# QUEENSLAND WADER



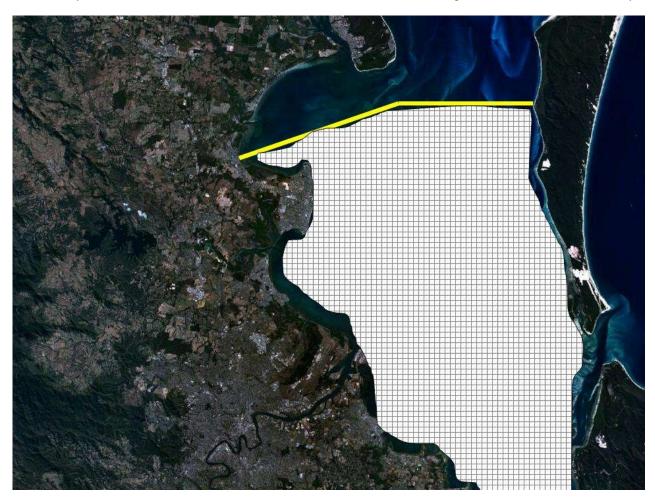
Issue number 065

September, October, November 2008

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

## Saemangeum, Korea vs. Moreton Bay

What does the area of the Saemangeum reclamation look like? When we flew over Moreton Bay on the way home from Korea we speculated on how much area would be lost if a 33km long embankment was built in Moreton Bay. The shaded area below shows the scale of the reclamation against the area of Moreton Bay.



By Sandra Harding and David Milton

## Well, Just How Many Waders are There in Moreton Bay?

The results have come on the \$64,000 question of "How many waders are there REALLY in Moreton Bay?". Different government reports or brochures alternately claim 40,000 or even 50,000 waders in Moreton Bay. To try and get an answer, QWSG members undertook the first ever bay-wide survey of waders on the weekend of 12 - 13 January 2008. This was also the National Summer Count Day and so undertaking the two activities at the same time was very efficient. Some more remote regions within the Bay, such as Pumicestone Passage were not surveyed that weekend. Counters visited their regular roost sites and thus could not be available to survey additional sites until the following spring tide weekend on 26 - 27 January. The sites not visited on the National Summer Count Day and counted a fortnight later were not expected to be influenced substantially by movements from the regular sites. Thus, I am pretty confident that the sums of all the counts does not include many double-counted birds, as would be expected if there was a lot of bird movements among roosts in that period.

Table of the number of each species of shorebird counted during the comprehensive survey of all high tide roosts in Moreton Bay on 13 January, 2008. Significance shows the percentage of the East Australasian Flyway population estimates (Bamford *et al.* 2008) that the total count represents. \* = fulfils Ramsar

nomination for total birds, \*\* = Nationally significant.

Migratory status	Species	Total	No. roosts	Significance (%)
Migrant	Bar-tailed Godwit	11650	37	3.6
	Black-tailed Godwit	450	11	_
	Broad-billed Sandpiper	2	1	
	Curlew Sandpiper	1363	18	
	Eastern Curlew	3651	40	9.6
	Great Knot	1433	16	
	Greater Sand Plover	151	6	_
	Common Greenshank	170	18	_
	Grey Plover	37	5	
	Grey-tailed Tattler	2430	12	4.9
	Lesser Sand Plover	213	4	_
	Marsh Sandpiper	125	6	_
	Pacific Golden Plover	337	10	_
	Red Knot	17	3	
	Red-necked Stint	4782	18	1.5
	Ruddy Turnstone	42	6	_
	Sanderling	2	1	_
	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1550	15	<del></del>
	Terek Sandpiper	691	6	1.2
	Whimbrel	1140	32	1.1
	All migrant species	30236	68	*
Resident	Beach Stone-curlew	5	3	_
	Black-fronted Dotterel	1	1	
	Black-winged Stilt	703	19	_
	Masked Lapwing	130	32	
	Pied Oystercatcher	737	25	**
	Red-capped Plover	354	23	_
	Sooty Oystercatcher	3	3	_
	All resident species	1933	56	
ВОТН	TOTAL ALL SPECIES	32169	68	

The numbers of shorebirds found during the survey were lower than the 40,000 birds most commonly claimed in the literature. This lower total population estimate is further supported by the fewer species present in internationally-significant numbers (6 spp. instead of 8) in Table 1 above. Even the most recent conservation literature, (eg. Bamford *et al.* 2008) list Moreton Bay as holding internationally significant numbers of eight species (Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew Sandpiper, Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattler, Lesser Sand Plover, Pacific Golden Plover, Terek Sandpiper and Whimbrel). So, the bay-wide survey did not find the expected numbers of three of these species – Curlew Sandpiper (prev. est. 5,229), Lesser Sand Plover (prev. est. 1,770) and Pacific Golden Plover (prev. est. 2,163). Our bay-wide count found only 26% of the estimated Curlew Sandpiper, 12% of the estimated Lesser Sand Plover count and less than 16% of the Pacific Golden Plover estimate for Moreton Bay. If these estimates were correct, then the total population of waders in Moreton Bay would have been very close to the 40,000 birds that the bay is believed to support.

