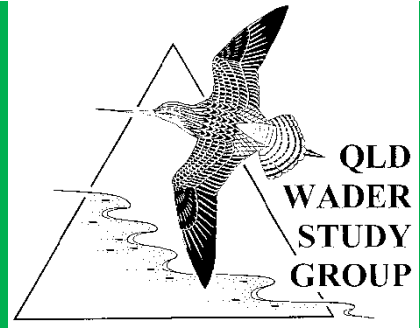


QUEENSLAND WADER



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Newsletter of the Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG), a special interest group of
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CHAIRPERSONS REPORT FOR 2015

2015 as always was busy in our core areas of research, education and conservation/consulting and again this year.

I'll talk about the years highlights later in the report under those broad banner headings but the group do a lot of things routinely that make us who we are which deserve mention before we get to the 2015 highlights. The newsletter continues to be exceptional with comprehensive articles from both locally and abroad and continues to get good feedback. David Edwards's commitment to the newsletter is a directly reflected in this ongoing quality. Please remember if you get your newsletter posted to you we do have a page limit so we fit more articles in our email version. If you can move to email it's cheaper for the group and you'll get more!

Sheryl Keates did another year as our veteran treasurer and kept our finances and membership on track and under control. A huge thank you to Sheryl for another year in that role.

As always we were involved with a whole range of shorebird related issues in 2015 with ongoing concerns at Manly and queries and involvement in a range of other environmental issues concerning shorebirds. Our involvement has ranged from providing advice, being involved in *ad hoc* survey work and providing historical data for reports involving these issues. However in the case of Manly we are now far more involved in the ongoing management and maintenance of the site with TMR thanks to the work of Arthur Keates. Under Arthur's guidance the rock wall has now been rebuilt properly and the roost is in better shape than ever.

Our collaboration with the Port of Brisbane has also continued this year with the count program continuing and the group continuing to analyse data and provide annual updates for the Port on their shorebird populations. We have also recommenced banding at the Port.

Other unsung volunteers who don't always make the highlights are Peter, who maintains our meeting minutes and has the unenviable task of making us all accountable for our actions and David Milton who maintains all our data which with online data entry continues to grow. Finally Sandra Harding and Arthur Keates (who's not even a committee member) continue to help draft formal letters and provide advice in relation to conservation legislation, without whom we would all struggle a lot more so thank you to them too.

I should also mention Linda and Phil Cross, Linda has continued tirelessly to maintain our count program and validate all data entry for which we all remain immensely grateful. As always the data is maintained flawlessly and any of us entering data all know we'd better get it right or else!

Phil in particular has seen his role grow as the number of flagged birds, and flag readers grows. We are now getting somewhere near 2000 flag sightings per annum and maintaining that is a big job for Phil.

Other members of committee and non-members who I've not mentioned continue to provide advice, engage in debate and generally contribute to the business of running what is a very active group so again thank you to all those who just help keep us going, a hugely important role in itself.

Some of the key activities in 2015, in no particular order of priority are highlighted below;

EDUCATION

As always a number of wader ID days and a wader course were held in 2015 with Sheryl and Arthur Keates, Phil and Linda Cross and David Milton and Sandra Harding doing the lion's share of the work and attendance at these events. The wader course was again held at the marine Park offices at Manly and we are grateful to NPRSR and Kristy Currie for the venue and time. As last year the course was fully subscribed.

The work by Ivell Whyte and more recently Robert Bush really came to the fore on the course, where the banners and posters on display had even more information than in previous years and really demonstrated in a modern professional way what we do and why the birds we represent require our focus. Work on the educational material for use by schools is almost completed using a grant from the Port of Brisbane and this online material will be available for use next year for a range of school ages. Robert is currently trying to source a developer to write a mobile application so that school children can take an interactive version of the kit into the field with them which will be a huge opportunity for engagement.

Sheryl has also started working with the Moreton Bay Environmental Centre educating young school children about shorebirds and also extending that work into other schools, which listening to Sheryl talk about the way the children respond has probably been one of the most exciting things this year in my opinion and something we need to develop and grow along with Roberts activities.

ARC LINKAGE AND OTHER UNIVERSITY AFFILIATIONS

We continued to work closely with University of Queensland during 2015 and engaged in fieldwork on a collaborative venture between UQ, a number of other parties and ourselves in monitoring shorebirds in the Gladstone area as part of the ongoing industrialisation in that area.

We were also successful with UQ and the Burnett Mary Regional Group in securing a further ARC grant for a project looking at management practises in marine parks and the impact on shorebirds which will lead to us doing more surveys in the Great Sandy Straits over the next couple of years.

SURVEYS

2015 was a quieter survey year with a survey of the Bowen region and some sites in the Gulf of Carpentaria revisited by Peter Driscoll and Arthur Keates. Preparation is underway for a Great Sandy survey early in 2016.

THE COUNT PROGRAMME

Linda Cross again tirelessly organised and managed the count programme in 2015 with monthly counts across a whole range of sites in Moreton bay and further afield up and down the Queensland coast. Online data entry for our count data has been well received and now every counter has a login id to the website, submits their data online where it is checked, processed and then downloaded to our back end database. Linda is always looking for new counters so if you know anyone, or would like to count your own site please get in touch with her. Thanks not only to Linda but to every one of our members who counts as without you, we would not have been able to contribute as much as we have to shorebird conservation and please don't underestimate the value of consistently counting a location over long periods of time.

BANDING AND GEOLOCATORS

We continued with banding fieldwork throughout the year targeting both migratory and non-migratory shorebirds around Moreton bay and put engraved leg flags on 357 shorebirds of 19 species in 2015, with cannon netting twice at Manly twice at the Port of Brisbane, twice in Gladstone and mist netting once at Wellington Point. QWSG now has over 3,122 birds leg flagged with several thousand resightings of individually identifiable birds at feeding roosting and migration stopover sites providing important data on the way birds utilise Moreton Bay and also on their use of stopover areas on migration.

Thanks to the many individuals who volunteer for banding, spending long hours in the field, often wading hip deep in water and mud to get birds into position for catching and also to Phil Cross who maintains the database of leg flag sightings, his workload goes up as the group and flag more birds each year and as our leg flag readers multiply! Phil will provide an update on leg flag sightings showing just how far our shorebirds really travel.

If you are interested in getting involved in banding please contact me for further information. For those interested we now publish both the leg flag reports and our banding trip reports online on the website.

2016 will be really exciting as we will be targeting Pacific Golden plovers and putting satellite transmitters on 4 individuals at the port to understand their migration routes.

CONSERVATION

On the conservation front we were actively involved in a number of initiatives. One of the key initiatives, driven by Peter Driscoll, was the inclusion of the south east Gulf of Carpentaria on the EAAF partnership site network, an important step in gaining international recognition of the site for shorebirds.

We also played a role in the redesignation of two shorebird species (Curlew Sandpiper and Eastern Curlew) as critically endangered under the EPBC and while sad, ironically it raises the profile of the issues facing these species and is likely to drive better outcomes. Unfortunately we have already been asked to provide similar feedback for a further five species proposed for re designation.

Those are just two of the major activities with many other activities including working with EHP on refreshing their shorebird data, working with healthy waterways on how shorebirds can be used as indicator species and many other initiatives.

I could go on forever and have tried to pick some of the bigger highlights of the year and mention some of the individuals involved as a demonstration of just how much we achieve each year. Thank you to every single committee member and also our non-committee roles such as Phil, dealing with leg flags, Linda looking after the count program, Vicki Campbell who looks after merchandise and Arthur who I've already mentioned earlier. Thank you also to BQ for their collaboration through the year and welcome to the new BQ committee. Everyone has contributed to the group in many different ways and we always underestimate the effort required to make a group like this run effectively. We always like to see new faces on the committee as they bring new ideas and perspectives so I'd encourage anyone who would like to stand to get in touch, now's your chance as we dissolve the committee.

