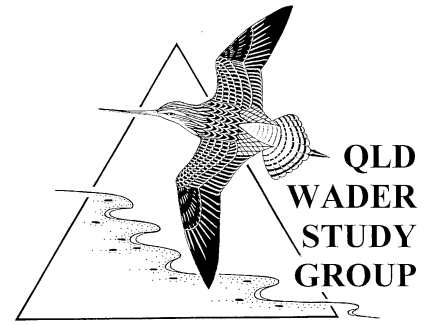


QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue number 31

AUTUMN 2000

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

QWSG Chairperson's Report for 1999 – Peter Driscoll

Another good year for QWSG but there have been some testing times and some more to come.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork for the Gulf survey and Eastern Curlew satellite tracking has been completed but final reports for both projects still need to be finalised. Another project on Eastern Curlews was organised by Paul Finn as an initial phase of his PhD project. Many QWSG and QOSI members helped on four weekends to count Eastern Curlews at low tide. The data have provided a useful comparison with high tide counts made over the years by QWSG and serve as some basis for other aspects of Paul's project. Other fieldwork has involved routine high tide counts and only a few days of cannon netting. Netting activities were limited due to my absence for nearly half the year in the Gulf. Early in 2000 QWSG members helped George Mackay, with support from Linda Cross, run field trials of counting methods that may lead to a revitalised AWSG population monitoring program for waders throughout Australia. Environment Australia has helped to fund the work by George and we anticipate some positive outcomes.

Public awareness

Under guidance from Andrew Geering, QWSG undertook another successful short course on waders. There is still a lot of interest and enthusiasm for waders as demonstrated by the good attendance at these courses. The newsletter helps to sustain the Group's high standards and credentials and has been blessed with a series of good editors including our latest, David Edwards. Requests for our display material and involvement with other groups also demonstrates the high level of interest in the general community. Ivell Whyte has developed plans and sourced funds for permanent display boards on birdlife around the freshwater and coastal wetlands of Normanton and Karumba in the Gulf of Carpentaria. These displays will eventually be read by many thousands of people.

Information base

Our databases on flag sightings, wader counts and banding records are in better shape now than they have ever been and at last the banding results are being analysed. A start has been made by Neil Fordyce and we have had recent help from Pete Nichols in getting the flag sightings in an accessible form. Linda Cross and Joyce Harding are still doing an excellent job on coordinating the count program and entering the data. This database continues to be of use to the Environmental Protection Agency of Qld and has recently been used by the Maritime Safety Authority in relation to oil spill response plans and more importantly by Wetlands International (Oceania) for a major review of Flyway population estimates.

(Continued on page 3).

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QUEENSLAND WADER

The Official Quarterly Publication of
Queensland Wader Study Group

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

Copy Deadline for the next issue of Queensland Wader is May 27th 2000

Contributions should be addressed to:

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Computerised contributions should be in IBM Word, ASCII or Rich Text.

Opinions expressed in Queensland Wader are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily those of the Queensland Waders Study Group, nor the Queensland Ornithological Society Inc.

Advertising Rates are \$20:00 for one quarter page and \$25:00 for a third of a page.

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(Cont. from Page 1)

Finances

The Group is in a very healthy financial state with the benefit of money left to us by Nigel Roberts and with income from sales of shirts etc and from the wader course. Thanks to Sheryl Keates for maintaining such a high standard as treasurer and to Arthur Keates for finalising the matter of Nigel's will. We now have the task of making best use of our financial advantage.

Conservation

As of late the QWSG committee has had some disturbing matters to deal with concerning the Manly Boat Harbour and Dux Creek roost sites. There are imminent threats to both sites and the final outcome for each is still uncertain. Fortunately, QWSG has been in the position of being able to advise and comment on both issues and hopefully what we have had to say will help to change what could still be the complete loss of both sites. Many of the committee members will be dealing with one or other issue for some months to come. Of course, there have been some positive outcomes for the year, including the listing of the Great Sandy Strait as a Ramsar site and the continuing strong links with AWSG and with Wetlands International. Both organisations have been very active in promoting and undertaking major programs into the study and conservation of waders.

The year to come

There are a few projects to complete and major issues of Dux Creek and Manly Boat Harbour to be resolved. QWSG also needs to plan carefully for the best use of current financial reserves. The considerable amount of routine work for many of the committee will remain as will the more enjoyable aspects of fieldwork. QWSG is currently organising several visits to the Great Sandy Strait throughout the year to survey the area at times when we haven't been there before.

In early July, AWSG is undertaking a workshop on waders at the time of the Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Conference to be held at Griffith University in Brisbane. I hope to see many of you there as AWSG is organising an event of high quality with a minimal cost of attendance.

AGM COUNT PROGRAM REPORT for 1999 by Linda Cross

My role as count co-ordinator over the past year has been somewhat hectic. I have been disappointed with myself for not achieving some of the goals we initially set down when both Phil and myself took this job on in early 1997. Perhaps these could have come to fruition had I concentrated more on the co-ordinators role. There were numerous reasons why this did not happen.

Our continued effort to increase the knowledge and expertise of members and none members in identifying waders, which was done by holding Wader ID days. Many thanks to Arthur and Sheryl Keates and David Edwards in sharing this responsibility.

Trying to raise more money for the group through merchandise sales, which required selling at QOSI monthly meetings, outings and displays.

With the newsletter comes the job of recording information on waders for my count program article and listing the numerous leg flag sightings, which then has to be recorded onto the database.

Being involved in the Eastern Curlew Study done by Paul Finn, which took time out of 8-week ends and additional bird survey work (other than waders), was also completed during the year.

By far the biggest increase this year has been the groups profile, so much so that we were asked to set up more than our normal amount of displays, attending festivals, official openings and some workshops, which also required giving a talk on waders. With the lifting of our profile also came requests from other environmental groups and local councils to attend workshops on the environment.

Although these things might sound trivial on paper they certainly can be, and were, time consuming.