Is this a sign of serious problems for these species? Curlew Sandpiper numbers have been showing a strong decline at several sites in southern Australia, but this is the first evidence that there may also be declines in Lesser Sand Plover and Pacific Golden Plover numbers. Before we get too worried, we need to look in the QWSG count database at the seasonal pattern of Lesser Sand Plover and Pacific Golden Plover use of Moreton Bay. What we find is that Lesser Sand Plover numbers tend to peak in Moreton Bay during southward and northward migrations (November and March – April). Indeed, in March 2006, we counted 2,429 Lesser Sand Plovers in Moreton Bay. For Pacific Golden Plover, the highest counts ever were in January of 2005 to 2007. However, none of these counts were greater than 1,300 birds and < 60% of the claimed population. Thus either the original figure in Bamford *et al* is an over estimate, or the population declined before we started out count program in 1992. Only in Curlew Sandpiper does it appear that we are seeing a decline in the population in Moreton Bay. The four highest counts in our database were all before 1996 and each totalled about 5,000 birds. Since 2001, we have not counted a total > 3,300 Curlew Sandpipers and the highest counts in the early 1990s and is consistent with data from southern Australia showing dramatic declines in Curlew Sandpiper numbers.

On a brighter note is the increasing number of Red-necked Stint in Moreton Bay. When the initial assessment of its values as a potential RAMSAR site was made in the early 1990s, Moreton Bay did not hold internationally significant numbers of this species. Now our survey found over 1.5% of the EAAF Flyway population are spending their non-breeding season in Moreton Bay. I looked at the QWSG count database and found that the highest count for Red-necked Stint in Moreton Bay was over 7,400 birds and 2.3% of the Flyway population. The apparent size of the Red-necked Stint population in Moreton bay was unknown until the survey. The database also showed that there has regularly been over 5,000 Red-necked Stint in Moreton Bay since 2001. This coincided with a major increase in dredging and land reclamation activity at the Port of Brisbane. The Red-necked Stint took advantage of the increase in food available in the dredgespoil ponds. This enables birds to feed continuously throughout the tidal cycle. These birds have returned and others in the same flocks migrating past Moreton Bay have also stayed. The numbers appear to be increasing and it will be interesting to see if the trend continues for several years into the future. Is this an actual increase in Red-necked Stint populations? Analyses so far from the national Shorebird 2020 project would suggest "No". It appears more likely to be a redistribution of Red-necked Stint into Moreton Bay from elsewhere. Further investigation of our data might help show where these birds may be coming from. It also leads to the question "What happens when the Port of Brisbane reclamation is complete?"

So, in summary, although Moreton Bay does not appear to hold 40,000 waders during summer, the count of 32,000 waders in our first bay-wide survey is not as poor as it seems on the surface. Many birds of some species do stay not in Moreton Bay throughout the summer. For these species, the highest counts are often during either the southward or northward migration periods. The month with the highest count of these migrating species seems to vary unpredictably. However, it does highlight that Moreton Bay does support over 40,000 waders, but not throughout the summer. There may be between 25,000 and 40,000 waders in Moreton Bay on any day.

The species we should be concerned about is the Curlew Sandpiper. This species was once one of the commonest species in Moreton Bay. If the current population declines continue at the current rate (50% decline in 15 yrs), this species will be extinct in Moreton Bay in another 15 years! One final positive note is the increasing number of Red-necked Stint in Moreton Bay. The internationally-significant numbers we see in the bay each summer are about doubled those counted during peak periods in the mid-1990s. They just love the Port of Brisbane and are probably the species most likely to be able to adapt to climate change.

#### References

Bamford, M, D. Watkins, W. Bancroft, G. Tischler and J. Wahl. (2008). Migratory Shorebirds of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway; Population Estimates and Internationally Important Sites. Wetlands International- Oceania. Canberra, Australia.

## **NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome the following new member who have joined recently:

## Ann Phillips Desley Priday

A reminder to members to please let the Treasurer know if you change your email address. 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.

## Climate Change - Where To From Here

Climate change is the biggest issue facing the planet in the next 50 years. But the big question for people is: "What can the individual do about climate change?" We know we have to reduce our use of electricity and cut down on driving the car, but it is governments who need to make the big changes. Governments respond to lobbying so I am trying to encourage you to take action by influencing your local Members of Parliament at both State and Federal levels of government.

In the latest edition of *Waves* I note the following in an article by Graham Chittleborough (Waves Volume 14, Number 2, 2008)

#### Over-consumption

Our biggest problem is that we have reached the point of over-consumption. We have progressively over-cleared, overgrazed, over-cultivated, over-fertilised and overpopulated our country and indeed the world. We have encouraged each other to consume ever more of our resources, claiming that ever-increasing consumption keeps up the demand for economic growth – which has become the god that most of us chase.

Sadly, too few ecologically minded people realise that on a finite Earth, perpetual growth is just not possible. Climate change (from human activities) is not the crux of the problem, it is the sum of all the different pressures we have introduced.

We need to act now – our options and our time are fast disappearing.

I went to the release of the draft Garnaut report in Brisbane in July at City Hall and felt that Ross Garnaut presented very reasoned arguments for the recommendations of the report to be supported. The report recommends an emissions trading scheme (ETS) starting in 2010. The science indicates that climate change is getting worse faster. The melting of the Artic is occurring so rapidly that scientists now suggest that there will be no summer ice by 2013, 90 years earlier than the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predictions. This is made worse by the fact that global emissions are rising much more quickly than predicted in even the worse case scenarios projected by the IPCC. The resultant rapid sea level rise will take away most wader habitat in coastal areas putting most species at risk.

An effective ETS should not be undermined by carbon-intensive polluting industry lobby groups. The scheme would need to satisfy the following factors (prepared by GetUp www.getup.org.au):

- A strong emissions cap. Australia's greenhouse pollution must begin declining by 2010, and be reduced by 50% over 1990 levels by 2020.
- Coverage of all sectors emitting greenhouse pollution including transport (esp. aviation).
- Auctioning of emissions permits no free 'permits to pollute' for carbon-intensive industries.
- No compensation to industry, but assistance to low-income households to reduce energy.
- Revenue from the trading scheme to go to energy efficiency, renewable energy and public transport. The Draft Review recommends 20% go to deploying renewable energy this is not enough.
- Scheme to begin operating fully in 2010 no "soft start" to ease companies into it.

