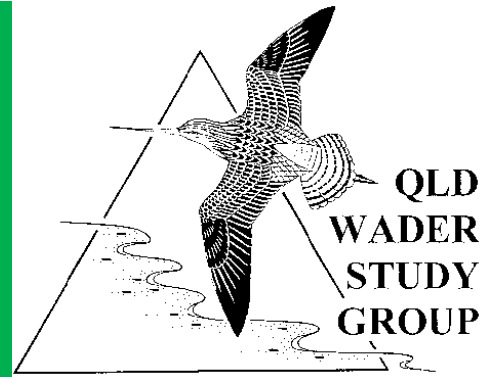


QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue 108

June, July, August 2019

Newsletter of the Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG), a special interest group of
Queensland Ornithological Society Incorporated. www.waders.org.au
<https://www.facebook.com/QueenslandWaderStudyGroup/>

Observations of Queensland Flagged Red Knot

by Arthur Keates

At the end of October 2018, QWSG's leg flag database had 859 records of observations of leg flagged Red Knot *Calidris canutus* dating back to late 1990. Of these, green leg flags fitted in south-east Queensland account for 173 records of birds with a plain leg flag (**PLF**), and 42 records of birds with an engraved leg flag (**ELF**). Between December 1988 and September 1996, 352 PLFs were fitted and a further 3 in 2006. Since September 2012, ELFs have been fitted to only 9 birds, the last in September 2018.

In contrast to other species fitted with green leg flags, the majority of observations are from New Zealand (133), followed by Queensland (44), mainland China and Taiwan (24), New South Wales (8), Russia (1), Japan (1) and Victoria (1). The high proportion of observations in New Zealand evidences the migratory route and non-breeding range of the species and the fact that south-east Queensland is primarily used as a stop-over on southern migration.

Of particular interest is the observation of a PLF on 20 June 2011 at Kosa Dvukh Pilotov Island ("Two Pilot's Sandspit"), a long and narrow island in the Chukchi Sea along the coast of the Chukotka Peninsula, Russia - see map. This island is within the breeding grounds of the *rogersi* subspecies of Red Knot, consistent with historical information indicating that subspecies spends its non-breeding season in New Zealand and south-east Australia while the *piersmai* subspecies breeds on the New Siberian Islands and spends its non-breeding season predominantly in north-west Australia. All other observations of green leg flagged Red Knot in the northern hemisphere have been of birds on northern migration, one each in Taiwan and on the island of Okinawa, Japan, the rest in the Yellow Sea region of China.



Red Knot breeding grounds site.

Two of the older records from China arise out of recovery reports of birds being caught in the Yangtze River estuary on northern migration having been banded and fitted with a PLF at Nudgee Beach on southern migration: one banded on 26 October 1992 was recovered at Miao-gang on 15 April 1994 and the other banded on 1 September 1996 was recovered at Juduansha 12 April 1998. More recently, between 2009 and 2015, the Global Flyway Network (**GFN**) team reported 21 observations in the Bohai Bay area of China, the earliest in any year on 16 April and the latest in any year on 27 May. The only record of an ELF is **ABE** on 28 April 2015, just under 3 years after banding on 23 September 2012 at Toorbul. Because the difference in the *rogersi* and *piersmai* subspecies is evident when in full, fresh breeding plumage, the team identified all but one to be of the *rogersi* subspecies.

Returning to Australasian records, the only Victorian record is of a bird banded at Bynoe Ck, Gulf of Carpentaria on 4 April 1998 and caught off Mann's Beach, Corner Inlet on 23 Feb 2002. All New South Wales reports are for observations at Stockton and the Kooragang Nature Reserve in the Hunter region between 1996 and 2014. As an indication of birds on southern migration, the earliest of those reports in any year is 22 September and the latest in any year is 22 October (4 of them likely of the same individual in a period of 2 weeks in October 2014). Of interest, **AKM**, banded at Manly Harbour on 12 October 2014, was observed just 5 weeks later at Stockton, but has not been reported since then.