We have lost a few counters and some sites are not being covered at all. Sadly, Dux Creek and Manly Boat Harbour could be lost for the waders. Our ongoing talks with Caboolture Shire Council and the Port of Brisbane our only hope for the birds.

On a more positive note we added 3 more sites and hooked 4 more counters to the program during the year.

At times I have thought long and hard about giving this job up and having my life back the way it used to be. I seriously considered giving it away towards the end of 1999 but somehow during the last week or two I decided to re-nominate and continue the job as best I can. (The real reason is because the paperwork and files need a big tidy up before I could pass them over!).

I thank all the counters for your continued contributions and patience for my tardiness in reply to your letters and queries.

A special thank you to Joyce Harding who once again processed all the information from your many counts sheets.

Linda Cross.

QWSG (QOS Inc) Financial Statement for 1999 AGM by Sheryl Keates

QUEENSLAND WADER STUDY GROUP (QOS Inc) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Income and Expenditure - Year Ending October 31, 1999

INCOME	Totals for Year Nov 1, 1997 to Oct 31, 1998	Totals for Year Nov 1, 1998 to Oct 31, 1999
Courses	\$2,030.00	\$1,995.00
Donations	\$980.55	\$400.00
Eastern Curlew Satellite Project	\$18,790.00	\$14,547.00
Estate N Roberts gift		\$32,842.20
Fundraising Income		
Books/reports	\$1,305.00	\$739.50
CDs		\$122.30
Commission WPSQ books		\$36.00
Mugs	\$32.00	\$16.00
Shirts	\$510.00	\$466.00
Miscellaneous	\$21.70	\$208.77
Gaming Grant -display boards	\$3,613.00	
Gov't contract	\$5,000.00	
Gulf Survey Project	\$69,660.00	\$38,778.95
Hire of gear	\$100.00	
Investment - interest	\$1,566.92	\$1,080.43
Membership		
Discount	\$237.00	\$201.00
Family	\$604.00	\$682.00
Single	\$1,184.00	\$1,457.00
Newsletter income-advertising	\$20.00	
Repairs and maintenance		\$74.98
Sale of gear	\$1,050.00	
State Govt grant - wader guide		
TOTAL INCOME	\$106,704.17	\$93,647.13

EXPENDITURE	Totals for Year Nov 1, 1997 to Oct 31, 1998	Totals for Year Nov 1, 1998 to Oct 31, 1999
Bank charges	\$91.10	\$65.75
Cannon Netting - capital	\$1,544.16	
Cannon Netting - operating	\$234.55	
Capital expenditure	\$2,273.54	
Coastcare expenses		
Empire Point	\$20,654.18	
Coastnet expenses	\$368.00	
Courses expenses	\$230.25	\$291.42
Eastern Curlew Satellite Project	\$12,324.28	\$30,136.71
Fundraising expenses		
Books, reports	\$1,196.70	\$374.70
CDs		\$165.15
Displays		
Shirt costs	\$316.90	\$120.00
Gaming grant expenses	\$3,613.00	
Gov't contract expenses	\$3,907.00	
Gulf survey expenses	\$44,125.94	\$44,767.73
Insurance/rego	\$153.00	\$337.45
Membership expenses	\$83.10	\$282.68
Miscellaneous expenses	\$102.45	\$134.74
Newsletter expenses	\$609.33	\$1,045.09
Repairs and maintenance	\$38.65	\$390.84
Running costs	\$89.47	\$57.15
Sale of gear expenses	\$35.00	
Stationery/postage/phone calls	\$774.75	\$230.56
Wader Guide expenses		\$19.95
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$92,765.35	\$78,419.92
 RECONCILIATION:		
Cash Book		
Bal start of financial year	\$42,927.72	\$56,866.54
add income for year	\$106,704.17	\$93,647.13
subtotal	\$149,631.89	\$150,513.67
add cancelled cheque		\$12.00
subtotal	\$149,631.89	\$150,525.67
less expenditure for year	\$92,765.35	\$78,419.92
TOTAL FUNDS IN HAND	\$56,866.54	\$72,105.75
 Statement at		
Balance shown	\$57,426.02	\$72,328.04
less outstanding cheques	\$559.48	\$394.29
plus uncredited deposit		\$172.00
TOTAL	\$56,866.54	\$72,105.75
 SUMMARY OF COMMITTED FUNDS		
	31/10/98	31/10/99
E. Curlew Satellite Project	\$19,320.66	\$3,589.75
Gulf Survey	\$25,534.06	\$19,545.28
Wader Guide (EPA grant)	\$4,100.00	\$4,080.05
Total Committed Funds	\$48,954.72	\$27,215.08
Balance to date	\$56,866.54	\$72,093.75
Less Committed Funds	\$48,954.72	\$27,215.08
Total Uncommitted Funds	\$7,911.82	\$44,878.67

RAMSAR and WETLANDS

News from Australian Wetlands Alliance (AWA) Newsletter July 1999.

Ramsar1999 Resolution VII.23 on boundary definitions and compensation

Australia brought the issue of providing a more precise definition of Ramsar site boundaries for sites that are poorly delineated on nomination to the conference. NGOs and partner organisations were concerned that it could open the way for contracting parties to inappropriately excise areas from their Ramsar sites. A number of interventions from AWA, WWF, Green Korea United, Birdlife and the World Heritage Commission highlighted the depth of concern. The final resolution provides that Australia will prepare two case studies for the development of an approach to the revision of Ramsar site boundaries in cases other than the urgent national interest. The two sites will be Coongie Lakes and Port Phillip Bay (Western shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar sites.

The redefinition of Ramsar site boundaries could well have repercussions for the definition of new sites when proposed. Significantly, many wader roosts around Moreton Bay were not included in the Ramsar site, as they are above high tide and not within the marine park.

The additional text below was not added. It is up to AWA members to ensure that these principles are adhered to in the review of site boundaries at Port Phillip Bay and Coongie Lakes, so that the case studies presented to COP8 provide a clear example on the implementation of these principles.

