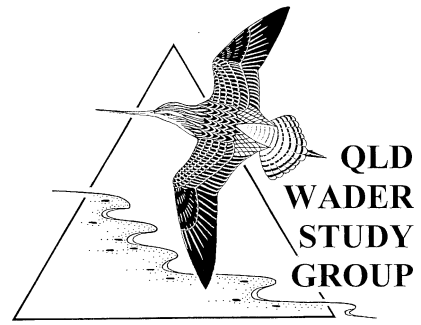


QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue number 26

SUMMER 1999

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

QWSG Chairperson's Report for 1998 – Peter Driscoll

QWSG is quite well placed financially. The count program is running very well and we continue to be involved in conservation issues. These three aspects of QWSG are the subject of separate reports by Sheryl Keates, Linda Cross and Greg Miller. However, I must mention that Environment Australia is poised to re-invigorate the AWSG program of population monitoring. QWSG will be able to make a substantial contribution. Our count data are being used by the State Government for planning purposes and are recognised for their significance in environmental assessment generally. Thanks to all the dedicated counters. Watching waders is useful, and fun!

The counts form the basis of a project commenced this year, administered by the Dept of Environment and Heritage under the National Wetlands Program of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) entitled "Management Planning and Public Education for Migratory Shorebird Roost and Feeding Sites in the Moreton Bay Marine Park". QWSG and QOSI are involved in another important project entitled "Key habitats for conservation of the Eastern Curlew on its feeding grounds". It is a PhD project being undertaken by Paul Finn from Griffith University, focussing on Moreton Bay. The QWSG Gulf Shorebird Surveys also began this year under a contract from the Department of Environment and Heritage with NHT funding. Plans for the QWSG book on waders of south east Qld also gained momentum over the last few months.

Projects which have been concluded are the two Coastcare grants on high tide roost sites at Dynah Island and Empire Point. Our work at Dynah Island has given some interim reprieve to birds using the site. Coming up on 5th December, the Empire Point roost site will be officially opened by Redlands Shire Council. It is the first purpose built wader roost site in Queensland and will hopefully dispel some bureaucratic trepidation about wetlands management.

For the first time in Queensland a local government development control plan has specifically incorporated protection measures for a wader roost site within the East Thornlands Local Area Plan (DCP 5 of the Redlands Shire Council). This has largely been through actions by QWSG members, Local Council officers and relevance given to high tide roosts under the Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan.

There is obviously no substitute for appropriate planning to avoid the need for artificial roost sites but they do offer an alternative approach when natural habitat is destroyed. Unfortunately, there are other major unresolved issues concerning high tide roost sites in Moreton Bay at places such as Dux Creek, Fisherman Islands and Manly Boat Harbour.

Throughout the year, QWSG has engaged in many other activities, some routine, but well executed such as the production of the newsletter, "Qld Wader", the running of identification days and another course on waders which was profitable and well attended. QWSG has maintained its strong links with the Qld Ornithological Society, the Australasian Wader Studies Group, the Australian Marine Conservation Society and the Wild Bird Society of Japan.

(Continued on Page 3)

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual subscription rates:
 Single: \$12
 Student/Pensioner \$ 9
 Family \$22
 Receipt will be forwarded with next edition of *Queensland Wader*.
 Forward application to:
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about QUEENSLAND WADER

Queensland Wader is a quarterly publication of the Queensland Wader Study Group. Contributions should be addressed to David Edwards, The QWSG Editor, xxxxxx, Clayfield, Qld 4011 or E-mail to vbw@ozemail.com.au Computerised contributions should be in IBM Word, ASCII or Rich Text.

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

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Title.....Name:.....
 Address:..... Membership \$.....
 Postcode:..... Donation: \$.....
 Phone: (Home) (Work)
 Fax / e-mail:

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$.....

How did you hear about QWSG

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

SIGNATURE: DATE:.....

(Chairperson's Report continued from Page 1)

We sustain our high public profile through public displays, commercial production of signage, our merchandise, and involvement with conservation issues through letters, meetings and participation on other committees. We have, or will have, a major contribution to the listing of the Great Sandy Strait and the southern Gulf of Carpentaria as Ramsar sites, and to controversies concerned with Nudgee Beach, Trinity Inlet, and the Cooper Creek catchment.

The general running of the Group has gone well this year. We have acquired a compact disk writer for data and slide library backup, are well set up with cannon netting and field equipment in good order, and are developing an excellent library on waders, thanks to contributions from members. We have also resolved some outstanding technical issues about our status as a special interest group of the QOSI and continue to work together with a range of expertise and involvement from the Committee.

Despite our continued success as an NGO, membership has suffered a slight slump this year, perhaps because the committee has had less time to encourage people to join. Don't be complacent, help support QWSG in whatever way you can.

If I were to list the individual contributions made by people over the last 12 months I would not fall short of a big thankyou to each of the committee members and to many of the general membership as well. The activities of the Group reflect the diversity and involvement of each of the committee members. Also, new people continue to show up for outings, and often become involved with the Group. They instil a fresh outlook and help to give new direction. A warm welcome to new committee members and a special thankyou to those that are leaving.

Peter Driscoll QWSG Chairperson

QWSG AGM Conservation Report 1997-98 by Greg Miller

Another QWSG year ends. During this, the 1997-98 year, the group's activities have been a continuation of previous events plus the introduction of some new areas of interest.

The now familiar events include the monthly high tide count and wader ID days. High tide counts form the regular basis of these activities with the data being promptly computerised by two busy helpers. This count system forms a significant data bank and is only kept operational by volunteers regularly monitoring their site/s. I urge all interested in participating to contact our count coordinator, Linda Cross, as in today's lifestyle members can be mobile as some of our feathered friends. Wader ID days, at either Manly or Toorbul, have offered an introduction to waders for a range of people from various groups and these days have enticed some to join the QWSG also.

Regularly, though more widely spaced events, are also important and these include:

The big activity for the QWSG is now the **satellite tracking program**. A tradition is forming where we don't catch the birds until the last possible high tide and preferably towards the end of it. This keeps interest high and this year's was about as interesting as it can get. Although the catch and transponder fitting went well a technical problem with the transmitters reduced the worth of our efforts. We all hope for a better result next year.

The '**Introduction to Waders Course**', pioneered by Dianna O'Connor, is continuing and this year's was at least as successful as previous courses. Another survey of the Great Sandy Straits was completed with the data providing part of a basis for future management plans. Various **cannon netting** days were undertaken and we hope that our green leg flags are noted along the flyway.

The QWSG, in the form of Peter Driscoll and friends – plus an array of exotic equipment – inaugurated the survey of the **south east Gulf of Carpentaria**. This is a massive task and requires sustained stamina and dedication backed by a logistics team (Peter) and wishes of good luck from all of us.

As I retire from the position of Conservation Officer, to allow new blood to enthuse members, I look at the wader situation in general and within Australia and Queensland in particular.

Unfortunately, while wader awareness has increased, I do not consider the waders themselves enjoy enhanced security of abundance or tenure of roost and feeding sites than they did previously.

