QUEENSLAND WADER

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

New study using QWSG data reports worrying declines in Moreton Bay shorebirds, and highlights the value of regular monthly counting

I, like many in Australia, have marvelled at the clouds of migratory shorebirds that visit our shores each year. Many of us are further amazed by the incredible physical endurance and navigational skills that must be required for these birds to travel thousands of kilometres each year. Increasingly though, shorebird counters are seeing fewer shorebirds around now than just a few years ago. For example, it was recently reported that the Curlew Sandpiper has decreased by 80% throughout southern Australia over the past 25 years. On top of this, there are increasing reports of habitat destruction in the staging sites used by migratory species in SE Asia. It is therefore not surprising that many of us are concerned about the plight of migratory shorebirds. The remarkable long-term shorebird population monitoring counts that have been conducted throughout Australia offering a unique opportunity to try and analyse and document the declines in shorebird populations. A new scientific paper due to appear in the journal Conservation Biology, 'Analyzing Variability and the Rate of Decline of Migratory Shorebirds in Moreton Bay, Australia' gives us some insights into how our existing long-term data can be put to work using new sophisticated modelling techniques to detect changes before they become catastrophic.

The paper, by researchers Howard Wilson, Bruce Kendall, Richard Fuller, David Milton and Hugh Possingham, highlighted the usefulness of doing monthly counts, as well as the differences between using simple versus more rigorous analyses techniques. Specifically, the study looked at 15 years of shorebird population monitoring data collected by QWSG volunteers at shorebird roosts throughout Moreton Bay. Monthly surveys on this scale represent a huge logistical effort, and substantial input of time by many QWSG volunteers. This new paper highlights how that extra effort allows trends to be identified for more species than would have be uncovered if counts were done just once in summer and once in winter. The sophisticated modelling techniques employed in this study would probably not have been possible to run on most computers 10 to 20 years ago, but the techniques are particularly suited to data with large amounts and different types of variability. They are well-suited to estimating how much our shorebird populations have changed, and how confident we can be that these changes are real. The paper uncovered strong evidence of long-term declines in Moreton Bay populations of White-winged Black Tern, Red Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Greenshank, Great Knot and Whimbrel, with evidence of an increase in Red-necked Stint (probably owing to the Port of Brisbane reclamation). There was some evidence of decline in another 4 species, and some evidence of increases in another 3. Interestingly, this paper showed that if counts had only been done twice a year in Moreton Bay, declines would have only been detected in four species; the Bar-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Whimbrel and Eastern Curlew. These results highlight the question: how much evidence do we need to decide when species are in decline?

In order to understand how to interpret the results, it is worth first reviewing what might affect the numbers of birds counted. In the simplest case we might expect bird abundances to stay level, which would mean the abundance counts shouldn't change. Now anyone who has ever counted shorebirds knows that if you do multiple counts, even when they are at a similar time of year, they will not be the same. At a local level, falcons can zip by leaving no shorebirds at the roost you usually count at, or poor weather can make it hard to count accurately, or push the birds around the corner you can't see. Furthermore, across large areas,

such as the whole of Moreton Bay, there are considerable logistical difficulties in counting all the birds in one area at one time. This results in counts that, if plotted over time would not be identical even if the actual bird population was not changing. Additionally, at a broader scale, one season the birds spend in the arctic might be particularly good with a long warm summer, with plenty of food and few predators around resulting in more young coming to Australia, while the following year might be a bad one. These natural fluctuations in numbers occur in every wild animal population, but they occur to different degrees in different species. All these sources of variation obscure underlying patterns in the bird abundances, whether that pattern is the population staying constant over time, or increasing or decreasing.

A simple model, such as linear regression, will assume that all the variation comes from one source (usually the variation in our ability to count the birds accurately). However, the recent paper by Howard Wilson and colleagues compared these simple methods with recently developed stochastic state-space models to account for many more sources of variation in bird counts, a much more realistic model. Simple population analyses techniques were more likely to identify population declines when there was in fact no decline happening. The more complex stochastic state-space models are less powerful at detecting change but give rise to fewer "false alarms".

It is clearly beneficial to have comprehensive techniques, which result in less doubt that the identified decline in a population is in fact happening, and which can then be used as compelling evidence of a problem when talking to decision makers. However, is it better to be more certain about the declines we do report, or should we identify all species that are possibly declining even if this gives rise to some false alarms? One solution is to make the scientific reporting complete enough to do both, as was done in this paper, so that the difference between those we are sure about and those with some evidence of decline can be made clear. In the case of QWSG, the paper shows clearly how monthly surveys enable greater scientific certainty regarding the changes in population abundance.

The shorebird monitoring data that has been collected over the last 25 years represents one of the best, most systematically collected long-term data sets in Australia: a data set which represents many thousands of hours of work by volunteers throughout the country. It is exciting to know that now a team of researchers at the University of Queensland led by Richard Fuller, Howard Wilson and Hugh Possingham will be extending the work discussed here. Supported by QWSG, DERM, the Port of Brisbane, the federal environment department, and the Australian Research Council, the team will determine if the results observed in Moreton Bay reflect what is happening throughout the East-Asian Australasian flyway. This project will be further assisted through the valuable input from those who have collected data from throughout the country, including representatives from each of the following organisations: Australasian Wader Studies Group, Bird Observation and Conservation Australia, Birds Australia, Birds Australia Western Australia, Birds Tasmania, Friends of Shorebirds SE, Friends of Streaky Bay District Parks, Hunter Bird Observers Club, New South Wales Wader Study Group, Ornithological Society of New Zealand, The South Australian Ornithological Association Inc., Victorian Wader Study Group, and Wetlands International. More importantly, the team will also try to uncover what is driving these declines.

For more information or to download a pdf copy of this paper, visit www.fullerlab.org
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When volunteers count: What can volunteer monitoring tell us about the fate of Moreton Bay?

By Richard Fuller (University of Queensland, AEDA) From Decision Point #29 – 7

Volunteers are collecting environmental data all the time, often amassing vast quantities of information. They do it because they're passionate about the environment, and they hope their effort might, in some small way, be making a difference. But does it? Many people in the scientific community have questioned the value of volunteer data, claiming that it often lacks the rigour and good design that characterises hypothesis testing.

Researchers at the University of Queensland (including several members of AEDA) recently examined data collected by volunteers over many years on waterbirds using Moreton Bay to determine if the data provided any insight on trends or the general health of the Bay.

Moreton Bay, just east of Brisbane, is one of Australia's largest and most important sites for shorebirds (see the box on Connecting Australia with the world). In summer, it teems with up to 40,000 shorebirds and is part of a network of critical (Ramsar designated) shorebird sites across the planet.

While Moreton Bay's water quality and aquatic ecosystems are the focus of a major government-sponsored monitoring program, there is nothing comparable for birds, despite their primary role in defining Moreton Bay as a Ramsar site. Changes to shorebird populations in the Bay may provide warning of things going amiss in the Bay but it might also provide early warning of problems elsewhere in the migratory bird flyway connecting Australia with the Arctic.

