded by the New Zealand Wader Study Group.
3. The Great Knot recoveries include three birds banded by QWSG which were recovered in Manila as dead birds.
4. The Bar-tailed Godwit recoveries include a juvenile bird banded in Alaska and recaptured on Moreton Island the following year and another bird banded by QWSG and recaptured in Manukau Harbour, New Zealand by the NZ Wader Study Group
5. There have been many sightings of green leg flagged waders, banded in Moreton Bay and seen again locally or overseas, including several sightings in New Zealand and two recent sightings from Japan of a Great Knot and an Eastern Curlew.

Table 1. Sightings of waders leg-flagged in Moreton Bay and seen more than 100 km away.

Date	Location	Observers
Bar-tailed Godwit		
28-4-92	ariake Sea, Japan	Jeremy Thompson & K. Komizo
29-4-92	Ashley Estuary, Canterbury, NZ	Sheila Petch & Kathleen Harrison
1-10-93	Kolan River north of Bundaberg, Qld	Peter Driscoll
Dec '93/ Mar '94	Homebush Bay	Ian Taylor
8-2-94 to 22-2-94	Brooklands Lagoon, Christchurch, NZ	Johanna Pierre
1-4-94	Brooklands Lagoon, Christchurch, NZ	Johanna Pierre
23-4-94	Sth of Access Bay, Firth of Thames, NZ	Barry Heather & Folkert Nieuwland
22-5-94	Miranda, NZ	Tony Harraken
Red Knot		
7-6-93	Kidd's Karaka, Manukau Harbour, NZ	D. Lawrie & Tony Habraken
23-10-94	Manawatu Estuary NZ	Colin Miskelly
1-1-95	Kidd's Karaka, Manukau, NZ	Tony Habraken
2-1-95	Jordan's, Kiapara, NZ	D Lawrie
Great Knot		
8-5-94	Ikawatsu, Ise Bay, Japan	Yoshimitsu Shigeta & Masou Watarai
21-5-94	Yahagifurukawa Estuary, Ise Bay, Japan	Yoshimitsu Shigeta & Masou Watarai
Eastern Curlew		
11 to 23-5-94	Yoshinogawa Estuary, Tokushima. Japan	Yoshimitsu Shigeta & Masou Watarai

Table 2: Long distance recovery records of waders banded in Moreton Bay by QWSG or recovered in Moreton Bay. Distances are in kilometres, directions in degrees.

Date	Banding/recovery locations (<i>Moreton Bay Loc's in italics</i>)	Distance	Direct.	Days
	Ruddy Turnstone			
28-10-91 19-9-93	Miranda, Firth of Thames, New Zealand <i>St Helena Island</i>	2324	292	692
	Bar-tailed Godwit			
7-7-89 14-4-91	<i>Amity Spit</i> Nakdong Estuary, Korea	7421	338	646
25-7-92 24-7-93	Kgun Lake, Yukon Delta Wildlife Refuge, Alaska <i>Moreton Island</i>	9920	189	364
3-5-93 7-3-94	<i>Nudgee Beach</i> Sandringham Bay, Botany Bay, NSW	757	194	393
	Curlew Sandpiper			
5-5-90 10-1-93	Szu-Tsao Tai Nan, Taiwan <i>Fisherman Islands</i>	6645	146	981
21-10-90 1-5-93	<i>Fisherman Islands</i> Saltpans of Taggu Tianjin City, China	8264	332	923
4-9-93 26-11-94	<i>Nudgee Beach</i> Inverloch, 150km SE of Melbourne	1424	207	448
	Red Knot			
4-12-88 21-10-90	Kooragang Island Area, Newcastle, NSW <i>Fisherman Islands</i>	612	14	686
23-2-89 17-10-93	South east Kaipara Harbour, New Zealand <i>Dux Creek, Bribie Island</i>	2258	292	1697
21-10-90 7-3-93	<i>Fisherman Islands</i> South east Kaipara Harbour, New Zealand	2228	122	868
21-10-90 7-3-93	<i>Fisherman Islands</i> South east Kaipara Harbour, New Zealand	2228	122	868
3-11-90 4-9-93	Miranda, Firth of Thames, New Zealand <i>Nudgee Beach</i>	2342	291	1036
17-11-90 4-7-92	<i>Luggage Point</i> Tamararie Firth of Thames, New Zealand	2341	123	595
	Great Knot			
3-3-91 1-5-94	<i>Fisherman Islands</i> Manila Bay Seashore, Philippines	5821	319	1155
20-3-93 15-94	<i>Fisherman Islands</i> Manila Bay Seashore, Philippines	5821	319	407
3-5-93 1-5-94	<i>Fisherman Islands</i> Manila Bay Seashore, Philippines	5821	319	363

Table 3. Captures for the year for each species and notes that highlight some of the more interesting features of these banding records.