14. Calls upon Australia, when reconsidering the definition of the sites chosen, to carry out a full environmental, economic, and social impact assessment which takes into consideration the full range of functions, services and benefits provided by the site concerned and to ensure that:

- no area of wetland is excised;*
- no wetland function, benefits and values are materially diminished;*
- proposed changes maintain or enhance the ecological character of these Ramsar sites;*
- proposed changes are submitted to full public consultation; and*
- proposed changes are subject to the same legal procedure as the original listing.*

AWA Action to COP8 - Ramsar Conference of Parties to be held in Spain

- Carefully track the progress of implementation of Resolution 23 and the development of proposal to COP8 regarding 'urgent national interest'.
- Participate in the development of *focal points* for technical (Scientific and Technical Review Panel, Resolution 2) and education (Outreach Program, Resolution 9) information networks. The resolution requires Contracting Parties to nominate, by 31/12/99, suitable Government and non-government focal points for communication, education and public awareness. The resolution also calls upon Contracting Parties to establish National Wetland CEPA (communication, education and public awareness) Action Plans by 31/12/2000.
- Flag NGO concerns regarding contentious proposals to the Ramsar Bureau in the run up to the COP, and if major concerns exist, suggest that they be ascribed to a technical session.
- At Ramsar 6, Brisbane, NGOs were provided with a training session on "How to be effective at a COP" by a member of WWF - Australia. In the lead up to COP8 similar guidelines for NGOs would greatly assist participation during COP.

Wetlands in Japan 1999 The Tides of Change

A video, "Wetlands in Japan 1999 - The Tides of Change" produced by Iwa pro Katsutoshi Iwanaga and presented by the Japan Wetlands Action Group was released at Ramsar at Costa Rica.

Impressive (sometimes in the most depressive manner) the video shows the status of wetlands in Japan. In particular, the "guillotining" of Isahaya Bay by huge steel plates driven into the seabed was a technological knee-in-the-groin for conservationists trying to prevent further loss of tidal flats. It is available for US \$40. For further information contact 'Japan Wetland Action Network, Yoshino ITO 6-4-2 Wakagidai, Fukuma-cho Munakata-gun Fukuoka, Japan 811-3221'. Email: godot@sannet.ne.jp

LYTTON WADER ROOST SITE

By Arthur and Sheryl Keates

One of the most important high tide wader roost sites in Moreton Bay is on Brisbane's south side at the northern end of Wynnum North Rd, Lytton.

The roost site adjoins the revegetated area that was formerly the site of a refuse tip. The grassy knoll just to the north of the car park provides a vantage point to view the waders roosting in the large tidal area fringed by mangroves on the eastern side and bordered on the western side by the railway line and Port Drive.

From the car park, simply follow the track from the gate. On your way, keep an eye out for Brown Quail, Tawny Grassbird, Golden-headed Cisticola and Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, species regularly seen here. If the high tide is late in the day, birds in the tidal area nearer the railway line may be best observed from Port Drive with the sun behind.

Depending on the height of the tide and the water level in the tidal areas, the muddy area attracts a mix of wader species. Our total species counts have reached almost 2,000 birds, mostly larger species. In several years of observations, we have never recorded sand plovers although we have seen Double-banded Plovers during the latter part of their stay in the Bay. Also, in our many visits to the area, we have only 6 records of Red-necked Stint.

Lytton is an ideal site for wader watchers who want to compare Black-tailed with Bar-tailed Godwits, Eastern Curlew with Whimbrel and Common Greenshank with Marsh Sandpiper, all of which are regularly seen here. In addition, when both species are present, Great Knot can be compared with the smaller Red Knot. Red Knot frequent here from September through to December on their way through to southern Australia and New Zealand. Their numbers usually reaches its peak in October when many have strong traces of breeding plumage.

Other species regularly seen roosting, loafing and feeding here at high tide are Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler and Black-winged Stilt.

Grey-tailed Tattlers roosting on the dead mangroves in the tidal area on the eastern side of the roost site provide a real challenge to the counter. At first glance, there appears to be none, but on a closer look, yes, there's one, there's another and another and not long after a tally of around 300 is reached.

Meanwhile, feeding in among the dead mangroves are the Curlew and Marsh Sandpipers. Then there are the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers that roost, but quite often feed, in the shallow tidal waters. In December 1999, we saw big numbers of Sharpies, reaching an amazing peak of 485 on 11 December 1999.

During the winter months, Red-necked Avocet sometimes roost and feed here. In some years it is not uncommon to see >100 birds. Although in recent years this elegant species has shown a tendency to favour the reclaimed areas at Fisherman Island.

One of the smaller species that is found at Lytton in most years from April to August is the Red-kneed Dotterel. Although numbers vary, we have seen almost 30 in the tidal area nearer the railway line.

As for rarer species, 1995 proved to be a good year. In November and December of that year, we were privileged to observe Asian Dowitcher (3) feeding in both the tidal areas and Broad-billed Sandpiper (4) feeding at the water's edge of the western area.

Apart from waders, Lytton is also a reliable site for several waterbird species, including, Royal Spoonbill and Chestnut Teal. Of the raptors, Whistling and Brahminy Kites as well as Osprey are often seen soaring overhead while Swamp Harrier is seen here on occasions.

Although relatively secure as a wader roost site, Lytton is not without its threats. A spillage from the nearby railway-refuelling depot could have serious consequences, not just for the waders, but the whole marine environment. Also, nearby housing developments are likely to have an impact, bringing with them disturbance by people and dogs.

Following is a list of waders, waterbirds, raptors and terns we have observed at the Lytton roost site over a period of 7 years.