Now is the time to act -

- Write to, and meet with, your local Member of Parliament. If you want this information electronically to place in a letter, please email me (Sandra Harding) on pitta@gil.com.au.
- Also you can join a community climate action group www.climatemovement.org.au.
- For more information there is a great toolkit on how to respond to climate change denialists: http://gristmill.grist.org/skeptics.

## **Electronic Newsletter ??**

Are you interested in receiving your "Queensland Wader" by email?

We are trying to determine if there is enough interest from the membership to issue the newsletter in a PDF format.

The committee is aware that we use a lot of paper with the newsletter, this would be reduced by the use of email, plus you could see the colour used in the production.

If you are interested email me on xxxx@xxxxl.com.au. Could you use the subject line as Electronic Newsletter. Editor



## "Last Food for 7293 km".

That's a sign that would cause consternation for the most experienced traveler but this is what many of our Waders face on their bi-annual migration between their breeding grounds in the arctic region and their wintering grounds in Australia or New Zealand.

Before undertaking these marathon flights, the birds have to rest and build up massive stores of energy. They do this by regularly feeding during the hours of low tide (both night and day), when the sand and mud is temporarily exposed. Their diet is mainly comprised of small marine creatures such as molluscs, crustaceans, worms and insects.

A few weeks before migration begins, the birds start to put on weight and build up a layer of fat, under the skin, which is used as fuel during their flight. Some birds increase their body weight by 30 - 50%.

It's estimated that more than 2 million birds undertake these massive flights and must find staging sites, with plenty of food, to rest and build up their strength again, before completing their journey.

Research has proven that most birds return to the same site, year after year, where they know they can find food and somewhere to rest safely.

If their favourite place is destroyed or damaged, they could be in a lot of trouble. Some are often close to exhaustion and don't have to energy to travel much further to find another suitable site.



This is not a sign I'd like them to see!

QWSG is commencing a project to record information about the location of feeding grounds and the number of birds using a particular site. Feeding grounds aren't always an extension of high tide roost sites. They can be at quite different locations.

Many people are tied up with other projects, including the 2020 Project, so we won't be having official count days at this stage. This will, probably, happen a little down the track.

Birders are out and about at all different times so, what we are asking everyone to do is to start collecting information and data, initially on an ad hoc basis, so that we can create a valid database.

I've been checking a number of low tide sites in my own area (Wynnum/Manly) and have noticed that a site might have to be checked over a period of time. For a couple days there might only be a dozen birds then, the next day, there could be a couple of hundred.

Included with this article, is a Feeding Ground / Low Tide Count Sheet which has been designed, specifically, for this project.

If you are unable to provide GPS co-ordinates, in the 'Location' box could you please give exact details of where the site is e.g. 'Wynnum Esplanade between Pine and Walnut St'.

	Birds Actively Feeding								
Species	Total Birds	Mud	Water over mud	Seagrass	Water over Seagrass	Sand	Water over Sand	Rocks	Other
Whimbrel	32	17	4						

It's important to identify if the birds are actively feeding or just resting. This example shows us that there were

- 32 Whimbrel at the site.
- 17 were feeding on the mud
- 4 were feeding on mud covered by water
- Number of Whimbrel actively feeding = 21 (65%)

Your assistance with gathering this information would be very much appreciated. Could you please return any count forms to Heather Smith by either email or post. Details are on the count sheets.

## **QWSG LOW TIDE / FEEDING GROUND COUNT SHEET**

Site	te						Date:					
		Time of low tide								Tide height		
Name &	Addres	s										
Time: Start GPS reading Finish GPS reading				•				Long Long				
Weather Conditions Disturbance:					ons		d Dir			ind Str		
People	Dogs	Boats fishing	Boats travelling	Boats waterski	Jetskis	Jetskis Cloud cover (scale 0-5):		-		ain cale 0-5	):	
	1											

		Birds actively Feeding									
Species	Total Birds	Mud	Water over mud	Seagrass	Water over Seagrass	Sand	Water over Sand	Rocks	Other		
e.g. Whimbrel	32	17	4								

## **General Notes:**

Please return sheets to: Email: xxxx@xxxx.com or Heather Smith (Mob: xxxx xxx xxx) Post: xxxxxxxxx Q 4xxx

## Life's a Beach to a Hooded Plover

By Grainne Maguire, Birds Australia.

It's a surprise to many to learn that come spring and summer our ocean beaches become the nesting grounds of a local shorebird – the Hooded Plover(*Thinornis rubricollis*). Nesting on the beach might seem to be an unintelligent choice, but these birds are highly adapted to coastal environments. They nest closest to their food source because when the eggs hatch the chicks have limited mobility but need to start feeding immediately. The beach and dunes are a great place to camouflage the nest because the tiny eggs are speckled to blend in perfectly with the grainy sand. A predator has to discover the eggs, giving the chicks a good chance of survival.

However, the Hooded Plover did not evolve with the enormous number of people that now flock to the beaches during their nesting season. Encroaching coastal developments and changes to the dune environment leave the Hooded Plover little room to adapt to our presence. The impacts of climatic change make the situation even more ominous.

Natural threats to breeding success - the tide, egg depredation by gulls and magpies, chick depredation by kestrels – have never been frequent or severe enough to threaten the survival of the species. However, the impact of people has greatly upset the balance and Hooded Plovers, one of only two exclusive beachnesting bird species in Australia (the other, the Beach Stone-curlew), are now facing extinction.