The Queensland records are for observations in the Gulf of Carpentaria (2), the Great Sandy Strait (1) and the rest in Moreton Bay as expected given the banding sites, accessibility issues and the greater observer effort in the region. The following leg flag data are consistent with count data for south-east Queensland showing most Red Knot are passage migrants, the majority on southern migration:

- There is only a single record in the Austral winter (at the Port of Brisbane on 28 June 1993).
- There are only 4 records in the Austral summer (3 in December and 2 in January).
- There are only 2 records in the Austral autumn when birds are on northern migration (24 March and 3 May).
- All other records relate to observations made in the Austral spring (the earliest in any year on 26 August through to the last week of October with 3 in November).

A snapshot of the observations in New Zealand reveals:

- The earliest arrival date in any year is 23 September.
- The latest date before departure on northern migration is 8 April.
- Only 2 birds have been reported in the Austral winter.
- 111 observations were made at sites in the harbours around Auckland, 16 in the Firth of Thames and only one on the South Island, at Nelson (bearing in mind this is a reflection of observer effort, notably that of Tony Habraken).

Of the 9 birds fitted with an ELF, 5 have been observed in New Zealand, including 4 of the 6 birds banded at Toorbul on 23 September 2012. Here is a brief history of each bird in the order of banding:

- (1) **ABE** was first observed on 11 January 2014 and then again on 28 February 2015 at Big Sand Island Kaipara Harbour. As already noted, it was observed by the GFN team at Bohai Bay, China on 28 April 2015 on northern migration. On its return, it was again observed at Big Sand Island on 19 December 2015.
- (2) Just over a week after banding, **ABH** was observed at the banding site on 1 October 2012 before being observed at Taporu South, Kaipara Harbour over the next 2 Austral summers: 10 March 2013, 11 January 2014 and 8 Feb 2014.
- (3) After **ABJ** was observed at the banding site on 1 October 2012, it was not reported again until 26 December 2014 when it was observed in Karaka, Manukau Harbour. Then followed observations in the next 2 years at the same site on 13 March 2016 and 5 November 2017. On 27 September 2018, it was observed at Maroom, Great Sandy Strait region, Queensland.
- (4) Originally banded at Miranda, Firth of Thames, on 20 October 1996, **ABK** was fitted with the ELF when caught at Toorbul on 23 September 2012. Three weeks later, it was observed at Clifton Beach, Whitford before returning to the Firth of Thames where it was observed for the last time on 3 March 2013. **ABK** is the oldest known individual of the Queensland flagged Red Knot having reached the age of 18+ years when last observed on 3 March 2013.
- (5) After being banded at Lytton on 11 September 2018, **ANB** was observed at Karaka, Manukau Harbour on 30 September. The last confirmed observation in Moreton Bay was 21 September although it is quite likely the partially read ELF on 27 September at Manly Harbour was **ANB**. With the favourable winds prevailing at the time, 3 days would have been enough time for it to make the journey across the Tasman Sea.

I thank those who report their observations of leg flags and Joris Driessen (Australasian Wader Studies Group) and Phil Cross for their diligence in maintaining the respective leg flag databases.



Red Knot **ANB** feeding at Thorneside, Queensland 20 September 2018. Photo: A Keates

Migration Route of Secretive Steppe Whimbrel Discovered

From Birdlife International 29th April 2019

The Steppe Whimbrel is the rarest and least understood member of the highly threatened Numeniini tribe (curlews and godwits). But considering they were believed to be extinct 25 years ago, it's unsurprising that we know so little about them. A newly published report is beginning to fill in the gaps in our knowledge.



Spot the difference: the Steppe Whimbrel is identified by its white underwings © Gary Allport
By Cressida Stevens

The story of the Steppe Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus alboaxillaris* is a bizarre one. There is a very real risk in conservation that birds can go extinct before we even know they exist, or know enough about them to make efforts to protect them. Very little was known about the Steppe Whimbrel – a rare sub-species of the Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* - before it was declared extinct in 1994. However, recent sightings have revealed the Steppe Whimbrel lives on, and we now have a second chance to research and rescue this enigmatic bird.

The Steppe Whimbrel is one of four subspecies of the Whimbrel. The Whimbrel itself has an IUCN rating of Least Concern – but were the Steppe Whimbrel to be its own species, it would be classified as Critically Endangered. A recent review of the subspecies' status estimates that there are a mere 100 individuals left, at most, and the population trend is declining.

