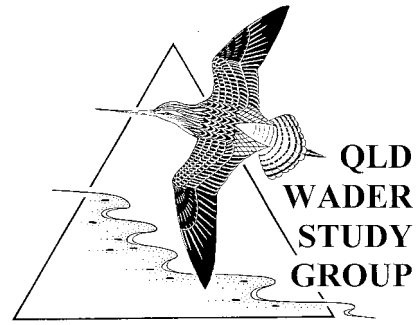


# QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue number 058

December 2006, January, February 2007

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

## **WADERS EVERYWHERE or ANYWHERE ? FINDING AND MAPPING WADER ROOSTS ALONG THE BURNETT MARY COAST ROUND 2 IN OCTOBER 2006**

The QWSG completed another survey of the coast north of Hervey Bay from 20 – 25 October 2006 to follow up on the successful survey from Pt Vernon to Moore Park in February 2006. This time, we were going for bigger and better challenges — trying to count and map roosts along over 200 km of coast. The survey allowed a second count for those areas already mapped and mapping of the northern area of the region. This required a much larger contingent of counters as the entire coast of the Burnett Mary NRM region from Tannum Sands near Gladstone south to Pt Vernon at Hervey Bay needed to be counted or roost sites mapped. Before the survey, the project coordinator, Kirsty Balmer, put in long hours trying to match the 55+ people involved with the 80+ roost sites and make sure each group had the gear and background knowledge to do the job at their sites. This included boats, drivers, local guides, aerial photographs of the roosts, accommodation and count and roost mapping sheets. We had people out in plastic hire dinghies that ran up on reefs, others in canoes, camping up mosquito-infested creeks, drives at low tide along sandy beaches followed by overcrowded inflatable dinghies, all to get to and map those difficult to access roosts.

The northern section of the Burnett Mary Natural Resource Management (NRM) region is more remote than the area covered in the previous survey and in many areas we only had information from one survey by Peter Driscoll 13 yrs ago to guide counters to the roost sites. Many new roosts were found and mapped and most of the old roosts were still viable and these were all mapped and the whole lot counted. Bird counts were not large and the total count was probably less than 4,000 birds along the entire section of coast. However, numbers may not have reached their summer peak as birds are probably still migrating. The largest roost was at the Bundaberg Port dredge spoil pond, which held about 1200 birds. Many of the roosts mapped also hold regionally important numbers of birds, including nesting resident species. Despite its seeming remoteness, the whole region is under a huge amount of pressure as developers try and turn all the available coastal land into higher density housing. Mapping the roosts and demonstrating their values for waders will have an important influence on the local and state government as they assess these development applications. Several Queensland EPA staff participated in the survey as they knew they were contributing to an important study. The summarised results and maps will be valuable for both local and regional planning.

There were many highlights but the ones for me were the many sightings of Beach Stone Curlew including a nest with eggs on Dr May's Is in the mouth of the Elliot River, New Zealand leg-flagged Bar-tailed Godwit at Eli Ck, Hervey Bay (Fig 1) and nesting Pied Oystercatcher at Morris Ck (Mort Ck), Rodds Peninsula near Turkey Beach (Fig. 2). Non-wader highlights included nesting Little Terns at several sites and meeting friendly locals with an interest and concern for their environment.



**Fig. 1.** An individually-ringed Bar-tailed Godwit flagged at Miranda, North Island of New Zealand but spending this October at Eli Ck, Hervey Bay (Photo: Bob Gleeson).

One more survey is planned for the Burnett Mary region and this will occur on the weekend of 17-18 March 2007. During this survey, we plan to revisit the roosts north of Moore Park to count them a second time during northwards migration and map any sites missed during the recent survey. We thank all the participants in the survey for their contributions and look forward to seeing many of you on the next survey. This project is funded by the Burnett Mary Regional Group for NRM and the completed shorebird mapping information will be held by them.



**Fig. 2.** Nest of a Pied Oystercatcher on the beach 100m upstream from the entrance of Mort Ck, Rodds Peninsula, Eurimbula NP (Photo: Sandra Harding).

**Survey participants:** Alan Briggs, Kirsty Balmer, John Bell, Andrew Geering, Barb Dickson, Bob and June Gleeson, Cathy & John Gatley, Chris Barnes, David Milton, Dawn Beck, Dennis & Lorna Johnson, Dez Wells, Don & Lesley Bradley, Floss Wainwright, Heather Smith, Ivell and Jim Whyte, John Knight, John Olds, Joyce Harding, Judy Caughley, Judy Coles, Ken Cowell, Liz Tanner, Margaret Bullock, Michelle Burford, Paul O'Neill, Paula Ryan, Peter Fraser, Peter Rothlisberg, Peter Royall, Ray Woodburgess, Rob Kernot, Rod Whiting, Sandra Harding, Sean Norman, Terry & Karen Kelly, Tim Siggs, Tim Thornton and friends, Eric Zillman, Leanne Evans, Jimmy Liolios, Jason Kas, Natalie McGrath



## Wader banding at Manly harbour

Waders will once again be caught and banded in Moreton Bay after a lag of several years. Initially, activities will occur at the Manly wader roost. Hopefully we will also be expanding to other sites over time. We are grateful for the support of the Port of Brisbane Corporation and Manly Marinas Incorporated for allowing us access to what is a restricted area at Manly.

The birds are being caught on a rising tide by setting mist-nets on their flight route into the roost. This allows us to catch a number of birds on each occasion, while causing minimum disturbance to the actual roost itself. As in previous years each bird will receive an Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) band as well as a green leg flag, which will identify the bird as being banded in south-east Queensland.

Each bird will be weighed and measured to calculate their body condition. Average body condition for each species can then be compared to look at variation both within and between years as well as identifying movement trends for the species using Moreton Bay using leg flag sightings.

Banding will also be used to complement existing long term trend data on survival and migration of waders. This will be provided by the new influx of green flagged birds being sighted in the flyway. To provide more detail than previously collated, many of the birds now banded will have their leg flag engraved with a unique 2 character code. This will enable us to monitor movements of individual birds around the bay, looking at fidelity to roost and feeding sites, as well as generating longer distance movement and survival data for individuals rather than age groups.

The data collected will improve in value with every flag sighting reported so if you see a wader with a green leg flag please look to see if there is a code on the flag and report that with your sighting as normal so the data is captured. Flag sightings are recorded by Phil and Linda Cross, their contact details are address: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, Qld 4xxx, email: xxx@xxx.net.au or phone: (07) xxx xxx.

All sightings will be published in the QWSG newsletter and we intend to provide regular updates on the fieldwork and results in the newsletter.

Thank you in advance for any sightings you send in and if you want any further information please e-mail me at xxx@xxx.com.

Jon Coleman, David Milton and Sandra Harding.

## Did You Know the Port of Brisbane Has a Shorebird Roost?

The Port of Brisbane Corporation has finished construction of a 12Ha Port of Brisbane Shorebird Roost. This site was originally a dredge tailwater pond and has been reconfigured and redesigned to make it one of the largest constructed roosts on Australia's east coast. The monitoring data gathered by the QWSG over the past 3 years was used to determine the type and proportion of the habitats presented within the roost site. Further, the experiences of the QWSG members were instrumental in the design and fit out of the two excellent hides that the Corporation has built within the site.