Finally and most importantly, I have to say thank you to the QWSG members for your support and fieldwork over the last 12 months. Without you we achieve nothing and I hope the 2015 report has shown you how important your support, your counts, and your involvement in everything to do with shorebirds really is. Here's to an equally busy and valuable 2016.

Jon Coleman – Chairperson QWSG

Count Coordinator's Report to QWSG AGM 19th December 2015

There has not been any improvement during the year in trying to recruit new counters. In fact it has probably worsened given that the two new standby counters recruited at the end of last year have not always been available to help at times. A Mackay counter has advised that they will only be able to count their site intermittently and the Great Sandy region has taken a big hit with one counter having heart surgery, another having knee issues and unable to count until further notice, another one having to step down due to ill health and another left for pastures new. In Moreton Bay another assistant counter has had knee surgery and one of the sites has been fenced off and unable to be counted for some months, but that should be resolved in the New Year when hopefully access will be granted. I am also having some health issues that have limited my ability to cover our sites, but thankfully Phil has managed to do them on his own.

From memory, there have not been any new sites added to the count programme during the year, and luckily at this point in time we have only lost one site where the counter has taken up residence elsewhere. The sites with counters that have health issues will hopefully be surveyed again once the counter improves.

I am currently trying to get Ged Tranter (a new member) involved in the count programme as he has already attended a count at the Port of Brisbane, helped do a December count at Manly Harbour and is keen to continue to help. Ged hails from the UK and is already an experienced counter, so he will be a valuable asset. I am also trying to get a 14 year old boy involved with the counts at Thorneside as he too appears to be quite knowledgeable about wader species and seems interested in joining and helping with counts.

Online count entries are progressing very well and there are very little errors now that I need to amend. I commend the counters for taking to this system like a duck to water so to speak. There have however been a couple of glitches on the website entry when the system has generated a couple of duplicate counts.

Counts conducted during 2015 are as follows:
 868 validated and downloaded
 98 validated and waiting to be downloaded
 63 waiting to be validated

44 yet to be entered by myself and David
60 yet to be entered online by counters

That is a total of 1133, but does not include the Gulf or Bowen survey counts. This figure is a couple of hundred less than 2014, which did include the Mackay and Great Sandy Survey. Unfortunately David Milton is unable to attend today, so he cannot give you the accurate figures on the count data.

I thank all the counters for their continued support to the count programme, which would not exist if not for them.

During 2015 I managed to leave Jon in relative peace by not having to email or ring him as much about the online count entries given that the counters are now more adept at entering their counts, but I would like to thank him for listening to the complaints that I did have. However, there were some people, (David Milton, David Edwards and Sheryl Keates), who I needed to liaise with during the year to fulfil my role as count co-ordinator, and I would like to thank the three of them for their patience and assistance throughout the year.

Thanks also should go to the rest of the group (on and off committee) for their hard work.

Linda.

Leg Flag Database Report to QWSG AGM – 19th Dec 2015

The leg flag database is more than a third larger now compared with this time last year, it consists of 14,719 entries; an increase of 3,967, this is a 36% increase year on year. This may be due in part to some sightings dated 2014 that were not added to the database until after the 2014 report was completed.

Green leg flags.

Green coloured leg flag sightings were 96% of the total added to the database this year. A total of 3,652 entries were loaded in, only 111 were plain flags, the rest were all engraved flags. This is the same ratio of engraved flags reported (97%) versus plain flags as the previous two years.

Green flags seen overseas.

The number of reports of waders carrying green flags, which were seen overseas, was 151, which is less than the total for the previous year. This year these reports came from six different countries.

Korea supplied half the total of these overseas sightings, 76 of which were from South Korea and interestingly one individual bird was reported in the communist part of the country.

I received 24 sightings recorded from **New Zealand**.

Japan provided 22 reports, only one was a plain flag, the rest were birds carrying engraved leg flags.

14 sightings were recorded in **China**.

At one location in **Russia**, green flagged waders were recorded on 6 occasions between late July and late August; one other bird was seen on consecutive days in May at another location. All 8 records were of Great Knot.

Of the 6 sightings from **Taiwan**, 4 different species were recorded.

Green flagged birds seen Interstate.

New South Wales

I entered 7 records of green flagged birds seen in NSW.

West Australia

There were 5 records of Red-necked Stint (SF on flag) recorded as being in Broome WA during September and early October.

Birds flagged overseas reported as seen in Queensland.

More sightings this year (164) than in 2014 (134).

USA (Alaska)

Four sightings of engraved black flags were reported from the Gladstone area. On four occasions (2 at Hervey Bay, 1 at Burnett Heads and 1 at Bowen) Pacific Golden Plover were reported with coloured bands but without any flag, one of these has been confirmed as being banded in Alaska, I expect the others will be also.

China

Birds flagged in China were recorded on 57 occasions this year.

Black/white combination - a total of 45 records of birds flagged at Chong Ming Dao

Blue/yellow combination - 3 entries from Bohai Bay.

Green/orange combination - a quantity of 9 records from Yalu Jiang Nature Reserve.

Japan

One more record this year (53) than last year (52).

Blue – birds flagged at Hokkaido reported on 34 occasions.

Blue/white combination – a total of 19 separate sightings, 7 of birds from Tokyo area and 11 from Torinoumi area.

Korea

White/orange combination – 2 separate sightings of birds with these coloured flags, both from north Queensland.

New Zealand

Birds carrying a White flag were reported on 27 occasions, of which 14 were carrying engraved leg flags.

Russia

Black/yellow combination - 1 only sighting of a Red Knot flagged in Kamchatka.

Yellow/white combination – 8 records of birds flagged on Sakhalin Island.

One sighting of a Red-necked Stint with a pale green flag recorded in Moreton Bay which was flagged in Chukotka.

Taiwan

White/blue combination – 7 recorded this year, 5 of which carried engraved flags.

Interstate leg flags seen in Queensland.**Victoria**

A quantity of 113 sightings of waders with Orange flags were recorded.

New South Wales

Pied Oystercatcher with an engraved Yellow flag was recorded on 21 occasions.

West Australia

A total of 14 records of birds from the other side of the country.

Yellow flag – Great Knot (WDA on flag) was reported at Cairns on 6 occasions during September and October, 5 other yellow flag sightings came from Maaroom, 1 from Gladstone area, a Black-tailed Godwit was seen at the eastern side of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Yellow/orange combination and 1 Great Knot reported from Mackay.

I would like to thank all the people who sent leg flag sighting records to me and ask them to keep on watching out for them.

Phil Cross.

Shorebirds of the Caley Valley Wetlands, Bowen

Wetlands are important habitat for migratory shorebirds. Along the Queensland coast, there are large areas of low lying land that is either tidal or inundated during wet seasons. The QWSG in its role as a source of knowledge about shorebirds in Queensland needed to investigate the shorebirds of the Bowen region in light of the proposed expansion of the Port of Abbot Point. Development of the coal in the Galilee Basin requires a port for export overseas. The Port of Abbot Point would service three mines and would have three terminals with coal storage areas and additional rail lines. However the need for the expansion is looking less likely as the viability of coal mines diminishes.

Around Bowen there are extensive areas of ephemeral wetlands, but there are no large estuaries carrying sediment to the coast suggesting that the lack of fertility will mean poorer shorebird feeding areas. These coastal wetlands are mainly used for grazing and have been altered to some extent by bunds for road access and to restrict salt water movement. The Port of Abbot Point is about 25 km north of Bowen where there is a jetty extending several hundred metres out to sea rather than a typical deep water harbour on the coast as the sea is too shallow for ships. At the end of the jetty (terminal) a basin is dredged for shipping. Coal is transported by train to the terminal and then out to sea to waiting ships.

