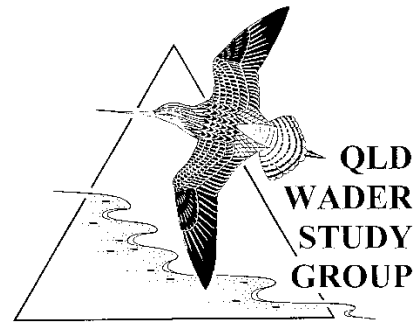


# QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue number 077

September, October, November 2011

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

## Spoon-billed Sandpiper Chicks Hatch

The first critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper to hatch in captivity in the world was always going to be a spectacular sight, but when a Heritage Expeditions boat docked in Anadyr last night not one, not two, but an incredible 17 tiny, hatched Spoon-billed Sandpiper chicks emerged.



One of the first chicks to hatch. © Martin McGill



A spoon-billed sandpiper hatching from its egg. © Martin McGill

The incredibly ambitious mission to collect eggs from the rapidly dwindling number of nests on the breeding grounds in Chukotka and transport them thousands of miles via land, sea and air to the conservation breeding facility at WWT Slimbridge hatching has reached an important milestone. Incredibly eight of the chicks actually hatched just as the team were preparing to leave Chukotka.

Describing his elation on docking safely in Anadyr, WWT's Head of Conservation Breeding, Nigel Jarrett said: "We boarded the boat with the eight newly hatched chicks, 12 fertile eggs, considerable anxiety about the trip on rough seas and a great deal of hope.

"We got off the other end with only three eggs, but an amazing 17 chicks and the remaining eggs poised to hatch any day, so I am as happy as happy can be."

Things have gone as well as could possibly have been hoped for so far, but saving this species is still going to be an uphill battle. A couple of the hatchlings aren't quite as strong as the others and we will have to accept that we will lose some.

The survival rate for Spoon-billed Sandpiper chicks in the wild is extremely low. On average just four chicks fledge out of around 20 eggs laid and only one of these would survive to recruit into the adult population two years later.

Taking these newly hatched chicks from hatching to fledging will be enough of a challenge on its own. However, even this is dwarfed by the work that we and our partners need to do to tackle the threats to the species in the wild.

Elizabeth Tambovtseva from Birds Russia is part of the team on the expedition. She said: *"The excitement from the team when the first egg hatched and a tiny chick appeared was off the scale – we haven't slept for days with the stress and worry so it was a pretty emotional experience."*

*"All the partners have been working hard as a team to pull off this very important stage of the mission and it's paid off. I didn't get a chance to celebrate my birthday last week, but this belated present more than makes up for that!"*

The conservation breeding expedition, led by staff from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and Birds Russia, has support from the RSPB, BTO, BirdLife International, ArcCona, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force and Moscow Zoo.

The project is funded by WWT and RSPB, with additional financial contributions and support from BirdLife International, the East-Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership, the Convention on Migratory Species, Heritage Expeditions and the Australasian Wader Study Group of Birds Australia.

WWT has launched a public fundraising appeal to save the spoon-billed sandpiper, which you can.



*Newly hatched Spoon-billed Sandpiper. © Martin McGill*

## **Sad News from this Project - 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011**

On Tuesday morning one of the birds from the third brood was found dead in the corner of its rearing cage. The bird appears to have been in good physical condition and thankfully none of the other birds showing any signs of illness. At this stage we can't 100% confirm what caused its death. These young birds are very delicate and in the wild many die when newly fledged, as they get used flying and using the other skills that they need to survive.

For Roland, Liz and the rest of the team this is obviously upsetting, but it is important to put it into perspective by considering the situation in the wild. *We still have many more young birds than there would be in the wild at this stage.* We have taken big steps towards establishing a conservation-breeding program. And from every set back, we are able to learn more about how to raise spoon-billed sandpipers in the challenging conditions in Chukotka. As well as trying to determine the cause of death, they are doing all they can to minimise any threats to the birds in the run up to their long voyage to Moscow.



## **BIRDS MOVE TO QUARANTINE AT MOSCOW ZOO**

Posted by *Spoon-billed Sandpiper project* on August 23, 2011



Nigel: A couple of weeks after leaving the spoon-billed sandpiper chicks in the capable hands of Liz and Roland and heading home, I was getting on a plane again – this time to Moscow.

Before we can take the birds back to the UK they need to spend time in quarantine – 30 days in Russia and 30 days in the UK. Their Russia stint would be taking place at Moscow Zoo, and I needed to check the facilities and get them up to scratch for their imminent, precious feathered guests.

So a few days were spent putting soft mesh over the tile walls so the birds can't hurt themselves, ensuring food and water was in place and providing UV lighting. The birds are going to be spending their 30 days inside, so providing natural, daylight conditions was imperative. That done, we were happy the facility was ready for the birds' arrival the following weekend.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> August, the birds were prepared for their longest journey yet by Liz and Roland – a 16-hour road and plane trip across Russia to their new accommodation. The journey was made even longer than it normally would have been because of the partial closure of the runway at Anadyr.