The site offers the opportunity to get close to a range of waterbirds, shorebirds and waders with the best viewing time at high tide. There is also a viewing platform showing the unique aspects of the intertidal feeding areas, St Helena Island and the Moreton Bay Marine Park.

The site can be accessed free of charge via the Port of Brisbane Visitors Centre, Number 1 Whimbrel Street, Port of Brisbane. Visitors are asked to sign in, agree to a code of conduct, and pick up a key to access the site and hides. Binoculars and bird ID books are also available for loan free of charge. This is a great place for a relaxed Sunday drive or if you have visitors in town. The Port of Brisbane Visitors Centre is open 6 days per week, Sunday - Friday. Bookings or more information xxx xxx.

## Queensland Wader Study Group Annual General Meeting

The QWSG AGM will be held on Sunday, 10 December, 2006, at the Visitor's Centre, Port of Brisbane, Curlew Cr, Fisherman Islands. More details later in Newsletter.

## Lena-Nordenskjöld International Biological Station and Zackenberg Research Station – two very different arctic worlds

By Hans Meltofte

Senior scientist at the National Environmental Research Institute, Denmark

During my c. 25 seasons as an ornithologist in the Arctic, it has often puzzled me how different conditions are in different parts of the Arctic. Opposite to the thinking of many people, the Arctic is not just the Arctic. Large differences occur not only between the “mild” Low Arctic (mean July temperature between 6°C and 12°C) and the harsh High Arctic (mean July temperature below 6°C), but maybe even more between the different regions of the Arctic. From the literature it is evident that basic conditions such as snow melt, productivity, predation and general climate exert highly different pressures on the breeding birds in different regions. Since I have spent most of my “arctic life” in high arctic Greenland, I have always wanted to visit other parts of the Arctic to see with my own eyes, how conditions differ. Fortunately, this has brought me to places as distant as Western and Northern Alaska, Svalbard and Franz Josef Land besides most of low and high arctic Greenland, but never to arctic Siberia or Canada. To fill at least a little bit of this gap, I was fortunate to spend two weeks in the Lena Delta in Northeast Siberia in late June and early July 2006. This was only possible thanks to the existence of the Lena-Nordenskjöld Biological Station and the great support provided by Vladimir Pozdnyakov and other ornithologists working here and in the outer delta, where we spent most of our time.

And what a difference! Of course, the bird fauna in this low arctic area is much more diverse than in remote high arctic Greenland. Where we for example have six species of waders breeding in our study area at the Zackenberg Research Station in central Northeast Greenland, where I worked during the last 11 summers, there are 17 wader species breeding here in the Lena Delta. And what species? Several of them are pretty exotic for an ornithologist coming from the Atlantic sector of the globe, where many of them only occur as very rare vagrants. Having seen them on the final spring staging areas in South Alaska and China and on the wintering grounds in Southeast Asia, Australia and South America, it was a wild aspiration to see them on the breeding grounds.

Also the densities are much higher here in the Lena Delta. In fact, there are one hundred times as high densities of breeding waders in the best areas here, as in the best areas of the northernmost land in the World, Peary Land in North Greenland. This is clearly due to the several hundred times higher productivity and thereby food density of this low arctic Lena Delta tundra than of the high arctic desert of Peary Land.

### Late and variable breeding in Siberia

But it is not all that better here in the Lena Delta. The climate of high arctic Greenland is much more continental with bright sunshine 24 hours a day and little wind for extended periods, where I have seen little more than strong winds, overcast skies and rain in most days here in the maritime summer climate of the Lena Delta. Such weather also occurs in high arctic Greenland, but most often only for one or a few days on end. In spite of a very thin snow cover here in the Lena Delta, not even the snow melt is much earlier here than in high arctic Greenland. In both places the snow melts during June, varying by 2-3 weeks between early and late years. The result is that the birds here do not breed earlier than in Northeast Greenland. On the contrary, in fact. In a favourable spring, the first wader eggs are laid around 1<sup>st</sup> June in high arctic Greenland, while egg-laying here in the Lena Delta and other parts of arctic Siberia generally is 1-2 weeks later. The same apply to the geese, where barnacle geese *Branta leucopsis* and pink-footed geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* will start egg-laying around 25<sup>th</sup> May in Northeast Greenland. Here, the black-bellied brent geese *Branta bernicla nigricans* and greater white-fronted geese *Anser albifrons* do not begin egg-laying until early June.

Also predation differs markedly. Here in Siberia, breeding success of tundra birds is well known to vary substantially from year to year depending on the abundance of lemmings and their predators. In lemming peak years, the predators have plenty of food, and tundra birds experience low predation on eggs and chicks, while in the year following a lemming peak, predators are abundant, but have few lemmings to feed on. This is at the cost of the tundra birds, which experience very low breeding success in such years.

This is not all that pronounced in other parts of the Arctic. In high arctic Greenland, the predation pressure is relatively stable in most years, resulting in the loss “only” of about half the wader nests to arctic foxes *Alopex lagopus* in most years. This is probably the result of much lower lemming peaks in this high arctic area, which again keep the populations of arctic foxes relatively low.

And where arctic foxes constitute the only important egg predator in high arctic Greenland, the pomarine skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* appears to be by far the most important egg predator here in the Lena Delta.

But the Lena Delta and high arctic Greenland do not constitute the extremes of arctic life conditions. Here, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in Western Alaska represents the most favourable part of the Arctic enabling the waders to start egg-laying already in mid May, whereas Franz Josef Land and some of the other Russian arctic islands most likely make up the worst with only one wader species breeding in any numbers: the purple sandpiper *Calidris maritima*, which finds most of its food in the littoral zone, because there is very little invertebrate food on the bare tundra.

### Difficult logistics

It is never been easy to perform scientific research in the Arctic. The costs and logistic difficulties have exerted strong limitations to most studies, and long-term ecological monitoring has only recently been initiated at a few permanent arctic research stations. Two of these stations are the Lena-Nordenskjöld Biological Station and Zackenberg Research Station in high arctic Greenland. Also here, the differences are striking. All transport to and from Zackenberg is by small chartered airplanes from Iceland, about six flying hours south of Zackenberg. This is very expensive, which limits the use of the station. Similarly, the transport by motorboat to the Lena-Nordenskjöld Biological Station makes it difficult to reach this place, especially because the often strong winds often prevent navigation on the delta channels leading to the station and other parts of the delta. Furthermore, we are fortunate to have almost all areas of interest within walking distance from our research station at Zackenberg, while the Lena-Nordenskjöld Biological Station is the logistic center for further excursions into the huge Lena Delta.

For a Dane it is almost incomprehensible that the Lena Delta covers an area of nearly the size of Denmark - if we do not include Greenland as Danish territory. To get an idea of the size of the Lena Delta, it is worth mentioning that the delta consists of 6500 channels and 1500 islands with a total of 30,000 lakes and ponds. Hence, it took us seven hours by motorboat to reach Nerpallaakh Island in the outer delta, where we wanted to monitor the rich tundra birdlife. Here we were living in an old fisherman's log cabin, waiting for days for the wind to calm down, so that we could visit other islands with important bird colonies to be monitored. But it was very cosy with crackling fire in the stove, boiling reindeer meat in the pot and lots of exiting birds right outside the cabin. Besides daily excursions to look at birds and search for their nests, it was pretty absurd to sit in an old log cabin in this extremely remote place and work on a computer, while the TV was broadcasting news from Palestine, and we could use satellite GPS systems to locate bird nests.