The dredging needed for the ship basin requires disposal of dredge spoil. This was initially proposed to be dumped in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and then changed to land adjacent to the Caley Valley wetland. The proposal to place the dredge spoil in the wetlands triggered the preparation of an EIS by the proponent (North QLD Bulk Ports).

The Caley Valley wetlands comprise salt pans, salt couch and freshwater wetlands (Lake Caley). During the QWSG visit in January 2016 there was a fresh water body surrounded by large areas of sedgeland. There had been no wet season rains to fill the wetland.

QWSG have limited counts from this part of the QLD coast. A shorebird survey of the Bowen coast was undertaken by boat in 1995 and this is the only data in the QWSG database for the region other than counts done at some local roosts around Bowen by Jon Wren in the 1990's and early 2000's. The QWSG count methodology is to count shorebirds at a spring high tide, when the birds are concentrated at high tide roosts that are not inundated. We also sought to replicate the tides selected at the time of the previous survey.

During our visit in January 2016 we found a diverse coastal marine and freshwater wetland system and the freshwater area while being mostly dry would be very productive once flooded by seasonal rains. Both migratory shorebirds and resident shorebirds used the wetlands. Migratory shorebirds (mostly Red-necked Stint) and resident Red-capped Dotterels utilized the salt pan habitat. Bar-tailed Godwits were found on the high tide roost at the mouth of the nearby Elliot River. Mostly waterbirds (Black Swans, pelicans and Grey Teal) were in the fresh water. A previous survey in 2012 by consultants for the proponent estimated 35 Australian Painted Snipe (endangered) used the sedgeland.

The QWSG database now has records for the Caley Valley wetlands and recent counts for some high tide roosts around Bowen. These parts of the coast are difficult to survey and do not attract many visiting bird watchers. But these are important and diverse habitats. The overall declines in migratory shorebirds (eastern curlew and curlew sandpiper are critically endangered) now warrant even more careful assessment of developments that impact on these birds. The QWSG will continue to monitor shorebirds in Queensland to find out more about how shorebirds use both the sub-coastal wetlands and foreshores.

Sandra Harding

Bowen and Burdekin River Delta Shorebird Surveys - January 2016

by Arthur Keates

QWSG has funded shorebird surveys in the Bowen area, including the Caley Valley wetlands about 21 km north of Bowen, and the Burdekin River delta. The surveys were conducted from January 20 to 22 by Peter Driscoll, David Milton, Sandra Harding and Arthur Keates



Flying into Bowen over the saltworks 11 Common Greenshank were seen but no other shorebirds.

On the first day of the surveys, Peter and Sandra conducted an aerial reconnaissance of coastal shorebird roost sites in the Bowen area from Bowen to Nobbies Inlet in the north. Flying over 11 sites, an estimated 1,930 migratory shorebirds were recorded, including 449 in the Caley Valley wetlands while the Nobbies Inlet-Cape Upstart area contained the highest estimate of 1,325.



As the Caley Valley wetlands are within the Abbot Point State Development Area, the Co-ordinator General's permission was obtained to enter the area to conduct ground surveys.

Clearly, there had been no significant summer flows of freshwater into the wetlands from the Don River prior to the surveys. However, the freshwater lake, Lake Caley, had sufficient water level to provide habitat for Australian Pelican, Black Swan, Grey Teal, Hardhead, White-headed Stilt, Masked Lapwing, Red-capped Plover and a single Marsh Sandpiper. Sadly, numerous spent shotgun pellets around the lake's edge evidenced wildlife at the wetlands do not always have a refuge.

Rather than trudge across the vast area to the saltpan to the west of Lake Caley, access was obtained by driving to the Elliot River and then by boat along the coast to a creek flowing into the saltpan. Even so, the distance to be covered by foot in the time was limited and so the four counters split into 2 teams. The saltpan attracted the following migratory and resident shorebird species, Masked Lapwing, Red-capped Plover, Common Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint. In addition, waterbirds and terns recorded included Great-billed Heron, Black-necked Stork, Brolga, Eastern Great Egret, Little Egret, Royal Spoonbill, Grey Teal, Hardhead, Caspian Tern and Silver Gull. At the mouth of the Elliot River, there were small numbers of Far Eastern Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit and Great Knot and a colony of nesting Silver Gull while a few Grey-tailed Tattler flushed from the mangroves near the boat launching area.



Even in the dry conditions, the ground counts for the Caley Valley sites covered resulted in a total of 661 migratory birds of 5 species, Far Eastern Curlew (15), Common Greenshank (56), Marsh Sandpiper (1), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (3) and Red-necked Stint (586). In addition, a late afternoon survey of Muller's Lagoon, in the heart of Bowen, added Common Greenshank (1), Marsh Sandpiper (23) and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (24) as well as White-headed Stilt (30) and Black-fronted Dotterel (6).

Having completed surveys of the Caley Valley wetlands and the Bowen area, the opportunity was taken to venture north to the Burdekin River delta which holds some remote shorebird roosts that are accessible only by boat. From previous surveys conducted by Peter, David and Sandra in October 2011 and January 2012, we know the area supports internationally significant numbers of Greater Sand Plover (>1% of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway population)¹. Counts of 6 roost sites confirmed the significance of the delta for the species (3 236), made up of flocks of 100, 1 468, 488 and 1 180. Counts of Lesser Sand Plover also attained the 1% threshold (613) made up of flocks of 20, 229, 79 and 285.

In addition to the shorebirds, 971 terns were counted, 738 being Little Tern with Caspian, Gull-billed, Common, Crested and Lesser Crested Terns making up the rest.

The table shows the shorebird species counts:

Species	Count
Beach Stone-curlew	2
Pied Oystercatcher	99
Grey Plover	77
Greater Sand Plover	3236
Lesser Sand Plover	613
Red-capped Plover	61
Far Eastern Curlew	227
Whimbrel	190
Black-tailed Godwit	60
Bar-tailed Godwit	593
Common Greenshank	7
Great Knot	2088
Red Knot	107
Ruddy Turnstone	2
Terek Sandpiper	1
Curlew Sandpiper	34
Sanderling	32
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	52
Broard-billed Sandpiper	1
Red-necked Stint	1461
Total	8943

Fortunately, because of its remoteness and inaccessibility to the delta roost sites other than by boat, the only apparent direct threat to them is the occasional disturbance by fishers. Nevertheless, long-term protection of the area is essential given its international importance to shorebirds.

¹ See the report "The Importance of Bowling Green Bay and Burdekin River Delta, North Queensland, Australia for Shorebirds and Waterbirds" published in Stilt 65 (2014): 3-16.

Shorebirds Gain New Sanctuary in South Australia



Bar-tailed Godwit: Photo by Chris T

By Sean Dooley, Wed, 02/12/2015

Paul Sullivan, CEO of BirdLife Australia, welcomed the announcement from SA Environment Minister, Mr Ian Hunter, that the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary will be proclaimed a National Park.

Mr Hunter told the crowd gathered at the Adelaide Flyway Festival in October that the government would also pursue a nomination for the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary to be acknowledged as a site of significance in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway.

The world's shorebirds are in crisis. According to BirdLife Australia, their populations have collapsed in recent years, and nowhere has this been highlighted more than in Australia. Most migratory shorebirds we see in Australia make an astounding migration from Siberia and Alaska each year, an arduous journey along the 'East Asian–Australasian Flyway' through China, Korea and South East Asia to spend the summer in Australia. All along the Flyway, they are losing the habitats they rely on to survive. Their plight was recognised at the Flyway Festival held on the shores of Gulf St Vincent at Adelaide's St Kilda foreshore.