For 30 years, this wader managed to escape the notice of humans and, like a lot of lost wildlife, it began to experience cultural extinction. This is where people stop looking for an animal, it is soon omitted from modern field guides and its existence is forgotten. But three years after the birds were consigned to history, they were re-found in Russia.

It is often said that you find something when you stop looking. In this case, it was actually during search efforts for the closely-related Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* in 1997, which researchers stumbled upon Steppe Whimbrels close to the Ural Mountains in Russia. This initial discovery was followed by regular sightings in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, being a migratory bird, little can be understood about it when only seen during part of the year. It was not until February 2016, that this bird was rediscovered at its wintering grounds in Africa, for the first time on the continent since 1965.

Gary Allport (BirdLife International) and colleagues had been observing and photographing a flock of Common Whimbrels *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus* on a beach in Maputo, Mozambique. But only when he returned from the site and looked over the pictures, did Gary realise that one bird stood out from the rest, matching the description of the very rare Steppe Whimbrel subspecies. Gary tells of the extraordinary experience: "It is amazing to think that such a rare and little-known bird was sitting on the public beach in Maputo, the capital city of Mozambique, right under our nose." Distinguishing between subspecies is not easy, but the Steppe Whimbrel differs in appearance with white underwings, white axillaries and fewer markings on its belly. Gary consulted experts, who confirmed his judgement, thereby launching a whole new opportunity for research.



Gary Allport discovered the Steppe Whimbrel when looking over his photographs © Callan Cohen & Gary Allport

The next step was to go back to the site in an attempt to track down their anomalous bird. Upon returning, excitement grew as not only did they find the bird, but also a second Steppe Whimbrel. The race was now on to gather as much information as possible from these two birds - a male and a female - before they took flight back to their Asian breeding grounds.

With the publishing of this research in *Wader Study*, we are finally filling in the gaps in our knowledge of this bird. Regular surveys of the beach in Mozambique have provided information on social interaction, feeding behaviour and timing of migration. In addition, equipping the male with a satellite tracker has revealed for the first time the route this subspecies takes and that Steppe Whimbrels are further set apart from Common Whimbrels by migrating one month sooner. The tagged male made quite a remarkable journey, covering almost 4,700 kilometres in just six days.

The opportunistic study of these two individual birds is of course not enough to establish reliable trends and information on the Steppe Whimbrel. In order to learn more, researchers are encouraging the public in Eastern Africa to look out for white underwings among flocks of whimbrels and curlews and photograph any suspected Steppe Whimbrels.

Currently, there is no conservation effort aimed specifically at this subspecies, which is only to be expected: it's very difficult to conserve an animal about which so little is known. This new research has made an exciting advance in equipping conservationists with some of the vital information needed, if they are to attempt a rescue of this bird.

Links for the paper are published in *Wader Study* here: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18194/ws.00126> (paywall).

The open access PDF is available on Researchgate

here: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330657425_Local_site_use_and_first_northbound_migration_tracking_of_non-breeding_Steppe_Whimbrel_Numenius_phaeopus_alboaxillaris_Lowe_1921

For a more in-depth insight, see Graham Appleton's blog here: <https://wadertales.wordpress.com/2019/01/26/in-search-of-steppe-whimbrel/>

Worldwide Mozambique Science

whimbrelnew sciencescience publicationlatest scienceMigratory BirdsMigratory Birds and FlywaysMigratory Birds and Flyways News

Mud, Glorious Mud! Spoonie's Winter Wetland Declared Protected Area

Birdlife - 31 Jan 2019

Nanthar Island, Myanmar is a crucial wintering site for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper (Critically Endangered). Thanks to the advocacy of BANCA (BirdLife in Myanmar) and local people, the site has now been designated a protected area.



Nanthar island hosts up to 12% of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper population © Butterfly Hunter/ Shutterstock
By Shannon Anstee

As Spoonie wades along the shore of Nanthar Island in Myanmar, he uses his unique spatula-shaped beak to sift small invertebrates from the mudflats. Luckily for this little Spoonie, he is standing on protected ground, rich in food and safe from the threat of hunting. However, some of his friends aren't so lucky. With a tiny population of no more than 456, and still in decline, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea* (Critically Endangered) is just one step away from becoming extinct in the wild.