### Water, water, water everywhere

Greenland is highly mountainous. Lowland areas suited for breeding tundra birds are restricted to valley floors and a few forelands. This mountainous landscape makes it easy to walk through valleys and other lowland areas, where dry ground predominates. Lakes and ponds are few in most areas, and fens are not common. Furthermore, the vegetation cover is not continuous. Large expanses are either barren gravel and stones or only have scattered plant cover. In the high arctic desert of Peary Land the vegetation cover is even below 10 per cent in the lowland.

What a difference to the Lena Delta. Here, the landscape is more of a "waterscape" with thousands of lakes and ponds, only separated by deep wet vegetation. To walk in this terrain makes it necessary to wear hip boots, and still it is like "navigating" in a labyrinth of permafrost polygons, lagoons and lakes. On top of this comes the cold wind, which makes it necessary to wear much clothing. In high arctic Greenland, I often work on the tundra only wearing a shirt and a vest, even having my sleeves rolled up, while I needed seven layers of clothing on most days here in the outer Lena Delta. I wonder what the birds feel about it? Well, according to their numbers and diversity, they after all seem to prosper!

### Easy nest finding

In high arctic Greenland, you are lucky, if you find five nests during one day's intensive work. The densities are so low that a sample of 10-25 nests and broods per species is a difficult aim to fulfil. Here in the Lena Delta, I could easily "stumble" over five nests during a few hours walk on the tundra. This was not by searching or waiting at a distance for birds to return to their nests and thereby reveal where it was, but simply by seeing the incubating bird lift from the nest a few meters away. This both applied to waders nests and nests by geese and ducks, which are much more numerous here than in high arctic Greenland. Most of the nests found by me were of the common species here: red phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*, Temminck's stint *Calidris temmincki* and greater white-fronted goose, but I also found a few nests of little stint *Calidris minuta*, curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, ruddy turnstone *Arenaria interpres* and long-tailed skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*.

According to my Russian colleagues, the lemming population was low this year after a peak in 2004-2005. This meant that predation by skuas and gulls on wader and duck nests was very high. Hence, many nests were depredated, and in early July most waders gathered in post-breeding flocks and left the tundra, and many female king eiders *Somateria spectabilis* and Steller's eiders *Polysticta stelleri* were not sitting on eggs anymore. Furthermore, the early snow melt in this part of Siberia apparently meant that many little stints and other "opportunistic" waders never flew this far north, but nested further south. Hence, the number of little stints on the island in the outer delta was very low this year as compared to previous years.

Large goose colonies are found on certain islands here in the Lena Delta. We visited one such island in the outer delta with a 250 pair strong black-bellied goose colony. Nests were concentrated at one end of the island, so that the ornithologists from the Lena-Nordenskjöld Biological Station could easily work their way through colony while recording egg numbers and other details. A total of 50-60 pairs of glaucous gulls *Larus hyperboreus* and herring gulls *Larus argentatus* were nesting among the geese, and goose eggs clearly made up the bulk of their food. About 20 per cent of the goose nests had been emptied by the gulls before our arrival on the island. Besides the geese and the large gulls, Sabine's gulls *Xema sabini* and Ross's gulls *Rhodostethia rosea* were nesting in a small colony on the island, and nests of Bewick's swan *Cygnus bewickii*, king eider and Steller's eider were also found by us.

Apparently, most Ross's gulls refrained from breeding this year. We found only one nest on the brent goose island, where about 10 pairs have been breeding in other years, and on our "own" island, Nerpallaakh, no Ross's gulls were found at all. Here, 12 pairs have been nesting in other years. On our way out here, we saw a flock of 80 Ross's gulls, which support the notion that many Ross's gulls are not breeding this year. In a non-breeding year like this, the birds leave the breeding sites in early July to migrate out into the pack-ice of the Arctic Ocean. Here, we recorded more than 1000 individuals as far west as between Franz Josef Land, Svalbard and North Greenland during the Swedish ice-breaker expedition Ymer in 1980, which may have been another non-breeding year.

### **The climate is warming**

One of the aims of ecological monitoring in the Arctic is to follow and possibly even to predict the effects of the ongoing climate amelioration, which is expected to be most pronounced in the Arctic. In most of the Arctic, temperatures and precipitation has been increasing during the last decades, and they are expected to increase even more in the future. This means earlier snow and ice melt in spring and higher summer temperatures, which will increase invertebrate productivity and thereby food availability for many arctic birds.

Thirty arctic wader specialists gathered at a workshop in Denmark a few years ago has worked on an analysis of the effects of these climate changes to arctic shorebirds. The common expectation is that climate amelioration initially will result in improved breeding conditions for waders in the Arctic, in that they are highly dependent on timing of spring thaw and invertebrate availability both to the adult breeding birds during the first period after arrival and to the chicks after hatch in July. In fact, a number of arctic and north boreal waders on the East Atlantic flyway seem to have been increasing during the last decades. This is not the case on the American and East Asian flyways, where destruction of important habitats and reduced quality of others apparently has caused several wader populations to decline. Similar changes are seen in other arctic bird groups, where e.g. geese have been increasing for decades in Europe and North America, but decreasing in East Asia mainly due to excessive shooting. These changes seem to have little to do with climate change.

However, in the longer term all arctic birds are most likely to suffer large range contractions due to overgrowing of tundra habitat with scrubs and trees. Hence, half the arctic land areas are predicted to be lost to overgrowth during the next 100 years. Here, high arctic habitats such as those of northernmost Siberia, Greenland and the Canadian Archipelago are likely to suffer most, since they will be "taken over" by low arctic vegetation from the south, while they can't "move" to the north because they already constitute the northernmost land areas adjacent to the Arctic Ocean. This means that the waders and other birds adapted to the high arctic tundra are likely to suffer the largest reductions in population size, whereas the low arctic species may do a little better.

This is supported by DNA-analyses of genetic diversity in arctic waders, where the high arctic species have been through narrow population "bottlenecks" during previous climatic perturbations such as at the end of the last glaciation, where some populations may only have numbered a few hundred individuals and others may have gone extinct. In contrast, low arctic species seem to have been doing better during these periods, having maintained a larger genetic diversity than the high arctic species.

These are not the only problems facing arctic waders due to climate change. Outside the breeding season, many of them depend on the extremely rich invertebrate food resources of inter-tidal habitats such as estuaries and mudflats along shallow coasts in temperate and tropical countries. Here, they build up those body stores, which enable them to perform migrations often covering thousands of kilometres non-stop between breeding, staging and wintering areas. With climate warming, the oceans will see increased water levels due to melting glacier ice and expanding sea water volume, which will reduce the availability of these crucial habitats to the waders and other shorebirds.

In this perspective, the future prospects for many arctic birds seem gloom, unless we humans succeed to halt the threats from climate change by severely reducing our expulsion of green-house gases.