"Our shorebirds are in big trouble," said Paul Sullivan, CEO of BirdLife Australia. "We must be driven by a positive future for shorebirds. We need champions to fight the silent shorebirds crisis."

Mr Sullivan acknowledged that shorebird conservation was an international issue, and that countries along the flyway need to step up to conserve these birds whose travels span the globe, although it is also crucially important to deal with local issues in Australia too.

The newly established Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary was an important first step, he said.

"The Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary is a role model for other states. We need more protected shorebird sites in every state and the Northern Territory. If Australia, as a nation, steps up and plays a leadership role in shorebird conservation at home, we will gain the moral authority to ask China and Korea to do the right thing."

Mr Sullivan highlighted that conservation organisations, such as BirdLife Australia, community groups, experts and governments must work together in a coherent partnership if they are to achieve any positive change, he said.

"If we can articulate together how we will make a difference, we can inspire people to help make it happen."

Decade-long Citizen Science Project Counts China's Waterbirds

By Ed Parnell, Thu, 14/01/2016 - 18:01

Since 2005, more than 150 volunteers have taken part in the China Coastal Waterbird Census, which, in November 2015, published its third report on the state of the country's coastal waterbirds.

The coastal wetlands of China constitute some of the most important migratory, passage and wintering sites along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Unfortunately, the area also faces some of the world's most serious conservation challenges. In order to protect and manage important sites along the flyway effectively, reliable data are desperately needed, making the China Coastal Waterbird Census – and the work carried out by its volunteers – of critical conservation importance.



More than 5,000 Far Eastern Curlew, out of an estimated global population of 32,000 individuals, were counted during the census (Image: Li Zai)

“We discovered at least 10 sites of international importance for birds, yet still without proper protection”, said Bai Qingquan, one of the coordinators of China Coastal Waterbird Census Team.

The latest report, which covers the period from 2010–11, presents a huge amount of information about China's coastal avifauna. A total of 161 species were recorded during the survey, including 21 globally threatened species.

Peak counts occurred during April's northward migration period, when almost 266,000 individual waterbirds were logged from 111 species. Twenty per cent or more of the entire population of the following globally threatened birds were recorded during the latest census: Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea* (Critically Endangered: 103), Saunders's Gull *Saundersilarus saundersi* (Vulnerable: 5,451), Relict Gull *Larus relictus* (Vulnerable: 6,005), Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor* (Endangered: 561) and Siberian Crane *Leucogeranus leucogeranus* (Critically Endangered: 700).

“The China Coastal Waterbird Count, which is organised and implemented solely by volunteer bird watchers has lasted for 10 years and is a great example of Citizen Science”, said Vivian Fu, Assistant Manager of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society/BirdLife International China Programme. “The findings of the census not only display significant scientific value, but also contribute to the conservation of sites and species of international importance. We hope that more and more people will join us in future.”

The report, which is written in Chinese, with an English summary and annotations, can be downloaded here (PDF, 55 MB).

The China Coastal Waterbird Census has been coordinated by the The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (BirdLife Hong Kong) and over the years has received support from the following donors: the Darwin Initiative; Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong; Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust; the Tolkien Trust; the Asian Waterbird Conservation Fund; and Ford Green Awards.

Black-bellied Plovers Tracked to Wintering Grounds

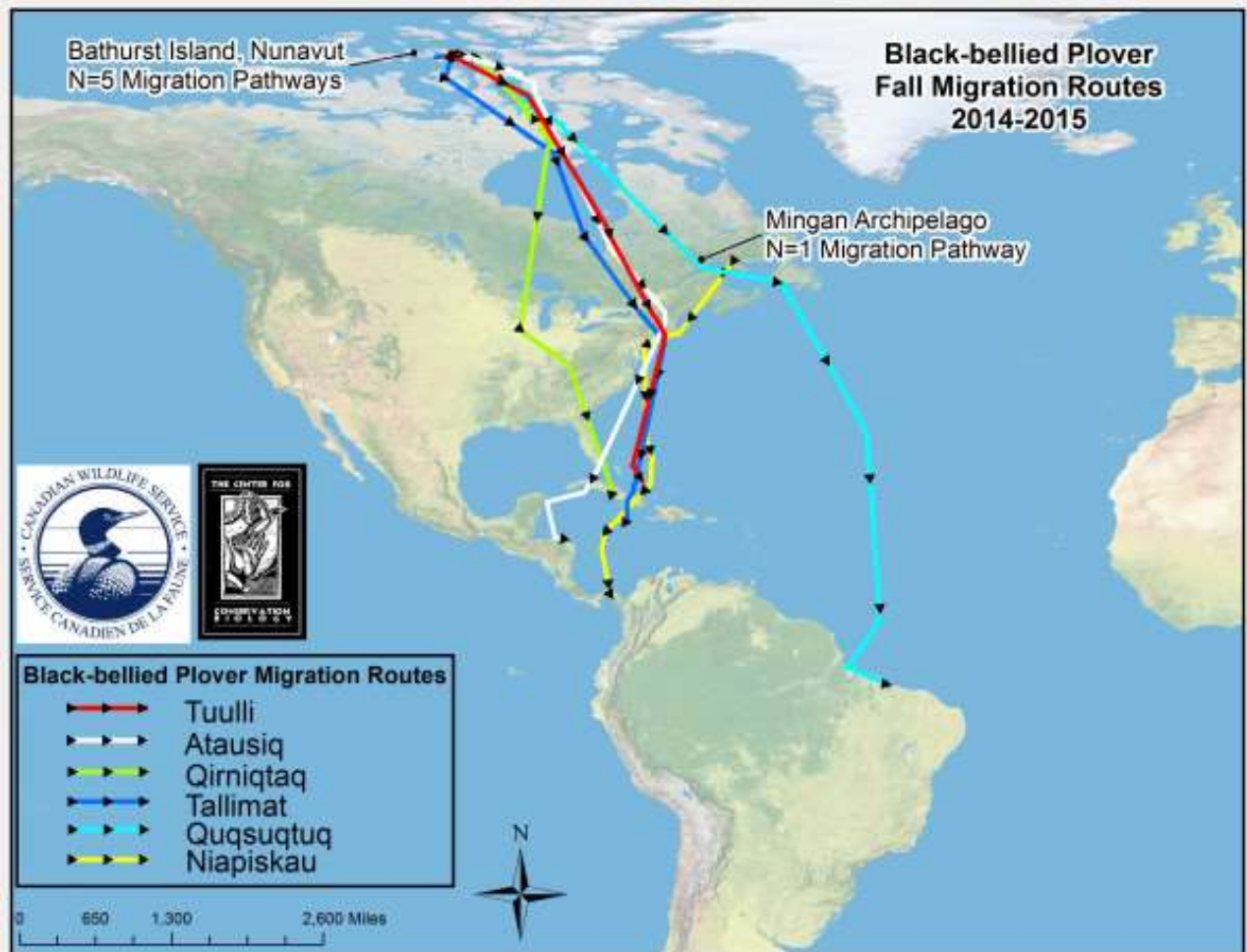
The Center for Conservation Biology/News Story/

The Center for Conservation Biology, in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Service, has tracked black-bellied plovers from their Arctic breeding locations and fall stopover locations to their wintering grounds. The plovers were trapped on the breeding grounds at Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area, located on Bathurst Island, Nunavut Territory, as well as at Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve, located in the Quebec Province along the St. Lawrence River.