Nanthar Island is not a well-known site for the Spoon-billed sandpiper – but it is nonetheless an important one. Covering a fairly large area of approximately 3,600ha, the island and the nearby Mayyu Estuary in Rakhine state, Myanmar host up to 12% of the global population of Spoon-billed Sandpipers.

In 2008, surveys of the Nanthar area conducted by the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force confirmed this importance. Unfortunately, spoonies that use this habitat as a wintering site are often under threat from hunting by local people. The Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA – BirdLife in Myanmar) has been working hard in the area to protect the unique bird from this pressing concern.

Tackling the problem at its source, BANCA assessed the socio-economic situation of the local people. From this, they were able to determine that most people did not really depend on shorebird hunting for their livelihoods, but instead used them to add variety to their own diets. To combat this problem, BANCA teamed up with local partner Rakhine Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association, to conduct education and awareness activities.

Both BANCA and the local people of Nanthar agreed that the habitat, which is also a breeding site for a number of species of marine turtles, should be protected on account of its high level of biodiversity. Working as an advocate for the local communities, BANCA consulted the Myanmar government to nominate Nanthar and its adjoining wetlands as a Flyway Network Site – part of a network of protected wetlands under the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership that are crucial sites for migratory waterbirds.



BANCA survey Nanthar island to confirm its importance as a site for Spoon-billed Sandpipers

BANCA Director of Operations Pyae Phyo Aung stated that *“The recent amendment of biodiversity and protected area conservation laws by the Myanmar government has helped to elevate the importance of community involvement in the conservation process, and is a major reason why Nanthar Island is now recognised as a Flyway Site”*

The declaration as a protected area is a great first step, but for BANCA, the work isn’t done yet. To make sure that spoonies, as well as other migratory birds, as well as marine species are safe. But for now, the protection status will ensure that the education and awareness activities that are being carried out by BANCA can be continued on a far larger scale. Helping to ensure the future of the spoonie, and his friends.

Check Out this video

Have you seen the FLYWAYS video footage that incorporates last Saturdays Toondah Harbour “A line in the mud event”? It just looks wonderful!!

Thanks to Gordana Pozvek for forwarding the Link.

Randall Wood

FLYWAYSFILM.COM (1 min 10 sec)

https://vimeo.com/335666278?fbclid=IwAR0WknHJkP8OCovUzAYLe5D02nH9HHooVh1oSTI5_xDqellb-AdKkcpaUSg

Also check out - Toondah Save the Bay (very beautiful, atmospheric short video – 44 sec)

Surveys! Surveys! – Calling all counters

QWSG committee have decided to once again undertake surveys of both Mackay and the Great Sandy Strait. All members and interested wader counters are welcome to participate in either or BOTH surveys.

The proposed dates are as follows:

Mackay survey: 26 – 27 October 2019.

Great Sandy Strait survey: date to be selected (early in 2020).

Interested participants please contact Peter Driscoll, Peter Rothlisberg or Linda Cross for details.

Peter Driscoll – email: xxxxx@xxxxl.com or phone: xxxx xxx xxx.

Peter Rothlisberg – email: or phone: 07 xxxx xxx Mobile: xxxx xxx xxx

Linda – email: xenus69@xxxxx.com or phone: 07 xxxx xxxx Mobile: xxxx xxx xxx

Accommodation and transport costs during both surveys will be provided by QWSG. In Mackay, air flights and most food costs will also be covered for participants. We need counters to undertake each survey efficiently, but always appreciate more counters if interested. Participants do not need to be experienced and are most welcome. They will be partnered with experienced counters, although final numbers may be limited by funds and resources to transport and accommodate people.

For the GSS survey, vehicle fuel costs travelling to and from the survey will also be reimbursed.

Chairperson's Comment: This is a great way to expand your knowledge of wader field work and to get to know other members of QWSG.