By Hans Meltofte

Senior scientist at the National Environmental Research Institute, Denmark

## Shorebird Conservation Toolkit

WWF-Australia with funding from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust is pleased to announce the launch of the Shorebird Conservation Toolkit - [www.shorebirds.org.au](http://www.shorebirds.org.au) - to help protect and enhance shorebird habitat across Australia.

The toolkit builds on the success of the national Shorebird Conservation Project (2001-2005), drawing from over 31 on- ground and community-driven shorebird conservation projects.

The toolkit is a comprehensive resource that will enable users to:

- understand and appreciate shorebirds, their habitat and conservation needs;
- locate important shorebird sites in Australia and access population estimates;
- develop site survey and monitoring programs;
- identify/assess site management needs, and implement/evaluate management actions;
- write grant applications, site communication plans and media releases;
- access existing resources;
- identify and advocate international / national conservation options; and
- access organisations with knowledge/expertise in practical shorebird and wetland conservation.

The toolkit is available on-line at [www.shorebirds.org.au](http://www.shorebirds.org.au) and on CD

For further information contact Bianca Priest 03 xxxx xxxx or [xxxx@xxxx.org.au](mailto:xxxx@xxxx.org.au)

## Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* - First Australian Occurrence

Deep in cotton growing country 650 km north-west of Sydney lies a small grain-handling township of Burren Junction. It is here that two bird watchers, Karen and Brett Davis from Jervis Bay saw a bird that they could not identify from their Australian field guide. Fortunately they were able to take digital photographs and send the images by Email to other bird watchers who were able to access field guides to birds overseas and identify the bird as a Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*.

The Grey-headed Lapwing breeds in north-eastern China and Japan and migrate to Nepal, north-east India, Bangladesh and southern China during the northern hemisphere winter. They are occasionally recorded as vagrants in the Philippines and in Indonesia.

More than 100 bird watchers travelled great distances within days of it being discovered in late June 2006. It was still there in late August and appears to have adopted the town, staying close to the tiny urban area, particularly in a grassy paddock opposite the grain storage silos at the western end of town. It is quite a handsome bird; grey above and in front extending down to a black breast band and a white belly below. The eye is bright red. Unfortunately, it has a large spherical red-brown growth under the right foot, causing a slight limp. It often raises the right leg when resting transferring a red-brown stain to the right side of the belly, indicating that the growth is probably infected. Our bird has moved south instead of north at this time of year and has also considerably overshot Indonesia!

Chris Herbert *from the Tattler*

## WADER WATCH Linda and Phil Cross, Joyce Harding

### 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

There are more leg flag sightings detailed in this newsletter.

### **Green leg flag sightings**

In each Qld Wader issue there is quite a number of green leg flag sightings recorded within Moreton Bay, which is where the bird was banded originally. As we are now seeing more leg flag combinations from other countries in Queensland, and have limited space available for sightings, we will not be listing each individual sighting of the green flag records in Queensland unless there is a significant movement of the bird. Instead, we will list the number of flags for each species and the period in which they were seen.

Sighted in Moreton Bay and environs between 27.08.06 & 05.11.06

4 Eastern Curlew, 6 Bar-tailed Godwit, 1 Great Knot, 1 Red Knot, 4 Grey-tailed Tattler, 1 Terek Sandpiper, 2 Curlew Sandpiper.

### **Interstate & overseas Green leg flag sightings**

1 Red Knot – Miranda, Firth of Thames, South Auckland, NI, New Zealand – Nigel Milius – 06.10.06

### **Orange leg flag sightings**

1 Eastern Curlew – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 26.08.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Coombabah Lake, Gold Coast – Terry Dillon & Lyn Wallace – 08.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Toorbul – Dez Wells, Deborah Metters & Jenny Ovenden – 08.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Fisherman Island – Peter Rothlisberg & Michele Burford – 08.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve – Ken Cowell, Floss Wainwright, Graham & Brenda Smith – 07.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Manly Boat Harbour – David Milton et al – 07.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Fisherman Island – David Milton et al – 10.09.06

2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Boonooroo – Trevor Qusted, Brian & Bev Woolley – 14.09.06

1 Great Knot – Toorbul – Dez Wells et al – 08.10.06

1 Great Knot – Toorbul – Linda & Phil Cross et al – 24.09.06

1 Red Knot – Toorbul – Dez Wells et al – 08.10.06

1 Red Knot – Toorbul – Brian & Judy Willey et al – 26.09.06

1 Red Knot – Toorbul – Linda & Phil Cross et al – 24.09.06

1 Red Knot – Boonooroo – Trevor Qusted, Brian & Bev Woolley – 14.09.06

1 Red Knot – Thorneside – Dave Houghton & Kath Shurcliff – 27.08.06

1 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – Cairns Esplanade – Bob & Vera Radnell – 04.09.06

2 Red-necked Stint – Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria – Dave Cropley – 02.10.06

1 Red-necked Stint – Fisherman Island – David Milton et al – 10.09.06

Dave Cropley sighted numerous Red Knot in Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria between 27.09.06 and 12.10.06. Up to a maximum of five orange flagged birds were seen at any one time.

### **Yellow leg flag sightings**

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Fisherman Island – Peter Rothlisberg & Michele Burford – 08.10.06

1 Red knot – Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria – Dave Cropley – 30.09.06 & 04.10.06

### **White (New Zealand) leg flag sightings**

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – white flag left tibia, red/white bands left tarsus and yellow/yellow bands right tarsus – Eli Creek, Gatakers Bay, Hervey Bay – Dez Wells, Sean Norman & Bob Gleeson – 21.10.06 (bird seen and photographed numerous times in same area up to 01.11.06)

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – white flag left tibia, blue/yellow bands left tarsus – Manly Boat Harbour – Terry Dillon – 20.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – white flag left tibia, yellow/blue bands left tarsus and yellow/red bands right tarsus – Fisherman Island – Peter Rothlisberg & Michele Burford – 08.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – white flag right tibia, yellow/yellow bands left tarsus, white/white bands right tarsus – Boonooroo – Trevor Qusted, Brian & Bev Woolley – 14.09.06



1 Red Knot – Boonooroo – Trevor Quested, Brian & Bev Woolley – 14.09.06

Dave Cropley sighted numerous Red Knot in Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria between 30.09.06 and 12.10.06. Up to a maximum of five white flagged birds were seen at any one time.

**Blue (Japanese) leg flag sightings**

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue flag left tibia and metal band right tibia – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight et al – 10.10.06

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue flag left tibia – Manly Boat Harbour – David Milton et al – 08.10.06

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue flag left tibia – Manly Boat Harbour – Sandra Harding et al – 07.10.06

4 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue flag left tibia – Toorbul – Dez Wells & Deborah Metters – 10.09.06

(All above birds with blue flag left tibia were flagged in Hokkaido, Northern Japan)

**Other wader leg flag sightings**

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – orange flag over green flag right tibia – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight et al – 10.10.06 (flagged in NSW)

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – white flag over black flag right tibia – Boonooroo – Trevor Quested, Brian & Bev Woolley – 14.09.06

1 Great Knot – white flag over black flag right tibia – Manly Boat Harbour – David Milton et al – 09.09.06

1 Great Knot – black flag over white flag right tibia – Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria – Dave Cropley – 08.10.06 & 12.10.06

1 Great Knot – white flag over black flag right tibia – Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria – Dave Cropley – 04.10.06

1 Red Knot – white flag over black flag right tibia – Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria – Dave Cropley – 28.09.06, 03.10.06, 09.10.06 & 12.10.06

1 Red Knot – black flag over white flag right tibia – Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria – Dave Cropley – 12.10.06 (Black over white and white over black flagged in Chongming Dao, Shanghai, China)

1 Red-necked Stint – blue flag left tarsus – Fisherman Island – Linda Cross – 10.09.06

(Blue flag on left tarsus is a part combination for Taiwan flagged bird, which should also have a white flag on the left tibia and metal band on the right tibia. Unfortunately the bird flew off before I could get a look for the other flag and metal band. Sometimes the flag on the tibia is quite high and not easy to see).