Hooded Plovers lay their eggs directly on the sand in a shallow nest scrape, either on the beach above the high-tide mark or in the dunes. The eggs can be crushed by people, dogs, horses and vehicles. The birds are also very prone to disturbance, coming off the nest when a person/animal approaches within 60-100m and returning only once the person/animal is gone. When the eggs are unattended, they can bake on hot sand, be buried by wind or predated. The tiny chicks are just as vulnerable to being stepped on by people or animals moving above water mark because they can't fly and are well-camouflaged. When disturbed, the parents leave the chicks to distract people or dogs away from their hiding chicks. This can result in exposure or starvation if the chick spends too long hiding, but also makes them vulnerable to predation. With every person or dog passing by, the chances of the chick dying increase.

#### **DISTURBING DISTRIBUTION**

Hooded Plovers are extinct in Queensland and northern NSW: only 50-60 remain in southern NSW; and in South Australia and Victoria, populations are vulnerable and estimated at 400-500 birds. The highest numbers occur in Tasmania, where the population is approximately 1000. Despite declining population numbers and rising threat levels, Hooded Plovers are considered secure nationally due to the stronghold of about 4000 birds in Western Australia (WA). It is thought, however, that the Hooded Plovers in WA are actually a separate subspecies, due to differences in morphology, breeding behaviour (they nest inland around lakes where threats are less intense) and the barrier to population exchange between east and west. Unfortunately, without *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* listing, conservation of the species is severely neglected in the east.

In 2006, Birds Australia began the Promoting Coexistence between Recreationalists and Beach-nesting Birds project, funded by the Australia Government and hosted by the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority. This project aims to improve the breeding success of beach-nesting birds by identifying the most effective ways of protecting nest sites. A major part of this project involves community volunteers, working in close association with land managers, to monitor nests and set up signs and fences to protect nests. Over the past two years, 90 breeding pairs were monitored by Birds Australia volunteers on the Victorian coast. Of over 600 eggs laid across two seasons, only 66 chicks survived – with a lot of effort from land managers and local community members. Such poor breeding success cannot sustain population numbers. Australia's resident shorebirds need converted conservation effort before we lose them completely.

From Waves Vol 14 No 2. 2008. Magazine of Marine Coastal Community Network

Further information; Grainne Maguire 03 xxxx xxxx

xxxx@xxxx.com.au www.birdsaustralia.com.au

## Count Programme by Linda Cross

Thank you to all counters for the return of the national winter counts. Some counters commented on the lack of wader numbers at their sites. Although wader numbers have been declining worldwide, analysis of our data, when completed, should be able to give us more information on how their numbers are affected here in Queensland.

I am very pleased that we have another group of counters to add to our count programme. Sue Sargent who is the coastal and marine coordinator with Burnett Mary Regional Group in Bundaberg, staff from Bundaberg Port Authority, local birdwatchers and Chris Barnes (who was the primary identifier) completed their first count of the Bundaberg Port Swamp. Chris is well known among some QWSG members and seabird enthusiasts for his counts a few years ago in Boonooroo and his regular trips from Bundaberg to join the pelagic trips out of Southport on the Gold Coast. It is good to have Chris assist the count programme again. We welcome the entire group into the programme and hope they will enjoy the challenge of the large site that they will be covering.

We would also like to welcome Emma Lewis into the programme. Emma will take over counting Dunwich on North Stradbroke Island where for the last twelve months Peter Kyne has been doing weekly counts at the site. The site has numerous records (probably the highest) of the NSW yellow flagged Pied Oystercatcher. Peter has gone to work in Canada for the next 6 months. This was part of his last email to me:-

'It has been nice getting to know some of these birds. I'm going to miss them (although I can't complain with birds like Least Bittern and Snowy Owl reliable where we'll be living!)'.

I was very envious when I read his email and told Peter how lucky he was. I also told him I was looking forward to the full frame photo of a Snowy Owl! We thank Peter for his contributions which have added greatly to the Count Programme.

Most of our New Zealand visitors (**<u>Double-banded Plover</u>**) should have departed for their home by now, with some of them sporting their lovely breeding plumage. The winter records extracted from counts came from 15 sites (3 more than mentioned in the last newsletter). The sites are listed below with some of the highest counts for the species.

Wave Break sand island Gold Coast (June 107) Jumpinpin South Stradbroke Island Reeder's Point Moreton Island King Street mudflats Thornlands Fisherman Island Brisbane (May 76) Caboolture River Mouth (May 62) Sandbank No 2 Caloundra Bundaberg Port Swamp Horeshoe Bay Gold Coast (July 62) Amity sandbank off North Stradbroke Island Geoff Skinner Reserve east (May 162) Manly Boat Harbour Bermuda Avenue claypan Deception Bay Kakadu Beach Bribie Island Noosa River sandbanks

#### **Beach Stone-curlew**

Even though I mentioned this species at 16 sites in the last newsletter, it is worth noting that they are still appearing on recent count sheets from Tweed River Entrance, Tweed Heads, Dunwich North Stradbroke Island, Noosa River Sandbanks, Maaroom, Finlayson's Point north of Mackay, Horeshoe Bay South Stradbroke Island, Cairns Esplanade, Seaforth Beach north of Mackay, Sunset Bay Eimeo Mackay, Curragee South Gold Coast and Reeder's Point Moreton Island.

#### **Bush Stone-curlew**

This species is not often recorded on counts, but there were three records. One was recorded at The Cresent Toorbul in May, two at Luggage Point in July and two at both Pioneer River and Shellgrit Creek in Mackay in July.

#### **Red-necked Avocet**

This nomadic Australian resident wader species has started to return to some of the count sites during the last month or two. The sites include:-

Deception Bay south (May 26) Fisherman Island (May 124 – July 152) Trutes Bay Tweed Heads (May 12 – July 5) Coombabah Lake Gold Coast (July 6)

#### **Red Knot**

A total of 34 of this species were counted by Phil at our Deception Bay south site on 17<sup>th</sup> May. This is a most unusual sighting for this time of year, particularly that number.