Instead of taking a direct flight to Moscow Liz and Roland instead had to take the birds on a smaller plane that needed to stop off at Yakutsk in Siberia (which was unexpectedly tropical in temperature). The good news – for us and the birds – was that Yakutia Airlines agreed to fly them all business class, so they were able to stay with the birds for the entire flight.

It was lucky they did because the long journey took its toll with the birds lighter in weight when they eventually landed in Moscow.

It was a relief all round when the zoo was reached and the birds could be introduced to their new temporary home. Fortunately they were quick to settle in and rest after their journey. Liz and Roland will continue caring for them at the zoo until it's time for the next stage – flying to the UK.

*The QWSG contributed to this project and wish those involved with this enterprise all the best. But most of all good health to the chicks and their future. Editor*

## Where are the Red Knots of the EAAF during spring and autumn migration?

*Written by Chris Hassel/Global Flyway Network*

We are asking for your help with sightings of Red Knot in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) between mid-March and mid-September.

The Australasian Wader Studies Group, the Global Flyway Network (GFN), and many other institutions and individuals have been studying the Red Knot in the EAAF for many years. However they are a surprisingly elusive species. We have been unable to get a really good understanding of their use of the Yellow Sea and other areas in the EAAF during northward and southward migration. Early work by Mark Barter and his Chinese colleagues did find reasonable numbers in the late 90s early 2000s. Since then GFN, in collaboration with Yan Hong Yan of Beijing Normal University, have worked extensively in the north of Bohai Bay. This small area has proved to be the main staging site in the East Asian – Australasian Flyway for Red Knots, both of subspecies *rogersi* and subspecies *piersmai* subspecies (see <http://www.globalflywaynetwork.com.au/reports/GFN-Bohai-Report-2010.pdf>. <http://www.publish.csiro.au/paper/MU10024.htm>).



*Red Knots are given unique colour-band and flag code for survival and demographic studies. © Ian Southey*

However what we are unsure about is where (or if) there are other crucial staging sites. Some of our work suggests a that subspecies *piersmai* makes a direct flight from North-western Australia to Bohai Bay, but our recent 2011 work suggests it does not! Did severe weather make this year unusual? Do one or both subspecies stage somewhere else on their journey to Bohai, if so where? And what happens on southwards migration?





*The 'piersmai' subspecies showing the generally dark colouration of the breeding plumage. © Ian Southey*



*The 'rogersi' subspecies showing the generally pale colouration of the breeding plumage. © Ian Southey*



We are asking for your help in this regard. We are hoping for any information about Red Knot in eastern Asia and Indonesia between mid-March and Mid-September. We are looking for counts, flag sightings, colour-band sightings, images, one-off sightings of big flocks. Of course our hope is for records of flocks of thousands of Red Knots in breeding plumage but really anything you can tell us will be of interest. We are sure there are some mudflats in the southern part of the EAAF full of Red Knot, particularly on spring migration.



*Destruction of the mudflats at Bohai Bay, shorebird habitat being pumped over the seawall to create industrial land. © Adrain Boyle*



*Destruction of the mudflats at Bohai Bay, seawall construction. © Adrian Boyle*

Thank you in advance for anything you can tell me.

I look forward to your records of 1000s of Red Knot feeding happily on mudflats we were not aware of!  
Chris Hassell Global Flyway Network [turnstone@wn.com.au](mailto:turnstone@wn.com.au) [www.globalflywaynetwork.com.au/](http://www.globalflywaynetwork.com.au/)

## Oil Spill Reaches Beaches

Growing concerns over environmental impact

BEIJING - Oil from a huge spill off China's coast has been found ashore in two separate areas, authorities said on Wednesday, sparking calls for greater transparency about the disaster. Environmental protection organizations have warned that the spill may be on a much larger scale than previously thought. Particles and patches of oil have been detected along coastal areas of northern Hebei province and northeastern Liaoning province.

These can be traced back to a leak in June at Penglai 19-3 oilfield operated by China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and US firm ConocoPhillips China (COPC) in Bohai Bay, according to a notice from the North China Sea Branch of the State Oceanic Administration (SOA). Dried oil particles and patches, about one to three centimeters in diameter, were found at a four-kilometer stretch of beach at Dongdaihe, in Suizhong county, Liaoning province, the notice said.

An unnamed official from Suizhong oceanic and fishery bureau confirmed the news and said an operation to clean up the oil had begun, without giving further details. In Hebei, similar oil particles and patches were found on a 300-meter-long beach in Jingtang port, the SOA notice said. Lin Fangzhong, an official with the SOA, confirmed the oil was from the Penglai leak and carried to the beaches by wind and wave, the Xinhua News Agency reported on Wednesday.