While there are no 'government' bird monitoring programs on the Bay, the Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG) has been systematically collecting data on waterbirds on the Bay for the past 16 years (Milton & Driscoll 2006). While some scientists question the value of volunteer collected data, the sheer size of volunteer datasets such as this, and the low cost at which they were collected makes them a potentially valuable tool for conservation. The big question is – how powerful could this data be for detecting real changes in bird numbers?

With colleagues Howard Wilson, Bruce Kendall and Hugh Possingham, I carried out a preliminary analysis of the data to determine its utility. In so doing, we stitched together several techniques in population trend analysis, and developed a novel method that has potential for analysing volunteer monitoring data around the world.

The problem is this: In no two years will the number of birds in Moreton Bay remain exactly the same, but how big does a change have to be before we begin to worry? We need to distinguish long term declines from normal year to year fluctuations in numbers caused by environmental variability. To make things worse, we don't know exactly how many birds there are in any given year – even the best counts will be imprecise across such a large area as Moreton Bay (this is known as 'measurement error').

Both types of variability – environmental variability and measurement error – limit our ability to make inferences from our observations, but they do this in very different ways. Reducing measurement error results in more precision in determining whether a population has declined or not. The amount of environmental variability affects the statistical confidence in deciding whether an observed decline is part of a long-term trend. Existing analysis techniques account for either interannual variability or measurement error, but not both; thus we had to pull together several methods in population trend analysis.

The data on the whimbrel are a case in point. Numbers cycle dramatically each year as birds arrive from the Arctic, spend the summer feeding in the Bay and then migrate north again (figure 1). We used a periodic model to track these changes (red line on the graph). A separate term reflected measurement error, which we can estimate, using the variability around the seasonal trend, because many counts are conducted each year.

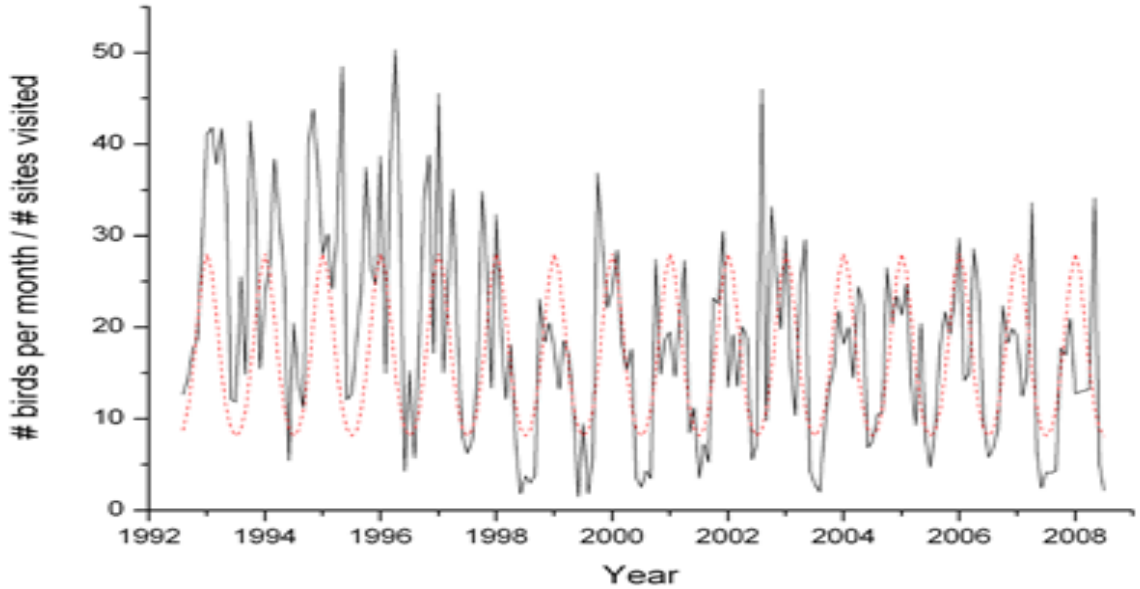

Figure 1: Mean monthly counts of whimbrel in Moreton Bay since 1992 (black line). A periodic model fitted to the data (red dotted line) describes the seasonality excellently, explaining 43% of its variance. Data are corrected for survey effort, and a decline in numbers is readily apparent.

This model identifies a 50% decline in numbers from 1992 to 2008, equivalent to a decline of 4.4% per year (p = 0.003). However, this is not yet evidence of a long-term trend. By using data for the intervening years, and explicitly incorporating between-year variability in the model, we conclude that there is indeed a long-term decline, though our confidence in the result is slightly weaker (p = 0.008).

In contrast, if one follows the recently developed Shorebirds 2020 methodology, which uses one count each year, taken in the summer period (Oldland *et al*. 2008), we can detect no decline in the whimbrel (p = 0.86). Clearly, the dual-model approach that also accounts for measurement error is far superior, owing in large part to the extra information derived from the monthly counts performed by dedicated QWSG observers. An analysis of population trends must routinely consider both measurement error and environmental variability to increase the power to detect change. When used in conjunction with data from independent sites, as outlined by Shorebirds 2020, this will provide a powerful technique for detecting declines.

Our model detects a significant decline in eight species (Australian pied oystercatcher, greater sand plover, bar-tailed godwit, whimbrel, eastern curlew, greenshank, great knot, sanderling) and increases in four (Pacific golden plover, wandering tattler, red-necked stint, sharp-tailed sandpiper). Volunteer monitoring data have proved invaluable in tracking the state of shorebirds in Moreton Bay.

Three urgent tasks arise from this work.
First, we must decide which management actions to implement, and where and when, to benefit shorebird populations in the Bay. Like predicting the weather, we must treat this as a probabilistic exercise. Management actions can then be decided on the basis of the most likely benefit, rather than waiting for a definitive conclusion on whether a population is in decline or not.
Second, can we make even better use of volunteer effort? Each month, count organisers have to decide how to deploy available counters across the shorebird sites. Should a core set of sites be prioritised to receive frequent coverage, or is it better to spread the effort more widely among a larger number of sites?
Third, we must work out the causes of any likely declines, in particular deciding whether the effects are local to Australia, or being driven from problems in other parts of the migratory flyway.

Many thanks to all the volunteer counters, without their help this dataset would not exist. Thanks also to QWSG staff, including Linda Cross, David Milton, Peter Driscoll, and Andrew Geering among others.

This story is based on a report prepared by Richard, Howard Wilson, Bruce Kendall and Hugh Possingham for the Qld Department of Environment and Resource Management. The report is titled Monitoring shorebirds using counts by the Queensland Wader Study Group*.*
Please email Richard if you would like a copy.
More info: Richard Fuller <r.fuller@uq.edu.au>

References

Milton D & P Driscoll (2006). An assessment of shorebird monitoring in Queensland by the Queensland Wader Study Group. *Stilt*, 50, 242–248.

Oldland J, R Clemens, A Haslem, L Shelley & B Kearney (2008). *Shorebirds 2020: Migratory shorebird population monitoring project.* Final report to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Birds Australia, Carlton, Australia.

Connecting Australia with the world

Living their lives perpetually in the summer, millions of shorebirds escape harsh boreal winters by making a 20,000 km round trip from their arctic breeding grounds to wetlands in the Southern Hemisphere and then migrating north again. Australia is a terminus of one of these migration routes, the busy East Asian-Australasian Flyway, which connects the continent with a dozen Asian countries.