#### Breeding records.

#### **Black-winged Stilt**

Recorded nesting at Luggage Point on 24.02.08 and 30 Pairs nesting and 7 chicks at Luggage Point on 09.03.08

#### **Masked Lapwing**

Adults with 4 chicks at The Crescent Toorbul on 27.01.08

#### **Sooty Oystercatcher**

1 immature bird seen with adult birds at Wickham Point, Caloundra on 05.04.08, which we hope suggests that a pair have breed in the vicinity.

#### **Apologies**

In the Wader Watch section of the newsletter last month I had a large number of sightings for 'Interesting sightings' and 'Not waders but of interest anyway', which I extracted from your count sheets, but unfortunately the editor had to cull them as there was not enough room to fit them in. I really try to supply you with as much information as possible from your counts, but sometimes there is not always the space available in the newsletter. We know you will understand our dilemma, and hope you understand our situation.

Happy counting.

Linda Cross.

**Note:** There is room in this issue and you will find all the result omitted from the last issue in the Wader Watch section of this Newsletter.

## Count Coordinator Takes a Rest.

#### Dear counters.

After 10 long years as count coordinator I am going to take a rest from the job. It is most important that I check the Port of Brisbane Corporation data and the QWSG database for accuracy, and I find I cannot get the job done while I am looking after the counts. It is really important that I get these two jobs done so that the data can be analysed. When I have finished these jobs I will make a decision as to whether I will return to the role of count coordinator.

Dawn Beck will be responsible for receiving and checking your count sheets, but will not start the job until <a href="November">November</a>. Please send your counts to me as usual until you do the November count, which you should then start sending to Dawn. Please do not send them to Dawn until after the November count.

Email Dawn at: xxxx@xxxx.com.au

I would like to thank you all for your contributions and hope you will continue to supply QWSG with many more counts. Thank you for your understanding and patience (particularly with my tardiness at times), which has been much appreciated.

Thank you all.

Linda Cross

The whole of the Committee, regular counters and the QWSG membership wish Linda a good rest from the trials of count coordinator. Her drive and commitment to her position will be greatly missed. How many of us have had a phone call about our count sheets; the numbers don't add up or are we sure that we saw Banded Stilts at our sites??!! All of this hard work has made our results spot-on.

As Editor I have to thank Linda for her contributions to "Queensland Wader", which always arrived on time with plenty of instructions to make sure I got it write right!

## WADER WATCH Linda and Phil Cross, Joyce Harding

Can everyone please remember to use the 'Leg Flag Observation Report' form.

Can we also please ask people to carefully check which leg the flag is on. If you are not sure, or just see the colour, and do not know which leg it is, <u>please do not make it up.</u> We do record the sighting on the database, even if we do not know which leg it was on. Recording information that you have not seen, or do not know creates extra work for Phil, I and other people who this information goes to. We would appreciate you cooperation on this issue.

#### **Green leg flag sightings**

In each Qld Wader issue there are 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 states and countries, and have limited space available for sightings, we will not be listing each individual sighting of 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.

Sightings in Moreton Bay & Environs between 04.04.08 & 26.07.08

3 Eastern Curlew, 1 Whimbrel, 8 Bar-tailed Godwit, 7 Pied Oystercatcher, 5 Grey-tailed Tattler, 2 Ruddy Turnstone, 3 Lesser Sand Plover, 1 Curlew Sandpiper, 1 Red-capped Plover & 1 Red-necked Stint.

The birds sighted above included some of the individually marked flags that QWSG have been fitting and I have listed them below.

Eastern Curlew - AC
Bar-tailed Godwit – CM, CP, FS,FX, FY
Pied Oystercatcher – AB, AC, AE, BN
Grey-tailed Tattler – CK, CV, HB, HK, HN
Ruddy Turnstone – DH
Curlew Sandpiper – CH
Red-capped Plover - AP
Red-necked Stint – AA

#### Interstate & overseas Green leg flag sightings

- <u>1 Bar-tailed Godwit</u> Egegik Bay, Alaska, USA Daniel Ruthrauff et al 20.07.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (male) Saemangeum Seawall, South Korea Adrian Boyle & Chris Hassell 20.05.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (male) Geum Barrage, South Korea Adrian Boyle & Chris Hassell 15.05.08
- 2 Bar-tailed Godwit Suncheon Bay, South Korea Adrian Boyle & Chris Hassell 12.05.08
- <u>1 Bar-tailed Godwit</u> Shell Fish Harbour, South Korea Chris Hassell, Chung-Yu Chiang & Ann Lindsey 11.05.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (BV) Baeksu, Korea, South Korea Nial Moores & Adrian Riegen 09.05.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (male) Yubu Island, South Korea Adrian Boyle & Chris Hassell 08.05.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (female) Shell Fish Harbour South Korea Adrian Boyle & Chris Hassell 07.05.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (male) Geum Barrage, South Korea Adrian Boyle & Chris Hassell 07.05.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (CV) Namyang Seawall South Korea Adrian Boyle & Chris Hassell 05.05.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (female) Yeongjong I, South Korea Adrian Riegen et al 03.05.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (FE) Yalu River mouth, Jalu Jiang Reserve, China Jesse Conklin 21.04.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (BR) Maehiang-Ri, Hwasung-kun, Kiongkido, South Korea Kyu-Sik Shim 09.04.08
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit (CV) Maehiang-Ri, Hwasung-kun, Kiongkido, South Korea Kyu-Sik Shim 09.04.08
- 1 Great Knot Shell Fish Harbour, South Korea Chris Hassell, Chung-Yu Chiang & Ann Lindsey 11.05.08
- 1 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Shoalhaven Heads, NSW Rex Worrell 25.02.08
- 1 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Shoalhaven Heads, NSW David Marshall 23.02.08
- 1 Greater Sand Plover Hanbou ChangHwa County, Taiwan Taiwan Wader Study Group 07.04.08
- 1 Greater Sand Plover Hanbou ChangHwa County, Taiwan Chung-Yu Chiang 05.04.08
- 1 Lesser Sand Plover Hanbou ChangHwa County, Taiwan Chung-Yu Chiang 17.04.08