Many high tide roosts lack necessary protections. Many are situated on private property where they are at the whim of development and others on public land fare little better.

Some low tide feeding sites are under increasing pressure. Human disturbance is a major cause, just witness the chaos of unleashed dogs chasing seabirds on tidal flats. Where are state or local government enforcement in this situation?

The story is not all doom and gloom. This year witnessed the triumph of persistence by many individuals and parties with the completion of the Empire Point Artificial Wader Roost. Unfortunately no one in the Redland Council told the birds it's not yet 'opened', as a result numbers are increasing steadily and various people are breathing easily again.

Many in the QWSG hope that this will be the first and last constructed wader roost in Queensland, not because of the time and energy it took to realise, but because enlightened land managers will value the presence of waders and plan with consideration of their well being. Concepts such as '**Best Practice**' and '**Ecologically Sustainable Development**' should be attitudes not platitudes.

In conclusion I thank many of our members who have kept us informed of events. Some in other countries and states, while most have been in Queensland. In Cairns Keith and Lindsay Fisher are continuing their manoeuvring regarding the future of the Cairns' Esplanade wader population. Keith and Lindsay are typical of wader watchers anywhere, the problems they face are not remote from Brisbane, but are similar to those throughout the flyway.

I wish waders a long and happy future, with the hope that future generations can enjoy waders as we do. Enjoy the magnificence of waders and the company of those who do.

Thanking you for your support,

Greg Miller, Conservation Officer QWSG.

AGM COUNT PROGRAMME REPORT for 1998 by Linda & Phil Cross

I would like to share with you some of the things that have taken place with the count program during this last year.

A number of counters and count sites have been added to the program. This has been achieved by skilful techniques used by myself, husband Phil and Arthur and Sheryl Keates. The techniques used have varied trying, gentle persuasion, flattery, do it for the birds, and if all else failed they would be verbally bullied and coerced. I would have to be guilty of the latter on the odd occasion, but no doubt the other three will vehemently deny having been involved in anyway!

Just over 30 sites have been added and quite a few new counters.

Starting north of the state we added Barron River and Cairns Airport. These 2 sites along with Cairns Esplanade are covered on a monthly basis now by Grahame Finnigan, Keith Fisher, Dawn Magarry and others. 3 new sites are added for the Townsville Region, Dungness, Cockle Bay and Bolgers Bay. Jo Weineke kindly stepped in to coordinate a number of counters from Bird Observers Club of Australia (BOCA) members, who cover 9 sites.

Moving on down the coast Jon Wren has added Cape Edgecombe to his list of sites. The Mackay region has in the past been covered by Lindsay Bone on National Count days only due to work commitments. This area will soon have an additional counter join the program who will hopefully supply us with more regular counts. His name is Robert Farnes (recruited by Sheryl).

Coming further south John Thomson took over the Kinka Beach sites a few months ago from Molly Crawford and now supplies us with monthly counts. We thank Molly Crawford for her past contribution to the program. In the same region Russell Watson, who has in the past helped Paul O'Neill count Sandy Point has added a new site on Great Keppel Island.

John Cummings and Kelvin Nielson and their members of the Gympie Field Naturalists cover 5 sites around Tin Can Bay whenever they are able to.

Brian Eunson covers Goat Island in the Maroochy River which compliments the other 3 sites in that area counted by a number of people (The Whiteoakes, The Sheldons, Shirely Rooke, Jan Bedwell *et al.*) who have a system worked out so that there is always someone to do the count. Jill Dening added more sites in and around Pumicestone Passage.

Trevor Ford joined Frank Bigg and Lois MacRae counting Dux Creek on Bribie Island. Trevor has been monitoring the site for over a year now and has supplied the count program with numerous count sheets, sometimes as many as 11 in one month.

David Edwards covers Pine Rivers North Shore. Brad White and Linda Welch cover two sites on Peel Island. All three enrolled for the wader course. The bait went out and we hooked all three onto the count program.

Other new counters are Peter & Lynette Reilly covering Stradbroke Island, and Rod Edwards covering the new man-made roost at Empire Point.

Some of our other counters have changed or added additional counts to the program. Owen & Deb McNamara doing 2 sites at Point Halloran. Meryl Dobe added Perulpa Bay & Blakesly's. John Harris added a site at Eagleby and Nicci Thompson added Keongs Dam at Oakey.

Tugun Sewage Works is not a new site but has not been counted for a few years. This site is now being covered by Ian Watson along with his others.

I would like to thank all counters, and stand-by counters for their contributions to the count program during this last year. I also thank you for your patience at my slow response to your letters and enquires. I must express my deep appreciation and thanks to Joyce Harding for her dedication in recording all the information from your countsheets which totalled over 1423 sheets this year alone.

Phil and I would like to take this opportunity to send our best wishes to you all and hope you have a happy and healthy 1999.

Presented by Linda & Phil Cross, QWSG Count Coordinators

SUMMARY OF COUNT DATA

Area	No. Count Sheets	Total Migatory Waders	Resident Waders	Other Species	Unidentified	All Birds
Moreton Bay	765	265223	28219	50050	915	344407
Tweed Estuary	387	26050	5338	53692	1	85081
Other	271	91798	6112	44420	95	142425
Totals	1423	383071	39669	148162	1001	571913

Of the total of over half a million counts, there is an overall average of about 400 birds per count sheet and 270 migratory waders per count sheet.

Moreton Bay covers sites from Caloundra to north of the Gold Coast.

Tweed Estuary are sites covered by Eddie Kleibers.

Others covers the gold Coast and all the areas north of Caloundra

The QWSG Financial Statements for 1998 follow on the next page

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have joined since the last magazine was printed:

Ben Cook, Lyal Grundy, Brian Tynan

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.