Common name	Number banded	No. Recapt/ Recovered	Total	no. leg flagged
Gull-billed Tern	1		1	
Caspian Tern	1		1	
Little Tern	40	1	41	
Ruddy Turnstone	32	1	33	32
Pied Oystercatcher	13	2	15	
Lesser Sand Plover	38		36	36
Double-banded Plover	31		31	
Greater Sand Plover	5		5	5
Red-capped Plover	26		26	
Eastern Curlew	62		62	62

Whimbrel	3		3	3
Bar-tailed Godwit	577	34	611	501
Grey-tailed Tattler	67		67	67
Curlew Sandpiper	19		19	19
Red-necked Stint	245		245	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	8		8	
Red Knot	51	3	54	47
Great Knot	164	32	196	159
Total	1383	73	1456	931

Walk-a-thon for Eastern Curfew study

by Peter Driscoll

During October last year, QWSG ran an Earthwatch Expedition which saw the attachment of the first radio transmitters to Eastern Curlews. Rosie Broderick, of St Dominic's Priory College in North Adelaide, was an enthusiastic member of that team and has sustained her enthusiasm. In fact, Rosie has just given us a great financial and moral boost and has worked hard for wader research well after leaving the company of fellow fieldworkers.

Back in Adelaide, she organised a walk-a-thon in conjunction with St Dominic's College to raise money for what she saw was being done in Moreton Bay. Despite lousy weather on the day of the walk last December, we recently received a cheque for about \$400. The donations were tax deductible because the funds are held in the QOSI Research Fund. The money means a lot to us but equally important is Rosie's vote of confidence in what we are doing. She has created public awareness of the birds, especially amongst young people, engendered public good will towards bird groups and substantially improved our chances of gaining other funding. The management committees of both QWSG and QOSI extend their appreciation to Rosie and other Earthwatch members, and to all those who participated in the walk-a-thon including the staff and students of St Dominic's.

All eight radio transmitters are currently on Eastern Curlews that will hopefully start on their northward migration before the end of March. Three birds have had the transmitters on for five months and the other five for about half this time. All birds have been monitored over the summer months and the trial study has so far been most informative. If the birds leave Moreton Bay, the next step is to seek funding for use of satellite technology. Watch this space!

One Editor Has His Say

Queensland Wader has gone through tough times, but has rebounded strongly. The number of contributors declined to one or two stalwarts, and consequently, because of heavy workloads, the newsletter came out later and later. It is so late this time that we have missed the summer issue. After a plea for help at a recent management committee meeting, members have responded splendidly and my personal opinion is that this issue of *Queensland Wader* is one of the best I can say this without any feelings of immodesty, as I have contributed very little. Maybe I am suffering from the 'chef's syndrome' - it tastes better when you don't cook it. Congratulations to the contributors. I think there is plenty of interesting reading. But don't stop there! Keep the contributions coming in.

Please note the new address of the editors on the front page. After a three month delay in building, we are finally moving into our new house. Why the delay - well that's a long story. One slow cannon netting day I'll tell you why.

Identification of Mongolian and Large Sand Plovers

by Brett Lane

Queensland supports the largest numbers of Mongolian Plovers (*Charadrius mongolus*) in Australia. It also supports sizeable numbers of Large Sand Plovers (*C. leschnaultii*) in places. It is not unusual for the two species to be found together, either roosting on the same beach of running and stopping, in characteristic plover fashion, across sandy or muddy shores, in search of crabs and worms.

When watching or counting shorebirds, some observers, confronted with the Mongolian Plover and/or Large Sand Plover, record them as unidentified sand plovers. This is because they can be difficult to separate in the field, particularly if good views are not obtained. The purpose of this brief note is to assist shorebird watchers in distinguishing between these two species which are routinely encountered during shorebird watching in Queensland and, indeed, throughout northern Australia.

Both species are plovers, with the characteristic large head and eyes, adapted for visual detection of prey, and the short, stocky bill, for snatching food from the surface of sand and mud. In non-breeding plumage, they are generally grey-brown above and white below, with varying amounts of grey around the eyes and earcoverts. In breeding plumage, they are also similar, with bright chestnut breast and napes, white throats and black and white markings around the eyes and forehead.

The table below summarises the differences in key features. These differences can be seen when the two species are seen together.