#### Orange leg flag sightings

1 Bar-tailed Godwit - Luggage Point - Ivell & Jim Whyte - 06.07.08

#### Yellow (North-west Australia) leg flag sightings

- <u>1 Red-necked Stint</u> yellow flag left tibia, metal band right tarsus Fisherman Islands Ken Cowell, Jon Coleman, Richard Fuller, Melanie Dixon 06.07.08
- <u>1 Red-necked Stint</u> yellow flag left tibia, metal band right tarsus Fisherman Islands Graham & Brenda Smith, Phil and Linda Cross 18.05.08

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

1 Red Knot – white flag right tibia etched **BCL** on flag – Wynnum Esplanade – Mat Gilfedder – 25.04.08

There is quite a story regarding the above Red Knot, which was sent in an email from Tony Habraken in New Zealand.

"The facts about this bird it is a 'survivor', it is one of the 10 birds we released on 30.3.08 (after 8 days in rehab) after being found during Easter weekend in a very bad way, not flying and able to walk. Some of you will already know the details of that fateful weekend when an unusual amount of Red Knot (56) were found dead and dying from unknown causes.

The post-mortems failed to identify the cause of death, but unfortunately the two suspect causes are either TOO expensive to test for or NOT able to be tested for in NZ. Marine Biotoxins or botulism.

This is truly a brilliant find as I wasn't expecting any of the released birds to migrate after the trauma they had suffered and weight lost during their ordeal. What's more brilliant and interesting is that I have located only three of the ten birds since the release of which **BCL** has been one.

The only sighting of it was on 13.4.08 at Kidds Karaka, Sth Manukau. BP 7 under and BP 6 upper. So it would be great to get more details.

All were adults in advanced BP.

BCL's weight at release was 130 gms (third heaviest bird of the ten, range 140 - 108gms)

There was one other sighted in the same flock that day, the third of the identified trio was seen this weekend in the Manukau Harbour.

It remains to be seen what has become of the other birds whether they departed on time with the rest, moved harbours or have been held up. So keep up the good work, a most valuable record."

Cheers Tony

#### Blue (Japanese) leg flag sightings

No sightings

#### Black over white/white over black (Shanghai, China) flag sightings

<u>1 Great Knot</u> – black flag over white flag right tibia – Cairns Esplanade – Jun Matsui – 29.05.08 <u>1 Great Knot</u> – black flag over white flag right tibia – Cairns Esplanade – Jun Matsui – 01.05.08

#### Other wader leg flag sightings

No sightings

#### Pied Oystercatcher 2 digit Yellow leg flag sightings

The following sightings of yellow flagged oystercatchers are not birds flagged in North West Western Australia, as per the flagging protocol. They are another project being run from Victoria and New South Wales. Birds flagged in Victoria will have a yellow flag on the right tibia and inscribed with two digits. New South Wales birds will have the yellow flag on the left tibia and inscribed with two digits.

All birds below had flag on left tibia (NSW) birds.

Plenty of sightings of these birds recorded by Peter Kyne at Dunwich on North Stradbroke Island with eight individual birds recorded from 12<sup>th</sup> May to 21<sup>st</sup> July.

A2 – recorded 4 times

A6 – recorded only once

A8 – recorded 3 times

B8 – recorded 4 times

C4 – recorded 5 times

D5 – recorded 9 times

D6 – recorded 6 times

E7 – recorded 9 times

Other sightings of yellow flags on left tibia as follows:-

B8 - Manly Boat Harbour - David Milton et al - 17.05.08

C3 & C9 - Buckley's Hole Sandbar - Michael Strong - 01.06.08

C5 – Buckley's Hole Sandbar – Dez Wells & Deborah Metters – 05.07.08

Two birds with yellow flags on left tibia were also seen at Buckley's Hole Sandbar by Trevor Ford on 26.07.08, but digits not recorded.

#### Other leg flag sightings and banded birds

- 1 Caspian Tern orange flag right tarsus and metal band left tarsus Toorbul Trevor & Kym Ford, Phil & Linda Cross – 24.03.08
- 1 Caspian Tern orange flag right tarsus and metal band left tarsus Cape Cleveland Road, south of Townsville - Annette Sutton - 02.03.08
- 1 Little Tern orange flag over white flag left tarsus and dark blue flag over metal band on right tarsus Toorbul – Trevor & Kym Ford, Phil & Linda Cross – 24.03.08
- 1 Little Tern white flag over blue flag on left tarsus Buckley's Hole Bribie Island Dez Wells & Deborah Metters - 23.02.08
- 1 Little Tern green flag over white flag left tarsus and white flag above metal band on right tarsus Toorbul - Ian & Jill Brown - 17.02.08