**Other leg flag sightings and banded birds**

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – blue over yellow band left tarsus and white over yellow band right tarsus – Manly Boat Harbour – Terry Dillon – 20.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – yellow band over blue band left tarsus (right leg tucked up and not able to check other leg for bands) – David Milton – 08.10.06

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – white over red band left tarsus and white over yellow band right tarsus – Manly Boat Harbour – David Milton – 07.10.06

(The three godwits above are probably New Zealand flagged birds that have either lost the white flag, or flag was not seen)

1 Caspian Tern – orange flag right tarsus and metal band left tarsus – Fisherman Island – David Edwards et al – 10.09.06

1 Caspian Tern – orange flag right tarsus and metal band left tarsus – Toorbul 1km north – Dez Wells – 13.08.06

**Interesting sightings**

**Please note these sightings are not authenticated records.**

\* = to be submitted to BQ RAC \*\* = to be submitted to BARC

30 Marsh Sandpiper – Maaroom – John Bell – 8.10.06

1 Common Sandpiper – Dalrymple Creek, Bowen – Jon Wren – 25.09.06

7 Wandering Tattler – Seaforth Beach, Mackay area – Peggy Harding – 10.09.06

1 Wood Sandpiper – Garnet's Lagoons – John Knight – 09.09.06 & 21.09.06

315 Black-winged Stilt – Kedron Brook Wetlands – Dez Wells – 09.09.06

**Not waders but of interest anyway**

2 Pacific Baza (breeding) – Banorah Point, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson – 11.10.06

20 Magpie Goose (breeding noted) – Nielsen's Road, Carrarra, Gold Coast – Terry Dillon – 09.10.06

2 Buff-banded Rail – Buckley's Hole, Bribie Island – Dez Wells & Deborah Metters – 08.10.06

1 White-winged Triller – Pine Rivers Northside – David Edwards – 07.10.06

5 Brolga (2 breeding with 1 on nest with eggs) – Young Ave, Kinka Beach, Yeppoon – Allan Briggs – 07.10.06

577 Grey Teal – Young Ave, Kinka Beach, Yeppoon – Allan Briggs – 07.10.06  
149 Wandering Whistling Duck – Kingscliff Sewerage Plant – Ian Watson – 25.09.06  
1 Australasian Bittern – Garnet's Lagoons – John Knight 21.09.06  
1886 Crested Tern – Noosa River Sandbanks – Jill Denning – 10.09.06  
1863 Little Black Cormorant – Fisherman Island – QWSG – 13.08.06  
253 Chestnut Teal – Fisherman Island – QWSG – 13.08.06  
20 Glossy Ibis – Garnet's Lagoons – John Knight & Peter Royall – 15.07.06 (21 on 11.08.06)  
11 Australasian Shoveler – Garnet's Lagoons – John Knight & Peter Royall – 15.07.06  
1 Musk Duck – Garnet's Lagoons – John Knight & Peter Royall – 15.07.06 (still on site on 11.08.06)  
264 Chestnut Teal – Luggage Point – Ivell & Jim Whyte – 15.07.06  
500+ Magpie Goose – Mackay Truck Stop – Ken Cowell & Floss Wainwright – 11.07.06  
10 Glossy Ibis – Mackay Truck Stop – Ken Cowell & Floss Wainwright – 11.07.06  
4 Radjah Shelduck – Harbour Lagoon, Mackay – Ken Cowell & Floss Wainwright – 09.07.06  
1 Southern Giant Petrel (ill and subsequently died) – Sandy Cape Fraser Island – Donald & Lesley Bradley – 07.06.06 (a second bird was found dead on 08.06.06)

## Count Programme by Linda Cross

**Would all counters please note that the monthly count dates for all of 2007 have been chosen and listed at the back of this newsletter.** It is always difficult getting just the right height of tide for the day, and the weekends I have chosen are the best I can get. I know there are some quite high and fairly low high tides, but unfortunately these are the best available. If your count site is swamped during the higher tides I suggest you get to your sites (for the first few months) well before the high and get the birds counted before they are pushed off the roost. If you want further advice about counting during the higher tides please feel free to contact me.

Marion Williams took over the count sites in the Tweed Heads area some years ago for the count programme, and has done an excellent job continuing to supply us with records for the database. Marion is having a couple of months break before selling up and travelling around Australia for 12 months, before returning to the Hervey Bay area to live, where she plans to be looking for waders there too. There are a number of very good wader sites in the area for Marion to check out, and perhaps survey some sites for us that have not been counted for a while. We extend our sincere thanks for her contribution and wish her well in her travels and relocation.

Our thanks to Laurel Allsopp, who has been counting with Marion at the Tweed Heads sites for quite some time, and will now continue to survey the sites for us and be the official counter.

We would also like to welcome Terry Dillon into the count programme. Terry has been visiting some of the sites on the Gold Coast that have not been counted for a long time. Not all sites are counted each month, but Terry fills in a count sheet for us each time he visits any of them. Committing oneself to regular monthly counts is not always possible for some people, but we appreciated any counts that can be done and given on an ad hoc basis.

The southward migration has now finished and it is interesting to see the movements of some species, which can be seen in the Wader Watch section. Yellow flagged birds are hardly seen at all in Queensland, but we have two listed in this issue. The other colour is white flagged (New Zealand) birds, with a number of Bar-tailed Godwits sporting a variety of colour bands being reported.

While on the subject of leg flagged birds, can everyone please remember to look and record very carefully the flag positions. Some of the birds have flags on the upper (tibia) and lower (tarsus) legs and it is important to record the combination accurately so that they can be traced back to the country of origin. Some of the flags on the tibia can be high on the leg and difficult to see requiring a lot of effort and time hoping the bird will eventually move enough for you to see the colour. It is certainly frustrating waiting for them to put that other leg down! As I have mentioned in the last paragraph, some of the godwits from New Zealand have colour bands too, and it is important to identify flags from bands and record accordingly. Accurate recording certainly makes things much easier for Phil when it comes to putting the sightings on the database and advising AWSG. Sometimes there is a flurry of phone calls and emails back and forth between observers, us and AWSG to try and get the right information.

The newsletter had to be done a little earlier for this issue in order for details of the AGM to be sent to members, so I was not able to extract sightings from the November count sheets, which are just coming in as I do this article. However, there were some larger totals of some species seen during October.