To summarise, the Large Sand Plover is less abundant in Queensland than the Mongolian Plover. It is slightly taller and more upright in stance, paler around the face and breast has paler upperpart, a narrow wing bar in flight and moves about noticeably slower than the Mongolian Plover. These differences can be subtle, but the length and robustness of the bill, which gives the Large Sand Plover a slightly more aggressive "look in the eye", is a reliable feature. Naturally, at least two or three, and preferably all, of the features mentioned in the table should be seen to confirm identification.

In September and February - April, birds moulting out of and into breeding plumage, respectively, can be seen. The Mongolian Plover in breeding plumage shows more extensive rufous underparts whereas in the Large Sand Plover the rufous is confined to a comparatively narrow breast band. Large Sand Plovers moult into breeding plumage and depart for the breeding grounds about a month earlier than Mongolian Plovers. Therefore, they can be seen with almost full breeding plumage as early as mid- to late February. Mongolian Plovers in full breeding plumage can be seen as late as the first week in May.

Finally, perhaps the most reliable difference between them is their shape, a difference eloquently summarised by M J Rogers in the journal *British Birds*, in 1982:

"I see the difference between them as lying in their character. The Larger Sand Plover [Mongolian] is quite a pleasing little bird. The Greater [Large Sand] strikes me as an ugly brute, with a body too small for its legs, a head too large for its body and a bill too large for its head. Perhaps, like a camel, the Greater Sand Plover [Large Sand] was designed by a committee?"

When the two species are seen together, such as in a mixed roosting flock, the Large Sand Plover stands "a short half-head taller than the Mongolian. With practice, it is not too difficult to identify them on their own but like all shorebird identification, it is important to obtain good views, ideally through a telescope or, if through binoculars, then at close range.

FEATURE	MONGOLIAN PLOVER	LARGE SAND PLOVER
Bill	Stocky, straight between half and two thirds the length of the head.	Very sturdy, straight almost the length of the head.
Facial Markings (on white background)	Dark grey ear coverts and lores, small white forehead; face appears darker.	Mid-grey ear coverts and lores often discontinuous; more extensive white forehead; face appears paler.
Stance	Typical hunched plover stance.	Typical stance but slightly more upright.
Breast markings	Varying narrow brown markings at sides of breast, often meeting to form a narrow	Varying narrow to broad grey-brown markings at sides of breast

	breast band.	rarely forming a complete breast band.
Upperparts	Brown.	Paler grey-brown.
Wing markings	No wing bar.	Narrow white wing bar.
Behaviour	Fast, run-stop-run plover movements while feeding.	Slower run-stop-run movements while feeding.

To St. Helena

by Diana O'Connor

When I joined the Queensland Wader Study Group, it was with some temerity, as I had done little wader watching and like most people, I found them very difficult to identify. So after I had done a couple of cannon netting outings, I decided to ask Andrew Geering if I could accompany him on one of his regular counts of the high tide roosts that he monitors at St. Helena Island.

The next suitable time was the week-end of the all Australian wader count. However, the Saturday night before we were to go, he rang to say the boat that would have taken us over was busy helping with firefighting on Stradbroke Island and we would have to do it the following weekend.

Next Sunday, the day dawned rainy and windy, and we had little option but to go, as we were trying to do the count as near to the date of the national count as possible. We were at the wharf at 6:00am as planned and the enthusiastic young ranger sped across to St. Helena with the square-nosed boat slapping the waves and spray coming over us as well as the rain. I regretted not putting on my waterproof trousers before boarding.

However we reached the jetty in no time and were presented with a row of terns sitting on the rails in the wind, apparently quite happy with the wild conditions. You should be able to buy binos with automatic wipers for these conditions. One of the best rewards was a twitch for me - my first Wandering Tattler, who frequents the rocks of the jetty. We also had Common Little, Caspian and Crested Terns. Approaching the beach and trying to count with our arms and scopes buffeted by the wind, we had the delights of seeing Bar-tailed Godwits, Pied Oystercatchers, Red-necked Stints, and Grey Plover. Biro's are no good on wet paper - pencils come into their own by the beach on in the rain.

Fortunately for us, having walked our sodden way up to the rangers' house, we were given use of an old vehicle to go around the various roost sites. We were busy for several hours counting each of these sites. We even had dry periods intermittently. The last site took us past a hill side with some trees and numerous weed species. Sadly, while the island was used as a prison, all the vegetation that would have given escapees cover, was removed. So the vegetation is much degraded. I can assure you that the swamp area is still rich in native mozzies and sand flies and I would recommend long trousers and sleeves for a repeat of my adventure. The wind was rising and the senior ranger recommended the flattest time for a return trip would be low tide, so we accepted his invitation to a roof over our heads till then. I had a pleasant time hearing of his time spent working in Chitwan National Park in Nepal. At 2:00pm, we boarded the boat to go back to the mainland.