One of the largest and most important sites for shorebirds in Australia is Moreton Bay. In the austral summer it teems with shorebirds. There are internationally significant numbers of eight species in the Bay, and it has been designated a Ramsar site (part of a network of 1800 critical shorebird sites across the planet).

Moreton Bay's water quality and aquatic ecosystems are the subject of a major monitoring program. Established in 2001, the Healthy Waterways Partnership assesses the state of south-east Queensland's freshwater and estuarine systems through a network of 389 sampling sites. An annual report card communicates the monitoring data, showing simply and convincingly whether aquatic ecosystem health has improved or declined. Unfortunately, there is nothing comparable for birds, despite their primary role in defining Moreton Bay as a Ramsar site.

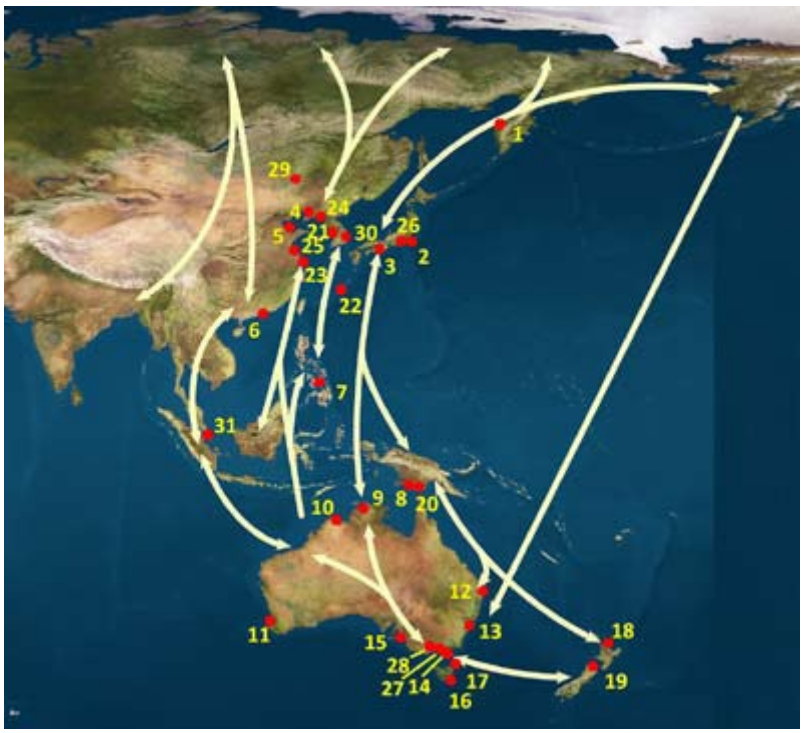

Figure 2: The East Asian-Australasian flyway connects the Arctic with Australia & New Zealand via many migratory stopover sites. Effective management of such an interdependent network is a daunting challenge. Adapted from a map prepared by the Australasian Wader Studies Group.

Can resident shorebirds be used as bioindicators of wetland health? – An historic study of Moreton bay, Queensland

By Kimberley Leadbetter

From a young age I have found birds absolutely amazing. As I furthered my education I became even more fascinated with marine birds in particular, admiring the adaptations required for their survival. At the end of last year I completed a Bachelor of Science at the University of Queensland, St. Lucia. However, much to my disappointment the courses I completed rarely involved marine birds. Hence when I was offered the chance to undertake an honours research project based on shorebirds in Moreton Bay I jumped at the opportunity! This study, which I began this year, aims at investigating the use of resident shorebirds as bioindicators for the health and quality of wetland habitats within Moreton Bay.

As most of you are aware shorebirds and their coastal habitats are currently globally threatened. Hence I believe it is vital that the causes of these threats are determined, particularly localised threats faced within Australia. In many instances shorebird research is understandably focused on migratory shorebirds, however, in order to investigate and understand local threats resident shorebirds provide a good insight. For this reason I will be investigating *resident* shorebirds; due to limited numbers only four resident species will be investigated – the Red-capped Plover *(Charadrius ruficapillus)*, Pied Oystercatcher *(Haematopus longirostris)*, Black-winged Stilt *(Himantopus himantopus),* and Masked Lapwing *(Vanellus miles)*.

I am extremely grateful for the hard work of the QWSG with their consistent shorebird counts over the years, without these counts my study would not be possible. I intend on analysing this count data from 1996 until present for the four resident species and will be looking for significant population trends present. To get a better sense of what is happening to these birds in relation to their habitats, only sites from the northern section of Moreton Bay are being analysed. These population trends will be compared with the associated temperature, rainfall and habitat data in an attempt to find significant correlations and hence potential causations for the given population trends. These data sets also range from *at least* 1996 until present and coincide with the northern shorebird roost locations. Whilst correlation-based studies are often frowned upon, I believe the historic aspect of this study will increase its reliability.

Habitat variables are mapped using ArcGIS and historic satellite images, the inter-annual changes of habitat quality will be measured and analysed. These variables measuring habitat 'quality' include: mangrove area, mangrove condition, mangrove density and associated foraging area in relation to each shorebird roost site. I predict that potential degradation within the wetland habitats will be correlated with potential decreasing resident shorebird populations. Hence resident shorebirds can be used as a biological indicator for the health status of the wetland habitats they rely on. Wetland monitoring techniques are currently expensive and often very time consuming, if this study supports the use of shorebirds as bioindicators, the resulting future wetland monitoring methods will be less costly and require less time.

The above is only a brief overview of what my honours study entails, so feel free to contact me via email (Kimberley.leadbetter@uqconnect.edu.au) as I would love to answer any questions or hear any advice and/or opinions from people who have first-hand experience with waders!

A call to save the enigmatic Spoon-billed Sandpiper

From AWSG news online

The Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* is one of the world's most unusual birds. The species is listed by the International Union for the Concervation of Nature (IUCN) as Critically Endangered on the basis of an extremely small population, estimated at 120-200 hundred pairs, and due to an annual decline of 27%. This means that it is at an extremely high risk of extinction in the next few years. Hunting and habitat loss on the non-breeding grounds, combined with the loss of important intertidal feeding areas during its migration, have all contributed to this precipitous decline.

An International Action Plan for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper has been produced on behalf of BirdLife International and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). Along with actions related to habitat protection, site management, awareness raising and education particularly in the non-breeding grounds, the possibility of establishing a captive breeding program was explored. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), British Trust for Ornithology, Birdlife International and Birds Russia have now embarked on an ambitious breeding program. This will entail extensive field operations in Chukotka, in the Russian Far East, in the forthcoming summer of 2011. Ongoing husbandry will be carried out through WWT facilities in the United Kingdom. The cost of this program is very high and, while it is being funded in the short term by RSPB and WWT, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership has invited Partners to provide financial assistance to enable ongoing support and the success of this critical program.

Although this species is not one that we see in Australasia it is, nevertheless, the most iconic wader species in our flyway.

Its current critical conservation situation should be of concern to every shorebird lover wherever they live. Moreover, the problems faced by this species are common to many of the shorebirds that migrate through our flyway. In many ways this is a flagship species that is demonstrating to the world the significant issues that are faced by these long distance migrants.