QWSG (QOS Inc) Financial Statement for 1998 AGM by Sheryl Keates

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDING OCTOBER 31, 1998

INCOME	Totals for Year Nov 1, 1996 to Oct 31, 1997	Totals for Year Nov 1, 1997 to Oct 31, 1998	EXPENDITURE	Totals for Year Nov 1, 1996 to Oct 31, 1997	Totals for Year Nov 1, 1997 to Oct 31, 1998
Bank charges refund	\$ 72.05		Bank charges	\$ 126.25	\$ 91.10
Coastcare-Dynah Island	\$ 8,000.00		Cannon Netting - capital	\$ 29.20	\$ 1,544.16
Empire Pt	\$ 21,690.00		Cannon Netting - operating	\$ 211.70	\$ 234.55
Coastnet	\$ 1,897.00		Capital expenditure	\$ 4,489.80	\$ 2,273.54
Courses	\$ 2,230.00	\$ 2,030.00	Coastcare expenses		
Donations	\$ 2,165.04	\$ 980.55	Dynah Island	\$ 8,024.55	
Eastern Curlew Satellite Project	\$ 29,390.95	\$ 18,790.00	Empire Point	\$ 2,111.00	\$ 20,654.18
Fundraising Income			Coastnet expenses	\$ 1,529.00	\$ 368.00
Books/reports	\$ 1,167.00	\$ 1,305.00	Conferences	\$ 439.00	
Mugs	\$ 304.00	\$ 32.00	Courses expenses	\$ 140.00	\$ 230.25
Shirts	\$ 470.00	\$ 510.00	Eastern Curlew Satellite Project	\$ 16,486.01	
Miscellaneous		\$ 21.70	Fundraising expenses		
Gaming Grant -display boards		\$ 3,613.00	Books, reports	\$ 434.50	\$ 1,196.70
Gov't contract	\$ 400.00	\$ 5,000.00	Displays	\$ 80.00	
Gulf Survey Project		\$ 69,660.00	Mugs	\$ 40.00	
Hire of gear		\$ 100.00	Shirt costs	\$ 374.50	\$ 316.90
Investment - interest	\$ 1,302.15	\$ 1,566.92	Gaming grant expenses		\$ 3,613.00
Membership			Gov't contract expenses	\$ 50.00	\$ 3,907.00
Discount	\$ 225.00	\$ 237.00	Gulf survey expenses		\$ 44,125.94
Family	\$ 878.00	\$ 604.00	Insurance/rego	\$ 436.73	\$ 153.00
Single	\$ 2,054.00	\$ 1,184.00	Membership expenses	\$ 30.00	\$ 83.10
Newsletter income-advertising		\$ 20.00	Miscellaneous expenses		\$ 102.45
Sale of gear	\$ 470.00	\$ 1,050.00	Newsletter expenses	\$ 879.42	\$ 609.33
State Govt grant - wader guide	\$ 4,100.00		Repairs/Maintenance		\$ 38.65
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 76,815.19	\$ 106,704.17	Running costs	\$ 245.02	\$ 89.47
			Sale of gear expenses		\$ 35.00
			Stationery/postage/phone calls	\$ 718.45	
			TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$ 36,875.13	\$ 92,765.35

RECONCILIATION:

Cash Book		
Bal start of financial year	\$ 2,987.66	\$ 42,927.72
add income for year	\$ 76,815.19	\$ 106,704.17
subtotal	\$ 79,802.85	\$ 149,631.89
add uncredited deposit		
subtotal	\$ 79,802.85	\$ 149,631.89
less expenditure for year	\$ 36,875.13	\$ 92,765.35
TOTAL FUNDS IN HAND	\$ 42,927.72	\$ 56,866.54

Statement at		
	Oct 31, 1997	Oct 31, 1998
Balance shown	\$ 45,936.82	\$ 57,426.02
less outstanding cheques	\$ 3,009.10	\$ 559.48
plus uncredited deposit		
TOTAL	\$ 42,927.72	\$ 56,866.54

OUTSTANDING CHEQUES

	Total	\$	559.48
SUMMARY OF COMMITTED FUNDS			
	31/10/97		31/10/98
Coastcare - Empire Pt (Int \$580.57)	\$ 20,159.57		
Coastnet	\$ 368.00		
E. Curlew Satellite Project	\$ 12,904.94	\$	19,320.66
Gulf Survey			\$ 25,534.06
Wader Guide (DEH grant)	\$ 4,100.00	\$	4,100.00
Total Committed Funds	\$ 37,532.51	\$	48,954.72
Balance to date	\$ 42,927.72	\$	56,866.54
Less Committed Funds	\$ 37,532.51	\$	48,954.72
Total Uncommitted Funds	\$ 5,395.21	\$	7,911.82

Presented by QWSG Treasurer, Sheryl Keates

EMPIRE POINT ROOST SITE 1998

By Joyce Harding

On Saturday 5th December Empire Point Roost Site was officially opened by Redland Shire Mayor, Eddie Santagiuliana.

The idea of a roost site at Empire Point began because of despair. Throughout Moreton Bay high tide roost sites were being lost to the demands of increasing numbers of people. In particular the loss of Raby Bay to canal development was of great concern. Raby Bay had long been recognised as a premier site for waders in Moreton Bay both for roosting and feeding (Amiet, 1957). QOSI members were among the many who submitted protests to the government of the day and worked valiantly to stop the development, but to no avail. As the development proceeded, QWSG made submissions to the developers and to Redland Shire Council to reserve part of the final stage as parkland incorporating a roost site (Giles, 1994). Redland Shire Council was sympathetic but time ran out as development continued. In the later stages of development wader counts were high as birds had less roosting space and were bunched together in the remaining space, particularly in bad weather.

The Report, "Raby Bay and Manly Harbour Wader Roost Survey" prepared by Wayne Lawler in 1995 increased awareness of the need for action to replace Raby Bay roost. "A Feasibility Study into the Construction of Migratory Wader High Tide Roosts in Moreton Bay, Qld, Using Raby Bay as a Case Study" (Lawler, 1995) was prepared on behalf of QWSG for the Queensland Department of Lands. Proposals for building an artificial roost at Oyster Point and Empire Point were discussed. A grant obtained from "Coast Care" and with the engineering expertise of Redland Shire Council staff and the design planning on behalf of the waders by Peter Driscoll were finally brought together to produce a plan.

General consensus initially settled on Oyster Point as the preferred site for the roost. Difficulties arose as local residents perceived it as detracting from the amenity because of more people traffic and the creation of a visual eyesore. Many waders are now roosting near the mangroves at Oyster Point so from the bird's point of view this site is satisfactory on most tides. Historically Empire Point was a sub-site and not used by a great number of waders. The advantages of selecting it were it's pre-use as a CRA dredge terminal, a less than pristine natural area, and it is hidden among mangroves. The new Empire Point roost is now being used as a staging site but given it's protection from disturbance, it will become more recognised by the birds and greater use will occur at high tides in the near future.

With the decision to make the wader roost site at Empire Point, a plan was drawn up for Council and State Government approval. Moreton Bay and its shores are under the jurisdiction of a great number of Authorities (more every year it seemed) from whom permits had to be obtained. Marine Parks, Fisheries and the Port Authority were the main ones with questions about Acid Sulphate Soils, mangroves and water flow patterns and many more. A number of times, all seemed well for the 'go-ahead' until some other regulation presented itself. The constant support of Adrian Caneris, Wildlife Officer of Redland Shire Council helped the QWSG through seemingly oceans of paper and to keep in focus the desired end. Finally, with all permits stamped & signed, the plan could be turned into action, and construction begin. In less than two weeks, the machines created an island, surrounded by a tidal moat, with shaped contours and a 85 metre wide open pad, for the inspection of passing waders. As this purpose built artificial roost is a first for Queensland, knowledge will be gained of the needs of waders at roost sites.

In this short account of the making of Empire Point Wader Roost it is impossible to fully convey the many hours of meetings, discussions, letter writing and field trips undertaken by members of the Queensland Wader Study Group executive during the last few years in addition to the management of finances and information. Also recognised is the tolerance of "Coast Care" for allowing extended time for the spending of the grant. The support of Redland Shire Council is much appreciated. Most of all, thanks to Peter Driscoll who has led the Group into an unknown and new area with success. Without his constant vision and effort this enterprise would not have been possible.