We had lovely views of the Bay and distant mountains in tattered grey and white. I felt washed of city life for a few hours and renewed by nature's energy and wildness. We had seen 27 species with the wader study group's telescope and I am now a little more competent as a shore-birder from the experience.

The people who do counts are happy for other members to come on counts with them. Some sites are more accessible than others and would take less of your Sunday morning. Please contact Ivell Whyte on if you would like to improve your identification skills. As a group we shall be much more effective if we have more people who are able to tell a Red-necked Stint from a Pelican and a little Tern from a Common Tern. Give it a few tries. Just recognise that it can be addictive as well.

Urgent action required

The Ramsar Convention is the world's foremost wetlands conservation mechanism. The Conference of Parties in Brisbane in March 1996 is a great opportunity for Australia to demonstrate good wetlands conservation, or to be badly embarrassed. Most Australian governments do not like being embarrassed, so the upcoming convention is a good opportunity to encourage them to conserve wetlands.

Good wetlands conservation requires funding. Unfortunately, the amount allocated by the Commonwealth Government which is often passed onto the states in grants, is small and getting smaller. Without more money your help is urgently needed to ensure we have the resources to conserve wetlands.

Wetlands and conservation budgets

The Wetlands Unit in the Australian nature Conservation Agency has been funded by taking conservation funds away from other areas. Next year the Unit will only have enough money to run the conference. The entire ANCA land purchase fund for all now parks is just \$4.2 million per year and will be totally cut after next financial year.

The entire Commonwealth 'Environment Program' is just \$181 million and is due to be cut by 40.3% in the next three years. By contrast government spending will rise by 13.3%. Just 0.15% of government spending goes to the 'Environment Program'. The 1995/96 budget will be decided in mid-April and announced in May. In the next few weeks the Prime Minister, Treasurer and Minister for Finance will decide what to allocate to conservation, including wetlands.

What we want

The Australian Government need to allocate a lot more money to conservation. Opinion polls show that most Australians want environment spending doubled. Politicians often are not interested in the fine detail - this is probably all you'll need to say. For those who want more detail, this summarises the funding Peak Conservation Organisations have asked for that affect wetlands:

\$0.5 M Wetland management plans;
\$10 M Implementation of management plans;
\$0.7 M Studies and assessment;
\$0.3 M Update wetlands directory;
\$2 M/2yrs Ramsar conference;
\$2 M/2yrs Community awareness and training;
\$0.35 M/2 yrs National Wetlands Policy;
\$4 M International Liason;
\$3 M/3yrs Waterwatch.

In addition funds are sought for land purchased for reserves (\$200 M), coastal conservation, and to assist aboriginal land managers, which would assist wetlands conservation in particular.

The environment department will have now submitted its funding request. This information is not public. Our job is to ensure they get whatever they sought.

1. Write to the following Ministers who will have a key role in allocating funds (all care of Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600):

* Prime Minister, The Hon. Paul Keating MP; Treasurer, The Hon Ralph Willis MP; The Minister for Finance, The Hon. Kim Beazley MP. These guys make the hard decisions about where the funds are allocated. Other politicians you talk to should also be asked to write to these three.

*The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator The Hon. Gareth Evans QC. Reminding the Minister that Australia's international standing would be jeopardised by a poor performance in the lead up to the Conference.

* The Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Senator The Hon. Bob Collins. Reminding the Minister that Ramsar is a 'wise use' convention that should be used to maintain and enhance Australia's fisheries resources.

* The Hon. Robert Tickner MP, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Remind the Minister that many significant wetlands are Aboriginal freehold land or subject to native title. Consequently the Convention could assist in better recognition and resourceing of indigenous peoples' role in managing wetlands.

2. Write, ring or visit your federal government member or state senators. If you are really keen, ALP members of state parliament should also be approached. Emphasise your local, electorate concern and ask them to write to the three budget Ministers in support of funding.

3. Write to your local papers and outline the problem and the solution.

4. Consider what other people from different groups would support Ramsar and seek their support Commercial and amateur fishing organisations for example.

Remember, you do not need to be an expert (even though you are likely to know vastly more than any politician on this subject) because these people make decisions largely based on opinions held by people like

you. Keep your correspondence polite and concise. Always ask them to undertake a task for you to ensure they do some work, such as write to another decision maker on your behalf and send you a copy.

Send interesting replies to me at WWF, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx NSW 2xxx.