The current locations of the tracked plovers are spread across a wide zone of the Caribbean and Central and South America. This wintering strategy contrasts with whimbrels that were tracked using similar satellite tags, with the majority of those birds concentrated in a relatively small area of Brazil. Black-bellies have a more generalist approach to habitat and diet than most shorebirds, and this may help explain why they are not concentrated in one area of the tropics and occupy such a broad latitudinal and longitudinal gradient in winter.

Several interesting migration tracks were recorded, including a non-stop transoceanic flight from Newfoundland to Brazil, with the plover making the 3,462 mile (5,570km) flight in approximately five days. A long-distance land route was also recorded, with the bird flying nearly six days and 3,960 miles (6,373km) from the high arctic breeding grounds to the wintering grounds in Cuba. The migration route of the plover tagged on Mingan Archipelago is interesting in that it provides evidence that at least some of the Atlantic Coast flyway shorebird populations utilize wintering grounds on the Pacific Ocean, in this case the well-documented shorebird hotspot of the Bay of Panama.

The high arctic nesting plovers appear to have several migration strategies. Several staged near the breeding grounds, then flew non-stop to winter locations. Several also migrated from breeding grounds to Atlantic Canada stopover locations before departing to winter locations. One of the tagged plovers was likely lost over the ocean due to interaction with a tropical storm system.



Migration routes of black-bellied plovers tagged on breeding grounds and a stopover location along the St. Lawrence River. Data from CCB.



Black-bellied plover on its breeding grounds. Photo by Fletcher Smith.

Black-bellied plovers are one of the smallest birds that can be tracked using current satellite tracking technology. Recent technological advances have reduced the size of satellite units, and this promises to answer life-cycle questions on even smaller migratory species.

The tracking of black-bellied plovers is a collaborative effort between The Center for Conservation Biology and the Canadian Wildlife Service, who initiated the tracking in 2014. Logistical support for the Bathurst Island field expedition was provided by the Polar Continental Shelf Program in Resolute, Nunavut. The tracking of the plovers is an ongoing project and the birds can be followed at Seaturtle.org.

*Written by Fletcher Smith | fmsmit@wm.edu | (757) 221-1617
January 11, 2016*

WADER WATCH - Phil Cross

Can everyone please remember to use the 'Leg Flag Observation Report' form. **Please email leg flag sightings to Phil on his new email address.**

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

Green leg flag sightings

In each Qld Wader issue there are quite a number of green leg flag sightings recorded within Moreton Bay, which is where the bird was banded originally. As we are now seeing more leg flag combinations from other states and countries, and have limited space available for sightings, we will not be listing each individual sighting of green leg 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 totalled 800 in the last three months, the species recorded and the number of observations was as follows: Bar-tailed Godwit 476, Curlew Sandpiper 8, Eastern Curlew 4, Great Knot 116, Grey-tailed Tattler 78, Lesser Sand Plover 13, Pacific Golden Plover 2, Pied Oystercatcher 21, Red-capped Plover 1, Red-necked Stint 60, Red Knot 1, Ruddy Turnstone 6, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 8, Terek Sandpiper 3, Whimbrel 2, White Headed Stilt 1.

They were sighted by Sarah Beavis, Tony Cotter, Phil Cross, Linda Cross, Kristy Currie, Cameron Davidson, Chris Gregory, Mary Hynes, Arthur Keates, Sheryl Keates, Sue Lee, Penn Lloyd Paul Marty, Greg McLachlan, Greg Nye, David Redhead, Paola Ricceri, Virginia Ridgley, Lee Rossow, Peter Rothlisberg, Michael Strong and Dez Wells.

The following is a list of the individually marked flags that have been seen on these species during this reporting period.

Bar-tailed Godwit – AB, AE, CN, CU, EC, FY, HL, HR, JB, JE, JH, KM, PA, PE, PR, PU, RL, AAA, AAB, AAE, AAH, AAM, ABL, ABR, ACA, ACB, ACJ, ACN, ACR, ACT, ACU, ACX, ACY, ADA, ADB, ADC, ADH, ADK, AEA, AEH, AEJ, AEN, AES, AEU, AEV, AHA, AHC, AHL, AHN, AHS, AHT, AHZ, AJC, AJD, AJE, AJJ, AJL, AJM, AJP, AJS, AJY, AJZ, AKA, AKB, AKK, AKS, ALM, ALV, ALZ, AMA, AMK, AML, ANB, ANL, ANZ, APN, APP, ARD, ARJ, ARN, ART, ARU, ARV, ASA, ASB, ASD, ASE, ASH, ASL, ASM, ASN, ASR, AST, ASU, ASX, ASY, ASZ, ATA, ATB, ATD, AVA, AVB, AVC, AVD, AVH, AVK, AVN, AVP, AVU, AVW, AVX, AVZ, AWA, AWD, AWE, AWH, AXS, AXT, AYA, AYB, AYD, AYN, AYP, AYS, AYU, AYV, AYW, AYZ, AZC, AZD, AZX, BAU, BBE, BBJ, BBK, BBL, BBM, BBN, BBP, BBR, BBS, BBU, BBX, BBY, BCB, BCC, BCE, BCK, BCX, BJU, BJW, BJZ, BKJ, BKK, BNA, BND, BNH, BNJ, BNL, BNP, BNS, BNU, BNY, BPB, BPC, BPD, BPF, BPH, BPJ, BPK, BPL, BPN, BPS, BPT, BPU, BPV, BPY, BRJ, BRK, BRL, BRP, BRV, BRX, BSD.

Black-winged Stilt – BWJ.

Curlew Sandpiper – AAK, ACC, AJA, AYU.

Great Knot – AAP, AAT, AAU, ADA, ADC, AED, AEE, AEJ, AEK, AEL, AEV, AEX, AHA, AHC, AHS, AHY, AHZ, AJE, AJM, AJS, AJU, AJX, ALA, ALH, ALL, ALS, ALU, AMJ, ATH, ATJ, ATK, ATL, ATM, ATN, ATT, ATU, ATV, ATW, ATZ, AUA, AUD, AUJ, AUL, AVX, AWE, AWK, AYR, AYU, AYV, AYW, AZE, BAV, BAZ, BBE, BBH, BBJ, BBL, BBU, BBX, BBZ, BCK, BCN, BCP, BCY, BCZ, BRJ, BRP, BRY.

Grey-tailed Tattler – AK, BT, BX, EJ, EN, HK, HT, JD, JE, JZ, RM, RY, AAC, ABD, ABN, ACD, ADE, ADH, AKC, AKS, AKV, APD, APN, APP, APS, APT, APU, ARE, ARV, ASE, ASL, ASZ, ATL, AUT, AUZ, AVC, AVL, AWP, AWT, AWV, AXH, AXL, AXX, AYD, BAD, BAJ.

(Tattler, APD, AVC and BAD, have green flag right tibia, yellow flag and geolocator on left tibia and metal band left tarsus).

Lesser Sand Plover – ALU, ANP, ANV, APB, APT.

Pacific Golden Plover – BTC.

Pied Oystercatcher – B2, C4, D8, H7, AAD, AAK, AAT, AAU.

Red-capped Plover – AP.

Red-necked Stint – B2, B9, C6, D7, F8, H2, J3, J5, K7, L8, M5, M9, N3, N9, NE, P9, S8, U3, UL, V6, VT, VZ, X3, XD, XX, Y5, Y9, YX, Z8, ZF, ZU, ZZ.

Ruddy Turnstone – ABY, AKW, AKX, AXY, AYH.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – ACY, AEL, AJJ, AJR, AJS, AKB, ALL.

Terek Sandpiper – ACK, AJN, ALD.

Whimbrel – AAD.