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- Amiet, L. 1957. A Wader Survey of Some Queensland Coastal Localities. Emu. Vol 57.
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- Lawler, W. 1995. Raby Bay and Manly Harbour Wader Roost Survey. QWSG
- Lawler, W. 1995. Wader Roost Construction In Moreton Bay. Qld. Dept of Lands

ON THE WAY OUT—BEACH STONE—CURLEWS?

By Tim Thornton from Burrum River

In a brief status report (QW No. 25) Louise Herdsman drew attention to the plight of the Beach Stone-curlew. She says that they are rare (possibly endangered)—I say, have no doubt, they are on the way out!

During '98 (from April to November) we sailed from the Burrum River to Lizard Island (and return) visiting many islands, anchorages on the mainland and places of interest. I saw only 5 pairs of Beach Stone-curlews. These were at Middle Percy Island, Zoe Bay on Hinchinbrook Island, Horseshoe Bay on Magnetic Island, The Esplanade in Cairns, and at Lizard Island. Two of these pairs were accompanied by a juvenile (Zoe Bay and The Esplanade.) We were cruising, not surveying, but nevertheless, 12 birds over 1000 nautical miles is disastrous. Even worse, I heard of a Beach Stone-curlew being shot at Horseshoe Bay. Hearsay, I admit, but pretty sad.

For several years I've watched a pair at Wathumba Lagoon on the western side of Fraser Island. To my knowledge, this pair have never fledged a chick. 4WD tracks criss-cross the area where they reside and nest. Why 4WD vehicles are allowed on the western side of Fraser Island is beyond my comprehension. Surely some areas should be free of these 4WD vehicles and those who proceed to fulfil the promise of the advertisement that "this vehicle will go anywhere". A single egg in the sand, "on or above the king-tide line", may be well camouflaged but offers little resistance to a 4WD vehicle and its occupant(s).

Beach Stone-curlews are placid, relatively large, sedentary and conspicuous. This makes them "sitting ducks" for recreational hunters and shooters. Recently introduced gun laws have probably led to an increase in recreational hunting as gun dealers sold thousands of military style rifles in northern Australia just prior to the new gun laws coming into effect. Hopefully the owners will run out of ammunition and/or the guns will rust before they manage to shoot the last Beach Stone-curlew.

International treaties, RAMSAR agreements, further studies and status reports will do little for our Beach Stone-curlews. Large known areas of habitat, such as the western side of Fraser Island, must be set aside and protected immediately if these birds are to survive. This elegant bird resembles classical creatures of ancient Egypt. It has probably been around for millions of years. To this day, it still graces some of our shores, but it is on the way out—there can be no doubt.

ACID SULPHATE SOILS by Joyce Harding

On Saturday 24/10/98 I attended a forum arranged by the Moreton Bay Environmental Alliance and presented by two officers of the Department of Natural Resources. The officers were members of the Queensland Acid Sulphate Soils Investigation Team (QASSIT) and they gave a very informative talk on a current but complicated subject.

Acid Sulphate Soils occur commonly along the east coast of Australia in coastal lowlands and estuarine floodplains at elevations of less than 5 metres above sea level. Land uses known to cause Acid Sulphate Soils disturbance include canal estates, marinas, dredging, aquaculture, transport infrastructure, sand/gravel extraction, housing estates, sugarcane and golf courses. All of these uses can, and often do infringe on habitat used by waders.

Funding assistance from the Natural Heritage Trust, the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations and the Gold Coast City Council will enable QASSIT to map these soils in south east Queensland. QASSIT also provides a laboratory soil testing service on Acid Sulphate Soils, technical advice on major developments and advice on suitable environmental codes of practice for industry. Knowledge of how these soils occur and where they should not be disturbed is an important factor in the management of coastal habitat.

Improved technology in controlling Acid Sulphate Soils, however, could eventually encourage demand for coastal development. A lessened need to restrict development in areas of Acid Sulphate Soils will increase the need for planning at the local level to control development for the benefit of the wildlife and in particular the welfare of waders.

Though in the short term Acid Sulphate Soils do not appear to have an immediate affect on waders, in the long term, loss of habitat, reduced food resources, changes in the food chain and reduced availability of nutrients will inevitably cause stress to the birds.

For further information on Acid Sulphate Soils contact the QASSIT Information Officer, Kylie Hey

Phone (07) xxxx xxxx

E-mail: HeyK@dnr.qld.gov.au

Website: <http://www.dnr.qld.gov.au/land/Iris/acidss/ass-home/html>

A Happy Reunion

On October 8, a rescue operation was mounted by Port of Brisbane Corporation staff on the Fisherman Islands reclamation site and was successfully “wrapped up”, resulting in a happy reunion.

Olwyn Crimp (Manager Environment), Tony Dunk (Superintendent Maintenance) and Sirtaj Mahommed (Reclamation), together save the life of a red-capped plover chick.

Firstly, Mahommed managed *not* to run over the chick in his excavator while on the reclamation site. Secondly, Tony dashed to the rescue and placed the chick in a hard hat, delivering the tiny ball of fluff to our resident bird expert, Olwyn, at Port Office. Olwyn, realising the chick’s only chance of survival was with its parents, supervised the reunion.



Placing the chick (inside the hard hat) back on the bund wall on the reclamation site, Olwyn and Mahommed moved back about 30 metres to allow the chick to call to its parents. In the meantime, Olwyn used the telescope to search for the parents and, upon locating them, extracted the chick from the hard hat, placing it within calling range of the parents. Almost immediately one of the parents took flight, circled and landed beside the distressed chick, promptly sitting on it for about 10 minutes to calm it down before walking it back to family and friends.

Reclamation staff are now on the look out for breeding red-capped plovers and make every endeavour to ensure they and all the other roosting shorebirds are undisturbed by the reclamation activities.

Rosie Fields, Port of Brisbane Corporation

If you have any wader anecdotes that might interest the QWSG members, please pass them on to me.

COUNT PROGRAMME

Linda Cross

Well another year has flown past and you can certainly see that you have all been busy sending me your counts and letters. So much so that the paperwork continues to pile on my desk, dining room table and has now spread to the sofa.

I'm not complaining about the work, it's just that at this time of year, (Christmas) there are those usual things to attend to, like shopping and writing cards, so things get a little bit behind.

There have been quite a few sightings of Beach Stone-curlew from a number of sites, Barron River, South Stradbroke Island, Great Keppel Island (breeding), Tin Can Bay, Bakers Creek, Dux Creek.

Other records of breeding sedentary waders are, Red-capped Plover Chicks at Cairns Airport (2), Luggage Point (1), Manly Boat Harbour (2). Brad White and Linda Welch watched 2 Pied Oystercatcher eggs hatch on 23 & 24-10-98 at Peel Island, and report in their count of 21-11-98 that both chicks are growing well. Nicci Thompson recorded 3 Black-winged Stilts nesting at Keongs Dam, Oakey.

We have worked out the wader count dates for all of 1999 and listed them in this newsletter. Remember to mark them off on your new calendar at the beginning of the year. We have done our best to keep them away from long week-ends but sometimes it is difficult as we are governed by the tides.

Over 30 new sites were added to the count program this year ranging from Cairns to the Gold Coast. A summary of the count data appears below. I would like to thank all counters and standby counters for their contributions to the count program during this last year. I also thank you all for your patience at my slow response to replying to your letters and queries.