The Australasian Wader Studies Group of Birds Australia (AWSG) supports this program and invites anyone interested in saving this species to provide financial assistance. Birds Australia have agreed to handle funding at no cost to the project. Donations may be made by cheque, payable to Birds Australia and forwarded to Suite 2-05, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia, or by credit card by phone 1300 730 075 or +61 3 9347 0757, or by returning the attached form (please **do not** make your donation online at the Birds Australia website). Please specify the Spoon-billed Sandpiper fund when making your donation.

Editor's Note: The Committee of the QWSG has donated $5,000 to this project, wishing all those involved the best for this enigmatic species.

Minutes to midnight
Time is running out for our migratory shorebirds

The situation in the Yellow Sea

The area around the Yellow Sea is home to over 600 million people and is the site of huge infrastructure developments, new ports and intense industrial activity, producing amongst other things, the consumer goods and electronic equipment so popular in our own society. With such high population density, finding room for industrial expansion is a challenge and enormous areas of intertidal mud flats have been converted to industrial land.

Sadly, it is these tidal flats that are the prime feeding habitat for hundreds of thousands of shorebirds. By 2009, land reclamation along the Korean Peninsula had reduced the national area of intertidal wetland by more than 70 per cent. Of even greater concern is the China Marine Environment Monitoring Centre's estimate that 1,000 km2 of land were reclaimed each year in China between 2006 and 2010. The shores of the Yellow Sea are the key staging site on shorebirds' annual migration from Australasia to their Arctic breeding grounds. On northward migration this coastline, bounded by China and North and South Korea, supports more than 30 per cent of our Flyway's population for 25 shorebird species and carries almost the entire Flyway population for another 15. The loss of these crucial habitats has seen a dramatic decline in shorebird numbers across the Flyway.

Proof of the magnitude of the threat is exemplified by two shorebird species - Great Knot and Eastern Curlew - that spend the non-breeding season here, feeding on the mudflats in such places as Roebuck Bay and Eighty Mile Beach in Western Australia. Count data analysed by the Shorebird 2020 team has revealed that Great Knot numbers have declined by 50 per cent in the last 25 years, a decline so dramatic that the species has had its official conservation status on the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species (the most objective and authoritative system for classifying species in terms of the risk of extinction) upgraded from being of Least Concern to Vulnerable. The Great Knot is now considered to be at 'high risk of endangerment in the wild'. Similarly, the status of the Eastern Curlew has also been reclassified as numbers have declined by 20 per cent in the last five years.

Case studies from the Bohai Sea exemplify the situation. This shallow embayment in the north-western corner of the Yellow Sea is the study site for annual research conducted by the Global Flyway Network. The study site abuts the massive new development of the Caofeidian Industrial Zone which houses a major port receiving iron ore and coal from Australia, as well as the Beijing Steelworks which were permanently moved from Beijing as a means of curbing air pollution during the 2008 Olympic Games. This development itself occupies 65 km2 of former tidal mudflat, but the devastation does not end there. The fill used in the creation of reclaimed land often comes from mud pumped in from adjoining tidal zones, lowering the levels of the mudflats so that they are no longer exposed at low tide, rendering them useless as shorebird habitat. Caofeidian is not the only development; land reclamation continues unabated and vital habitat is being lost at an alarming rate.

It would be difficult to find a more polluted large water body on earth than the Bohai Sea. It absorbs nearly 5.7 billion tonnes of sewage and 2 million tonnes of solid waste each year; 43 of the 52 rivers that flow into it are heavily polluted. Yet in the spring of 2010, over 80,000 Curlew Sandpipers were recorded at the study site. Identifying leg-flags on some of the birds showed they had come from India, Thailand, Singapore, Sumatra, Taiwan, Shanghai and six sites in Australia, highlighting how birds from a wide range of non-breeding sites in the Flyway concentrate in the ecological bottleneck of the Yellow Sea. Furthermore, in 2009, 25 km of its shores were used by over 45 per cent of two subspecies of the world's population of adult Red Knot (race *rogersi* that migrates to Chukotka, and *piersmai* that breeds on the New Siberian Islands).

The simplistic view (often advanced), is that shorebirds will just move to other tidal flats, is not accurate given the specialist feeding needs of many species and the reality that most tidal flats have already reached their carrying capacity. In 2010, more birds were counted on the tidal flats that remained; probably forced there as others were destroyed.

A marked increase in people collecting shellfish for food was also noted. In the past this activity was done by hand, only possible when low tide exposed the mud flats. In 2010 collecting was primarily done using noisy, smoky petrol-driven machines that could work at any tide, sucking up everything in their path and pumping the mud through a sieve, which collected all shellfish, thereby destroying the smaller-sized shells eaten by Red Knots.

Obviously, preservation of the remaining tidal flats in the Yellow Sea is essential for conservation of all shorebirds species in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, but preservation of the remaining tidal flats of Bohai Bay is of critical importance to the conservation of Red Knot in the Flyway.

The situation here

Australia, China and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) are signatories to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international agreement which promotes the conservation and wise use of wetlands. The Convention defines 'wise use' of wetlands as: *their sustainable utilization for the benef it of humankind in a way compatible with the maintenance of the natural properties of the ecosystem*.

Australia also has bilateral agreements on migratory birds with both China (CAMBA) and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA); the agreement with South Korea being signed as recently as 2007. Regular meetings are held to discuss how each country is adhering to the requirements of the bilateral agreement. The meetings, however, are not open to the public and little information about matters discussed, actions agreed or decisions taken is revealed to the general public.

With a sustainable future for our shorebirds so imperiled, it is vital that we take action and demand that our governments honour the commitments they have signed up to at the international level. Thinking of how to achieve this as an individual can engender a sense of powerlessness, but there are now numerous examples where people-power has made a difference. We need to make our leaders take notice. As Tony Burke, the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is new and does not have a background in shorebird migration, letters from Birds Australia members raising concerns about the loss of Yellow Sea habitat and the impacts on migratory shorebirds are timely. This Minister has the future of shorebirds in his hands; he needs to understand that initiating and leading robust debate at future international meetings has to become one of his priorities.

As the inspiring final sentence of the book Invisible Connections: Why Migrating Shorebirds need the Yellow Sea declares:
"Like the shorebirds that rise into the air to cross continents and oceans, so too we must all rise to the challenge—to secure a future for the birds, the tidal flats and the living world which we all share."

The situation is alarming and urgent. Please write on behalf of our shorebirds.

What you can say

• Preservation of the remaining tidal flats in the Yellow Sea is essential for conservation of the remaining shorebirds in our Flyway - the Australasian East-Asian Flyway.
• That at future meetings of the bilateral migratory bird agreements (eg CAMBA and ROKAMBA), Australian delegates should ask their counterparts what is being done in their country to ensure sufficient appropriate habitat remains to ensure that birds can successfully stage there on migration.
• That the Australian government should advocate for the issue of shorebird habitat to be listed as a standing agenda item at each Conference of Parties of Ramsar, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Migratory Species (the Bonn Convention).
• That the Minister for the Environment requests and lobbies for the issue of the reclamation of shorebird habitat in the Yellow Sea to be included as a major agenda item on the program for the next IUCN World Congress to be held in the Republic of Korea in late 2012.
• Request that the House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Treaties undertakes a parliamentary review of Australia's performance in maintaining its obligations to international environment treaties.