Interstate & overseas Green leg flag sightings

Pied Oystercatcher

1 Pied Oystercatcher (A8 on flag) – Patch's Beach NSW – Bo Totterman -20.11.2015

Curlew Sandpiper

1 (engraved flag unread) – Fu-Pao wetland Changhua County, Taiwan – Chung-Yu Chiang – 4.5.2015.

Red-necked Stint

1 – Wang-Gong Changhua County, Taiwan – Chung-Yu Chiang – 23.8.2015.

Orange (Victoria) leg flag sightings

Bar-tailed Godwit

Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates – 30.11.2015, 7 & 10.1.2016

Toorbul – Dez Wells – 16.1.2016

Great Knot

Kakadu Beach – Michael Strong – 29.11.2015

Toorbul – Linda Cross & Arthur Keates – 4.12.2015

Sandfly Bay – Linda Cross & Arthur Keates – 2.1.2016

Red Knot

Kakadu Beach – Michael Strong – 27.11.2015

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

Great Knot

Port of Brisbane – Jon Coleman – 22.11.2015

Port of Brisbane – Jon Coleman – (L75 on white flag) -22.11.2015 – flagged Chongcho Lake Sokcho City

Port of Brisbane – Arthur Keates & Penn Lloyd – 17.1.2016

2 birds Maaroom – Chris Barnes – 27.11.2015

Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates – (J62 on white flag) – 30.11.2015

Burnett Heads – Chris Barnes – 2 & 14 & 15.12 .2015
 Burnett Heads – Kim & Rachel Cumes – 30.12 .2015
 Burnett Heads – Chris Barnes – 20.1.2016

Greater Sand Plover

Point Vernon Hervey Bay – Lee Mason – 26.12.2015

White (New Zealand) leg flag sightings

Bar-tailed Godwit – white flag right tarsus, white over red band left tarsus, red over yellow band right tarsus –
 Inskip Point – Brian McCauley – 5.11.2015

Blue (Japanese) leg flag sightings – use four combinations

Bar-tailed Godwit

Toorbul – Paul Marty – 30.1.2016 (flagged Hokkaido)
 Kakadu Beach – Michael Strong – blue flag left tibia, orange flag left tarsus – 27.11.2015 – flagged
 Arao Coast Kyushu Japan
 Toorbul – Arthur Keates – blue flag left tibia, white flag left tarsus – 4.12.2015 – flagged Yatsu Tokyo
 Bay
 Toorbul – Dez Wells – blue flag left tibia, white flag left tarsus – 16.1.2016 – flagged Yatsu Tokyo Bay
 Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter – engraved blue flag left tarsus, white flag left tarsus 28.12.2015
 (flagged Torinoumi)
 Port of Brisbane – Linda Cross – blue flag left tarsus, white flag left tarsus 17.1.2016 (flagged
 Torinoumi)

Grey-tailed Tattler

Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates – 7.1.2016 (flagged Hokkaido)
 Lytton Roost – Arthur Keates – 28.1 & 31.1.2016 (flagged Hokkaido)
 Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates – blue flag left tarsus, white flag left tarsus 30.11.2015 (flagged
 Torinoumi)
 2 birds Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates – engraved blue flag left tarsus, white flag left tarsus 7.1.2016
 (flagged Torinoumi)
 Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates – 315 on blue flag left tarsus, white flag left tarsus 10.1.2016 (flagged
 Torinoumi)

Green over orange (Yalu Jiang Nature Reserve, China) leg flag sightings

Bar-tailed Godwit

Blue over white band left tarsus, yellow over yellow band right tarsus. Seven sightings of this same bird at these
 sites and dates:

Toorbul – Linda Cross & Sheryl Keates – 4.12.2015
 - Dez Wells – 16.1.2016
 - Arthur Keates & Kevin Donoghue – 30.1.2016
 Sandfly Bay – Linda Cross & Paola Ricceri – 2.1.2016
 Kakadu Beach – Michael Strong – 29.12.2015 & 24.1.2016.
 Lee Rossow – 12.1.2016

Green over blue (Jiangsu China) leg flag sightings

Red-necked Stint

Curtis Island – Bob Black – 7.1.2016
 Bundaberg Port Swamp – Chris Barnes – 10 & 16.1.2016

White over blue (Taiwan) leg flag sightings

Greater Sand Plover

Burnett Heads – Chris Barnes – 10, 12 & 20.1.2016
 Burnett Heads – Chris Barnes – 19.12.2015, 2 & 3.1.2016.

Only the white flag was seen on these last three sightings, it is thought they were flagged in Taiwan as some of
 their birds have lost the blue flag since being fitted.

Yellow over White (Sakhalin Island Russia) leg flag sightings

Great Knot – Maaroom – Chris Barnes – 27.11.2015

Other wader leg flag and banded sightings

The three Pacific Golden Plover listed below have bands only (no flags) they have been identified as being banded
 in Alaska USA. The blue over green banded bird has been seen in this region twice previously, at Bundaberg in
 December 2012 and at Burnett Heads in March 2015.

Pacific Golden Plover – orange band right tibia, white band right tarsus, and orange band left tibia – O'Reagan Creek Hervey Bay – Marilyn Sweetnam – 14.11.2015
 Pacific Golden Plover – purple band right tibia, yellow over pink band left tibia – Cape Edgecumbe Bowen – Marlis Schoeb – 1.12.2015
 Pacific Golden Plover – blue band over green band right tibia – Burnett Heads – Chris Barnes & Brandon Hewitt – 10.1.2016
 Great Knot - (AJW on green flag) – Maaroom Great Sandy – Chris Barnes – 27.11.2015

Other leg flag sightings and banded birds

Caspian Tern

- 1 (E6) on orange flag left tarsus, metal band right tarsus – Buckley's Hole Bribie Island – Dez Wells – 14.11.2015
- 1 orange flag right tarsus, metal band left tarsus – Toorbul – Michael Strong – 16.01.2016
- 1 orange flag left tarsus – Kakadu Beach Bribie Island – Michael Strong – 24.01.2016

Editor: Luckily I have a very full Newsletter this quarter, however, this means that some articles have to be cut from this Addition of Queensland Wader, one of those is Wader Watch. This article can be found on the web site in the coming weeks.

Count Programme - Linda Cross

Count Programme

by Linda Cross

I would like to thank all counters for their patience during my endeavour to catch up on counts and emails. Counts for the last couple of months of 2015, all of January and a few for early February have been checked and validated, and I have started to catch up on emails. However, the February counts have now started to flood in as I type this article for the newsletter, but unfortunately I don't have time to check them or extract any sightings for this article as the deadline looms.

Four of our injured counters mentioned in the last newsletter have now successfully recovered enough to undertake the National Summer Count along with the rest of the counters in the programme. Thank you all for getting your counts loaded onto the website so that the Database Manager was able to extract the counts to send to Birdlife, who we share our data with.

The Ruff, Pectoral Sandpiper and Wood Sandpiper that have been seen and recorded by a number of people since September last year at Nathan Road, Kippa-Ring were last reported on 24.12.15. The site is now completely dry and devoid of birds.