I must express my deep appreciation and thanks to Joyce Harding for her dedication in recording all the information from your count sheets, which totalled over 1423 this year alone, and thank her for picking up the occasional leg flag I missed.

Phil has stepped down from the joint count coordinator role due to work commitments. He is still on committee and will assist me whenever he can.

We would like to take this opportunity to send our best wishes to you all and hope you have a merry Christmas and happy and healthy 1999.

Linda Cross

BIRD AUSTRALIA - ATLAS OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS

As most of you would be aware the new Atlas of Australian Birds will describe the distribution and abundance of all bird species, breeding and non-breeding populations, in Australia.

We encourage all our counters to get involved in this important bird project. You will need to record all bird species, not just waders. Count your waders and waterbirds as usual and note the other species seen, (you don't need the numbers for them). PLEASE DO NOT RECORD THEM ON OUR COUNT SHEET. A little extra time will be required to fill in the Atlas Data Sheet after you have completed your wader count sheet.

There are a number of Atlas Regional Organisers in Queensland who will be able to assist you. Should you require particular information regarding your site please feel free to contact Linda Cross (07) xxxx xxxx.

You will need to register with Birds Australia. You can contact Birds Australia at:-

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Hawthorn East. Vic. 3123

Tel: xxxx xxxx Fax: 03-xxxx xxxx Email: raou@raou.com.au

WADER WATCH *Linda Cross, Peter Driscoll, Joyce Harding*

Leg Flag Banding Legend (colour = where banded)

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

Green leg flag sightings - Queensland

- 7 Eastern Curlew - Wader ID, Arthur Keates, Martin Waugh at Manly Boat Harbour and Amity Point, between 4-10-98 and 21-11-98.
- 40 Bar-tailed Godwit - David Edwards, Wader ID, Arthur Keates, Sandra Harding, David Milton, Linda Cross, Jim & Ivell Whyte, Alex Bisgrove and Rob Stogdale at Pine Rivers North Shore, Manly Boat Harbour, Lytton, St. Helena Island South East, Toorbul North, Cabbage Tree Creek, Clontarf, Woody Point, and Nudgee Beach, between 12-9-98 and 29-11-98.
- 4 Black-tailed Godwit - Wader ID and Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour 4-10-98 and Lytton 10-10-98.
- 10 Great Knot - Arthur Keates, Jim and Ivell Whyte and David Edwards at Manly Boat Harbour, Cabbage Tree Creek and Nudgee Beach, between 25-10-98 and 29-11-98.
- 7 Grey-tailed Tattler - Wader ID and Arthur Keates, all at Manly Boat Harbour, between 4-10-98 and 21-11-98.
- 5 Ruddy Turnstone - Sandra Harding, David Milton, Arthur Keates, Brad White and Linda Welch at St. Helena Island Homestead, Manly Boat Harbour and Peel Island Jetty, between 10-10-98 and 21-11-98.
- 5 Greater Sand Plover - Wader ID, David Edwards, and Arthur Keates, all at Manly Boat Harbour, between 4-10-98 and 21-11-98.
- 10 Lesser Sand Plover - David Edwards, Arthur Keates and Trevor Ford at Manly Boat Harbour and Dux Creek, between 8-10-98 and 2-12-98.

Other leg flag sightings and Banded Birds

- Bar-tailed Godwit - 5 with orange flag seen by David Edwards and Arthur Keates, all at Manly Boat Harbour on 8,10,25-10-98 and 7&21-11-98.
- Great Knot - 1 with orange flag seen by Jim & Ivell Whyte at Cabbage Tree Creek on 21-11-98.
- Red Knot - 1 with orange flag seen by David Edwards at Manly Boat Harbour on 13-9-98.
- Greater Sand Plover - 1 with orange flag seen by David Edwards at Manly Boat Harbour on 8-10-98.
- Lesser Sand Plover - 1 with orange flag seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour on 21-11-98, 1 with orange flag seen by Andy Eacott & Chris Wiley at Wynnum on 29-11-98.
- Sanderling - 3 with orange flag seen by Col Collins at Noble's Rocks, East of Nelson, Victoria on 28-10-98.
- Grey-tailed Tattler - 1 with blue flag seen during Wader ID at Manly Boat Harbour on 4-10-98, 1 with metal band and 1 with light blue band on left leg and metal band on right leg seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour on 17-10-98, 1 with blue flag seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour on 7-11-98, 1 with blue flag seen by Brad White & Linda Welch at Peel Island Jetty on 21-11-09 and 1 with blue flag seen on by Linda Cross at South Esplanade Deception Bay on 28 & 29-11-98.
- Ruddy Turnstone - 1 with metal band seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour on 17-10-98.
- Pied Oystercatcher - 1 with metal band seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour on 25-10-98 and 3 with metal band seen by Michele Burford and Peter Rothlisberg at St. Helena Island Pier on 21-11-98.
- Caspian Tern - 1 with metal band seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour on 17-10-98.
- Crested Tern - 1 with orange band seen by Edward Kleiber at Hastings Point (South of Tweed Heads) on 14-11-98.

Interesting Sightings

- 5 Sooty Oystercatcher - Trevor Ford at Dux Creek on 14.9.98.
- 2 Broad-billed Sandpiper - Trevor Ford & Frank Bigg at Dux Creek on 10.10.98.
- 65 Greenshank - Jill Denning at Donnybrook on 10.10.98.
- 83 Greenshank - David Edwards at Pine River Brays Lagoon on 10.10-98.
- 1 Asian Dowitcher - Tom Tarrant at Toorbul on 21.10.98. Probably same bird, seen by other members at Toorbul on 22.23.24 & 27.10.98.

- 2 Asian Dowitcher - Ivan & Joyce Fien & Jean Corney at South Esplanade Deception Bay on 7.11.98.
- 100+ Pacific Golden Plover - David Edwards at Nudgee Beach 28 & 29.11.98.

COUNT SITES

*The following article is the one of a series of descriptions of each of the sites regularly counted as part of the Count Program. **All Counters are encouraged** to share the details of their sites with other members, providing details of history of the survey, general description of the site, site access, any problems encountered regularly, completeness of the count, changes noted over time and any other relevant information.*

It would be great to get this section going again so that the other counters to hear about your site, so please put pen to paper, finger to the keyboard and send me your article. I should be able to use any photos you might have. If you have access to a computer a disc or e-mail would be appreciated.

BBO HOSTS BIGGEST AND BEST NORTH WEST WADER AND TERN EXPEDITION

The following was listed by Jan Sparrow the co - warden at the Broome Bird Observatory for onward transmission.

During August, September and October the Broome Bird Observatory was a hive of activity as researchers from around the globe came to participate in the AWSG's 16th Wader and Tern Banding Expedition.

In all, 127 people from 17 nations volunteered their services. Many came from the East-Asian Australasian Flyway. Whilst here, they gained valuable experience in cannon netting, banding, processing and counting shorebirds. The hope is that they will put this into practice, on the beaches and mud flats of their home countries. In turn, this will improve Flyway knowledge and conservation.