Bohai Bay is surrounded on three sides by Liaoning, Hebei, Tianjin and Shandong. Winds usually blow from the southeast in Bohai Bay from June to August. This wind pattern has sheltered Shandong province from the pollution, Ding Zhixi, a spokesman for the Shandong provincial oceanic and fishery administration, told China Daily on Wednesday.

ConocoPhillips China declined to comment on Wednesday.

Oil patches could easily be observed near Penglai oilfield's Platform C on Tuesday amid operations to clean up the spill. The spill at Platform B has stopped, but a sheen occasionally appears, and about 400 barrels of oily water had been collected as of Tuesday, ConocoPhillips China said.

The Houston-based energy company estimated earlier that about 1,500 to 2,000 barrels of oil and oil-based drilling fluids had gone into the sea during the two leaks at Penglai oilfield. The amount of oil recovered may not increase significantly as most of the spill has evaporated, said Mark Nelson, vice-president of ConocoPhillips China, who led a media group on Tuesday to Platform C. Two boats are operating in the spill area with another joining the cleanup on Wednesday, he said. A boom, 1,180 meters long, has been deployed to prevent the sheen from spreading.

The SOA ordered the company to shut down production at the two platforms on July 13. The first incident at Platform B occurred on June 4 while the other leak, at Platform C, occurred on June 17.

"We'll wait for the SOA's approval to resume production at the two platforms," Nelson said.

Three members from the North China Sea Branch of the SOA were sent to Platform C and three to Platform B to oversee cleanup work.

One member from the branch at Platform C said that there's been no distinct progress in the cleanup so far. No cleanup timetable was provided.

The spill, which has polluted a sea area about six times the size of Singapore, was kept secret for several weeks before being made public this month, sparking suspicions of a cover-up. AFP quoted Greenpeace China campaigner Li Yan as saying on Wednesday that the latest report indicates a wider coastal area could eventually be affected, and urged the government and oil companies to release more information to the public. "The biggest problem now is that the public is not aware of the potential impact," she said.

Ma Jun, director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, told China Daily on Wednesday that the SOA notice highlights a dramatic change in circumstances with pollution hitting nearby coasts. "The impact is far more than what ConocoPhillips told the public and they should release information to the public as quickly and comprehensively as possible," Ma said.

(China Daily 07/21/2011 page1)



## PLOVERS TRACKED ACROSS THE PACIFIC

*Written by Planet Earth Online*

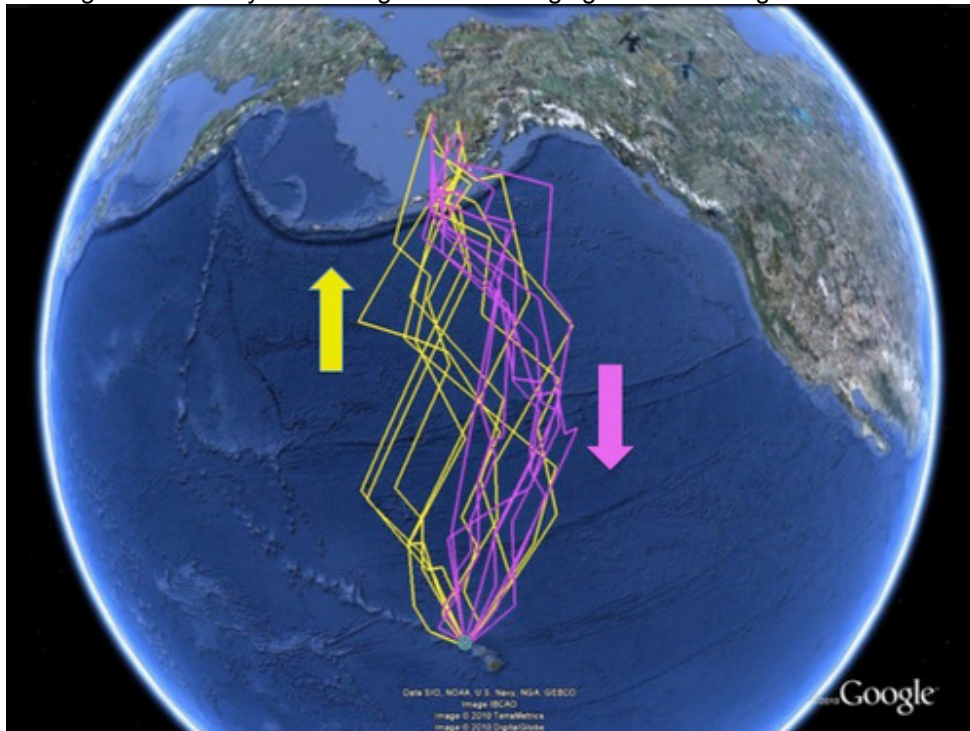
**Scientists have monitored Pacific Golden Plovers for the first time as they migrate thousands of kilometres nonstop from Hawaii to Alaska in spring and back again in autumn.**

The team also found the birds fly much more directly to their destinations than expected, suggesting they're even better navigators than previously assumed.