Some of the less common species that have appeared on counts the last couple of months include:

- One Sanderling – Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay – 09.01.16.
- Seven Broad-billed Sandpiper – Redcliffe Airport North Side – 13.12.15
- Four Broad-billed Sandpiper – Bundaberg Port – 15.11.15 – 13.12.15 and 17.01.16.
- Two Broad-billed Sandpiper – Port of Brisbane – 15.11.15.
- One Broad-billed Sandpiper – Cairns Esplanade – 10.11.15.
- One Asian Dowitcher – Port of Brisbane Artificial Roost – 15.12.15.
- Two Wood Sandpiper – Garnett's Lagoon No.1, Hervey Bay – 12.12.15.
- One Little Curlew – Garnett's Lagoon No.1, Hervey Bay – 12.12.15.
- One Common Sandpiper – O'Regan's Creek Westside, Hervey Bay – 14.11.15
- One Common Sandpiper – Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island (mangrove area) – 13.12.15 and 10.01.16.
- Nine Latham's Snipe – Nathan Road, Kippa-ring – 14.11.15

Following are some migratory species numbers extracted from counts:

Eastern Curlew – Geoff Skinner Reserve west hosted 363 on 14.11.15 and around two dozen less on both December and January counts. Other good numbers in excess of two hundred birds were recorded at Maaroom, King Street mudflat Thornlands, Mirapool Beach Moreton Island, Oyster Point and Thornlands Road Thornlands.

Whimbrel – At the Lytton roost on 28.01.16 a total of 216 birds were counted and Toorbul had the next largest count of 198 on 16.01.16.

Bar-tailed Godwit – The largest count for this species was 3,130 at Mirapool Beach, Moreton Island on 15.01.16. At Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island 2,750 were recorded on 07.01.16 and 2,215 were counted at Maaroom on 14.11.15. Other large numbers in excess of a thousand birds were recorded at King Street mudflat Thornlands, Oyster Point, Toorbul and Geoff Skinner Reserve west.

Black-tailed Godwit – A large count of 370 were recorded at Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve on 14.11.15 and a considerably lesser number of 77 were seen at Osprey House, Dohles Rocks site on 24.11.15. This species is not commonly seen at most of the QWSG count sites, but some were recorded in far lesser numbers at Cairns Esplanade, Queensland Aluminium ashpond Gladstone, Maaroom, Kakadu Beach roost Bribie Island, Toorbul, south esplanade Deception Bay and Manly Harbour.

Pacific Golden Plover – On 15.11.15 numbers totalled 506 at the Port of Brisbane, and a far lesser number of 129 were recorded at Shellgrit Creek, Mackay on 09.01.16.

Great Knot – Maaroom once again recorded the highest count of 820 on 12.12.15. At Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island on 29.12.15 numbers totalled 652 and the Port of Brisbane had 582 during the count on 13.12.15.

Marsh Sandpiper – Redcliffe Airport North Side recorded 86 on 13.12.16. Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve recorded 44 on 15.01.16. A combined total of 37 at Garnett's Lagoon No.1 and No.2, Hervey Bay on 12.12.15 and on the same day the Maaroom count recorded 35.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – A number of good counts for this species with the highest being 497 at Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve on 16.01.16. Port of Brisbane figures were 470 on 15.11.15 and Bundaberg Port recorded 418 on 13.12.15. Nathan Road at Kippa-ring reported 386 on 14.11.15.

Red-necked Stint – The best figures for this species came from the Port of Brisbane with 4,044 on 13.12.15, and 3,074 on 15.11.15. Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve recorded 672 on 16.01.16 and Luggage Point had a total of 617 on 07.02.16.

Other individual migratory species sightings are as follows:

40 Common Greenshank – Geoff Skinner Reserve west – 12.12.15
 37 Ruddy Turnstone – Port of Brisbane – 15.11.15
 67 Terek Sandpiper – Manly Harbour – 14.11.15
 210 Greater Sand Plover – Port of Brisbane – 15.11.15
 1,409 Lesser Sand Plover – Port of Brisbane – 13.12.15
 1,593 Curlew Sandpiper – Port of Brisbane – 15.11.15

Other totals for resident waders and interesting sightings are listed under 'Interesting wader sightings' and 'Not waders but of interest anyway' section of this newsletter, and it is hoped that the editor has room to include them in this issue.

Breeding records.

Beach Stone-curlew – one juvenile reported with two adults at Reeder's Point, Moreton Island on 15.01.16.

Pied Oystercatcher – one half grown young and one week old chick at Kakadu Beach roost Bribie Island on 08.11.15. Nesting at Manly Harbour on 14.11.15. Some juvenile in flock of adults at St. Helen's Beach north of Mackay on 15.01.16. Two juvenile at Queensland Aluminium ashpond, Gladstone on 11.12.15. One juvenile at Toorbul on 16.01.16.

Masked Lapwing – nest with four eggs at Maaroom on 12.12.16 and three juvenile on 16.01.16. Two chicks at Kakadu Beach roost Bribie Island on 08.11.15. Two juvenile at Toorbul 1 km north on 16.01.16.

Black-winged Stilt – several still nesting at Kedron Brook Wetlands on 14.11.15. One on nest at Manly Harbour on 12.12.15. One adult showing distraction display at Pine Rivers northside on 12.12.15.

Comb-crested Jacana – juvenile at Buckley's Hole on 17.01.16.

Red-capped Plover – One chick at Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island on 27 & 29.12.15. One juvenile at Lytton claypan on 16.01.16. Three juvenile at Manly Harbour on 12.12.15. One on nest at O'Regans Creek Westside on 14.11.15. Two chicks at Queensland Aluminium ashpond Gladstone on 11.12.15. One juvenile at Reeder's Point Moreton Island on 15.01.16.

Nest with two eggs at Seaforth Beach creek mouth north of Mackay on 12.12.15. Chicks at Bundaberg Port on 13.12.15, and one chick seen on 17.01.16. Two young fledglings at Caboolture River mouth on 25.12.15.

Counters not entering their counts online, please continue to send them to me at my email or postal address as follows:

A reminder that Leg flag sightings must not be entered online during count entry. Please also note that flag sightings emailed to Phil should be sent to his new email

Please contact Phil or myself for the Leg Flag Observation Report Form

Happy counting.
Linda Cross.

Wader ID Days 2016

Sunday 20 March 2016 at the Wader Roost at Manly Harbour

2.30 m high tide at 07:40. Meeting time 07:30.

This is your chance to access the wader roost at Manly Harbour. Meet at the end of Davenport Dr, south of the Royal Queensland Yacht Clubhouse, Manly.

QWSG has a license over the wader roost. Under the conditions of the license, participants in this field trip will be required to sign a form acknowledging responsibility for their own health and safety, including:

- wearing protective clothing at all times (for example, hat, shoes, sunglasses) and using sunscreen
- drinking water to avoid dehydration
- using insect repellent if necessary
- telling a group leader about any health issues that may affect taking part in the field trip
- if feeling unwell, or concerned about someone else being unwell, immediately telling a group leader or another participant
- immediately telling a group leader or another participant about any injury suffered (including a slip, trip, fall and snake bite) or hazard that may cause injury to someone.

Participants must wear enclosed footwear and, as we are likely to be on site for up to 2 hours, must have enough drinking water.

Anyone who does not comply with these conditions will not be allowed to enter the site or asked to leave.

The gate will be locked after we enter the site and late arrivals will not be able to enter.

If you have any questions or are planning to attend an ID day, please contact the leaders. As numbers are kept at a reasonable level, you are advised to book early.

Leaders: Arthur and Sheryl Keates.

Saturday 23 April at Toorbul

2.07 metre high tide at 10:03. (plus 30 minutes later for Toorbul – 10:33). Meeting time 09:00 onwards.

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.

Amenities: At the T-junction turn left and 200 metres ahead is the toilet block and shop.

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. Phil & Linda Cross.
Arthur & Sheryl Keates.

Wader ID Reports 2015

Manly Harbour Report 29 November 2015

by Arthur & Sheryl Keates

Despite the heat, strong north-easterly wind and the threat of mid to late afternoon storms, 16 hardy souls were not deterred from taking part in the shorebird outing to the roost at Manly Harbour. After flushing several small coveys of Brown Quail as we walked along the track behind the dredge spoil area, we found most of the roosting shorebirds were on the southern end of the island and track, nearest to observers.