Lytton Species List

Little Pied Cormorant	Red-necked Avocet
Pied Cormorant	Pacific Golden Plover
Little Black Cormorant	Red-capped Plover
Darter	Double-banded Plover
Australian Pelican	Red-kneed Dotterel
White-faced Heron	Black-fronted Dotterel
Little Egret	Masked Lapwing
Great Egret	Black-tailed Godwit
Australian White Ibis	Bar-tailed Godwit
Straw-necked Ibis	Whimbrel
Royal Spoonbill	Eastern Curlew
Magpie Goose	Marsh Sandpiper
Black Swan	Common Greenshank
Grey Teal	Grey-tailed Tattler
Chestnut Teal	Ruddy Turnstone
Pacific Black Duck	Asian Dowitcher
Australasian Shoveler	Great Knot
Black-shouldered Kite	Red Knot
Whistling Kite	Red-necked Stint
Brahminy Kite	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
White-bellied Sea-eagle	Curlew Sandpiper
Swamp Harrier	Broad-billed Sandpiper
Little Eagle	Silver Gull
Osprey	Gull-billed Tern
Nankeen Kestrel	Caspian Tern
Pied Oystercatcher	Crested Tern
Black-winged Stilt	

Beach Stone Curlews

One swallow doesn't make a summer, but Russell Watson's good news report from Great Keppel Island was encouraging (Queensland Wader No 30). I saw this pair of Beach Stone-curlews in August 1999 when I visited Great Keppel and wished I'd known that someone was "looking after them". There are other good news reports eg. Kerry Jarvis saw "her pair" with two juveniles at "the bedroom" on the western side of South Stradbroke Island in early January 2000. The bad news is "my pair" at Whatumba Lagoon were not to be seen in mid December 1999. A fisherman told me there had been a fishing competition the previous weekend (to my visit). There were 100 plus boats on the point which is (was) "home" to a pair of Beach Stone-curlews.

The tragedy is that these birds are not common anywhere. Isolated pairs are struggling to survive against the forces of nature and man in fewer and fewer locations along our coastline. They seem to be unable to cope with man (unlike the Bush Stone-curlew which frequents resorts, golf courses and parks in the cities and even backyards on Magnetic Island). The existing National Parks are not enough to ensure their survival and National Park programs, eg. turtle monitoring, can pose a major threat to a breeding pair of Beach Stone-curlews. On the northern end of Fraser Island National Park 4WDs patrolling the remote beaches are a threat to the Beach Stone-curlews. Rangers in beach front National Parks need to have the care and concern that Russell Watson extends if these birds are to breed in such National Parks.

So precarious is the situation with these birds their only hope can be some national program for nesting site protection. Such programs exist for Terns on the coast of Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. It is surely the role of the Queensland Wader Study Group, the Queensland Ornithological Society and Birds Australia to lobby governments for assistance to establish such a nest protection program. NOW!! before it's too late, while a few pairs remain and manage to nest and raise young.

Dr. Tim Thornton
Burrum River
07 4129 0609

WETLANDS for WADERS

(produced for submission to Brisbane City Council)

Recently I was asked to clarify my position on the protection of waders and their roost sites. The current and recent battles by Queensland Wader Study Group to save some of the important roost sites around Moreton Bay are of major concern to me.

Some Sites of Importance

Raby Bay - which was lost though we had some success in Redland Shire with the construction of Empire Point roost and with the Thornlands Development Control Plan,
 Dux Creek - Bribie Island - still being fought,
 Wynnum Manly Boat Harbour - still being fought,
 Brisbane Port - losses and gains.

Large numbers of birds now roost at these sites and the most used argument against the sites protection is the often made statement that "the birds have only recently arrived in large numbers after development had started". The questions to be answered are,

Where have these large numbers of birds come from? and WHY?

Coastal wetlands

Consider the area drained by Tingalpa, Lota, Wynnum and Bulimba Creeks and the Lytton area at the mouth of the Brisbane River. There was a time, not so long ago, when these were low lying areas, much of it becoming inundated during extra high tides or during the rainy season. There were extensive claypans, saltmarsh, and open areas then generally regarded as waste land. These areas are now parkland, playing fields, industrial and housing estates, shopping centres, all parts of the recent growth of the City. This loss of wetland has occurred all along the coast of eastern Australia and for many reasons apart from the growth of cities.

In the past, these areas when they were partly covered with water during extreme high tides and flooding would have been available to the waders. Birds would have rarely been noticed as few people were then interested in the areas' significance for waders. Curlew and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and other small waders would have escaped the notice of casual observers. With the loss of these extensive wetlands it is inevitable that waders must now gather during high tides, in their present large numbers at the few remaining places left for them.

Apart from the obvious loss of wetland along foreshores, continuing displacement of birds is to be expected as weeds encroach on the landward edge of remaining mangroves, followed by the mowing, spraying and tidying up by enthusiastic councils. Introduced weeds will continue to be an ongoing problem on wader roost sites. Weeds, if uncontrolled will put greater pressure on existing roosts and the waders' options will decrease further. These areas, close to human activities are subject to ever increasing disturbance making it difficult for birds to achieve the required rest needed for migration.

Replacement Sites

Often the suggestion arises that Authorities should construct replacement roosts in exchange for roost sites lost, such as Empire Point replacing Raby Bay. It has yet to be proved that these sites are acceptable to the birds. The needs of waders are as varied and as many as there are species. So many roost sites have been lost through past development that it is vital to keep all sites that are currently used. It is a much better management practice to keep what the birds have chosen themselves than to expect them to accept a site because it is convenient for people.

In the future, the protection of migratory waders will involve a greater care of the saltmarshes, claypans and open space than we have achieved in the past. The East Asian-Australasian Flyway is under threat throughout it's entire length, and we must be aware of events threatening the viability of the waders' migration. We must insist that both local and state governments are aware of, and act upon these threats when local management plans are implemented. In this way we can start to fulfil our obligations under Ramsar, CAMBA and JAMBA and lessen the continued necessity of fighting for individual roost and feeding sites when their viability is threatened.

These thoughts and comments are my own, but would reflect the views of most members of QWSG. I suggest that we must all look at our remaining wetlands and make known to our various local Councils, the need to protect our coastal and intertidal wetlands in view of their importance to the birds passing through. Even if these places are only used for a few weeks of the year, they can be crucial for waders during migration.

Joyce Harding

Further Information

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Miller, G. 1997. *Wader Site Data Collation and Survey Project For South-east Queensland*. Dept. of Environment Southeastern Regional Office, Coastal Management Branch.