This kind of research is shedding unprecedented light on these hard-to-monitor creatures' behaviour; for instance, follow-up work is providing the first clues that Japan may be an important stopover for plovers as they head from South Pacific islands beyond Hawaii to breeding grounds in Alaska and Siberia.

*'We thought they might use the lengthy Hawaiian archipelago as a guide - that they would fly south until they reached an island somewhere in the chain and then travel along the archipelago until they got to their final destination,'* says Professor Wally Johnson, an ecologist at Montana State University and lead author of the paper, published in Wader Study Group Bulletin. *'But it turns out that they take a far more direct route.'*

The researchers, based at Montana State University, Brigham Young University in Hawaii and the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), used geolocators, or data loggers, made by BAS. These minuscule devices are attached to bird's legs and work by measuring and recording light levels at regular intervals.



*Geolocator tracks of plovers migrating northward (yellow) in spring from Hawaii to Alaska, the reverse in fall (purple). The figure shows data from the 2009 portion of the study. Click to enlarge image. © Wally Johnson*

The team equipped 24 birds with loggers in Hawaii at their wintering grounds. After about six months, when the plovers had flown to Alaska and back again, the scientists recaptured them, removed their loggers and downloaded the data they contained. Special software turned this into an accurate record of where the plovers had been that could be plotted on Google Earth.

As well as more traditional methods to catch plovers, like setting up mist nets in their territories, the team pioneered the use of the 'Super Talon' net gun. This was originally designed as a law enforcement tool, but it turns out to be a great way to capture wild birds without harming them. The researchers even found they could take unwary plovers by surprise with an unusual tactic of drive-by net-gunning.

Plovers are ideal subjects for this kind of research because they return to the same wintering territories every year, so scientists know exactly where to go to find a particular individual. *'They're so strongly site-faithful that we can predict where they will be with almost 100 per cent accuracy,'* explains Johnson. *'If they're alive, it's almost certain they will come back to the same place.'*





*A geolocator-equipped male Pacific Golden-Plover in Hawaii, late April, a few days before migration to Alaska. © Wally Johnson*

On their spring flight northwards, the birds averaged 63 kilometres per hour and covered around 4800 kilometres in about three days. They made the return trip in around four days. Plovers are well-known as fast flyers, and in this study some birds reached incredible speeds, presumably with the wind behind them - for example, the ground speeds of three individuals ranged from 167 to an exceptional 185 kilometres per hour.

Johnson and his colleagues are now working on follow-up research applying similar methods to plovers that travel from places further south in the Pacific, like the Marshall Islands. So far, their findings suggest that these birds (unlike plovers wintering in Hawaii) stop over in the uplands and rice fields of Japan to fatten up while en route to their breeding grounds in Alaska and Siberia- a migratory link that hasn't previously been suspected.

*'Japan seems to be a major stopover for them,' Johnson says. 'A lot of shorebirds stop in the Yellow Sea region between China and Korea, but very few golden plovers have been seen there. We knew they had to be going elsewhere, and now we think we know where.'*

The team also noted that extended periods of 'noise', in which the geolocator registers very little light, probably show periods when the birds are on their nests incubating and hence keeping the devices shaded. These noise patterns could potentially be used to estimate hatching success rates in various species that nest in remote areas.

### Why Eating Raw Seafood is Dangerous or The hunter becomes the Hunted

A very unfortunate Semipalmated Sandpiper that choose the wrong mussel to make a meal. It was at Jones Beach State Park a couple of weeks ago and all five birders who observed this poor bird's plight felt nothing but pity.



This was taken from the net found by chance. The bird could not get rid of the meal.

## Watch out for Russians

QWSG has just received a request from Adrian Riegen in New Zealand asking for all wader watchers to look out for Red Knot and Pacific Golden Plover fitted with data-loggers (geolocators)

Pavel Tomkovich has been banding at Meynypoligyno, South Chukotka, Siberia this breeding season (2011) and attaching data-loggers on a few birds of these two species. Some of these Knots (3) are chicks of a female that was banded in Miranda (New Zealand) so it is likely they will head to NZ. Many of these 'NZ' Knots pass through Queensland on route back to the land of the long white cloud.

### What to look for.

Red Knots – White flag on right tibia with 3 letters engraved on it (all start with CK), quantity 11 birds, four of these birds carry data-loggers fitted to the left tibia.

A quantity of 20 others had lime coloured flags fitted but no data-loggers.

Pacific Golden Plover - 8 are carrying data-loggers and a light green flag on the left tibia.

If you see any flags or data-loggers on birds please advise Phil Cross.



## Calling all counters – QWSG are going to survey Great Sandy Strait again this summer

A few years ago, the QWSG committee agreed that we would undertake surveys of Mackay region and Great Sandy Strait in alternate years. QWSG visited Mackay in November 2010 and so this summer we will be undertaking a survey of Great Sandy Strait.

This survey will be on the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and all members are invited to be involved. All fuel and accommodation expenses with receipts will be met by QWSG. Our last survey of Great Sandy Strait was in October 2009. During that survey, we found over 25,000 waders during the southward migration period. This survey has been timed to cover the summer period when populations should be stable.