Tangle of shorebird policy unpicked

21 February 2019

From UQ News



Research has shown that international cooperation has been critical in protecting migratory shorebirds in the Asia Pacific, but ongoing challenges exist. The University of Queensland-led study surveyed and analysed the international policy framework for conserving shorebirds migrating within the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, one of four major global migratory waterbird flyways.

Eduardo Gallo-Cajiao, from UQ's **School of Biological Sciences** and the School of **Earth and Environmental Sciences**, said conserving these birds was a huge challenge, but efforts were well under way. "Every year, millions of shorebirds travel between their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere, primarily in Russia and Alaska, and their wintering areas in the southern hemisphere, including Australia and New Zealand," he said.

"This spectacle, however, is currently in peril due to multiple threats, such as coastal reclamation, hunting, pollution, and disturbance."

"National governments and other key players have realised that protecting these birds requires international cooperation, so they've been collaborating across the region through agreements."

The research revealed the number of active agreements, who participates in them, and the threats they address. "A total of 28 agreements make up the international framework for conserving migratory shorebirds in the Flyway, with 57 government and non-government participants," Mr Gallo-Cajiao said. "These agreements have been emerging since the 1970s, with China, Russia, Japan, Australia, Republic of Korea, and the USA participating most."

The team discovered that Flyway-relevant agreements are not exclusive to national governments, with NGOs and local governments becoming key players.

"NGOs have been emerging as signatories to some of these agreements since the mid-2000s, and local governments, such as Seochon County in the Republic of Korea, have been entering into additional agreements," Mr Gallo-Cajiao said.

"The rise in the number of agreements seems to be the result of governance demand in critical areas around the Yellow Sea, where conservation priorities are high.

"We have the agreements; the challenge now is to ensure actions are coordinated across them, helping to protect these beautiful, precious, and globally revered species."

The research has been published in [Regional Environmental Change](#) (DOI: [10.1007/s10113-019-01461-3](#)).

Media: Eduardo Gallo-Cajiao, e.gallocajiao@uq.edu.au, Dominic Jarvis, dominic.jarvis@uq.edu.au

Shorebird Count Down in far North-West Tasmania

From The Advocate - Tasmania



As the sun rises, mud flats stretch out as far as the eye can see.

A group of 26 have made the journey to Robbins Island at dawn to take advantage of the low tides. Prepared for all weather, the group have come to the area to identify and count the various species of shorebirds that are roosting in the region. Some of the birds have travelled tens of thousands of kilometres from Alaska, Eastern Siberia, Mongolia and Japan to spend the Tasmanian summer feeding and resting for the return journey.

Hazel Britton is the organiser of the North-West shorebird count and has been involved in the count for 15 years. She gathers a group of volunteers each summer and winter to visit roosting sites around Perkins Island, Robins Island and Kangaroo Island.

"It's true wilderness out there. You don't see any other people normally once you get to the island," she said. The bi-annual counts are crucial for gathering data as part of BirdLife Australia's Shorebirds 20-20 monitoring and conservation program.



Bird counters in action. Picture: Michael Hyland

On January 20, the counters visited 11 roosting sites in the remote islands. Armed with telescopes and binoculars, they watched the birds as the tides rose and they came into roost on higher land.

Amateur bird photographer Michael Hyland went to document the count. He said conditions on the exposed islands were very challenging for photography. "Last week the conditions were very warm and windy, very bright and there wasn't a lot of birds there. It was probably one of the poorest counts we've had," he said.

"It's true wilderness out there. You don't see any other people normally once you get to the island." - Hazel Britton

The number of shorebirds was noticeably down this year. Mrs. Britton said numbers were low for the largest shorebird, the Eastern Curlew, as was the Red Knot and Curlew Sandpiper.

There was a rare sighting of a Terek Sandpiper, a small bird with an upturned bill. "I last saw one of those in the north west about 15 years ago. It is unusual, the odd one gets this far," Mrs. Britton said.

She said the number of birds is dependent on many things, including wind and tides. The birds might simply be roosting in places that the counters don't visit. But generally the numbers of migratory bird species have been declining as land is reclaimed on their feeding grounds in places such as the Yellow Sea. Climate change and growing human population also put stress on the bird populations.