Good luck

Jan-de Pittock, Conservation Officer, WWF (02) xxx xxxx

Fundraising

Diana O'Connor is organising a night of activities, including a showing of slides, to raise money for the QWSG. Do you leave a space that could fit about 40 people for this event? If so, please ring Diana on xxx xxxx.

Slide Library

Do you have any slides of cannon netting trips that could be used for training beginners? If so, please ring Peter Driscoll on xxx xxx. QWSG will refund costs for copying of slides.

Lytton Protest

A new diesel fuelling station for Queensland Rail is being built next to the Lytton roosts. There will be a protest meeting at 10.00am, Sunday 9th April, along Port Drive, near Fishermans Islands.

Qwsg And Qdeh Survey Waders In The Great Sandy Strait

by Peter Driscoll

On Sunday 26th February 1995, the Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG) in collaboration with Alan Jeffery and the Maryborough office of the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage (QDEH), mounted a count of waders at high tide roost sites throughout the Great Sandy Strait. Assistance also came from the Port Curtis Wader Study Group and the Rainbow Beach office of QDEH. The roost survey was followed up on Monday with cannon netting at Inskip Point.

On Saturday morning an aerial reconnaissance and wader count was made that included the region between Tin Can Inlet to Moon Point (Fraser Island). On the basis of this flight and previous survey information roost sites were identified, and included most of the major roosts and many of the minor ones. With few exceptions these sites were then surveyed and the coverage of the area was almost complete except for one or two large roosts and small congregations of waders, such as Terek Sandpipers and Eastern Curlew, and species that roost mostly in mangroves such as the Grey-tailed Tattler and Whimbrel. Counts of species in mangroves were made where they were encountered during the course of the survey.

Sites were approached on foot by car or by boat. Five boats were used and at least 38 people participated in 11 teams that recorded counts from 25 sites. Full details of the results will be published in the Sunbird. It was a very successful exercise and testimony to the skills and effectiveness of amateur bird watchers. The participants included (I apologise for any omissions):

Name		Team
Fred	Armbrust	F
Don	Arnold	G
Margaret	Bernard	C
Fay	Bielewicz	J
Julian	Bielewicz	J
Leanne	Bowden	B
Phil	Cross	I
Linda	Cross	I
Marc	Dargusch	E
Peter	Driscoll	H
Andrew	Geering	D
Ian	Gynther	B
Joyce	Harding	K
Sandra	Harding	E
Cyril	Hembrow	C

Alan	Jeffery	A
Bob	James	A
Karyll	James	A
Fiona	Johnson	A
Arthur	Keates	I
Cheryl	Keates	I
Bruce	Knuckey	D
Brett	Lane	E
Nola	Marr	C
Greg	Miller	B
David	Milton	H
Greg	Nye	C
Diana	O'Connor	G
Sue	Olsson	B
Paul	O'Neill	D
Tony	Rowland	F
David	Stewart	C
Jeremy	Thompson	F
Peter	Tierney	A
Ian	Webb	E
Ivell	Whyte	K
Jim	Whyte	K
Karen	Wright	F

The results of the aerial survey are as follows (as taken and collated by Brett Lane):

Eastern Curlew	4597	Cormorant	331
Bar-tailed Godwit	10430	Australian Pelican	162
Medium wader	9950	Egret/Spoonbill/Ibis type	450
Greenshank type wader	305	Gulls/terns	1675
Grey-tailed Tattler/Terek	826	Black-necked Stork	1
Whimbrel	76		
Small wader	216		
Pied Oystercatcher	664		
<u>Total waders</u>	27064	<u>Total other birds on roosts</u>	2619
<u>Total</u>	22683		

Some summary results of the ground survey of 25 roosts sites are as follows:

Bar-tailed Godwit	13359
Eastern Curlew	4059
Whimbrel	1819
Grey-tailed Tattler	1832
Mongolian Plover	1832
other migratory waders	5122
<u>Total migratory waders</u>	28023
<u>Total resident waders</u>	1377
<u>Total other birds on roosts</u>	4204

Great Sandy Straits Census - Lakins

by Ivell Whyte

The inclement weather of the last weekend of February simply couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of volunteers from QWSG and people from QDEH as we arrived at Boonooroo for the wader census of the Great Sandy Strait region.

Jim and I turned up on Saturday afternoon with the Stessl in tow. True to form, the right indicator light on the boat trailer wasn't working for us and we'd driven up from Brisbane trying not to make any right hand turns or overtake any other vehicles.