Good numbers of Grey-tailed Tattler were seen in September at Mathieson Homestead (1100) and Fisherman Island (671). In October, Manly Boat Harbour (597), Toorbul (744), Fisherman Island (600), and Mathieson Homestead (1400).

Reasonable numbers of Eastern Curlew were seen at Mathieson Homestead (467) in September along with (287) at Thornlands in the same month. In October they were seen at Geoff Skinner Reserve east (334) and Mangrove Point Hervey Bay (468).

Whimbrels are quite often hiding in the mangroves, but a good count came from Mathieson Homestead (510) in September

The only other significant counts in September were (468) Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, (1378) Red-necked Stint and (906) Curlew Sandpiper at Fisherman Island. While in October the best counts were (606) Pacific Golden Plover, (360) Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, (3558) Red-necked Stint and (619) Curlew Sandpiper at Fisherman Island, (132) Pacific Golden Plover at Pioneer River, Mackay, (176) Red Knot at Lytton and (249) Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve.

The only other significant counts came from Lytton, with 176 Red Knot on 08.10.06 and 249 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve on 07.10.06

One Latham's Snipe arrived early in Garnet's Lagoons during the first week of August

### Breeding records

Beach Stone-curlew – breeding pair with one sitting on nest with an egg at Pioneer River, Mackay on 08.10.06 (photographs taken by Les Thyer)

Pied Oystercatcher – on a nest at Seaforth Beach Mackay area on 10.09.06 (report from 1<sup>st</sup> October says that the bird has now gone, as there are too many people causing disturbance)

Black-winged Stilt – two birds nesting at Buckley's Hole, Bribie Island on 23.10.06 (Also seen on 29.10.06 by Birds Qld group. One nest clearly seen through scope with 4 eggs), one bird nesting at Bishops Marsh on 08.10.06, lots of nests and mating at Kedron Brook Wetlands on 09.09.06 and numerous downy chicks seen on 07.10.06.

Masked Lapwing – juveniles at Point Halloran on 07.10.06, chicks at Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island on 09.09.06 and two chicks at Cobaki Retirement Village, Tweed Heads on 05.10.06

As I write this article (10<sup>th</sup> November), I am still in paid employment and apologise to everyone for not replying to emails. I thank you all once again for your patience and understanding.

Happy counting Linda.

## Email Subject: Black/White leg flagged bird-Lake Tyers, VIC

When Chongming Dao started using engraved leg flags on most large waders in April this year, they (with the approval of ABBBS etc) switched the order of the flags.

The reason was to make the white flag (which is the one being engraved) more visible. It was thought less likely to be hidden by a bird's white belly feathers in the lower position.

They now flag ALL birds with Black / White (whether flags are engraved or not), rather than the earlier White/Black. Therefore the order is still useful information as it indicates **when** the bird was flagged.

It is a bit confusing, but given the huge numbers of birds being flagged there now (and the commitment of those working there in challenging conditions), it was thought best to maximise their chances of getting useful results from their ongoing flagging studies.

Regards,

Heather Gibbs

- Australasian Wader Studies Group (leg-flag database operator)

- Deakin University, Burwood [xxxx@xxxx.edu.au](mailto:xxxx@xxxx.edu.au)

## **Submission from the Queensland Wader Study Group on the Climate Smart Adaptation Discussion Paper**

### **1. Climate smart adaptation - Climate change adaptation principles**

Climate change is the result of increased greenhouse gases stemming from the ecological footprint of people in wealthy countries including Australia. Any efforts by governments to reduce our ecological footprint will enable a greater conservation result for the environment. It would be good if tied in with the recognition of climate change; small steps could be made to encourage people to reduce the overall footprint of people in Queensland.

People can make changes in how they live to reduce the production of greenhouse gases. For people to make these changes, they need to be able to see what they do as part of the bigger picture. Creating the vision should be the role of government. A long term approach is needed if our ecological footprint is to be reduced enough to make a difference. While government only operates on the short term (to the next election), in this case the vision needs to be over the long term (at least 20 years).

To reduce the private use of cars needs a reorganisation of the residential areas to improve accessibility without the use of private cars. The government needs to determine how much car use should be decreased and how this will be achieved. Within this context each decision of government should be required to address the need to reduce the footprint and greenhouse gas production.

### **2. Climate smart adaptation - How can you adapt to climate change?**

An important part of adapting to climate change is improving the resilience of natural systems. Shorebirds or waders are birds that are dependent on wetlands. Wetlands have wetting and drying periods which the birds utilise. Climate change will mean lessening environmental flows in rivers, less rainfall and higher sea levels. Many of these wetlands are already threatened due to coastal developments, regulation of rivers, damming of rivers, water extraction and reclamation of tidal and freshwater wetlands. To build in natural resilience for shorebirds, there needs to be efforts to keep as much water available to enter the wetlands while maintaining their natural variability.

The planning being undertaken for water allocation in catchments should address climate change. Once problems occur from lack of water for wetlands, water needs to be purchased from rural producers or other water users to put back into the wetlands. This situation should be avoided.

Another option that should be considered is the use of recycled water. Recycled water can be used to create wetlands for the use of shorebirds. This water may be from urban stormwater, agricultural runoff or waste water treatment plants if appropriately treated. These wetlands will need appropriate management to ensure that there is sufficient water available over the times when resident shorebirds are breeding. They need to be shallow with emergent vegetation and have a variable water level that reflects the natural rainfall events.

A further consideration to accommodate shorebirds is to buffer development around all shorebird areas to ensure that as sea levels rise shorebird habitats are not lost. Disturbance of shorebirds is a major threat in areas where there is urban development, particularly for shorebird high tide roosts. These roosts will be under greater threat from sea level rise.

The QWSG would appreciate your response on how the government proposes to address these issues.

Yours sincerely,  
Dr David Milton,  
Chair,  
Queensland Wader study Group

**Why do all the birds fly south from the northern winter ??????  
Because they did not want to walk !!!!!!!**

## WADER ID DAY REPORTS

### Toorbul Wader ID day report – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Thirteen people (a much smaller total than normal) attended this wader identification day. Weather conditions were excellent for viewing the variety of birds.

Having a smaller group was a bonus for attendees wanting to learn more about these species because they got tuition on just about a one to one basis, and having Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits, Great Knot and Red Knot at the roost was good for pointing out the differences between them. A count of the waders was conducted at the roost by some of the QWSG members.

A quick stop at **Bishops Marsh** as we left rewarded some of us with close views of a Latham's Snipe in the drain along the roadside, 2 Brolga and a Buff-banded Rail.

Six species were seen at Bishops Marsh:

11 Grey Teal, Cattle Egret, 2 Brolga, 1 Buff-banded Rail, 1 Latham's Snipe and 4 Black-winged Stilt.

A total of 57 birds were seen at the main **Toorbul roost** and environs as follows:

9 Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck, 2 Australian Pelican, 1 Little Egret, Intermediate Egret, 1 Striated Heron, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, 2 Osprey, 1 Whistling Kite, 1 Brahminy Kite, Buff-banded Rail, 17 Black-tailed Godwit, 492 Bar-tailed Godwit, 357 Whimbrel, 263 Eastern Curlew, 1 Common Greenshank, 11 Grey-tailed Tattler, 179 Great Knot, 17 Red Knot, 8 Red-necked Stint, 32 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, 55 Curlew Sandpiper, 3 Pied Oystercatcher, 1 Sooty Oystercatcher, 1 Masked Lapwing, 5 Silver Gull, 11 Gull-billed Tern, 3 Caspian Tern, Spotted Turtle-dove, Crested Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Galah, Rainbow Lorikeet, Pale-headed Rosella, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Striated Pardalote, Little Wattlebird, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, Mangrove Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Grey Shrike-thrush, Magpie-lark, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Figbird, Australian Magpie, Richard's Pipit, Welcome Swallow and Common Myna.