Members interested in being involved should contact David Milton or Sandra Harding on 07 3390 2179 or email: [pitta@gil.com.au](mailto:pitta@gil.com.au) to register their interest.



## What is a geolocator?

A **geolocator**, **light-level logger** or **bird logger** is essentially a lightweight, electronic archival tracking device, usually used in bird migration research to map migration routes, identify important staging areas, and sometimes provide additional ecological information.

### History

The use of geolocators for tracking birds was pioneered by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), which developed the device for recording the behaviour of the Wandering Albatross. From albatrosses and other seabirds the use of geolocators has been extended to other migratory species, including terns, waders, and even small songbirds.

### Methods

Geolocators record changes in light levels at different latitudes and longitudes. They do not use satellite or radio technology and, as it is an archival logger, recapturing the bird is necessary to retrieve the device to download the data to a computer for analysis. Because it uses low power technology and data compression it is able to record data for long periods of time.

Recording light levels over time produces data on day-length which can be analysed to give continuous latitude and longitude readings of a bird's long-distance movements. The location data so derived is not as accurate as that from GPS tracking, but the devices are considerably lighter and cheaper. Other sensors, such as for recording temperatures, or whether the substrate is wet or dry, may be used in conjunction with the light-level loggers in order to provide further ecological information about the bird's location. The devices may be attached to the bird being tracked by a harness, or simply attached to the band on the bird's leg. The weights of the geolocators range from about 1 g to 2.5 g, with a battery life of 1-5 years.

*Thanks to Wikipedia*

## NOTES ON THE EFFECTS OF VOLCANIC ERUPTION ON MIGRANT BIRDS IN ICELAND

Written by [Fuglavernd - BirdLife Iceland](#)

Jóhann Óli Hilmarsson, President of BirdLife Iceland, says that the volcanic eruption hasn't had much effect on migrant birds. Eurasian Oystercatchers and Black-tailed Godwits quickly learned that there was plenty of food beneath the ash. The early phase of the eruption disturbed the local Northern Fulmars to some extent but they were quick to adapt. There were also concerns for the birds breeding in the areas most affected by the ash fall but the case of the Eurasian Oystercatcher in Fagradalur shows that all hope is not lost. Eurasian Oystercatchers favour areas with gravel or sand so the ash in fact expands the areas it can breed in. However, some birds are likely to abandon their attempts to breed this year or will try to find new, ash-free areas to nest in. As long as the volcano doesn't erupt for all eternity, the overall effect on birds is likely to be limited!

The photograph shows a Eurasian Oystercatcher which laid two eggs in a pile of ash next to some farm buildings in Fagradalur, close to the village of Vík in southern Iceland. The ash from Eyjafjallajökull has clearly not prevented it from starting a family this year.

*The ash from Eyjafjallajökull has clearly not prevented this Oystercatcher from starting a family this year. © Jóhann Óli Hilmarsson*



## WADER WATCH

Linda and Phil Cross, Joyce Harding

Can we please ask people to carefully check on which leg the flag is placed? 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 data base, 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 your 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 03.04.11 and 14.08.11

13 Bar-tailed Godwit, 21 Pied Oystercatcher, 2 Black-winged Stilt, 4 Grey-tailed Tattler.

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

Bar-tailed Godwit – **HS, HV, JD, JM, JX, PA.**

Pied Oystercatcher – **AE, AH, AN, AS, AT, EU, EY, A6, B2, B4, B7, C4, D3, H7.**

Black-winged Stilt – **CJ, RD.**

Grey-tailed Tattler – **B4, B7, C4. (All three Tattlers have green flag right tibia, yellow flag and geolocator on left tibia and metal band left tarsus).**

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

1 Whimbrel (UJ) – Mouth of Kongo River, Matsusaka Mie, Japan – Atsushi Wada – 03.05.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Arao Beach, Arao, Kumamoto, Japan – Kimiko Sakai – 08.05.11

2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Maihiang-ri tidal flat, South Korea – Kyu-Sik Shim – 20.04.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Sonezaki-Shinden, Kitakyushu-Shi, Japan – Yoshibumi Shiroi – 15.04.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Ushimizu beach, Arao-shi Kumamoto-ken, China – Hisayoshi Shiraishi – 09.04.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Clifton Beach, Whitford, Auckland, North Island, New Zealand – Tony Habraken – 05.03.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Miranda Firth of Thames, South Auckland, North Island, New Zealand – Tony Habraken – 19.02.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Clifton Beach, Whitford, Auckland, North Island, New Zealand – Tony Habraken – 28.01.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Miranda Firth of Thames, South Auckland, North Island, New Zealand – Tony Habraken – 04.01.11