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How to Count Waders

A chance conversation yesterday with George McKay, who was organising the Moreton Bay wader count trials, led to to think.....George said that a few people had expressed concern about their levels of competence at estimating wader numbers at roosts.

Many years ago, faced with counting huge numbers of terns in Caloundra, I bought a hand-held tally counter, such as is used to count bodies walking through turnstiles at events. I can't begin to tell you how embarrassed I was at my own incompetence when I discovered how badly I had been under-counting the flocks. I guess you could say that I am less incompetent with my counter than without it.

I have given counters to people as gifts on a number of occasions. Invariably the immediate response is low key, followed by a comment some time later about what a wonderful tool it is. They usually cost me about \$30 or less, and I get them mailed from a company at Archerfield in Brisbane.

I wonder if there could be some value in putting a short piece in the next Qld Wader suggesting counters might like to try using this method. Can I have some feedback please?

Jill Denning
Sunshine Coast, Qld
hallden@universal.net.au
26° 51' 152° 56'

Well, Jill, it's in the Newsletter. If you would like more info contact QWSG or Jill. Editor

SHOC & AWSG Conference 2000

Following the highly successful Australasian Wader Studies Group conference on Phillip Island in June, there will be another wader conference in Australia in July 2000. This will take place in connection with the SHOC (Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Conference) which is to be held from 27th June to 2nd July at Griffith University, Brisbane. On 1st July there will be a symposium on waders held within SHOC followed by an AWSG whole day conference at the same venue on 2nd July. The theme on both days will be 'Linking the hemispheres - long distance wader migration'.

So far the AWSG has eight speakers lined up. They will cover case histories of long distance wader migration, including Red Knots through the Americas, migration of Bar-tailed Godwits from New Zealand and Australia to Russia and Alaska, and Great Knots between Australia and Russia. The results of the Eastern Curlew satellite-tracking project will be reported. One talk will review the physiological changes in waders prior to migration. Another will report on timing of departure from NW Australia, including the influence of weather on departures. We hope further speakers will be added to the program. The AWSG has approached several others who could talk on topics such as the conservation implications of long distance migration, and the influence of winds on migration.

Enquires about the wader conference should be sent to: j.wilson@dynamite.com.au

COUNT PROGRAMME

Linda Cross

We extend a warm welcome to Lynn Roberts, who after attending the Wader Course showed great interest in becoming involved. Needless to say it didn't take long for me to put the hook in and reel her in. Lynn has been a stand by counter for the last 2 months covering the new wader roost at Empire Point.

As I sit and write this article my desk is covered with count sheets that I have just finished checking and extracting flag sightings plus other interesting information to include in this newsletter.

There are a few counters who have recorded some of the waders with breeding plumage evident. Yesterday (24th Feb) I went to Toorbul to try and recruit yet another counter for the program and noticed a number of species starting to go into breeding plumage, a couple of Bar-tailed Godwits were just about in full breeding plumage. It should be great viewing at the Wader Identification Day planned for 25th March.

I have to commend Les Thyer from Mackay for his dedication to the count program when he stood for 2 hours during heavy rain (rain scale of 4) on 17.2.00 counting 2350 birds. In that total was 1000 Lesser and 550 Greater Sand Plovers!

The following Beach Stone-curlew sightings have been reported:

1 on the new roost at Empire Point seen by Jim Tyson on 23.11.99, 2 sightings of 2 birds and 1 sighting of 4 birds at Great Keppel Island seen by Russell Watson between 31.10.99 and 4.2.00, 2 at Black Soil Creek, Townsville seen by Dez Wells on 31.10.99, 3 birds in early January at Boyne Island seen by A & J Ruddell, 1 at Tin Can Bay Esplanade seen by John & Barbara Cummings on 5.2.00 and the good news from Keith Fisher at Cairns Airport site is that the pair of Beach Stone-curlews nested again, hatching a chick on 19.12.99 (28days after egg laid). It would appear that it is still going strong as Keith has reported seeing 4 adults and 1 juvenile on 24.1.00 and 6 adults and 1 juvenile on 5.2.00.

Sooty Oystercatcher sightings from the following sites:

1 at Maroochy River North Shore seen by Jan Bedwell on 12.12.99, 2 at Dalrymple Point Bowen seen by Jon Wren on 20.12.99 and again on 18.1.00 2 at Tweed River Entrance seen by Eddie Kleiber on 29.12.99 and 1 seen on 1.2.00, 2 at Dux Creek Bribie Island seen by Frank Bigg on 6.2.00, 2 at Pioneer River Mackay seen by Les Thyer on 17.2.00.

Breeding records are as follows:

2 Black-winged Stilt chicks at St. Helena Island on 11.12.99, 1 very young juvenile BWS at one of the Deception Bay roosts could suggest a breeding record for the site, on 8.1.00, 2 Red-capped Plover chicks (one reported as a ball of fluff) at Maroochy River North Shore on 12.12.99, 1 Red-capped Plover chick at Manly Boat Harbour on 5.2.00, 2 Red-capped Plover chicks at Pelican Waters Caloundra on 6.2.00, 6 Red-capped Plover nests at Sandbank 1 Caloundra on 6.2.00 and only one record of Pied Oystercatcher juvenile from Great Keppel Island on 7.1.00.

A very interesting sighting at the Manly Boat Harbour has given a number of people a tick in their life book. A South Island Pied Oystercatcher (Kiwi invasion) was spotted by D & R Dine on 24.11.99 and Paul Walbridge joined them the following day 25.11.99 and got photographic evidence. For anyone interested it was still at the roost on 5.2.00.

I am sure most of you have had similar experiences were people have asked what you are photographing while using your scopes to wader watch. Well a classic comment came off the December count sheets from Jan Bedwell who covers Maroochy River with Shirley Rooke. She is probably still laughing as I tell you that she was asked "if they were looking for meteors"!