It's a long, tiring day for the counters but the work is very rewarding. "We feel that it's important to monitor birds because it's only by entering all the data into the database that experts can crunch the numbers to see what's going on," Mrs Britton said. "Most of our counters really feel it's a privilege."

Shorebirds by numbers

Tasmania is the final stop on the East Asian/Australasian Flyway used by many shorebirds that breed in the tundra of Siberia, Alaska and Mongolia.

Australia hosts 33 species of migratory shorebirds, however, many don't come as far south as Tasmania. Up to up to 20,000 birds come to far North West of Tasmania to feed on the benthic fauna living in the tidal mudflats.

Scientists use geolocators and tracking devices to record the epic journeys of some of these birds. One Bar-tailed Godwit known as E7 was tracked flying 11,680 kilometres from Alaska to New Zealand non-stop. Volunteers from BirdLife Australia and the Australian Wader Studies Group have carried out monitoring of key shorebird areas in Australia since 1981.

Shorebird Egg Theft is Becoming a Big Problem in the Arctic. And Climate Change is Behind it.

Environmental Health News
Nov 09, 2018

The daily rate of eggs stolen from shorebirds' nests in the Arctic is three times higher than it was 70 years ago. The trouble, which coincides with warming temperatures, could impact vulnerable populations of stunning birds.

For centuries, the Arctic has been a relatively safe place for shorebirds such as plovers and sandpipers to lay their eggs, as nests in the tropics were much more likely to suffer attacks from predators.

That is changing.

The rate of "daily nest predation"—eggs stolen from the nest by predators such as foxes or rodents—has increased threefold over the past 70 years in the Arctic, according to a study published today in *Science* that looked at more than 38,000 nests from 237 shorebird populations in 149 locations throughout the world.

The study is the latest to show trouble for shorebird populations that migrate to the Arctic—though most of the previous research has pointed to problems away from breeding grounds—and suggests that the energy-intensive, long distance flights to breeding spots in the far North may no longer be the safest bet for some birds.

Around the globe, about 45 percent of Arctic shorebirds populations are decreasing, according to a 2016 report from the National Audubon Society.

"The Arctic now represents an extensive ecological trap for migrating birds," the authors wrote.

Rebecca Bentzen, Arctic Beringia avian research coordinator with the Wildlife Conservation Society, told EHN the most alarming part of the study was that shorebirds using the East Asian flyway—a bird migration route ending in the northeast Russia—were most impacted and about 20 percent of the birds on that flyway already have threatened populations.

The daily nest predation rates in the North Temperate Zone, which includes Europe and most of Asia and North America, doubled. In the tropics, there was little change.

The researchers also looked at temperature changes over this time and linked the higher rates of eggs stolen in the Northern Temperate Zone and Arctic to warming temperatures.

"These findings are alarming," said Tamás Székely, an evolutionary biologist and professor at the University of Bath and senior author of the new study, in a statement. "The Earth is a fragile planet with complex ecosystems, thus changes in predator-prey interactions can lead to cascading effects through the food web."

Formerly a "win-win" for the birds



Spoonbill sandpiper (Credit: Pavel Tomkovich)

Shorebirds from around the world head to the Arctic to breed because the region is "flush with resources," Daniel Ruthrauff, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Science Center, told EHN.

"But it's a brief flush," added Ruthrauff, who researches the reproduction, migration and populations of shorebirds.

The birds — including species familiar to birders such as Semipalmated sandpipers, Buff-breasted sandpipers, American golden plovers, Black-bellied plovers, Bar-tailed godwit—head to the Arctic to eat the abundant insects and enjoy what has long been a relatively predator-limited area.

"Predators like foxes and weasels, have strong population fluctuations, because there are only strong food resources during summer," Ruthrauff said. "The birds leave when there isn't food, predators are stuck here. It's a win-win for the birds."

The new findings are concerning, Ruthrauff said, because shorebirds have "constrained reproductive output." "It's almost always four or so eggs, it's a short breeding season chicks hatch and leave the nest almost immediately," he said. "They put a lot of resources into big eggs, big chicks and they get one chance per year."