1 Bar-tailed Godwit (FP) – Taporu South, Kaipara Harbour, Auckland, North Island, New Zealand – Tony Habraken – 02.01.11

1 Red Knot – Nanpu, Bohai Bay, China – Chris Hassell & Adrian Boyle – 27.05.11

2 Red Knot – Nanpu, Bohai Bay, China – Chris Hassell & Adrian Boyle – 12.05.11

1 Red Knot – Nanpu, Bohai Bay, China – Chris Hassell & Adrian Boyle – 01.05.11

1 Red Knot – Nanpu, Bohai Bay, China – Chris Hassell & Adrian Boyle – 17.04.11

1 Red Knot – Big Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour, North Island, New Zealand – Tony Habraken – 29.01.11 & 30.01.11

1 Red Knot – Karaka, Manukau Harbour, South Auckland, North Island, New Zealand – Tony Habraken – 16.01.11

3 Red Knot – Big Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour, North Island, New Zealand – Tony Habraken – 02.01.11

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Miro River Estuary, Siohara-cho, Matsusaka-shi, Mie-ken, Japan – Sadao Sato – 17.05.11

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Minamirokugo, Ohta-ku, Tokyo-to, Japan – Tamotsu Narita – 19.05.11 **(Above tattler had green flag right tibia, yellow flag and geolocator on left tibia and metal band left tarsus).**

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Mouth of Kongo River, Matsusaka Mie, Japan – Atsushi Wada – 03.05.11

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Kitamuranitta-cho, Matsusaka-shi, Mie-ken, Japan – Sadao Sato – 02.05.11

1 Grey-tailed Tattler (RZ) – Tama River Estuary, Ota, Tokyo, Japan – Hideo Yamaguchi – 01.05.11

2 Curlew Sandpiper – Bohai Oil Rig Site, China – Chris Hassell & Adrian Boyle – 06.05.11

1 Lesser Sand Plover (DY) – Wang-Gong, Chang-Hua County, Taiwan – Chung-Yu Chiang – 07.04.11



**Orange (Victoria) leg flag sightings**

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Manly Harbour – Sandra Harding – 06.08.11  
 1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter – 30.07.11  
 1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Kristy Currie – 16.07.11  
 1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter – 11.06.11

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

No sightings

**Blue (Japanese) leg flag sightings – use four combinations**

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Point Halloran Reserve – Brian Russell – 27.05.11 (The Tattler above had blue flag on left tibia – flagged in Hokkaido)

**Black over white or white over black (Shanghai, China) leg flag sightings**

No sightings.

**Black (Alaska USA projects) leg flag sightings**

No sightings

**Other wader leg flag sightings**

1 Red-necked Stint with blue flag right tibia – Fisherman Islands – Andy Eacott – 07.08.11

**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.

Eight NSW birds seen as follows:

C1 – Fisherman Islands – David Edwards & Robert Bush – 15.05.11  
 C1 - Point Halloran Reserve – Adrian Boyle – 25.05.11  
 E7 - Point Halloran Reserve – Adrian Boyle – 25.05.11  
 K3 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter – 17.07.11 & 21.07.11  
 K4 – Manly Harbour – David Milton – 11.06.11  
 K7 – Point Halloran Reserve – Adrian Boyle – 25.05.11  
 L4 – Point Halloran Reserve – Adrian Boyle – 25.05.11  
 L4 – Manly Harbour – Sandra Harding – 06.08.11  
 L9 – Victoria Point – Laurie Knight – 21.05.11  
 L9 - Point Halloran Reserve – Adrian Boyle – 25.05.11  
 N8 – Point Halloran Reserve – Adrian Boyle – 25.05.11

**Other leg flag sightings and banded birds**

1 Caspian Tern – orange flag right tarsus – Thooloor Island – Jill Denning – 18.07.11  
 1 Caspian Tern – orange flag right tarsus and metal band left tarsus – Terry Dillon & Jason Searle – South Stradbroke Island – 16.06.11  
 1 Caspian Tern – orange flag right tarsus – Fisherman Islands – Andy Jensen – 05.06.11

**Interesting wader sightings**

Please note these sightings are not authenticated records.

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

**Not waders but of interest anyway**

3 Spotless Crane – Bishop's Marsh, Toorbul – 13.08.11  
 1 Glossy Ibis – Nathan Road, Redcliffe – 16.05.11  
 4 Glossy Ibis – Bundaberg Port Swamp – 15.05.11  
 1 White-necked Heron – Bundaberg Port Swamp – 15.05.11 & 18.06.11  
 2 Pink-eared Duck – Luggage Point – 16.07.11  
 1 Pink-eared Duck – Bundaberg Port Swamp – 15.05.11  
 6 Australasian Shoveler – Bundaberg Port Swamp – 15.05.11 & 18.06.11  
 20 Radjah Shelduck – Kinka Wetlands – 06.08.11  
 18 Wandering Whistling Duck – Garnett's Lagoons – 15.07.11  
 6 Wandering Whistling Duck – Buckley's Hole – 17.07.11