Who to write to

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The Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* undertakes one of the avian world's most extraordinary migratory journeys.

Recent research reveals that some individuals from the East Asia/Australasia Flyway population made a nonstop flight of over 11,000 km, the longest continuous journey that has ever been recorded for a landbird.

The East Asia/Australasia Flyway contains two Bar-tailed Godwit subspecies: *L. l. menzbieri*, which nests in north-eastern Siberia and spends the northern winter in South-east Asia and western Australia, and *L. l. baueri*, which breeds in western Alaska and migrates to New Zealand and south-east Australia for the non-breeding season. The flyway population is estimated at 325,000, comprising roughly 170,000 *menzbieri* and 155,000 *baueri* (Delany and Scott 2006, Bamford *et al*. 2008).

Ornithologists have long suspected that the Bar-tailed Godwit was capable of making an immense journey in a single haul (Gill *et al*. 2005). However, the true scale of their migratory feats has only recently been confirmed. Researchers from the Pacific Shorebird Migration Project, a joint initiative between the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and PRBO Conservation Science, used satellite telemetry to follow the birds' migration. Individuals of the *baueri* race were fitted with small transmitter whilst on the 'wintering' grounds in New Zealand (Gill *et al*. 2009).

The birds began their northward migration in mid-March, typically completing the journey in two stages. First, the godwits follow the west Pacific Rim to the Yellow Sea, which lies between main-land China and the Korean peninsula. This leg, of over 10,000 km, is completed in a single flight and takes between six and eight days. The North Yellow Sea, particularly the area around the Yalu Jiang Nature Reserve, is an extremely important staging site, with almost the entire *baueri* race believed to pass through the area each spring. The birds remain here for several weeks before continuing on to their Alaskan breeding grounds, where they stay for much of June and July. In August, the birds 'bulk up' at coastal staging sites such as Kuskokwim Shoals off the mouth of the Kuskokwim River. Immediately prior to departure, their fat reserves constitute over half their body weight, whilst their gizzards and intestines, which are not needed during flight, shrink to almost nothing (Piersma *et al*. 1998). The birds depart Alaska in late August, embarking on a remarkable non-stop flight directly across the central Pacific Ocean. A ided by strong tailwinds, the birds average 56 km per hour and can complete the 11,000 km journey in just over eight days. With a total round-trip of 29,000 km it is likely that a typical Black-tailed Godwit of the *baueri* race will fly more than 460,000 km during the course of its lifespan.

Route taken by one satellite tracked Bar-tailed Godwit

Reproduced from map by PRBO Conservation Science and USGS Alaska Science Center available at http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/ shorebirds/barg_updates.html

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT SHOREBIRD DISTURBANCE

How often have you been observing shorebirds only to have them disturbed by un-educated and thoughtless people? Well now you can do something to help reduce that impact.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service have been patrolling some of the more disturbed sites in Moreton Bay and Pumicestone Passage to actively enforce the shorebird disturbance legislation and help minimise disturbance in the future. This information also applies to all other QWSG counters. We can assist by doing the following (but only if you can easily obtain information of the alleged offenders):
However, QPWS strongly insist that for your own safety you do not approach or engage in conversation with the people doing the disturbing, or be seen photographing or making notes about them.

- If vehicles are driven into areas that disturb the birds record the registration, make, model and colour if you can. Also note description of drivers and any other people.
- If a jet ski is used, also make a note of the registration and colour. Include a description of the driver and passengers if there are any.
- If there are just people disturbing the birds, make note on what they are doing and a description of the people. If dogs are involved make a note of the breed of the dog if you know it, or description and colour of the dog.
-

Any information you have can be sent to the following people, who will forward it onto QPWS.
Linda Cross at xenus@big.net.au, David Milton at David.Milton@csiro.au,
Sandra Harding at pitta@gil.com.au

WADER WATCH Linda and Phil Cross, Joyce Harding

Can we 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, please do not make it up. 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.
Can everyone please remember to use the 'Leg Flag Observation Report' form.

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 06.02.11 and 21.05.11
1 Eastern Curlew, 1 Whimbrel, 6 Bar-tailed Godwit, 21 Pied Oystercatcher 1 Black-winged Stilt, 1 Great Knot, 1 Ruddy Turnstone, 10 Grey-tailed Tattler, 1 Lesser Sand Plover.

The birds sighted above included some of the individually marked flags that QWSG have been fitting and are listed below.
Whimbrel – **KZ.**
Bar-tailed Godwit – **CC, HV, PA.**
Pied Oystercatcher **– AN, CT, EY, A6, B3, B5, C4, C8, D3, D6, H7.**
Grey-tailed Tattler – **AR, CE, A2, B3. (A2 & B3** have green flag right tibia, yellow flag and geolocator on left tibia and metal band left tarsus**).**

Interstate & overseas Green leg flag sightings
1 Eastern Curlew – Yalu Jiang, Northern Yellow Sea, China – Jesse Conklin – 21.03.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Aphae Island (south), South Korea – Kim Seok-Yee & Andreas Kim – 10.05.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Suncheon Bay, South Korea – Ju Yung Ki – 05.05.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit **(J1)** – Yalu Jiang, Northern Yellow Sea, China – Julia Melville – 01.05.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit (**HR)** – Yalu Jiang, Northern Yellow Sea, China – Jesse Conklin – 26.04.11
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Mankyung Estuary, Kunsan City, South Korea – Ju Yung Ki – 24.04.11
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Maihiang-ri tidal flat, South Korea – Dr Kyu-Sik Shim – 21.04.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Sol-ri, Seocheon, Chungnam Province, South Korea – Dr Kisup Lee – 21.04.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit **(CK)** – Songdo mudflat, Incheon, South Korea – Dr Kisup Lee – 17.04.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit **(DE)** – Songdo mudflat, Incheon, South Korea – Dr Kisup Lee – 17.04.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Songdo mudflat, Incheon, South Korea – Dr Kisup Lee – 17.04.11
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Aphae Island (south), South Korea – Dr Kim Seok-Yee & Andreas Kim – 17.04.11
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Geum Barrage, South Korea – Ju Yung Ki – 14.04.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Dasa-ri Biin-myeon Seocheon-gun, Chungman Province, South Korea – Mr Kil-Wook Yeo – 12.04.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit (**D1**) – Yalu Jiang, Northern Yellow Sea, China – Jesse Conklin – 11.04.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Yalu Jiang, Northern Yellow Sea, China – Jesse Conklin – 02.04.11
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Waimea Inlet, Best Island, Nelson Airport Island, South Island, New Zealand – Willie Cook, David & Julia Melville – 18.02.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Bells Island, Waimea Inlet, Nelson, South Island, New Zealand – Willie Cook – 17.01.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Tasman Bay, Nelson Haven, South Island, New Zealand – David Melville – 17.01.11
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Motueka sandspit, Nelson, South Island, New Zealand – Rob Schuckard & Ingrid Hutzler – 09.12.10
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Bells Island, Waimea Inlet, Nelson, South Island, New Zealand – Willie Cook – 15.11.10
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Pakawau, Golden Bay, South Island, New Zealand – Ingrid Hutzler – 09.12.09
1 Great Knot – Gochang tidal flat, Gomso Bay, South Korea – Ju Yung Ki – 13.05.11
1 Great Knot – Maehiang-Ri tidal flag, Hwasung-ku, South Korea – Kyu-Sik Shim – 20.04.11
1 Red Knot – Bohai Oil Rig Site, China – Adrian Boyle & Matt Slaymaker – 17.04.11