My sincere thanks to Dawn Beck for compiling the bird list during the day.  
Linda Cross

### Toorbul Wader ID day report – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2006

A total of twenty three people turned up for this wader identification day.

There is no shade close the enhanced roost and it was hot standing in the sunshine during our observations of the birds and was probably responsible for an earlier departure of some of the group. A cooling sea breeze, which was most welcomed, did not pick up until some of us were having a late lunch.

Both species of godwit and knot were at the roost, which was good for showing the difference between them. At one time there was an adult Bar-tailed Godwit, an adult Black-tailed Godwit and a juvenile Bar-tailed Godwit standing close together allowing us to point out the differences between them. The lone Grey Plover had a little post breeding plumage, as did some of the other waders.

An Osprey gave a great display of catching fish right in front of the roosting birds.

A Bar-tailed Godwit and a Great Knot were seen with orange leg flags (flagged in Victoria).

A total of 25 birds were seen at the main Toorbul roost and environs as follows:

Australian Pelican, White-faced Heron, Osprey, Whistling Kite, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Grey-tailed Tattler, Great Knot, Red Knot, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Pied Oystercatcher, Black-winged Stilt, Grey Plover, Masked Lapwing, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Spotted Turtle-dove, Mangrove Honeyeater and Common Myna.

Linda Cross

## WADER ID DAYS for 2007

### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at Toorbul**

High tide at 12:48 (plus 30 minutes later for Toorbul) of 1.69m. Meeting time 11:00am.

Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane to the Donnybrook/Toorbul exit (a large billboard advertising Humble Pie is on the left just prior to the exit. 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 2kms); we will be on the left.

Bring water, food and a chair. It is a good idea to have a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent. Most importantly bring your binoculars or telescopes. Hopefully we can provide the answers to all your questions.

Please contact either Phil & Linda Cross (07) xxxx xxxx or David Edwards (07) xxxx xxxx if you have any questions.

**Editor's Note:** *Once again the tides have conspired against us. We find that we have to turn up at 2:00am or will be flooded out by exceptional high tides. This is a low tide for Toorbul but we should be able to find the birds even if we have to visit the other small areas close to the main roost.*

## Shorebird Conservation Toolkit

WWF-Australia with funding from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust is pleased to announce the launch of the Shorebird Conservation Toolkit - [www.shorebirds.org.au](http://www.shorebirds.org.au) - to help protect and enhance shorebird habitat across Australia.

The toolkit builds on the success of the national Shorebird Conservation Project (2001-2005), drawing from over 31 on- ground and community-driven shorebird conservation projects.

The toolkit is a comprehensive resource that will enable users to:

- understand and appreciate shorebirds, their habitat and conservation needs;
- locate important shorebird sites in Australia and access population estimates;
- develop site survey and monitoring programs; •identify/assess site management needs, and implement/ evaluate management actions;
- write grant applications, site communication plans and media releases;
- access existing resources;
- identify and advocate international/national conservation options;and
- access organisations with knowledge/expertise in practical shorebird and wetland conservation.

The toolkit is available on-line at [www.shorebirds.org.au](http://www.shorebirds.org.au) and on CD  
For further information contact Bianca Priest 03 xxxx xxxx or [xxxx@xxxx.org.au](mailto:xxxx@xxxx.org.au)

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new member who have joined recently :

Deborah METTERS  
Dennis & Lorna JOHNSON

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.

## **UN: Migratory birds not major cause of flu transmission**

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-11/02/content\\_5283058.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-11/02/content_5283058.htm)

Editor: Mu Xuequan

NANCHANG, Nov. 2 (Xinhua) -- UN officials on Thursday said migratory birds do not play a major role in the transmission of the highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1. They made the remarks at the first international Living Lakes Conference in this capital of east China's Jiangxi Province.

Dr. Vincent Martin, an official with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UNFAO), said the spread of bird flu is mainly the result of the world's fast and unregulated development of animal production to meet the increased demand for animal protein. Highly concentrated domestic poultry production systems, especially in Asia, are still using centuries-old practices that place humans and poultry in close proximity, he said. Meanwhile, the constantly evolving nature of the virus has provided the ideal conditions for the emergence of new pathogenic strains of avian influenza.

Evidence indicates wild migratory birds play a minor role in the long-distance spread of the virus, he said, adding that the main causes of the deadly disease are the trade of poultry and poultry products. Marco Barbieri, executive secretary of Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), said the spread of bird flu receives a lot of attention in the media yet there remains widespread misunderstanding of the issue.

Misinformation has led to wild birds being automatically blamed, the official said. "This creates political pressure for ill-advised and disproportionate policies such as the culling or harassment of wild birds and the destruction of wetland habitats."

According to Barbieri, other modes of transmission, such as the trade in poultry and poultry products, the trade in caged birds and human movements may well play a far more significant role in the spread of the bird flu. In some cases, these modes of transmission have been underestimated and do not receive proportionate exposure in the media, he said. "We need to present an accurate and balanced view which acknowledges that there are a number of factors whose relative importance can change, depending on the area or outbreak concerned."

On the role of wild birds in transmission of the bird flu, Barbieri said it is clear that trade in domestic poultry has been a crucial factor, even in transmitting avian influenza over long distances and across continents. However, numerous species of wild birds, especially water fowl, have been proven to be susceptible to infection by H5N1, he pointed out. Close contact between wild birds and poultry can lead to cross-infection.

The loss of wetlands around the globe has forced many wild birds onto alternative sites like farm ponds and paddy fields, bringing them into closer contact with chickens, ducks, geese, and other domestic fowl. The experts say the issue of "ecohealth" highlights the interplay between agriculture and the ecology. A long term solution would be to separate poultry operations and wetlands used by wild birds in order to avoid shared access and cross-contamination, the UN officials suggested. Wild birds and poultry in the same region should not have direct contact with each other, and runoff from domestic poultry operations must not pollute wetlands used by wild birds.

"Farmers can help to reduce the risks of direct transmission of poultry and cross-infection between wild and domestic birds by improving hygiene and bio-security standards in farms and during the transportation of birds, said Barbieri. Scientists should synthesize information on the routes and timing of water bird migration, especially of poorly known intra-African migrants, and birds using Central Asian, Asia-Pacific and Neotropical flyways. "We need to strengthen bird research worldwide, especially in areas where little or no ringing and counting schemes have operated in the past," he said.

The official urged all countries to strengthen field surveillance of wild birds and enhance the understanding of wild bird migration and use of important sites during migration. They must avoid unjustified and counter-productive measure such as culling of wild birds and destruction of the natural habitats on which they depend, such as wetlands, he said. "The governments should also work with site management and veterinary authorities to ensure regular and effective site monitoring, aimed at rapid detection and reporting of any potential H5N1 outbreak," he added.