In total 15,016 shorebirds of 37 species were banded and yellow leg flagged. They were caught on beaches, salt works, sewage ponds and even on Broome golf course. In addition to this, 786 terns were caught, of 7 species.

Retraps were numerous, with a Whiskered Tern taking the prize for age, 16 years since banding. Notable controls were: Terek Sandpiper - Hong Kong, Curlew Sandpiper - Hong Kong, 2 Red Knot - Hong Kong (one of which had been controlled at Broome before, on the 1994 expedition), Curlew Sandpiper - Taiwan, Terek Sandpiper - South Korea. There were 21 sightings of orange leg flags (8 Sanderling, 7 Red-necked Stint, 4 Curlew Sandpipers, 1 Great Knot and 1 Ruddy Turnstone).

An aerial count of Roebuck Bay on the 11th of October turned up 94,825 shorebirds. The first ever complete count of 80 Mile Beach (a bemusing name as it is 265 kilometres long) on the 17th and 18th of October, showed there were 465,890 birds using this amazing area. Some mind boggling figures include: Great Knot 158,080, Bar-tailed Godwit 110,290, Greater Sand Plover 63,482, Oriental Plover 57,619. The remainder consisted of another 28 species.

Besides the banding and counting two additional complimentary research projects were conducted. Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers aged as 3+ were dyed yellow on the underparts and underwing. Some of these birds have already been seen in SE Australia. Keep your eyes peeled in the southwest wetlands also, and let us know if you see any yellow- dyed birds. Northwest to southwest Australia is not considered a traditional migration route but you never know.

Six radio trackers were deployed on 4 Great Knot and on 2 Bar-tailed Godwits. This confirmed anecdotal evidence on the mobility of birds of the Roebuck Bay area, particularly in relation to night time high tide roosts. Birds have been tracked on the northern beaches, at Bush Point, behind the Crab Creek Mangroves and on Cable Beach. The shorebirds were only on Cable Beach on night time roosts. Seeing 20,000 birds on a high tide under a full moon is truly wonderful.

The BBO would like to thank all participants and in particular the legendary Clive Minton, for their hard work and enthusiasm and for keeping the BBO's name synonymous with top research.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

Manly - Wader Identification 4 October 1998

About 25 people, mostly QOSI or QWSG members, turned up for a wader identification day at Manly Boat Harbour. We started at 7:15 am under a clear blue sky with a gentle westerly breeze. By the time we finished at 10:15 am the temperature had climbed to the high 20s.

As expected, both the species and number of waders recorded was higher than the wader ID day here on 9 August. A total of about 1644 birds was recorded. Many of the birds seen, particularly Pacific Golden Plover, Grey-tailed Tattler and Red Knot had traces of breeding plumage. Four species (Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit and Grey-tailed Tattler) were sighted with our own green leg flags while a Grey-tailed Tattler with traces of breeding plumage wearing a blue (Japan) leg flag provided the highlight for many observers as was the case on the same day a year ago.

The 28 species recorded were-

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

Sheryl & Arthur Keates

Cannon Netting Sun 24th October at Dynah Island

Early start at 5:30 am with Tina Larsen, Bill Manners, Phil Battley, Yuri Zharikov, David Edwards and Peter Driscoll. This site means that the whole of the gear has to be taken across the mud flats to the sandy beach area.

As the tide came in over 1000 birds were on the site but then a canoeist came up from behind without our noticing and scared these birds away, but the birds may have been ready to go anyway. The Whimbrel and Curlews hung around for a while then moved off. Then Phil and Yuri went to mouth of Schulz Canal in the dingy and put up the whole flock with the intent that they would return to the beach. Some of these birds did come back but wouldn't settle despite numerous fly pasts. Then on the falling tide a flock of about 300 mixed birds came to the netting site.

About 80 birds were caught with the fine mesh net with no injuries despite firing into water. The wind from the north slowed up the net. The birds were removed from the net and placed in the holding cages. The birds were processed, being banded measured and flagged with our green leg flags. The birds were closely scrutinised by all. It is always interesting to see the birds at close quarters. Peter will have to look at Phil's samples of Knots to get a perspective on distinguishing features of 2nd year birds.

The following 78 birds were caught:

3 Ruddy Turnstone
 1 Whimbrel
 33 Bar-tailed Godwit (including 1 "control" and 1 "recapture")
 5 Curlew Sandpiper
 1 Red-necked Stint
 1 Red Knot
 34 Great Knot (including 5 "recaptures")

The "control" Bar-tailed Godwit was a bird banded in Victoria (with an orange flag) but I haven't got the banding details from the Banding Scheme yet.

The recaptured Bar-tailed Godwit was banded by us at the same place 28th Dec 1995 (current age 4+).

Details of the 5 Great Knot recaptures are as follows (known ages in brackets):
 Fisherman Islands 13th Oct 1991 (8+)
 Dynah Island 18th July 1992 (9+)
 Fisherman Islands 20th March 1993 (7+) (also caught 3rd May 1993 at Dynah Is)
 Fisherman Islands 20th March 1993 (7+)
 Dynah Island 3rd May 1993 (7+)

Cannon Netting Sun 22th November at Dynah Island

Didn't happen !!

Cannon Netting Sun 6th December at Fisherman's Island

Once again an early start in order to set up the nets with Peter Driscoll, Arthur Keates, David Connolly, David Edwards, Tom Scotney and a visitor from China.

Two of the nets were set out on one of the bund walls where Grey-tailed Tattler had been seen roosting. Once these were readily to go another net was set up in one of the drier bunds where Pacific Golden Plover and Sand Plover had been observed roosting.

The group was joined by Olwyn Crimp and several people from the Port of Brisbane Authority who had come to see what was involved in cannon netting.

We had hoped to net the Grey-tailed Tattlers first. As usual the waders did not exactly help by roosting in front of the nets!! After much encouragement to move towards the nets they took off in the wrong direction!! So it was off to the other site, and once again the birds were in the wrong place, so three of the group were sent out onto the bund to 'twinkle' the birds towards the nets. After almost moving them to the right area the took off. This was repeated a couple of times with the added sight of one of our number disappearing knee deep in the mud of one of the bunds!

It was now just passed high tide and most of the people from the Port Authority had to leave. As if by magic some of the Grey-tailed Tattlers were roosting in the catch area. Whoosh!! We had some birds in the net, however the net went into the water so there was an organised scramble to remove the birds as quickly as possible, some birds escaped from the sides. These birds were placed in the holding cages, and feeling lucky Peter was off to the other net.

Again the birds were around the area but not in the target area. Two members moved out on to the mud and moved more into the netting site and again the cannons were fired. This time we had some Pacific Golden Plover.

These birds were taken to the holding cages where the birds were measured, banded and flagged, and then quickly released. Although two nets were fired there were not many waders caught:

- 9 Pacific Golden Plover
- 6 Grey-tailed Tattlers
- 1 Little Tern.

Although it was a long day, it was most enjoyable.

NEWS FROM THE QWSG COMMITTEE

Committee members please note that the next committee meeting will take place on Tuesday 19th January 1999 at xxxxxxxxxxxx St, Yerongpilly.