Peter Driscoll and Brett Lane from the wader study group and Alan Jeffery from QDEH Maryborough had already done an aerial survey of the wader roosts on the previous day, so it was quickly down to business. Leaders were allocated sites and team members assigned.

Because access to Lakin's property between Boonooroo and Maaroom was uncertain a 4-wheel drive was thought necessary, so Jim and I were allocated the sites there.

Saturday afternoon was for reconnaissance and a preliminary count if possible. Armed with some local knowledge provided by the caravan park owner at Boonooroo, and accompanied by Joyce Harding, we set out to find a way in to our count sites, which were to extend about 2 kilometres along the foreshore in front of Lakin's homestead. We also intended asking permission of the owners to enter the property.

We failed dismally on all fronts. The property gate was locked, so we couldn't drive in.

Subsequent phone calls to the Lakins were unsuccessful. No-one could tell us how far it was in to the roost sites from the property boundary.

With assurances from Alan Jeffery, however, that the National Park Ranger from Poona knew the Lakins quite well, and that he felt they wouldn't mind our presence on the property, we decided to walk in the following day. After all, we thought, it couldn't be any more than a couple of kilometres.

We were wrong. It must have been closer to five.

Now, Joyce had taken up birdwatching because she had found that bushwalking was becoming too solid for her. She had volunteered to come with us because she thought that we would be driving her in. She was wrong. But she was wonderful, hiking in without complaint. The open wallum at the entrance to the property merged into heavily wooded eucalypt forest before opening out onto a clearing at the homestead, which was adjacent to the shoreline.

A break in the mangroves on the foreshore allowed a clear view through to Fraser Island. In this gap, a lightly vegetated sandbar protected several tidal mudflats, which were absolutely ideal roost sites. Joyce remained here to count, getting a total of 1602 birds from 19 species, including a beach thick-knee.

Jim and I beaded along the extensive mangrove fringed claypan to the south.

As a relative newcomer to wader watching, I had never seen more than a handful of Eastern Curlew at the one time, so to me, the sight of a flock of 423 all together, was quite incredible. (There were 502 in total on the unvegetated saltpan behind the mangroves).

Neither had I seen so many red-capped plovers before - 220 in all, running and feeding in the wet mud, as were a large number of red-necked stints. There were also Lesser Golden Plover, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and a couple of Pied Oystercatchers. Whimbrels that had gathered at the very southern tip of the claypan unfortunately took flight and an accurate count of these wasn't possible.

Time was running short, so we reluctantly left the claypan and headed back to join Joyce and check any possible sites to the north of the homestead.

A quick reconnaissance of the claypan and mangroves toward Maaroom turned up only a handful of Whimbrel, but thousands of mosquitoes, that had obviously not been told what insect repellent was for.

A quick exit was in order.

The walk back to the vehicle was a wee bit slow. The 'scopes felt heavy and the legs weary, and the wildflowers in the wallum kept calling to us to rest and look at them.

None of us - Joyce included - would have missed out on the experience though.

Back at the caravan park, Tony Rowland hadn't had a chance to look at the trailer lights (I'm not even sure now that we told him about them). We headed back to Brisbane with the Stessl, indicator light still not working, once again trying not to make any right hand turns or overtake any traffic.

The only sign of anyone in authority on the way home, however, was Gary Harch's wife, Jennifer, bearing down on us with her Doberman, as we pushed the boat back under the hall. We hadn't met previously, and she thought we were taking off with the Stessl, not returning it.

Wader study group trips - there's nothing like them.

A vignette from the Great Sandy Straits Survey

by Diana O'Connor

0415 hours. The cabin awakes.

0515 hours. Don arrived as arranged and we drive the "car-mit-canoe" to Poona through the grey, wet pre-dawn.

0545 hours. We put the canoe in, attach the outrigger and motor and slide out into Poona Bay and turn west up the mouth of the creek. We follow a few Whimbrel that are still flying in as we are not quite sure where the roost is (in fact we thought it was farther up the creek than where it actually turns out to be). However, the delight of motoring up beside mangroves at flood tide is some compensation for our wasted time and we find a few birds on the salt-flat on the southern shore. We can take the canoe in though a break in the mangroves to walking depth. Don tells me the lovely grey mangroves are *Avicennia marina*. We see a few plovers, godwits, Whimbrels and curlews. We also find scattered Whimbrels roosting in the trees, instead of roosting on the ground in groups - new information for me. I realise that our counts will miss hundreds of birds dispersed like this in the mangroves. Returned from this reconnoitre, we pass through a second mangrove