Happy counting,

Linda Cross

Linda sorry about last month. Cut and paste is a great boon to editors as long as they remember to save after using it!! Editor

WADER WATCH <i>Linda Cross, Peter Driscoll, Joyce Harding</i>
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Leg Flag Banding Legend (colour = where banded)

- Green = Brisbane/Queensland,
- Orange = Victoria,
- Yellow = Northern Western Australia,
- White = New Zealand (some species banded in New South Wales),
- Blue = Japan.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Pete Nichols for his work compiling and sorting a lot of our leg flag information and offering to take over the job of entering the sightings onto the database. Please continue to send you sightings to Linda Cross who will record them for the newsletter and then pass onto Pete.

Green leg flag sightings – Queensland

29 Eastern Curlew – seen by: John Harris at Manly Boat Harbour (4 with transmitters), Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Manly Boat Harbour (3 with transmitters), Arthur Keates and David Edwards at Manly Boat Harbour (3 with transmitters), Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Lytton (2 with transmitters), Neil Fordyce, Linda Cross and Janet White at Deception Bay (1 with transmitter), Arthur & Sheryl Keates and Tom Wheller at Lytton (3 with transmitters), Linda Cross at Deception Bay (1 with transmitter) between 21.12.99 and 5.2.00

27 Bar-tailed Godwit – seen by: Jill Dening at Toorbul, Linda Cross at Toorbul, Ivell and Jim Whyte at Cabbage Tree Creek, Martin Waugh at Amity Point, Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Manly Boat Harbour and Lytton, Andrew Geering at St. Helena Island, David Edwards and Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour, Arthur & Sheryl Keates and Tom Wheller at Lytton, David Edwards at Pine Rivers Northside, Linda Cross & George McKay at Toorbul, Linda Cross and Dennis Stanbridge at Toorbul between 7.10.99 and 24.2.00

1 Black-tailed Godwit – seen by Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Lytton on 8.1.00

1 Greenshank – seen by Martin Waugh at Amity Point on 7.12.99

10 Great Knot – seen by Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Boonooroo, Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Manly Boat Harbour, David Edwards and Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour, Neil Fordyce, Linda Cross and Janet White at Deception Bay, Linda Cross & George McKay at Deception Bay and Toorbul, Linda Cross and Dennis Stanbridge at Toorbul between 25.9.99 and 24.2.00

8 Grey-tailed Tattler – seen by Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Lytton on 8.1.00 and 29.1.00

4 Ruddy Turnstone – seen by Andrew Geering at St. Helena Island between 13.11.99 and 5.2.00

8 Lesser Sand Plover – seen by Arthur & Sheryl Keates, David Edwards and John Harris at Manly Boat Harbour between 11.12.99 and 8.1.00

Other leg flag sightings and banded birds

Red Knot – 1 with orange flag seen by Linda Cross at Toorbul on 7.10.99

Grey-tailed Tattler – 1 with blue flag seen by Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Lytton on 11.12.99

Crested Tern – 1 with green flag seen by Lindsay Agnew at Woody Head Clarence River Estuary on 13 and 15.1.00

Common Tern – 3 with orange leg flags seen by Jill Dening and Barbara Dickson at Caloundra Sandbank on 9.12.99

Little Tern – 1 with yellow flag and metal band on right leg and blue and red flags on left leg seen by Eddie Kleiber, June Harris and Wendy at Flat Rock, Ballina NSW on 12.1.00

Silver Gull – 1 with yellow Band on left leg and metal band on right leg seen by Eddie Kleiber at Tweed River Entrance

Interesting sightings

1 Double-banded Plover at Great Keppel Island on 12.12.99 and 27.12.99 (Very unusual record)

4 Sanderlings – Dez Wells at Black Soil Creek Townsville on 31.10.99

4 Eastern Curlew – with transmitter, John Harris and Ros Laundon at Manly Boat Harbour on 20.12.99

1 Eastern Curlew – with transmitter, David Connolly at Lytton on 5.2.00

1 Asian Dowitcher – Keith Fisher at Cairns Esplanade on 8.1.00 (been around for 2 weeks)

1 Broad-billed Sandpiper – Keith Fisher at Cairns Esplanade on 8.1.00

8 Broad-billed Sandpiper – Keith Fisher at Cairns Airport on 5.2.00

1 Common Sandpiper – Maureen Cooper, Tess Brickhill, Alan & Margaret Brown at Pioneer River Mackay on 11.12.99

1 Common Sandpiper – David Edwards at Pine River, Petrie on 15.2.00

1 Common Sandpiper – Eddie Kleiber at Trutes Wetland Tweed Heads on 1.2.00

1 Common Sandpiper – John & Barbara Cummings and Jan Olley at Tin Can Bay Sewage Works on 5.2.00

4 Common Sandpiper – Keith Fisher at Cairns Airport on 5.2.00

3 Little Curlew – Frank Bigg at Dux Creek Bribie Island on 6.2.00

3 Wandering Tattler – Donald & Lesley Bradley at Point Vernon Hervey Bay on 11.12.99

1 Wandering Tattler – Andrew Geering at St. Helena Island on 5.2.00

Not waders but of interest anyway

5000+ Little Tern – Jill Chamberlain at Sandbank No 2 Caloundra on 14.12.99

Red-tailed Tropicbird – Russell Watson at Great Keppel Island on 10.12.99 (arrived sick and subsequently died)

8 Radjah Shelduck ducklings – John Thompson at Yeppoon Gold Club on 29.11.99 (down to 3 by 13.1.00 quite big and doing well)

3 Brolga – Maree Burke & Rob MacFarlane at Kinka Beach Yeppoon on 8.1.00

3 Brolga – Phil & Linda Cross at Bishops Marsh Toorbul on 6.2.00

1 Glossy Ibis – Linda Cross at Bishops Marsh Toorbul on 24.2.00

Black-necked Storks have been seen on 6 sites:

- 1 male at Deception Bay on 8.1.00,
- 1 female at Cobaki Wetlands Tweed Heads on 11.1.00,
- 1 at Cairns Airport on 24.1.00 and again on 5.2.00,
- 1 at Duraby Creek Marsh Tweed Heads on 1.2.00,
- 2 at Kinka Beach Yeppoon on 5.2.00,
- and 1 immature at Poverty Creek Bribie Island on 6.2.00.