What is a RAMSAR Listing?

From the Australian Wetland Alliance November 1998 Newsletter

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance commonly referred to as the Ramsar Convention, was signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. Adoption of this treaty was intended to provide a framework for international cooperation for the conservation of wetlands. Arguably it represents the most direct vehicle for delivery of wetlands conservation in Australia.

As one of the first signatories to the Ramsar Convention the Commonwealth Government undertook, on behalf of all Australian governments, to conserve Australia's wetlands. In order to achieve this a number of obligations were agreed to including:

- listing wetland sites on the "List of Wetlands of International Importance",
- managing all Australian wetlands in accordance with 'wise use' principles,
- creating and managing wetland nature reserves,
- promoting training of wetland managers,
- cooperating with other Contracting Parties for the management of shared wetland and shared wetland species.

In short, Ramsar listing is the designation of a site to the List of Wetlands of International Importance. In order to identify "important" wetlands, criteria (see below) were adopted at the 4th meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention in 1990. To be listed wetlands must meet at least one of these criteria; all of which relate to wetland values based on their ecological, botanical, zoological, limnological, or hydrological characteristics.

How can Ramsar listing advance the conservation of wetlands?

There are a number of reasons why Ramsar listing can be considered a tool for better conserving wetlands. Principally, it has the potential to provide priority access to financial and technical support for wetland conservation across a variety of existing land tenures. Listing can also offer a means to showcase examples of best practice management and wise use of wetlands.

What are the implications of Ramsar listing a wetland?

Management – To be listed it is preferable that the site is currently managed in accordance with the Convention's wise-use guidelines. Management may be occurring in the absence of a formal management plan and while it is preferable that a plan is put in place, the persistence of the wetland and maintenance of its ecological integrity can be considered a testimony to the responsible and conservation oriented management practices of the wetland's owner/manager. Indeed, Ramsar listing is a simple, yet high profile way of demonstrating this sense of responsibility and stewardship to the wider community. It also offers a way of securing support for private management efforts from state and Commonwealth governments.

Ownership – Ramsar listing does not change ownership of land in any way. It is however best considered permanent. Listing can be altered but this is not a simple process.

Reputation - Ramsar listing does not mean that the government can regulate and change private land use. This does not, however, make participating landholders exempt from provisions of any new laws.

Suggested Steps Towards Nomination of a Ramsar Site.

Step 1 Determine if the wetland is of "International Importance"

Is your wetland listed in the "Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia"? To be suitable for Ramsar listing a wetland must meet at least one of the following qualifying criteria.

1.1 Criteria for representative or unique wetlands.

A wetland is considered internationally important if:

- a) it is a particularly good representative example of a natural or near-natural, wetland, characteristic of the appropriate biogeographical region; or
- b) it is a particularly good representative example of a natural or near-natural, wetland common to more than one biogeographical region; or
- c) it is a particularly good representative example of a natural or near-natural, wetland which plays a substantial hydrological, biological or ecological role in the natural functioning of a major river basin or coastal system, especially where it is located in a transborder position; or
- d) it is an example of a specific type of wetland, rare or unusual in the appropriate biogeographical region.

1.2 Criteria based on plants and animals

A wetland should be considered internationally important if:

- a) it supports an appreciable assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or subspecies of plant or animal, or an appreciable number of individuals of any one or more of these species; or
- b) it is of special value for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of a region because of the quality and peculiarities of its flora and fauna; or
- c) it is of special value as the habitat of plants or animals at a crucial stage of their biological cycle; or
- d) it is of special value for one or more endemic plant or animal species or communities.

1.3 Specific criteria based on water birds

A wetland should be considered internationally important if;

- a) it regularly supports 20,00 waterbirds; or
- b) it regularly supports substantial numbers of individuals from particular groups of waterbird, indicative of wetland values, productivity or diversity; or
- c) where data on populations are available, it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbirds.

When trying to establish the suitability of a wetland for Ramsar Listing reference should be made to the "Guidelines for Application of the Criteria"; formulated by the Contracting Parties to the Convention and available from Environment Australia – Biodiversity Group (Wetlands, Waterways and Waterbirds Unit). Technical assistance in assessing whether a wetland meets criteria pertaining specifically to waterbirds can be sought from Birds Australia (Head Office, ph 03 9882 2622

Step 2 Identify who the stakeholders are with respect to the wetland; both in the immediate vicinity and with the wetland's catchment (where practical).

Stakeholders include those in which tenure is vested, those who utilise the wetland; directly, or indirectly, and those activities impact in some way on the wetland. To be constructive the concept of Ramsar listing should be supported by as many stakeholders as is practical. Indeed, the best prospect of achieving listing of a new site is for non-government organisations (NGOs) to assist landowners to prepare the necessary documentation and to actively seek State and Commonwealth support together.

Step 3 Identify how the wetland is currently managed.

Is a management plan in place or being prepared? Do management issues represent a direct threat to maintenance of the wetland's ecological integrity?

Step 4 Convince the State/Territory Conservation agency to nominate the wetland for listing.

This is best approached at two levels;

1. Local/Regional Office level
2. State/ Head Office

Agencies will need to be convinced that international recognition would be beneficial to the wetland and would assist in attracting resources for management. Agency staff will also need to be assured that Ramsar Listing of the wetland has full stakeholder support. Similarly, (steps 2 7 3 above) they will need to be assured that management of the site is not problematic: particularly from an administrative point of view

Support must also be sought from the State/Territory Minister for the Environment. Despite all previous NGO efforts, the Commonwealth Government has a policy of not listing sites without support of the relevant State/Territory. It would also be advantageous if local State Members of Parliament and local governments were supportive of the site's nomination to the Ramsar List

Step 5 Preparing and submitting the nomination.

Once the preceding stages have been completed NGOs can further facilitate the nomination of a wetland by ensuring State agency staff have access to any inventory information you aware of. This will aid in fulfilling the minimum data requirements for the preparation of a nomination (ie a description and map). The nomination is prepared by State agency staff and then submitted to Environment Australia – Biodiversity Group, Wetlands, Waterways and Waterbirds Unit (as the national governmental authority responsible for Ramsar matters). The nomination is then presented by the Government of Australia to the Ramsar Convention Bureau either directly or via the Australian Embassy in Switzerland.

Brisbane City Council and Narashino forge wetland agreement

Taken from the Brisbane City Council's publication 'The Regenerator', a newsletter about community care for Bushlands, Wetlands and Waterways.

Protecting the feeding grounds and roosting sites of migratory shorebirds is the key to a new environmental agreement forged between Brisbane City Council and the City of Narashino in Japan.

The agreement, which was signed in February 1998, links the Boondall Wetlands in Brisbane and the Yatsu Tidelands in Narashino, Tokyo Bay – both of which are important protected habitat areas along the East Asian-Australian Flyway.

Some shorebirds migrate up to 25,000 kilometres annually along this East Asian-Australian Flyway, breeding in eastern Russia, northern China and Alaska, and migrating to South-East Asia and Australasia

Both wetland areas are listed in the Ramsar Convention. Yatsu Tidelands, although it is only 40 hectares in actual size, is an important stopover for migrating shorebirds, allowing them to rest and refuel on their long journey.