As is usually the case at this roost site, Bar-tailed Godwit made up the majority of the migratory species but there were good numbers of Grey-tailed Tattler and Terek Sandpiper while only one Far Eastern Curlew was observed and no Ruddy Turnstone, although the latter species could well have been on the track or rock wall on the eastern side eluding our optics.

At least 2 pairs of White-headed Stilt had small chicks in their care and it appeared, and their behaviour indicated, several other pairs were nesting. Several species of migratory waders were noted with a Queensland green engraved leg flag while a glimpse was observed of a possible yellow flagged Great Knot.

The following species were seen at the roost site:

Australian Pelican, Little Pied Cormorant, Pied Oystercatcher, White-headed Stilt, Pacific Golden Plover, Red-capped Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Far Eastern Curlew, Common Greenshank, Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Great Knot, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Silver Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern and Little Tern.

Record-breaking wintering numbers of Spoon-billed Sandpipers in China

By Adrian Long, Thu, 25/02/2016 - 08:40

Record numbers of Spoon-billed Sandpiper, a Critically Endangered shorebird, have been discovered wintering in China, says conservationists from the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS, BirdLife International Partner in Hong Kong SAR, China). On 30 December 2015, HKBWS volunteers Jonathan Martinez and John Allcock found at least 30 Spoon-billed Sandpipers near the Fucheng Estuary in south-west Guangdong Province, some of this land is located within the Zhanjiang Mangrove National Nature Reserve. This was the highest number ever found in China during winter, but the record did not even last a month. At the end of January further coordinated counts in Guangdong Province, including members from the Zhanjiang Bird Watching Society and staff from the Zhanjiang Mangrove National Nature Reserve Management Bureau. Together they counted at least 45 individuals from four locations, with Fucheng Estuary having the highest count (38 individuals).

“These numbers are a massive increase on just three individuals counted at Fucheng during our inaugural mid-winter survey in 2012. That year, we found long lines of mist-nets were found flanking shorebird roost sites. We counted hundreds of dead birds, and literally thousands of nets”. Jonathan Martinez

Since then the Zhanjiang Bird Watching Society, and government officials from the Zhanjiang Forestry Department have taken sustained measures to clear the illegal mist nets. In addition, there were educational activities carried out by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society and Zhanjiang Bird Watching Society to help raising awareness to the local communities.

“Our work has made Fucheng mudflat an attractive place for Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other waterbirds”, says Jonathan Martinez. The estuary in Fucheng is clearly of global importance for the species”.

Seven of the Guangdong birds were marked with coloured flags or rings on their legs. One of this was tagged with white leg flag engraved “MA”, this bird was also recorded last winter in the same place. The unique markings enable individual birds to be tracked as they travel along the East Asian—Australasian Flyway.

“As most of the individual birds found here are marked in Russia it also is becoming very important for development of cooperation conservation work along the lines of bilateral agreement on migratory birds signed by both the governments of China and Russia, for which SBS is the key model species”, said the Chair of the SBS Task Force Dr Evgeny Syroechkovskiy.

The global population of Spoon-billed Sandpiper numbers fewer than 400 adult birds. A large proportion were already known to use coastal wetlands in China whilst on passage between breeding grounds in Russia and principal wintering quarters in Bangladesh and Myanmar.

“With other known sites still to be surveyed we hope that further wintering Spoon-billed Sandpipers will be discovered in Guangdong and South China”, says Jonathan.

“This newly discovered wintering location is the third known biggest one in the world. This again proves exceptional importance of China for the survival of this Critically Endangered species”, commented Evgeny.

The surveys were part of the international Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force winter census by Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force under EAAFP (*East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership*) between 26th January to 6th February, 2016.

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, Jill Brown
 Secretary, Nick Bricknell
 Treasurer, Wayne Lock

president@birdsqueensland.org.au

secretary@birdsqueensland.org.au

treasurer@birdsqueensland.org.au

Monthly Meetings Birds Queensland

1st Thursday each month except January, when there is no meeting.
 Royal Geographical Society Meeting Room, 237 Milton Road, Milton.
 Arrive after 7:15pm for a 7:30pm start.

Dog Disturbance on Shorelines

When people see dogs chasing or disturbing shorebirds,
 Phone the BCC Call Centre 3403 8888 and request a RAPID RESPONSE TEAM be sent.
 Add the number to your mobile.

QWSG MERCHANDISE

Should you wish to purchase any of the QWSG merchandise, Contact Vicki Campbell Phone 07 3378 2964 or email vicki.campbell@cogentia.com.au

Postage is **not** included in prices quoted.

BOOKS	\$35.00	Shorebirds of Australia
METAL BADGES	\$6.50	Metal QWSG logo badges.
CLOTH BADGES	\$8.00	QWSG logo on rectangular bottle-green or sand background

POLO SHIRTS \$42.00.

Our cotton polo shirts are 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

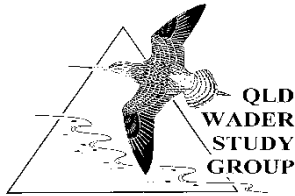


NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have joined recently:
 Lila, FRIED, Ros GREEN, Gail KELLY & Mal BRYANT, Martin PURVINS,
 Thomas RYAN, Mark, SANDERS, Matthew THOMPSON,
 Jean TZ-YU LIAO, Elise ZARRI.

A reminder to members, please let the Treasurer know if you change your email address. If you do please make sure that it does allow delivery and not send downloads to spam.

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.



Count Activities – 2016

QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Program – 2016

Sat 12th Mar	2.33m at 11:56		Sat 20 th Aug	2.10m at 10:47
Sat 9 th Apr	2.32m at 10:51		Sat 17 th Sep	2.21m at 09:43
Sat 7 th May	2.24m at 09:43		Sat 15 th Oct	2.26m at 08:36
Sat 4 th Jun	2.11m at 08:32	National Winter Count	Sat 12 th Nov	2.22m at 07:26
Sat 23 rd Jul	1.98m at 11:48		Sat 3 rd Dec	2.31m at 11:43

Port of Brisbane Count Dates – 2016

Sun 13 th Mar	2.15m at 12:42	Meet	10:50	Sun 21 st Aug	2.13m at 11:32	Meet 09:40
Sun 10 th Apr	2.18m at 11:37	Meet	09:50	Sun 18 th Sep	2.28m at 10:29	Meet 08:40
Sun 8 th May	2.15m at 10:32	Meet	08:40	Sun 16 th Oct	2.38m at 09:24	Meet 07:35
Sun 5 th Jun	2.06m at 09:25	Meet	07:35	Nat Winter Count	Sun 13 th Nov	2.39m at 08:17
Sun 24 th Jul	1.98m at 12:36	Meet	10:45	Sun 4 th Dec	2.26m at 12:22	Meet 10:30

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!

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

A reminder to members: please check to see if your renewal is due and please let the Treasurer know if you change your contact details.

I / We wish to join / renew: (Single: \$15; Family: \$25; Student/Pensioner: \$10)

Title:..... First name:Surname:

Address:..... Membership: \$.....
 Postcode:..... Donation: \$.....
 Payment enclosed: \$_____

Do you require a receipt? Yes / No

Phone: (Home) (Work)(Mobile).....

Email Fax.....

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 (colour version) by E-mail?.....

Signature Date:.....

Please email this form to: membership@waders.org.au

Direct funds transfer to:

Qld Wader Study Group

BSB: 313 140

Account number: 08305297

or

Please post this form to: QWSG Treasurer, PO Box 3138, SOUTH BRISBANE, QLD 4101.

Cheques to be made out to: Qld Wader Study Group