SAD NEWS

We were very saddened to hear that Tony Ashby passed away in the early hours of Monday 14th February. Tony counted Coombabah Lake area on the Gold Coast for a number of years and was well known to a number of QWSG members.

He was instrumental in setting up many of the pelagic trips out of Southport that also made him well known in the birding world. I know a lot of us have numerous lifers because of the trips organised by Tony and Paul Walbridge. Tony was always happy, helpful and made the trips a pleasure to be on and he will certainly be missed.

Hope your riding the waves with the seabirds beyond Tony.

Twinkling Tattlers ...and other new experiences

January 9th - my first cannon-netting – with many *new* experiences. A 6am start on a Sunday. New people in old clothes. A trailer full of unfamiliar equipment. New and delightful jargon. My imagination has the birds roosting amongst green mangroves against a jewel blue sea but in fact we are amidst the grey industrial landscape of Port of Brisbane.

Lots of bustling and rushing about to get the nets set before high-tide. Gear lugged across a hundred metres of smelly sucking mud. And when it is all set up, the news that a dredge is on its way with a load of mud to be pumped into this reclamation cell! Never mind – perhaps it will not raise the water level too much?

Off to set the second net in the corner of another reclamation cell, where Peter saw Grey-tailed Tattlers gathering the day before. The water level in the cell is high, the sides steep and the beach narrow, so setting the net is more complicated.

The sun seems high now and it is a hot, bright breezy day. It's hard on the eyes. I realise I'm hungry. Must be lunchtime. No – only 9am!

Back to the first net, where the birds are very obliging, standing directly in front of the net. I don't appreciate how unusual this is at the time - how lucky I am that *any* birds are caught on my first excursion. Mainly Great Knots but a few Red Knot, Lesser Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwits and one Curlew Sandpiper are also caught. I feel very privileged to see these beautiful birds close up. Feeling their light strong bodies reminds me of the marvel of their migration. I can feel that some are very skinny – perhaps they have only just ended their long flight?

Must be lunchtime now??? Yes 11.30am.

At the second net the Tattlers are not being so obliging. At first we cannot even see them. Then they're spotted, not in front of the net but to the side - perfectly camouflaged as they stand on the grey rocks. Gentle twinkling splits the flock, flushing some onto the track, some across the cell, some into the adjacent cell and some to where David and Arthur are hiding with the ignition box. As we wait, Sheryl tells me the secrets of the Grey Plovers armpits. After about half an hour some settle in front of the net and are caught. Total immersion for some of the team as the birds are retrieved – a blessing on such a hot day.

Smudges and smears on my face, glue on my trousers, cakes of mud on my knees and a shirt that'll never look the same again. A bundle of images and memories of the day in my head – I'm glad when David asks me to write this up so I can share them.

Neil Fordyce and Janet White

WADER IDENTIFICATION DAY REPORTS

WADER ID DAY – TOORBUL 11 SEPTEMBER 1999

As we were unable to advertise this outing in the QOSI newsletter, it was no surprise to find that only 5 people turned up. The 5 being, myself, Phil, Arthur and Sheryl Keates and David Edwards.

There was quite a blustery southerly wind blowing which made a couple of the group cold and there was quite a lot of cloud but it remained fine and dry.

Having nobody to instruct in wader identification meant we could spend much of our time looking at the different plumage the waders were sporting. Excellent close viewing of the birds allowed us to pick out juveniles of some species and green flags were sighted on 3 Great Knot and 1 Bar-tailed Godwit. Some species still had breeding plumage evident.

Birds seen as follows: -

4 Black Swan, 1 Australian Pelican, 1 Little Egret, 1 Royal Spoonbill, 5 Black-tailed Godwit, c600 Bar-tailed Godwit, 180 Whimbrel, 11 Common Greenshank, 2 Terek Sandpiper, 180 Grey-tailed Tattler, 2 Ruddy Turnstone, 107 Great Knot, 23 Red Knot, 6 Red-necked Stint, 56 Curlew Sandpiper, 1 Pied Oystercatcher, 21 Black-winged Stilt, 36 Lesser Sand Plover, 2 Greater Sand Plover, 2 Gull-billed Tern and 5 Caspian Tern.

Linda & Phil Cross

WADER ID DAY – Manly Boat Harbour 12th December 1999

Thirty-three people, some travelling from the Gold Coast, Boonah and Gympie, attended the wader identification day at the high tide roost site at Manly Boat Harbour.

After overnight rain the water level in the lagoons had risen slightly from the day before. The gentle SE breeze at 11 am gained considerably in strength by the time we finished at 1 pm. Observers enjoyed good views of 25 species, mostly waders and terns. Two species were sighted with green leg flags, Lesser Sand Plover and Great Knot as well as a Pied Oystercatcher with a metal band. However, there was no sign of the South Island Pied Oystercatcher seen at this site 2 weeks earlier.

Species recorded were-

Great Egret, Little Pied Cormorant, Osprey, Pied Oystercatcher, Pacific Golden Plover, Red-capped Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Greater Sand Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Common Greenshank, Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Great Knot, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Silver Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Crested Tern, Little Tern.

Sheryl & Arthur Keates

Wader ID Days

Sat 25th March at Toorbul: Meet at 12 noon (or earlier if you wish) for a 1.82m high at 12.35pm Brisbane Bar (40 minutes later at Toorbul). Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane to the Donnybrook/Toorbul turn-off near the Big Fish. Turn off here and head east over the highway overpass. Continue on this road to Toorbul. Turn right at the T-junction then first left and then right, which brings you onto the Esplanade. Follow this road to the end (approximately 2 kms), we will be on the left.

Sun 16th April at Manly Boat Harbour: Meet by 7.00am at the end of the road east of the Royal Queensland Yacht Clubhouse, Manly, for a high tide of 2.29m at 7.53am. UBD map 164 A6.

These days are a great way to learn in the field, so if you are beginning or are in need of a refresher now that the waders are coming back, come along with sunscreen, insect repellent, plus some food and drink, and a telescope if you have one. Please ring Linda on 07 5495 2758 or Sheryl on 07 3398 4898, if you have any queries.