636 Chestnut Teal – Luggage Point – 16.07.11  
549 Chestnut Teal – Fisherman Islands – 15.05.11  
 Many other large totals at other sites, but too many to list.  
751 Grey Teal – Bundaberg Port Swamp – 15.05.11  
2 Wedge-tailed Eagle – Lillies Island, Tweed Heads – 11.07.11  
1 Spotted Harrier – Kedron Brook Wetlands – 07.08.11  
1 Swamp Harrier – Kedron Brook Wetlands – 07.08.11  
1 Grey Goshawk – Toorbul Sandspit – 13.08.11  
1 Brown Falcon – Kedron Brook Wetlands – 14.05.11  
1 Brown Falcon – Kinka Wetlands – 06.08.11  
3 Yellow-billed Spoonbill – Kedron Brook Wetlands – 14.05.11  
1 Common Noddy – St Helens Beach, north of Mackay – 19.07.11  
294 Black Swan – on water in front of Toorbul, Sandfly bay roost – 16.07.11  
397 Silver Gull – Fisherman Islands – 15.05.11  
1 Roseate Tern – Noosa River sandbanks – Jill Denning – 21.06.11  
63 White-faced Heron – Trutes Bay, Tweed Heads – 11.07.11  
373 Australian White Ibis – Kedron Brook Wetlands – 04.06.11  
1140 Little Pied Cormorant – sandbank off Amity Point – 18.07.11  
8 Great Cormorant – Trutes Bay, Tweed Heads – 08.8.11  
3 Black-necked Stork (1 adult & 2 immature) – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – 15.07.11

## Count Programme by Linda Cross

Long overdue is a welcome to new counter Glen Pacey, who has been counting Lytton No1 claypan for quite a while, and who is also a regular at the Port of Brisbane counts. Another new counter is Rob Clemens. Some of you should already recognise the name as Rob was previously with Birds Australia Shorebirds 2020 project. Rob moved to Brisbane early this year and has already joined the counter of Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve during counts and filling in while they are away. Welcome also to Andy and Theresa Pavone who have been filling in for the counters of Point Vernon and Gable's Point Rocks in Hervey Bay. Without the assistance of these new counters, and everyone else involved in the count programme it would not be possible to have an extensive database. We thank you all sincerely for your commitment to the waders.

The winter months are usually relatively quiet, but there have been some highlights. Our visitors from across the Tasman, Double-banded Plover, have been showing off their new suit of colours during the July and August counts. From May through to August they have been recorded at twenty-one sites from Brisbane through to Cairns. The largest totals have been (195) at Inskip Point in May, (110) at the same site in June and (76) at Reeder's Point, Moreton Island in July.

Bird numbers and species appear to be picking up over the last two months, but this has mainly been due to our resident species that have been breeding out west after the exceptional rain the outback received. As reported in the previous newsletter, Black-winged Stilt and Black-fronted Dotterel have turned up in good numbers at numerous sites. However, Red-necked Avocet has only been recorded at two sites. At Fisherman Islands three were recorded in May, 35 in June, a nice flock of 210 in July and 145 in August. The only other record is one bird at Deception Bay south in July. Red-kneed Dotterel records have also been lower, with only three sites recording them. One at Queensland Aluminium Ltd. Gladstone in June, six at Pine Rivers north side in August and two also in August at Kedron Brook Wetlands site.

Possible early arrivals of Marsh Sandpiper during the 6<sup>th</sup> August count with one at Maaroom and one at Kinka Wetlands.

Although not a wader, I have been really surprised at the number of sites Buff-banded Rail have been recorded at. During the last few months the species has been seen at ten sites, with five of them being the first record and three sites only having one record before. Spotless Crake have also been seen at two sites (see Wader Watch Section).

Large numbers of ducks have also been recorded at numerous sites. Some of the large records are in the Wader Watch Section of this newsletter.

Only a couple of interesting totals recorded for two species during the last few months.

Whimbrel – 347 at Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay on 02.07.11

Whimbrel – 117 at Toorbul on 14.05.11



Red-capped Plover – 980 at Inskip Point on 29.05.11

Red-capped Plover – 279 at Fisherman Islands on 15.05.11

Beach Stone-curlew – an increase on the number of sites where this species has been recorded since the last newsletter, which is good news. Sites include Tweed River Entrance (1), Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island (1), Toorbul (1), Caloundra Sandbanks (3), Noosa River sandbank (1), Inskip Point (3), Gable's Point Rocks (1), Pioneer River northbank (2), Seaforth beach north of Mackay (1), St. Helens beach north of Mackay (2) and Cairns Esplanade (1).

#### **Breeding records.**

Pied Oystercatcher – pair nesting at Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island on 24.07.11 and still on site 14.08.11

Masked Lapwing – two newly hatched chicks at Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island on 14.08.11 and four at Thornlands on 06.08.11

The return of waders from their southward migration will already be under way when you receive this newsletter, so make sure those scopes have been given a good clean so you can do the following things: When counting each species try to work out the number of juveniles and record them in the notes section of the newsletter. By doing this it gives us an indication of how productive the breeding season was for each species.