Too many people, too few wetlands



Red fox (Credit: Pavel Tomkovich)

Scientists were already concerned about shorebird populations. Ruthrauff said estimates have shown up to 50 percent of migratory shorebird populations appear to be declining. A lot of previously research has attributed the decline to populations on the loss of wetlands, he said.

Bentzen said, in the East Asian flyway for example, places with a lot of people and related infrastructure are hotspots for threatened shorebird populations.

Also places like the oilfields of Alaska where "they try hard to keep them clean, but there are landfills, and most predators feeding on eggs and nestlings are also eating garbage – so there's a higher population of raven, foxes and gulls," she said.

The authors of the new study point out that predators are the most common cause of breeding failure, so the implications of the new research could be large. The study didn't pinpoint why climate change is spurring the increased egg-theft, however, there are a few possible explanations.

Predators could be eating more eggs since other food sources—such as lemmings, which have had a population crash due to less snow cover—are less abundant. There could be changes in vegetation and plants around the nests, leaving them more vulnerable, or increased numbers of predators, such as foxes.

Nest predation may just be the tip of the iceberg for climate impacts, so to speak—diseases thought absent from the Arctic are impacting bird populations as well. For example, an avian cholera outbreak in the Hudson Bay from 2004 to 2013 killed thousands of eiders.

A "genetic disposition to be resilient"



A Bristle-thighed Curlew on the tundra. (Credit: Rachel M. Richardson, USGS)

If nesting in the Arctic continues to trend unfavorable, it's unclear if the birds will alter their breeding or migrations. Bentzen said there are two categories of shorebirds— "conservative breeders", which go to the same place every year and breed, and "opportunistic breeders," which will "go to Arctic, case the joint, find the best spot and breed there."

She said the latter group, given their adaptability, might prove to fare better if conditions keep worsening.

Ruthrauff said there is hope because the shorebirds are "already hardwired to deal with so many different ecosystems."

"Wintering in Panama Bay, stopping in Humboldt Bay, breeding on the tundra in Arctic Alaska that puts them in some good standing," he said. "There is some built-in genetic disposition to be resilient."

Shorebird Droppings Likely to Blame for Water Advisory at Delaware Bay Beach

Delaware Online

It's that time of year again: for the birds and the bees and the bacteria at the beach.

A recreational water advisory at Slaughter Beach was issued Tuesday afternoon after sampling found higher-than-normal levels of bacteria in the water. Slaughter Beach, along the Delaware Bay, is a temporary buffet this time of year for thousands of migrating shorebirds that stop over during migration routes to feed on horseshoe crab eggs.

The droppings those birds leave behind contain the same fecal indicator bacteria used to test recreational water quality to make sure it's safe for swimming. Increased rainfall can also cause indicator bacteria to be washed close to shore, according to an advisory issued by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.



Horseshoe crabs at Slaughter Beach. (Photo: Jason Minto, The News Journal)

Additional water quality samples have been taken and the advisory will be lifted once those levels return to normal. The tests found 107 colonies of enterococci colonies in 100 milliliters of water, which is just slightly over the safe limit, according to the state's online recreational water monitoring system. Officials test all public beaches to make sure they're safe for locals and visitors.

Enterococcus is an indicator bacteria found in the feces of most animals, and can signify the presence of harmful bacteria that can cause gastrointestinal problems in sensitive groups, such as people with immune system disorders.

The recreational water advisory is a warning that bacteria may be present. No other bay or ocean beaches have an active advisory at this time.