East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network.

Current list of the Shorebird Network from Doug Watkins.

Moroshechnaya Estuary	Russian Federation
Tonggin River Lagoon and mudflat	Republic of Korea
Yatsu tidal flats	Japan
Yoshino Estuary	Japan
Manko	Japan
Yalu Jiang Nature Reserve	China
Shuangtaihekou National Nature Reserve	China
Huanghe National Nature Reserve	China
Yancheng Biosphere Reserve	China
Chongming Dongtan	China
Mai Po - Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site	China
Olango Island	Philippines
Wasur Game Reserve	Indonesia
Tonda Wildlife Reserve	Papua New Guinea
Kakadu National Park	Australia (NT)
Parry Lagoons	Australia (WA)
Thomsons Lake	Australia (WA)
Moreton Bay	Australia (Qld)
Kooragang Nature Reserve	Australia (NSW)
Corner Inlet	Australia (VIC)
The Coorong	Australia (SA)
Orielton Lagoon	Australia (Tas)
Logan Lagoon	Australia (Tas)
Firth of Thames	New Zealand
Farewell Spit	New Zealand



ACTIVITIES - 2000

Wader Counts (general monitoring)

Contact: Linda Cross on 07 5495 2758 or at xenus@big.net.au
Completed count forms should be returned as soon as possible to:
Mrs L Cross at 40 Thompson Rd, Bellmere, Qld 4510.

WADER COUNTS DATES (general monitoring) FOR ALL OF 2000

Sat 4 th March	High Tide of 2.30m at 08:37am
Sun 2 nd April	High Tide of 2.24m at 08:00am
Sat 6 th May	High Tide of 2.01m at 10:55am
Sat 3 rd June	High Tide of 1.97m at 09:51am (NATIONAL WINTER COUNT)
NO COUNT IN JULY	
Sat 19 th August	High Tide of 1.89m at 12:00noon
Sat 16 th September	High Tide of 2.04m at 11:00am
Sun 15 th October	High Tide of 2.23m at 10:41am
Sat 11 th November	High Tide of 2.26m at 08:58am
Sun 10 th December	High Tide of 2.38m at 08:36am

Counters in the regions of Mackay and the North please choose a date as close as possible to the ones listed above with a tide high enough to push as many waders as possible into their respective roosts.

Cannon Netting

There are no scheduled cannon netting days planned for the next six months but netting outings are mounted "opportunistically" when it appears there may be a good chance of success, so the regulars will be warned and they will contact those who have shown interest in the past. If a date is arranged you will need to bring food and water, plus sun-screen and insect repellent.

BOONOROO CAMPOUT – 11th & 12th MARCH

This will be a joint QOSI/QWSG campout to Boonooroo (approximately 260 km north of Brisbane), which is up in the Great Sandy Strait and a great spot for waders.

We will be staying at the Boonooroo Caravan Park in Oak Street (a 3 star Qld Q-Park), which has water frontage, inground pool and excellent facilities: powered and unpowered sites; on site caravans for hire; general store (including hot food), fuel and LP Gas, bait & tackle, EFTPOS, showers and toilets (disabled amenities) and the Bowls Club is situated nearby.

A group booking has already been made for unpowered sites, but if you want a powered site or an on-site caravan you will need to contact the owners Terry & Odette O'Neill on Ph: 4129 8211 or Fax: 4129 8003 to arrange that.

We will be checking out the waders at the roosts on Saturday and Sunday. The best time for viewing is an hour either side of the high tides, which are as follows: Saturday 2.6m high at 1252 hours, Sunday 2.39 high at 13:45 hours. Highlights of our last visit in September 99 was seeing 42 Grey Plover together at the roost. Don't forget your telescopes and **BRING THE HEAVY ARMOUR (INSECT REPELLENT) FOR THE SANDFLIES**, they can be bad at times.

Directions: Travel north on the Bruce Highway until you reach Gympie, turn right on to the Tin Can Bay Road, after approximately 44km turn left onto the Poona/Maryborough Road. Follow this road for 40km then at the 'T' junction, turn right and 7 kms later you will arrive at Boonooroo. The Caravan Park is on the right hand side.

Cost: Unpowered site \$10:00 per couple per night, powered site **off** the waterfront \$12:00 per couple, powered site **on** the waterfront \$14:00 per couple, then \$3:00 each extra person for all three. On-site caravan \$25:00 per night for 2 people, then \$3:00 each extra adult. (There are 3 caravans with sleeping capacity for 4).

Leader/s: Phil and Linda Cross Phone: 07 5495 2758
 Peter Crow Phone: 07 3398 5118

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have joined since the last magazine was printed :
 Maureen Cooper, Priscilla Park, Marie Carmody, June Anwyl, Robert MacFarlane,
 John Knight, Terry Robinson, Robert Gleeson,

Many thanks too to those who have included a donation with their renewal or membership fee. This is greatly appreciated as such donations make on-going work possible.

Other Conservation Activities of Interest



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

Separate membership is required. Contacts: Dawn Muir, President (07) 3870 8076; Sheena Gillman, Secretary (07) 3372 4089; Treasurer, Lyal Grundy (07) 3355 1050

Monthly Meetings **QOSI** - 7.45pm Queensland Museum Brisbane
 1st Thursday each month except January.
 Entry via Dinosaur Garden in Grey Street. Doors open between 7.30 and 8.00pm.



MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

I/We wish to join/renew: (Single \$12; Family \$22; Student/Pensioner \$9)

Title.....Name:.....

Address:.....

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

Membership: \$.....

Donation: \$.....

Payment enclosed: _____

Phone: (Home) (Work)

Fax / e-mail:

TOTAL \$.....

How did you hear about QWSG

What activities do you wish to participate in? WADER COUNTS, FIELD TRIPS, SCIENTIFIC DATA COLLECTION, SURVEYS, CLERICAL, OTHER (specify.....)

SIGNATURE:

DATE:.....