Boondall Wetlands, which forms a significant component of the Moreton Bay Ramsar-listed site, is an important summer feeding ground for the birds, along with several other sites along the Australian coast.

BBC Natural Areas Officer, Peter Shilton, said BCC had started developing an action plan in consultation with the Narashino City Council.

'The plan will include the exchange of scientific information between the two cities, cooperation between academic institutions, reciprocal promotion of each other's wetlands, and developing a home stay arrangement to enable community group members from each country to visit each other's wetlands,' Peter said.

'The contents of the draft plan will be discussed with community group members, both in Brisbane and Narashino.

The Yatsu Tidelands are located at Narashino, in the Chiba prefecture in Tokyo Bay. It is a very rich area which attracts a wide variety of birds. It is the only wetland area in Japan that is listed in the Ramsar Convention.

'The local community at Narashino has developed a visitors centre – the Yatsu-Higata Observation Centre – which contains very comprehensive display material,' Peter said. 'There is also a very robust volunteer program for guiding visitors around the wetlands'. The staff at the Observation Centre have established a Brisbane information corner, and BCC has contributed information and materials to this exhibit.

Likewise, the City of Narashino has already sent an illustrative history (in the form of a wall panel) of the Yatsu Tidelands to BCC, and this will be put on display in a Narashino corner at the Boondall Wetlands Information Centre.

Exchange of information between community groups in the two cities will be an important part of the agreement, and already some of Narashino community group members have requested information about frog projects in Brisbane

'This agreement will not only be of great benefit to community groups and local authorities in each city to exchange information, it is a big step forward in the fight to preserve the habitats of the migratory shorebirds,' Peter said.



ACTIVITIES - 1999

Wader Counts (general monitoring)

Contact: Linda Cross (07) 5495 2758. Completed count forms should be returned to Mrs L Cross at xxxxxxxxxx Rd, Bellmere 4510.

WADER COUNTS DATES (general monitoring) FOR ALL OF 1999

Sat 23 rd January	High Tide of 2.23m at 1.27pm
Sat 13 th February	High Tide of 2.22m at 7.43am (NATIONAL SUMMER COUNT)
Sat 20 th March	High Tide of 2.33m at 11.21am
Sat 17 th April	High Tide of 2.29m at 10.15am
Sat 15 th May	High Tide of 2.19m at 9.04am
NO COUNT IN JUNE	
Sat 31 st July	High Tide of 1.87m at 11.16am (NATIONAL WINTER COUNT)
Sat 14 th August	High Tide of 1.91m at 11.26am
Sun 12 th September	High Tide of 2.00m at 10.58am
Sun 10 th October	High Tide of 2.10m at 9.57am
Sat 13 th November	High Tide of 2.10m at 12.23pm
Sat 11 th December	High Tide of 2.27m at 11.27am

Cannon Netting

Fitting of another batch of satellite transmitters to Eastern Curlews needs to occur around the end of January. The tides are appropriate between Thursday 28th January and Thursday 4th February and the fieldwork will focus again on the southern end of Moreton Island, with the possibility of switching to Nth Stradbroke Island. Rather than undertake a concentrated period of fieldwork over a few days with many people, the strategy this year will be to have just a few people on hand over an extended period with preparations to catch birds when and where the opportunity arises. Some preliminary observations will be made and "blank" nets set up throughout January. The weekend of the 30th and 31st of January is already set aside for low tide census of Eastern Curlews which will restrict the availability of some people. Those of you who want to be involved in the netting should contact Peter Driscoll (xxxx xxxx) and indicate over what period you could help. We will need people during week days as well.

There will be no further opportunities for netting this summer mainly because of Driscoll's absence from Brisbane between mid February and late April.

Contact: Peter Driscoll (07) xxxx xxxx three days in advance to confirm time and place. For weekend trips, please confirm at least one week in advance. As well as listed activities, netting outings are mounted "opportunistically" when it appears there may be a good chance of success.

Other Activities

Other Conservation Activities of Interest



QWSG is a special interest group of the Queensland Ornithological Society Inc. whose object is "To promote the scientific study and conservation of birds by all means possible, with particular reference to the birds of Queensland". Separate membership is required. Contacts: Dawn Muir, President (07) xxxx xxxx; Sheena Gillman, Secretary (07) xxxx xxxx; Treasurer, Lyal Grundy (07) xxxx xxxx

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

Wader Identification Days

Sun 7th Feb

12 Noon - Toorbul. High Tide of 1.90m at 1.41pm (40 mins later at Toorbul).

Bring: Telescope, hat, chairs, insect repellent and lunch.

Directions: Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane to the Donnybrook/Toorbul turn-off near the Big Fish. Turn off here and head east over the highway overpass. Continue on this road to Toorbul. Turn right at the T-junction then first left and then right, which brings you onto the Esplanade. Follow this road to the end, we will be on the left.

Contact: Phil & Linda Cross 07-xxxx xxxx

Sun 7th Mar

11.00am - Toorbul. High Tide of 1.98m at 12.25pm (40 mins later at Toorbul).

Bring: Telescope, hat chairs, insect repellent and lunch.

Directions: Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane to the Donnybrook/Toorbul turn-off near the Big Fish. Turn off here and head east over the highway overpass. Continue on this road to Toorbul. Turn right at the T-junction then first left and then right, which brings you onto the Esplanade. Follow this road to the end, we will be on the left.

Contact: Phil & Linda Cross 07-xxxx xxxx

These are a great way to learn in the field, so if you are beginning or are in need of a refresher come along. Those little, middle and large brown birds become a lot clearer when someone else can point out those minor points that make wader watching so much easier.

We advise members that our merchandise is also available at outings and wader ID days should you wish to purchase anything.

We have new stock of Pizzey and Knight Field Guide along with other good books. Please check the back page of the newsletter for our range.

THE CURLEW HAS BEEN BUSY AGAIN!!

A BABY GIRL!

To Owen & Deb McNamara: a daughter, Eleanor, on Sunday 6th September, 1998 - 7lb 5oz.

Proud parents Owen and Deb counted Nandebie Park before moving onto 2 sites at Point Halloran. Eleanor accompanied Owen and Deb on their count just a couple of weeks later. A prospective counter in the making we wonder!

AND A BABY BOY!

To Dave Stewart and Natasha Taylor: a son, Adan, on 26th September 1998 – 9lb 9oz.

Proud parents Dave and Natasha are well known to QWSG members. Both have been hard workers for the organisation for many years.

Dave is currently looking after the QWSG library, while Natasha is having a well earned break from reporting and compiling for Wader Watch.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH SETS OF PARENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE QWSG.

Copy Deadline for Autumn Edition

The deadline for the next issue is the 15th of March.

Contributions should be addressed to David Edwards, The QWSG Editor, 54 Elliott Street, Clayfield, Qld 4011 or E-mail to ybw@ozemail.com.au Computerised contributions should be in IBM Word, ASCII or Rich Text.