Take a close look at legs for flags and try to record them as accurately as possible. Remember to send the sightings to Phil on the Leg Observation Record Form. If you don't have one please contact us and we will send it to you. There is a separate article that Phil has done for this newsletter about flagged birds from Russia, so please read it so you are aware of what to look for. A number of species flagged in New Zealand drop into Queensland before heading across the Tasman (particularly Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit), so keep a close eye out for them. The godwits have a flag and a combination of coloured bands. It is important to record them as accurately as possible to identify the individual bird.

Please send counts to me, Linda Cross. Email: [xenus@big.net.au](mailto:xenus@big.net.au) or

Snail mail: 40 Thompson Road, Bellmere. Qld 4510.

Phone: 07 5495 2758

Any leg flag sightings can be sent to Phil Cross by either of the two above ways.

Happy counting Linda Cross.

## **Wader ID Days**

### **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September at Toorbul**

High tide at 12.48pm (plus 30 minutes later for Toorbul 1:18pm) of 1.99m. **Meeting time 11.30am**

Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane to the Donnybrook/Toorbul exit. Turn off here and head east over the highway overpass. Continue on this road to Toorbul. Turn right at the T-junction then first left and then right, which brings you onto the Esplanade. Follow this road to the end (approximately 2kms); we will be on the left. Bring water, food and a chair. It is a good idea to have a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent. Most importantly bring your binoculars or telescopes. Hopefully we can provide the answers to all your questions.

Please contact any of the following people if you have any questions. Arthur & Sheryl Keates 3843 1874. David Edwards 3262 2017. David Milton or Sandra Harding 3390 2179.

### **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October at Toorbul**

High tide at 14.01pm (plus 30 minutes later for Toorbul 2:31pm) of 2.02m. **Meeting time 12.30pm**

#### **Directions as above.**

Please contact any of the following people if you have any questions. Phil & Linda Cross 5495 2758. Arthur & Sheryl Keates. 3843 2179.

### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December at Toorbul**

High tide at 14.03pm (plus 30 minutes later for Toorbul 2:33pm) of 2.19m. **Meeting time 12.30pm**

#### **Directions as above.**

Please contact any of the following people if you have any questions. Phil & Linda Cross 5495 2758. Arthur & Sheryl Keates 3843 2179. David Edwards 3262 2017. David Milton or Sandra Harding 3390 2179.

## QWSG CONTACTS

### QUEENSLAND WADER

The Official Quarterly Publication of  
Queensland Wader Study Group

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28 Peppertree Street,  
SINNAMON PARK  
QLD 4073

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscription rates:

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Receipt will be forwarded with next edition of Queensland Wader.

Forward application to:

Sheryl Keates  
QWSG Treasurer  
PO Box 1483  
CARINDALE  
Qld 4152

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, and only one further newsletter will be sent after expiry of your subscription.

Copy Deadline for the next issue of Queensland Wader is **November 18<sup>th</sup> 2011**

Contributions should be addressed to:

David Edwards, The QWSG Editor, 54 Elliott Street, Clayfield, Qld 4011  
or E-mail to: [gouldian@ozemail.com.au](mailto:gouldian@ozemail.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.

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## QWSG MERCHANDISE

Should you wish to purchase any of the QWSG merchandise, items may be purchased at BQ Inc meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at the Royal Geographical Society Rooms, 237 Milton Rd, Milton.

**OR**

Contact Vicki Campbell Phone 07 3378 2964 or email [vicki.campbell@cogentia.com.au](mailto:vicki.campbell@cogentia.com.au)

Postage is not included in prices quoted.

### Note price reduction on "Shorebirds of Australia"

BOOKS	\$35.00	Shorebirds of Australia
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 now 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.

Men's sizes: SM - XL

Women's : XS - M



## 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

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.

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new member who have joined recently :

**Nicholas Murray**  
**Steve, Colleen & Jacob Fox**

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](mailto:gouldian@ozemail.com.au). Could you use the subject line as "Electronic Newsletter". Editor



## Count Activities - 2011

### QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Program – 2011

Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep 2.18m at 13:27  
 Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Oct 2.20m at 11:07  
 Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 2.32m at 10:54  
 Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2.36m at 09:19

### Port of Brisbane Count Dates – 2011

Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Sep 2.11m at 14:29 Meet 12:40  
 Sun 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2.16m at 11:43 Meet 09:50  
 Sun 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 2.31m at 10:48 Meet 09:00  
 Sun 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 2.39m at 09:55 Meet 08:05

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:** please let the Treasurer know if you change your contact details.



## MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

I / We wish to join / renew: (Single \$15; Family \$25; Student/Pensioner \$10)  
 Title..... First name: ..... Surname Name:.....  
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 Payment enclosed: \$.....  
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 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, PO Box 1483 CARINDALE, Qld 4152**

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An email advice to Sheryl Keates **2tattlers@gmail.com** would be appreciated.