Orange (Victoria) leg flag sightings
1 Eastern Curlew – Shoalwater Bay – Andrew McDougall – 12.08.10

White (New Zealand) leg flag sightings
1 Red Knot – yellow flag over yellow band right tarsus and yellow band over yellow band left tarsus - Buckley's Hole Sandbar – Barbara Collyer, Linda Cross et al – 19.03.11 (Although this bird was seen by a few people and was reported as a yellow flag because it was the same yellow as the bands. Banders in Western Australia have not marked any birds with this combination of flag and bands, therefore AWSG have concluded it is probably a stained white flag. We will continue to liaise with banders to confirm the region where flagged)

Blue (Japanese) leg flag sightings – use four combinations
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Lytton Claypan No 1 – Glen Pacey – 14.05.11
1 Great Knot – Buckley's Hole sandbar, Bribie Island – Dez Wells – 22.03.11
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Manly Harbour – Rob Dougherty & Colin Reid – 16.04.11
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Toorbul – Linda Cross – 09.04.11
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Fisherman Islands – Andy Eacott – 03.04.11
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Cairns Esplanade – Jun Matsui – 27.03.11
(The four Tattlers above had blue flag on left tibia – flagged in Hokkaido)

Black over white or white over black (Shanghai, China) leg flag sightings
1 Great Knot – Cairns Esplanade – Jun Matsui – 26.03.11 & 27.03.11
1 Great Knot – Buckley's Hole sandbar, Bribie Island – Dez Wells – 22.03.11
1 Great Knot – Buckley's Hole sandbar, Bribie Island – Linda Cross et al – 19.03.11
1 Red-necked Stint – Cairns Esplanade – Jun Matsui – 01.04.11

Black (Alaska USA projects) leg flag sightings
No sightings

Other wader leg flag sightings
1 Great Knot – white flag left tibia over blue flag left tibia (**E3 on flag**) – Maaroom – Chris Barnes 24.11.10 (flagged Hsia-Pu Ilan County, Taiwan)

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.

Fourteen NSW birds seen as follows:
A6 – Point Halloran Reserve – Brian Russell – 24.04.11
B3 – Point Halloran Reserve – Brian Russell – 24.04.11
B4 – Point Halloran Reserve – Brian Russell – 12.04.11 & 24.04.11
C1 – Manly Harbour – David Milton – 05.03.11
D5 – Reeder's Point, Moreton Island – David Milton – 04.04.11
E7 – Victoria Point – Laurie Knight – 21.05.11
J1 – Manly Harbour – Jon Coleman – 03.04.11
J6 – Manly Harbour – David Milton – 02.04.11
J8 – Manly Harbour – David Milton – 03.03.11
J8 – Manly Harbour – Jon Coleman – 03.04.11
K7 – Victoria Point – Laurie Knight – 21 05.11
L7 – Reeder's Point, Moreton Island – David Milton – 04.04.11
L9 – Point Halloran Reserve – Brian Russell – 12.04.11 & 24.04.11
L9 – Point Halloran Reserve – Jon Coleman – 13.05.11
N8 – Point Halloran Reserve – Jon Coleman – 13.05.11
N8 – Victoria Point – Laurie Knight – 21.05.11
O9 – Manly Harbour – David Milton – 03.03.11

Other leg flag sightings and banded birds
1 Caspian Tern – orange flag right tarsus and metal band left tarsus – Mathieson Homestead – John Knight – 02.04.11

Count Programme by Linda Cross

First up is a reminder to all counters that the **National Winter Count** is Saturday 16th July. If you are unable to do your count please let me know as soon as possible as I might be able to get someone do the count on your behalf.

Please also note that although there is no count set down for June this does not mean that you cannot do a count. However, some of the tide heights and times at weekends during that month are not particularly receptive for a count. Again, this should not be a deterrent as counts can be done on a high, low, incoming or outgoing tide at any time. It's just a matter of how keen you are to do one!

Towards the end of 2010 and early this year numerous comments were made on count sheets about the lack of small waders at sites, and I can advise that you are not alone in this statement. For quite a few months smaller species (and some larger ones) have been missing from their regular sites. There have been many questions as to where they have gone, but alas we don't have an answer for all of them. One of the sites we personally count in Deception Bay has been void of birds for five months and we did not even get any arrivals or passage birds such as Red Knot on their southward migration. We have been at a loss to understand why the birds have deserted this site.

One theory could be the floods, particularly for one species (Black-tailed Godwit). This species is normally recorded in good numbers at the Deception Bay south roost during the summer months and during northward migration, however, none have been seen at the site for months. On checking counts we see large numbers were recorded at Luggage Point and Pine Rivers Wetlands, sites that don't normally have that many. Perhaps some analysis should be done for the spring and summer counts in Moreton Bay during 2010/2011 to see if there was a change of sites for numbers and species due to the flooding, which could have produced a good food source from silt washed down the rivers.

Another reason for the lack of birds at Deception Bay and perhaps other sites is mangrove growth on some areas of the roost. Toorbul 1km North roost used to have a few species that rested in the samphire, but that site now has a lot of young mangrove trees on it and very few birds use the roost. Mangrove regrowth is occurring at other sites along the Queensland coast, Kougari Street claypan at Boonooroo and Mathieson Homestead in Hervey Bay are two other areas faced with a similar fate. Although mangrove trees are important we also need to look at the problem they are causing for roosting waders.

Not all the news I have to report is bad though. Most of your May count sheets have come in and at least things are looking good for our resident species, with what looks like a return to the coast after hopefully a good breeding season inland. Even the drought was broken at our Deception Bay south roost in May with the return of a couple of species.

Black-winged Stilt have been recorded at 18 sites and some counters have recorded the number of juvenile/immature birds among the flock giving an indication of breeding success. Of those recorded, the young birds are around 20% of the flock size. Three Red-necked Avocet were recorded at the Port of Brisbane on 15th May after being absent for many months. Black-fronted Dotterel have also turned up at nine sites in May, with one site (Deception Bay claypan) having an all time record of 56.

Although not waders, ducks have also started returning to the coast with quite large numbers of Chestnut Teal being seen at numerous sites.

Our winter visitors from across the Tasman (Double-banded Plover) have been recorded at Buckley's Hole Sandbar, Caboolture River Mouth, Deception Bay claypan, Geoff Skinner Reserve, Manly Harbour, Maroochy River sandbar, Mirapool Beach Moreton Island, Fisherman Islands and Redcliffe Airport. The largest count being 38 at Geoff Skinner Reserve east on 14th May. If you want to see this species in its splendid breeding plumage you will need to go looking for them around the end of July and beginning of August before they head home to New Zealand.