Along with the three officials, more than 200 world experts and officials discussed sustainable lake management, avian influenza and wildlife habitat conservation during the two-day forum.

## QWSG CONTACTS

### QUEENSLAND WADER

The Official Quarterly Publication of  
Queensland Wader Study Group

#### MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE QWSG

<u>CHAIRPERSON:</u>	David Milton	(07) xxxx xxxx	
<u>TREASURER:</u>	Sheryl Keates	(08) xxxx xxxx	or <a href="mailto:xxxx@xxxx.com.au">xxxx@xxxx.com.au</a>
<u>SECRETARY:</u>	Peter Rothlisberg	(07) xxxx xxxx	
<u>NEWSLETTER EDITOR:</u>	David Edwards	(07) xxxx xxxx	
<u>COUNT COORDINATOR:</u>	Linda Cross	(07) xxxx xxxx	

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dawn Beck	Ken Cowell
Andrew Geering	Joyce Harding
Sandra Harding	Des Wells
Ivell Whyte	

#### CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence to:  
The QWSG Chairperson,  
xxxxxxxxxxx,  
xxxxxxxxxxx  
QLD 4xxx

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify the Treasurer as soon as possible of any change of address so that your Newsletter can be dispatched correctly.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscription rates:  
Single: \$15:00  
Student/Pensioner: \$10:00  
Family \$25:00

Receipt will be forwarded with next edition of Queensland Wader.

Forward application to:  
QWSG Treasurer,  
xxxxxxxxxxx  
xxxxxxxxx  
NT 0xxx

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

Copy Deadline for the next issue of Queensland Wader is February 18<sup>th</sup> 2007

Contributions should be addressed to:

David Edwards, The QWSG Editor, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, Qld 4xxx  
or E-mail to: [xxxx@xxxx.com.au](mailto:xxxx@xxxx.com.au)

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.

PRINTED BY: Mr Bob Durrington of J.R. Durrington & Sons Pty Ltd.



## QWSG MERCHANDISE

Should you wish to purchase any of the QWSG Merchandise, items may be purchased at BQ Inc meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at the Royal Geographical Society Rooms OR....

Contact or E-mail at xxxx@xxxx.com.au

Postage is not included in the prices quoted.

BOOKS	\$19:80 Shorebird Conservation in the Asia-Pacific Region.
	\$ 3:30 A Guide to Waders of Moreton Bay (through Birds Queensland)
	\$24:00 Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds
CD	Bird calls of the Broome region (includes 42 Wader Species).
METAL BADGES	\$ 5.00+postage Metal QWSG logo badges

No longer in stock: Birds of Bribie Island, Pumicestone Passage and Environs  
Wildflowers of Bribie Island  
However, can be obtained from BIEPA by contacting  
Kathleen Catalan on 07 xxxx xxxx  
A Birdwatcher's Guide to Redcliffe, Pine Rivers and Caboolture Shire.  
However, can be obtained from WPSQ Caboolture branch by contacting  
Brian & Eileen Rigden on 07 xxxx xxxx

### POLO SHIRTS, CLOTH BADGES

We are currently looking at organising new stock of polo shirts and badges from new suppliers and would like to hear from members who are interested in purchasing any of the two items mentioned. This will be particularly helpful for us when placing the order in relation to sizes, colour etc.

The polo shirts will be of tri-colour in 100% cotton and will have a pocket. At this point in time we do not have a costing for them and are therefore unable to give you a price. These factors will be discussed at the AGM in December.

We have new metal QWSG logo badges available for sale. The badge has been made like the logo that appears on the front top right corner of this newsletter with pale grey-brown for the sand, blue ocean/sky and the godwit is pale grey-brown, black with a little white. They are 3½ cm in size and are very stylish.

Please contact Dawn Beck on 07 xxxx xxxx or Ivell Whyte on xxxx xxxx

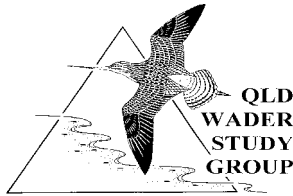
## Queensland Wader Study Group Annual General Meeting

The QWSG AGM will be held on Sunday, 10 December, 2006, at the Visitor's Centre, Port of Brisbane, Curlew Cr, Fisherman Islands

The program is:

- AGM: 9.45 - 10.30 am
- Talk by Danny Rogers on the effect of the closure of the Saemangeum estuary, South Korea on waders coming to Australia 10.40 - 11.10 am
- Count at the Port: starts at 11.15 am
- BBQ lunch held in the park opposite the Visitor Centre at 1:30 pm or after the count is completed (BYO food and drink)

If you have any queries, please contact David Milton on xxxx xxxx (home)



## Count Activities 2007

### QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Programme – 2006-7

Sat 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2.29m at 12:25

#### **QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Programme – 2007**

Sun 7 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2.33m at 11:57	Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Jul 1.71m at 10:01 <b>National Winter Count</b>
Sun 4 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2.37m at 10:55	<b>National Summer Count</b> Sat 4 <sup>th</sup> Aug 1.98m at 13:25 (1:25pm)
Sun 4 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2.31m at 09:54	Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2.03m at 11:31
Sat 31 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2.20m at 08:14	<b>Additional Count for northward migration</b>
Sat 28 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2.05m at 06:50	Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2.17m at 10:31
Sat 19 <sup>th</sup> May 1.71m at 11:12	Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2.26m at 09:35
<b>NO COUNT IN JUNE</b>	Sat 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2.27m at 08:40

### Port of Brisbane Count Dates – 2006-7

Sun 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2.18m at 13:06 Meet 11:15

#### **Port of Brisbane Count Dates – 2007**

Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2.40m at 11:22	Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Jul 1.68m at 09:14
Sat 3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 2.41m at 10:23	Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Aug 1.99m at 14:23 (2:23pm)
Sat 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mar 2.34m at 09:23	Sun 16 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2.00m at 12:06
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2.04m at 07:30	Sun 14 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2.16m at 11:03
Sun 20 <sup>th</sup> May 1.63m at 12:03	Sun 11 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2.27m at 10:09
Sun 17 <sup>th</sup> Jun 1.68m at 11:00	Sun 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2.32m at 09:16

**PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR RENEWAL IS DUE!**



## MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

I / We wish to join / renew: (Single \$15; Family \$25; Student/Pensioner \$10)  
 Title..... First name: ..... Surname Name:.....  
 Address:..... Membership: \$.....  
 ..... Postcode:..... Donation: \$.....  
 Payment enclosed: \$.....  
 Phone: (Home) ..... (Work) .....  
 Fax / e-mail: .....

TOTAL \$.....

How did you hear about QWSG .....

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

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

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

SIGNATURE: ..... DATE:.....

**Post to: QWSG Treasurer, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, NT 0xxx**

**Cheques to be made out to: Queensland Wader Study Group**

For a direct credit, please use the following details. An email advice to Sheryl Keates xxxx@xxxx.com.au would be appreciated.

Account name: Qld Wader Study Group  
 Account number: xxxxxxxx  
 Financial Institution: Uni Credit Union  
 BSB: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