channel to the south, nose through a gap in the trees and come across the main roost on a rounded point with an outer line of large mangroves, which protect an inner clay pan edged with metro high young mangroves. We grab the telescope, secure the canoe and wade 100 metres in and begin our count. Bar-tailed Godwits, dozens; Whimbrel, dozens; Eastern Curlews, dozens; Red-necked Stints, Mongolian Plovers, Greenshanks, Pelicans, all in dozens. Thank goodness Don can tell the difference between Greenshanks 100 metres away and Marsh Sandpipers 200 metres away! I regretfully just accept his word and realise that I'll need to learn with birds that are 100 metres or closer I before I can do the more distant ones. The young Jabiru, sorry, Black-headed Stork, is unmistakable and lovely. Once these are all recorded on my tape, we wade back to the boat and pass south towards Shark Inlet

We've only gone metres when we disturb a flock of Grey-tailed Tattlers sitting in the large grey mangroves. We estimate 50, then another lot of 100 and then another 55 fly off. Don tells me that the tattlers and Terek Sandpipers often roost in the trees in large groups - more news for me and another source of error in a count of roost sites - you would need a boat to go around us and settle a little way on in the trees back from the ocean edge this time. Some of the *Avicennia* here are 9 metres across and have large horizontal branches a metre above the water that you could sit on and have a picnic with water all around you. It is so beautiful out here on a mild grey day that poetry flows into my mind, displacing the angular memories of daily life. Not surprisingly we have fewer nature poets these days with our city living. A pair of sea-eagles comes into view as we are counting an extension of the roost and suddenly 4 Eastern Curlews becomes 30 as they rise for a few moments in concern!

We are nearly rounding the point into Shark Inlet when our sweet motor coughs and dies. The roost is still 1 kilometre away. The rain comes in sheets and the wind is quite strong now. What to do? By the time we get there the birds may be spreading out to feed. Then we shall have to paddle out of the bay against the waves, wind and another 3 kilometres back to Poona. Don decides enough is enough and with our brief only half completed, we regretfully turn around. After fuelling with fruit cake instead of petroleum, we wade along the mangrove edge, side on into the waves. As my thigh muscles complain that I hadn't prepared them for this, I mentally design feet that fold well back to lessen the drag when walking in water. We calculate that it will take us an hour to get back to the boat ramp. We tire of walking and decide paddling will be more efficient, so we hop back in and Don, chivalrous as he is, corrects the course as I, in the bow, paddle left or right as my arms dictate.

Rain squalls drench us, but the wind being on our stern quarter is now a considerable help, as are the waves, though we can't plane. We radio Fay and Julian to say what has happened and that we'll be an hour. In fact with the assistance of the elements, it only takes 35 minutes till we reach our passengers. It has been the most enjoyable half day I've spent for months.

IF we do it again next season, I promise it will be much more efficient with the local knowledge gained. And please, next time, can we see if there are enough people to hire a plane for a survey flight on the Saturday - it wouldn't cost each of us too much - and I'd love to see the Straits from the air!

Oh, and what about a weekend when high tide is 8.30 or 9.00 am? But perhaps that wouldn't be as beautiful.

Clarence River - Yamba, NSW (11/12 February)

by Fiona Johnson

If you were looking for the perfect weekend away with an introduction to the joys of cannon netting with balmy weather, co-operative birds and plentiful social activity, it is possible, perhaps even probable, that the weekend of 11 and 12 February was not the weekend for you.

Representing the Queensland Wader Study Group were Peter Driscoll and Stephanie Tonkin with Sam and Briony, Leanne Miller, Greg Bowden, Karen Wright, Tony Rowlands, Alex Kruezaj and myself. Phil Straw was there from the New South Wales Wader Study Group, along with a number of other NSWWSG members.

Saturday started well. People were to meet at the Calypso Caravan Park at mid day, settle into their accommodation and catch up with everyone before venturing out for a leisurely late afternoon set-up in readiness for the early morning firing on Sunday (reconnaissance having been done in the morning by the earlier arrivals).

And that's probably about when things started to go awry. Accommodation reservations mysteriously disappeared, the sand flies bit and the rain started to fall. On the bright side the wind hadn't strengthened. Yet.

Alex and I left to find alternative accommodation (yep, it was ours) and do a bit of sightseeing before returning at the appointed time to join the crew in setting up. However, when we returned it was to find that a quick decision had been made to attempt netting some greater (large) and lesser (Mongolian) sand plovers. We heard the distant sound of firing cannons (must've been the fastest set-up in history) followed by the sight of some frantic activity taking place in the middle of the Clarence River.