#### **Interesting sightings**

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

- \* = to be submitted to BQ RAC \*\* = to be submitted to BARC
- 117 Masked Lapwing Luggage Point Ivell & Jim Whyte 06.07.08
- 8 Black-fronted Dotterel Bundaberg Port Swamp Sue Sargent et al 05.07.08
- 13 Black-fronted Dotterel Kedron Brook Wetlands Dez Wells 17.05.08
- 13 Black-fronted Dotterel King Street, Thornlands Joyce Harding 08.03.08
- 116 Ruddy Turnstone Fisherman Island QWSG count 22.06.08
- 205 Pied Oystercatcher Dunwich North Stradbroke Island Peter Kyne 02.06.08
- 1 Broad-billed Sandpiper Toorbul Dez Well & Anita Cosgrove 17.05.08
- 102 Red-capped Plover Fisherman Island QWSG team 18.05.08
- 88 Red-capped Plover Geoff Skinner Reserve east Peter Rothlisberg & Michele Burford 17.05.08
- 3 Sanderling Reeder's Point, Moreton Island QWSG team 04.07.08
- 5 Sanderling Mirrapool Beach, Moreton Island QWSG team 07.04.08
- 3 Sanderling Inskip Point Jill Dening et al 27.03.08
- 2 Wood Sandpiper Nudgee Beach Rd, Boondall Wetlands Jon Coleman 21.03.08
- 3 Wood Sandpiper Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay John Knight 03.02.08

#### Not waders but of interest anyway

- 817 Chestnut Teal Luggage Point Ivell & Jim Whyte 06.07.08
- 409 Chestnut Teal Kedron Brook Wetlands Dez Wells 06.04.08
- 6 Pink-eared Duck Buckley's Hole Bribie Island Michael Strong 01.06.08
- 57 White-faced Heron Trutes Wetlands Tweed Heads Laurel Allsopp & F. Hill 26.05.08
- 25 Glossy Ibis Garnett's Lagoon Hervey Bay John Knight et al 18.05.08
- 4 Black-shouldered Kite (2 adults 2 juveniles nested in area) Kedron Brook Wetlands Dez Wells -17.05.08
- 1 Rufous Songlark Kedron Brook Wetlands Dez Wells 17.05.08
- 165 Black Swan Garnett's Lagoon Hervey Bay John Knight 06.04.08
- 2 Black-necked Stork (nesting) Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay John Knight 06.04.08 2 Cotton Pygmy Goose (M & F) Centenary Lakes, Caboolture Trevor Ford 03.08.08
- 2 Cotton Pygmy Goose Garnett's Lagoon, Hervey Bay John Knight et al 18.05.08
- 12 Australasian Shoveler Garnett's Lagoon, Hervey Bay John Knight et al 18.05.08
- 4300 Pied Cormorant Reeder's Point, Moreton Island QWSG team 07.04.08
- 3000 Caspian Tern Inskip Point Jill Dening et al 24.04.08
- 2 Lesser Crested Tern Dunwich, North Stradbroke Island Peter Kyne 19.04.08
- 29 Lesser Crested Tern Seaforth Beach Creek Mouth, North of Mackay Peggy Harding & Stella Mearns -19.03.08
- 1 Wedge-tailed Eagle Osprey House/Dohles Rocks Brenda Smith 16.03.08
- 2 Little Eagle St Helena Island Ken Cowell & Dawn Beck 22.02.08
- 16 Wandering Whistling Duck (includes 6 young) Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay John Knight, Bill & Avis Gould - 09.03.08
- 13 Wandering Whistling Duck (includes 7 young) Bishop's Marsh, Toorbul Dez Wells & Deborah Metters -08.03.08
- 10 Wandering Whistling Duck (3 adults & 7 young) Buckley's Hole Bribie Island Dez Wells 23.02.08
- 16 Whiskered Tern Luggage Point Ivell & Jim Whyte 24.02.08
- 8 Whiskered Tern Lytton David Connolly 23.02.08
- 1 Eastern Reef Egret (grey phase) Mathiesen Homestead, Hervey Bay Peter Royall 23.02.08

2 Plumed Whistling Duck - Bishops Marsh Toorbul - Dez Wells - 28.01.08

7 Chestnut Teal ducklings - Lytton - Dawn Beck & Vicki Campbell - 05.04.08

30 Chestnut Teal ducklings (3 groups) - Fisherman Island - QWSG team - 06.04.08

410 Australian White Ibis - Garnett's Lagoons - John Knight, Jim & Barbara Love - 13.01.08

300 Silver Gull - Fisherman Island - QWSG team - 06.04.08

200 White-winged Black Tern - Noosa River sandbanks - Jill Dening - 15.03.08

## WADER ID DAYS

## Sunday 28th September at Toorbul

High tide at 08:45am (plus 30 minutes later for Toorbul) of 2.04m. Meeting time 07:45am

Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane to the Donnybrook/Toorbul exit (Big Fish/Humble Pie billboard) 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 will have birds arriving on their southward migration.

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

## Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November at Lytton roost

High tide at 10:55am with a height of 2.30m. Meeting time 09:30am

One of the few roosts that usually have Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits at the same roost, which will help you sort out the difference between them. To get to Lytton, drive east along Lytton Road following the signs to the Port of Brisbane, follow Pritchard Street from the turn off to Fort Lytton National Park, turn left into Wynnum North Road, continue to the end of the road and park in the car park. UBD 143 F11.

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

## An eye for the Maine chance

BirdLife press release 18-06-2008

Maine Audubon has completed the initial stage of its Important Bird Areas (IBA) program, identifying 22 areas in Maine as critical to state and global bird populations.

"A diverse mix of habitats makes Maine an important place for about 300 species of birds—many of them threatened or endangered", said Susan Gallo, the Maine Audubon biologist who heads the project. "But threats like inappropriate development, chemical contamination and climate change put them at risk. By identifying the most crucial areas, the IBA program helps us focus our conservation efforts where we can have the greatest impact."