Listed below are a few interesting totals recorded for some species during the last few months.

Whimbrel – 539 at Mirapool Beach Moreton Island on 04.04.11
Bar-tailed Godwit – 5,500 at Boonooroo on 17.03.11
Pied Oystercatcher – 301 at Manly Harbour on 03.03.11
Sooty Oystercatcher – 14 at Dudgeon Point near Mackay on 30.03.11
Black-winged Stilt – 382 at Pine River Northside on 14.05.11 (includes 54 immature)
Latham's Snipe – 12 at Nathan Road Redcliffe on 05.02.11 and 5 at Kinka Wetlands on 02.04.11
Ruddy Turnstone – 185 at Port of Brisbane on 03.04.11
Red Knot – 62 at Fisherman Islands claypan on 03.04.11 & 14 on 15.05.11
Grey-tailed Tattler – 1,056 at Port of Brisbane on 03.04.11
Lesser Sand Plover – 1,030 at Port of Brisbane on 03.04.11
Curlew Sandpiper – 1,178 at Port of Brisbane on 03.04.11
Red-capped Plover – 325 at Inskip Point on 17.03.11 & 280 at Fisherman Islands on 15.05.11
Broad-billed Sandpiper – 7 at Back Beach, Mappon, Weipa on 01.03.11. Other records came from Luggage Point (1) on 08.01.11, Cairns Esplanade (1) on 10.12.10 and Port of Brisbane (2) on 03.04.11 and (1) on 06.02.11.

Beach Stone-curlew – quite a few records. Point Vernon (2) on 14.05.11, Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island (2) on 14.05.11 & (1) on 02.04.11, Tweed River Entrance (1) on 11.05.11, Day's Gutter Moreton Island (3) on 04.04.11, Seaforth Beach north of Mackay (2) on 02.04.11, Dudgeon Point near Mackay (2) on 31.03.11 (3) on 30.03.11 (4) on 03.03.11 & (3) on 02.03.11, Namaleeta, Mapoon, Weipa (1) on 03.03.11, Back Beach, Mapoon, Weipa (1) on 03.03.11 & 02.03.11

Breeding records.

Masked Lapwing – three young at Maaroom on 05.03.11
Red-capped Plover – three chicks at Port of Brisbane on 03.04.11

Interesting wader sightings

Please note these sightings are not authenticated records.

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

Oriental Pratincole – one (in breeding plumage) at Dudgeon Point, Mackay on 30.03.11
Wood Sandpiper – two at Bundaberg Port on 06.03.11
Wood Sandpiper – one at Endeavour River mouth Cooktown on 06.02.11
Wood Sandpiper – two at Garnett's Lagoons on 05.02.11 & 20.11.10
Common Sandpiper – four at Poona Creek GSS on 13.02.11
Asian Dowitcher – one at Cairns Esplanade on 17.11.10
South Island Pied Oystercatcher – one at Victoria Point since the end of April and still at site as I type this on 23.05.11

Not waders but of interest anyway

Great-billed Heron – one at Endeavour River claypan, Cooktown on 02.03.11
Black Bittern – two at Endeavour River claypan, Cooktown on 06.02.11 & 02.03.11
Australian Bustard – one at Dudgeon Point near Mackay on 03.03.11
Great Cormorant – two at Noosa River sandbank on 24.02.11
Great Cormorant – one at Trute's Bay Tweed Heads on 11.05.11

Chestnut Teal – 548 at Port of Brisbane on 03.04.11
Chestnut Teal – 473 at Pine Rivers Northside on 14.05.11
Radjah Shelduck – 18 at Kinka Wetlands on 05.03.11
Radjah Shelduck – 5 at Boonooroo on 17.05.11
Australasian Shoveler – 1 at Bundaberg Port on 06.02.11
Spotted Harrier – one (immature) at Luggage Point on 14.05.11
Spotted Harrier – one at Kedron Brook Wetlands on 02.03.11
Grey Goshawk – one at Deception Bay claypan on 02.04.11
Brown Falcon – one at Deception Bay claypan on 02.04.11
Spotless Crake – one at Kedron Brook Wetlands on 02.03.11
Glossy Ibis – two at Pine Rivers Wetlands Reserve on 14.05.11
Brolga – 10 at Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon on 02.04.11
Greater Frigatebirds – three on Cairns Esplanade after cyclone Yasi.
Lesser Frigatebirds – 17 on Cairns Esplanade after cyclone Yasi
Lesser Crested Tern – 3 at Gables Point Rocks, Hervey Bay on 02.04.11
Common Tern – 5,600 at Inskip Point on 03.03.11
White-winged Black Tern – 200 at Maroochy River Sandbar on 08.03.11
White-faced Heron – 82 at Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay on 14.05.11

Black-necked Stork – **1** at Bishops Marsh on 09.04.11, **1** at Endeavour River claypan Cooktown on 03.04.11, **1** at Pine Rivers Wetlands Reserve on 02.04.11, **3** (one juvenile) at Poverty Creek behind Mission Point on 21.03.11, **2** at Redcliffe Airport on 05.03.11, **3** at Dudgeon Point near Mackay on 02.03.11, **2** at Bundaberg Port on 06.02.11, **2** (on nest) at Garnett's Lagoons on 05.02.11, **1** at Luggage Point on 05.02.11, **1** at Bishops Marsh on 05.02.11 & 08.01.11, **4** at Kinka Wetlands on 08.01.11, **5** (including three juvenile) on 18.12.10 and **2** on 20.11.10.

Buff-banded Rail – a few records during the last few months from the following sites: Deception Bay claypan, Dudgeon Point Wetland Mackay, Luggage Point, Nathan Road Redcliffe, Pine Rivers Northside and Kinka Wetlands. Two were seen at Kinka Wetlands, but one was taken by a Peregrine Falcon. At Dudgeon Point in Mackay six were seen on 30.03.11

Please send all counts to me. Linda Cross. Email: xenus@big.net.au
Snail mail: 40 Thompson Road, Bellmere. Qld 4510 Phone: 5495 2758

Happy counting.
Linda Cross.

Wader ID Days Reports

TOORBUL WADER ID DAY REPORT 9 APRIL 2011

Thirty people turned up for this wader ID day. Four members from the Toowoomba Bird Observers made the long trip to join us, as did Graham and Liz Palmer who once again came all the way from Jimboomba. It was also good to have Bob James and Russ Lamb join us again from the Sunshine Coast to assist us helping people identify the waders present.

Weather conditions were fine, dry, some clouds, sunny and a south east wind. Although it was a relatively low high tide for the day, thankfully the rains from the day before had wet the substrata and the south east wind pushed the tide in a little further making conditions quite good for viewing the birds.

Fourteen species of waders were present with the biggest number being Grey-tailed Tattlers and Whimbrel. Most of the Tattlers were in breeding plumage ready for their migration. This species is one of the last to leave our shores for their annual migration to the northern hemisphere. Although numbers were lower for other species it was good to have one Red-capped Plover and a very small number of Sand Plover and Stint on the roost for people to see. These three species are seen in much lower numbers at this roost over the last couple of years compared with the previous years.