The 'catch' was brought back to the camping ground for processing: one greater sand plover and six lesser sand plovers. The difference between the bill lengths of the two species, when seen up close, was quite dramatic and everyone enjoyed the opportunity for a close inspection of these notoriously similar species. So there was a highlight to the weekend after all. Then commenced the much greater task of preparing all the equipment for the main netting attempt. Finally, late in the afternoon, the team left (without me) to set-up four nets on an island in the Clarence. The rain fell. Heavily. And the wind blew. Briskly. It was, of course, dark. And at about 9:00pm a saturated, exhausted team returned. Thank goodness for that last minute decision not to go. The guilty conscience I could live with - in the alternative accommodation which boasted such luxuries as television, pizza delivery and the pleasant sound of rain on the roof. Amazing how your perspective on rain changes, depending on how it is experienced!

A very early start to Sunday had all the original people, plus more from the local area, strategically positioned for that moment we had all worked/waited for - the firing of cannons and netting of birds.

Not so. An unexpectedly high tide had three out of the four nets submerged. The fourth net was the only possible option. An option with few birds in the immediate vicinity. However Peter Driscoll set forth to manoeuvre a flock of eastern curlew and bar-tailed godwit into the catchment area. But even Peter's endless patience and care failed to do the trick. The falling tide and the birds' decided lack of co-operation were against him and, eventually, we had to admit defeat.

But only temporarily. A flock of Lesser Sand Plover flew in and, in the spirit of ensuring every possible option had been pursued to the end, attempts were made to ease the Sandplovers into place. It very nearly worked.

As we started the long process of packing up all those soggy nets, I'm sure, in the distant haunting call of a curlew, I heard a distinct chuckle.

So there you have it. A long-winded way of saying the rain fell, the sand flies bit and the birds laughed. But Yamba is a delightful place and well worth the trip. I look forward to another visit when, perhaps, the sunlight shine.

(And that's only the story about the cannon netting - you should hear the one about the journey home. It involves flooded rivers, stranded vehicles and, generally speaking, atmospheric conditions to delight a duck!)

Activities

For netting activities, please confirm with Peter Driscoll (#####) three days in advance for confirmation of time and place. In the case of weekend trips please confirm at least one week in advance. For the wader counts, please ring Ivell Whyte, the count coordinator on #####. All completed count forms must be returned to Ivell Whyte at #####.

As well as the activities listed, we will mount netting outings "opportunistically" when it seems there is a good chance of success.

Seabird trip 8th April 1995 (on behalf of SOSSA)

The Southern Ocean Seabird Study Association (SOSSA) in conjunction with Seaworld is planning a day trip off the coast for about 20 people to observe seabirds. The boat will leave from Seaworld at a cost of \$22 per person, which is substantially less than what has been possible on trips leaving Moreton Bay. Please contact Paul Walbridge if you are interested, ph. Xxx xxxx hm, xxx xxxx wk.

Wader Counts (general monitoring)

Sat. 1 st April	High of 2.16 m at 10: 12 pm.
Sat. 15 th April	High of 2.29 in at 9:08 pm.
Sat. 13 th May	High of 2.16 m at 7:51 pm.

Sat. 15th July **High of 1.99 m at 11:36 am - AWSG winter count day.** (This weekend, or 8/7/95 which is impractical in Qld for high tide count - high of 2.21 m at 6:01 pm).

Sat. 26th August High of 1.94 m at 9:24 am.

Sat. 23rd September High of 1.97 m at 8:22 am.

Sat. 14th October High of 2.06 m at 12:46 pm.

Sat. 11th November High of 2.24 m at 11:40 am.

Sat. 9th December High of 2.36 m at 10:45 am.

Cannon Netting

Sun. 2nd April Fisherman Islands. High of 2.08 m at 10:43am. (conditions unpredictable at this site present and an alternative will 'be Sun. 30th April: High of 1.99 m at 9:42am.)
at

Sun. 14th May Cabbage Tree Creek mouth. High of 2.14 m at 8:41 am.

Sat. 10 & Sun 11th June North Stradbroke Island. High of 2.01 m-at 7:23am on Sunday.

Sat. 5 & Sun 6th Aug Moreton Island. High of 2.06 m at 4:30pm on Saturday.
(likely to be additional netting in mid to late Aug. and/or early Oct.)

Sun. 29th October St Helena Island. High of 2.29 m at 1:20pm.

Training day

Sat. 27th May Starting 10:00am at Nudgee Beach Environmental Education Day. There will be a dummy cannon net firing to demonstrate to beginners how everything is set up. gear maintenance will also be done. Bring food and drink for a BBQ lunch (BBQ supplied), and don't forget the binoculars for some hints on wader identification.

Some