The IBA program of BirdLife International is a worldwide initiative aimed at identifying and protecting a network of critical sites for the conservation of the world's birds. When complete, this global network is likely to comprise around 15,000 IBAs covering some 10 million km² (c.7% of the world's land surface) identified on the basis of about 40% of the world's bird species. The effective conservation of these sites will contribute substantially to the protection of the world's biological diversity.

IBAs are locations that provide important habitat for one or more species of breeding, wintering or migrating birds. The areas meet thresholds for birds listed as threatened or endangered, for species of state or regional conservation concern, or for substantial population concentrations or unique species diversity.

"At this stage we focused on the most important spots on publicly and privately conserved land along the coast and major wetlands in southern and central Maine", Gallo said. "We think this is a good starting point for engaging the public, working with landowners and encouraging responsible land management."

"We see this as a locally driven, grassroots, bottom-up process," said John Cecil, Audubon's national IBA program director. "Local engagement is a cornerstone of the IBA program's success in the United States."

A national committee is reviewing several Maine IBAs that may qualify for globally important status. Certain sites meet global population thresholds for Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* (Near Threatened), Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow *Ammodramus caudacutus* (Vulnerable), and Rusty Blackbird *Euphagus carolinus* (Vulnerable).

#### **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 Meeting Room, 237 Milton Road, Milton.

#### OR

Contact Dawn Beck Phone 07 xxxx xxxx or email xxxx@xxxx.com.au

Postage is not included in prices quoted.

BOOKS \$45.00 Shorebirds of Australia

\$19.80 Shorebird Conservation in the Asia-Pacific Region

\$20.00 Status and Conservation of Shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian

Flyway.

CD \$20.00 Bird Calls of the Broome Region (includes 42 Wader Species)

METAL BADGES \$5.00 Metal QWSG logo badges.

CLOTH BADGES \$8.00 QWSG logo on rectangular bottle-green or sand background

POLO SHIRTS \$35.00.

Our cotton polo shirts are finally available. The locally made shirts are plain bottle or sky with contrast collar in sand or tri-coloured sand/cocoa/sky and sand/cocoa/bottle. Sizes S – XXL in men's as well as XS and S in women's. Please bear in mind when ordering that sizes are extremely generous.

We are having more polo shirts made and there will be smaller sizes available again. So contact to place your order.



## **Other Conservation Activities of Interest**



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

Separate membership is required. <u>Contacts</u>: President, Marianne Keller (07) xxxx xxxx; Secretary, Jim Sneddon (07) xxxx xxxx; Treasurer, Frank James (07) xxxx xxxx.

Monthly Meetings Birds Queensland - 7.45pm

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday each month except January, when there is no meeting. Royal Geographical Society Meeting Room, 237 Milton Road, Milton. Arrive after 7:15pm for a 7:45pm start.

#### **QWSG CONTACTS**

#### QUEENSLAND WADER

The Official Quarterly Publication of Queensland Wader Study Group

MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE QWSG

CHAIRPERSON: Andrew Geering (07) xxxx xxxx

TREASURER: Sheryl Keates (08) xxxx xxxx or xxxx@xxxx.com.au

<u>SECRETARY:</u> Peter Rothlisberg (07) xxxx xxxx <u>NEWSLETTER EDITOR.</u> David Edwards (07) xxxx xxxx

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Dawn Beck (07) xxxx xxxx Vicki Campbell (07) xxxx xxxx Jon Coleman (07) xxxx xxxx Maureen Cooper (07) xxxx xxxx Ken Cowell (07) xxxx xxxx Joyce Harding (07) xxxx xxxx Sandra Harding (07) xxxx xxxx David Milton (07) xxxx xxxx Heather Smith Dez Wells XXXX XXX XXX (07) xxxx xxxx

Ivell Whyte (07) xxxx xxxx

COUNT COORDINATOR: Linda Cross (07) xxxx xxxx

CORRESPONDENCE All correspondence to:

The QWSG Chairperson,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX,

XXXXXXXXX QLD 4xx

<u>CHANGE OF ADDRESS</u> Please notify the Treasurer as soon as possible of any change of address so

that your Newsletter can be dispatched correctly.

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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, From 28/10/08

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.

<u>Copy Deadline</u> for the next issue of Queensland Wader is **November 18<sup>th</sup> 2008** Contributions should be addressed to:

David Edwards, The QWSG Editor, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, Qld 4xxx or E-mail to: xxxx@xxxx.com.au

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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## Count Activities 2008

## **QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Programme – 2008**

Sat 23rd Aug 2.02m at 14:07 (2:07pm)

Sat 20th Sep 2.18m at 12:54 Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 2.08m at 12:16 Sat 1st Nov 2.24m at 11:14

Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 2.00m at 15:11 (3:11pm)

## Port of Brisbane Count Dates - 2008

Sun 24<sup>th</sup> Aug 2.03m at 15:19 Meet 13:30 (1:30pm)

 Sun 21st Sep
 2.13m at 13:53 (1:53pm)
 Meet 12:05

 Sun 5<sup>th</sup> Oct
 2.00m at 12:57
 Meet 11:10

 Sun 2nd Nov
 2.17m at 11:49
 Meet 10:00

Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 1.95m at 16:12 Meet: 14:20 (2:20pm)

The Port of Brisbane is a work site and we are doing the survey for the Port and ourselves. Unfortunately we cannot accept people who turn up on the day for a bird watching day.

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

A reminder to members to please let the Treasurer know if you change your email address.



## MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

Address:	First name:	(Single \$15; Family \$25 Surna Postcode:	ame Nam		\$		
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Cheques to be made out to: Queensland Wader Study Group For a direct credit, please use the following details.

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An email advice to Sheryl Keates xxxx@xxxx.com.au would be appreciated.