We checked for leg flags and found the following flagged birds:

1 Grey-tailed Tattler with blue flag left tibia. (Japan)
1 Pied Oystercatcher with etched green flag. Coded **EY** – (Moreton Bay, Queensland).

Birds counted at Toorbul Roost and environs:
22 Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck, Crested Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, 1 Australian Pelican, 2 White-faced Heron, 2 Little Egret, Australian White Ibis, 3 Eastern Osprey, 2 White-bellied Sea-Eagle, 3 Whistling Kite, 1 Brahminy Kite, 1 Brown Goshawk, 15 Australian Pied Oystercatcher, 1 Sooty Oystercatcher, Black-winged Stilt, 1 Red-capped Plover, 14 Lesser Sand Plover, Masked Lapwing, 217 Bar-tailed Godwit, 334 Whimbrel, 4 Eastern Curlew, 2 Terek Sandpiper, 471 Grey-tailed Tattler, 10 Common Greenshank, 4 Great Knot, 14 Red-necked Stint, 121 Little Tern, 1 Gull-billed Tern, 8 Caspian Tern, 2 Silver Gull, 2 Galah, Sacred Kingfisher, Striated Pardalote, Mangrove Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Brown Honeyeater, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Grey Shrike-thrush, Olive-backed Oriole, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Willie Wagtail, Torresian Crow, Magpie-lark, Welcome Swallow, Common Starling and Common Myna.

Bishops Marsh was full of water, there one Brolga and a male Black-necked Stork were seen by most people on their way to Toorbul in the morning. Both birds were still present when we stopped in the afternoon on the way home after Toorbul. The Black-necked Stork was bathing in the water. Birds seen were:
60 Pacific Black Duck, 1 Australasian Grebe, 1 Black-necked Stork, 1 Intermediate Egret, 40+ Cattle Egret and 1 Brolga. A small group of Plumed Whistling Duck were also seen on the dam wall in the paddock to the west of the marsh.
Linda Cross.

KAKADU ROOST WADER ID DAY REPORT 19 MARCH 2011

Robyn Black, Peter Boyd, Rob & Barbara Collyer (counters for Point Halloran sites), David Edwards, Tony Cotter and Greg Longman joined Phil & I at the Kakadu artificial roost on Bribie Island. The experienced counters way outnumbered those who came to get some tuition, which was a bonus for them. Weather conditions were fine, dry and overcast.

We knew in advance that the waders had not always been using the Kakadu artificial roost on the higher tides and that was very apparent when we arrived with only a handful of birds present. Large flocks of Bar-tailed Godwits, some Whimbrel and Great Knots were flying past and headed up Dux Creek to roost. As we had been informed the day before the outing that a reasonable number of birds were congregated on the sandbar in front of Buckley's Hole we waited for around an hour before heading down to that site in the hope of seeing more species.

The following is a list of birds on the Kakadu roost and environs:
Crested Pigeon, Pied Cormorant, 1 White-faced Heron, 1 Whistling Kite, 1 Brahminy Kite, 4 Australian Pied Oystercatcher, 11 Red-capped Plover, 2 Lesser Sand Plover, 1 Greater Sand Plover, 2 Masked Lapwing, 2 Bar-tailed Godwit, 1 Whimbrel, 3 Red-necked Stint, 1 Little Tern, 1 Caspian Tern, 10 Silver Gull, Galah, Rainbow Lorikeet, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Torresian Crow and Welcome Swallow.

When we arrived at Buckley's Hole we headed down the path to as far as we could go as the 2.52 metre high tide was well in. A good flock of birds were clumped together on the sandbar in front and a few more on another smaller sandbar to the left. Here we spent a couple of hours showing the difference between Great and Red Knot, trying to explain why the Sand Plovers were Greater and pointing out the non-breeding and breeding plumage of Little Tern. Some Bar-tailed Godwit, Great Knot and Greater Sand Plover had quite extensive breeding plumage showing, but only one Red Knot had a small amount of red on the breast.

We checked for leg flags and found the following flagged birds:

1 Great Knot with Black flag over white flag – (Shanghai, China).
1 Great Knot with old green flag – (Moreton Bay, Queensland).
1 Red Knot with yellow flag over yellow band right tarsus and yellow band over yellow band on left tarsus – (Unknown, possibly New Zealand))

The forecast rain arrived around 10.30 am, so we all departed for home.

Birds seen on the sandbars and Buckley's Hole environs:

Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Grebe (B), Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Australian White Ibis, Whistling Kite, Brahminy Kite, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Red-capped Plover, Greater Sand Plover, Comb-crested Jacana, Bar-tailed Godwit, Great Knot, Red Knot, Red-necked Stint, Little Tern, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Crested Tern, Silver Gull, Rainbow Lorikeet, and Welcome Swallow.

(B) Breeding

Linda Cross.

QWSG CONTACTS

QUEENSLAND WADER
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Queensland Wader Study Group

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Members are reminded their membership expires on the date shown on the newsletter address label, and the membership joining/renewal form is now on the 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 **August 18th 2011**
Contributions should be addressed to:
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OR
Contact Vicki Campbell Phone 07 3378 2964 or email vicki.campbell@cogentia.com.au

Postage is not included in prices quoted.

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Men's sizes: SM - XL
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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. Contacts: President, Mike West (07) 38764844; Secretary, Jim Sneddon (07) 3343 6323; Treasurer, Helen Underwood 0414 340 953

Monthly Meetings — Birds Queensland - 7.45pm
1st 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.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new member who have joined recently :

Rob Clemens, Tony Cotter, David Fitzgibbon
Moyra McRae, Pete Jones

A reminder to members, 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.

Electronic Newsletter ??

Are you interested in receiving your "Queensland Wader" by email?
If you are interested email me on gouldian@ozemail.com.au. Could you use the subject line as "Electronic Newsletter". Editor

Count Activities - 2011

QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Programme – 2011

No Count in June

Sat 16th Jul 1.82m at 10:07
Sat 6th Aug 2.06m at 14:51
Sat 3rd Sep 2.18m at 13:27

National Winter Count

Sat 15th Oct 2.20m at 11:07
Sat 12th Nov 2.32m at 10:54
Sat 10th Dec 2.36m at 09:19

Port of Brisbane Count Dates – 2011

Sun 5th Jun	1.78m at 11:38	Meet 09:50	Sun 16th Oct	2.16m at 11:43	Meet 09:50
Sun 17th Jul	1.84m at 10:46	Meet 08:55	Sun 13th Nov	2.31m at 10:48	Meet 09:00
Sun 7th Aug	2.07m at 16:04	Meet 14:15 (2.15 pm)	Sun 11th Dec	2.39m at 09:55	Meet 08:05
Sun 4th Sep	2.11m at 14:29	Meet 12:40			

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

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……..……)
Would you like to receive your newsletter by E-mail……

SIGNATURE: …… DATE:……

Post to: QWSG Treasurer, 30/43 McLachlan St, DARWIN NT 0800

Cheques to be made out to: Queensland Wader Study Group
For a direct credit, please use the following details.

Account name:	Qld Wader Study Group
Account number:	08305297
Financial Institution:	mecu Limited
BSB:	803 140

An email advice to Sheryl Keates **tattlers@tpg.com.au** would be appreciated.