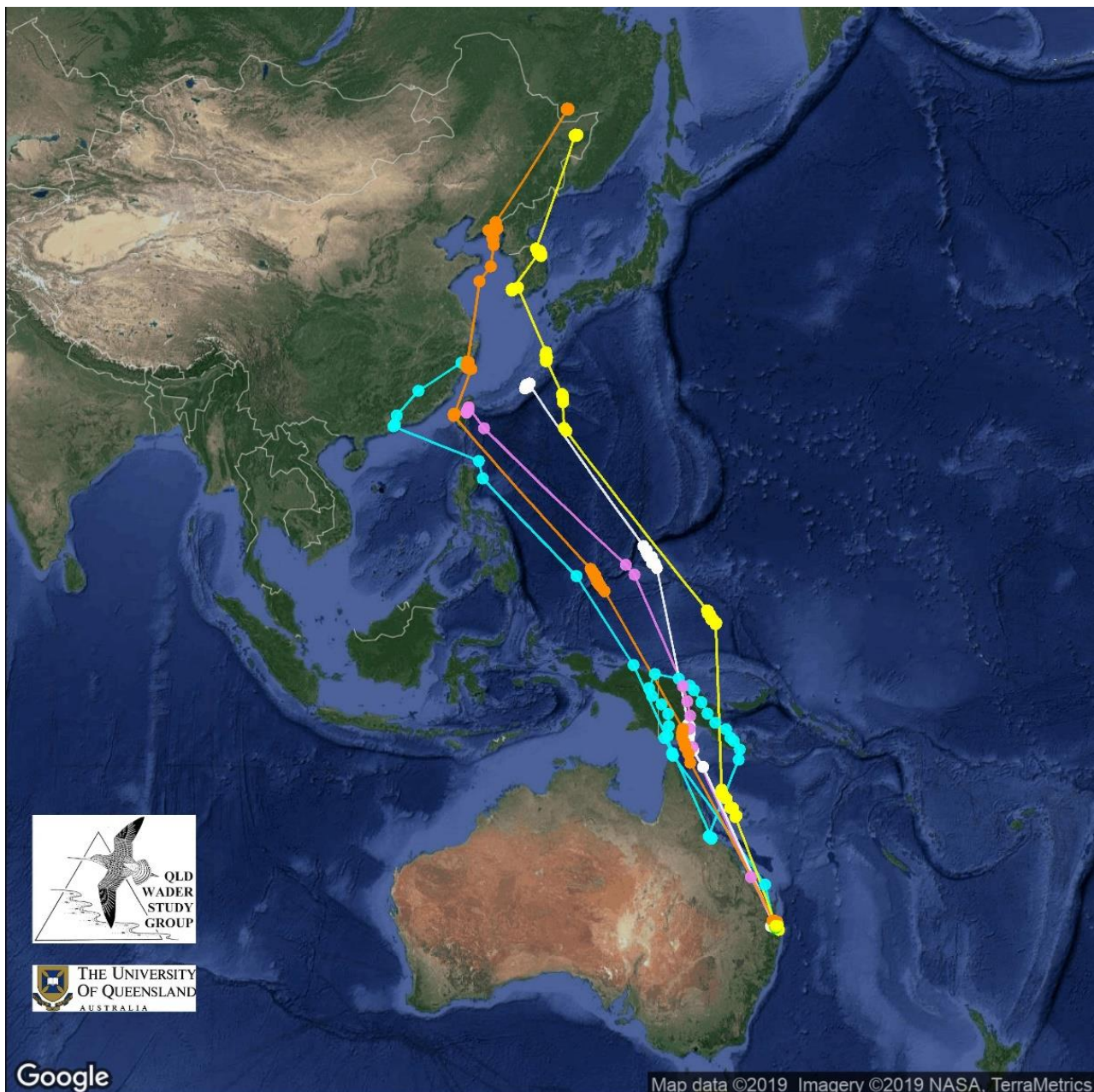
To see all of the beach monitoring locations and most current test results, go to www.apps.dnrec.state.de.us/RecWater.

Curlew Tracking Update

by Brad Woodworth

As QWSG counters that have visited Moreton Bay's beaches and coastlines recently will well know, most of the more than 30,000 migratory shorebirds that spend the Australian summer in Moreton Bay have now left for their northern hemisphere breeding grounds. This includes five Far Eastern Curlew that were equipped with tracking devices by the Queensland Wader Study Group at Manly Wader Roost, Toorbul Wader Roost, and Geoff Skinner Wetlands in Moreton Bay over the summers of 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Two of the curlew (orange and yellow) are being tracked for the second consecutive year and have already reached their breeding areas; amazingly, the exact same breeding areas they occupied in 2018! The northward migrations of the other three curlew (cyan, purple, white) are still in progress, with the three birds last detected in eastern China, Taiwan, and Okinawa (Japan), respectively.

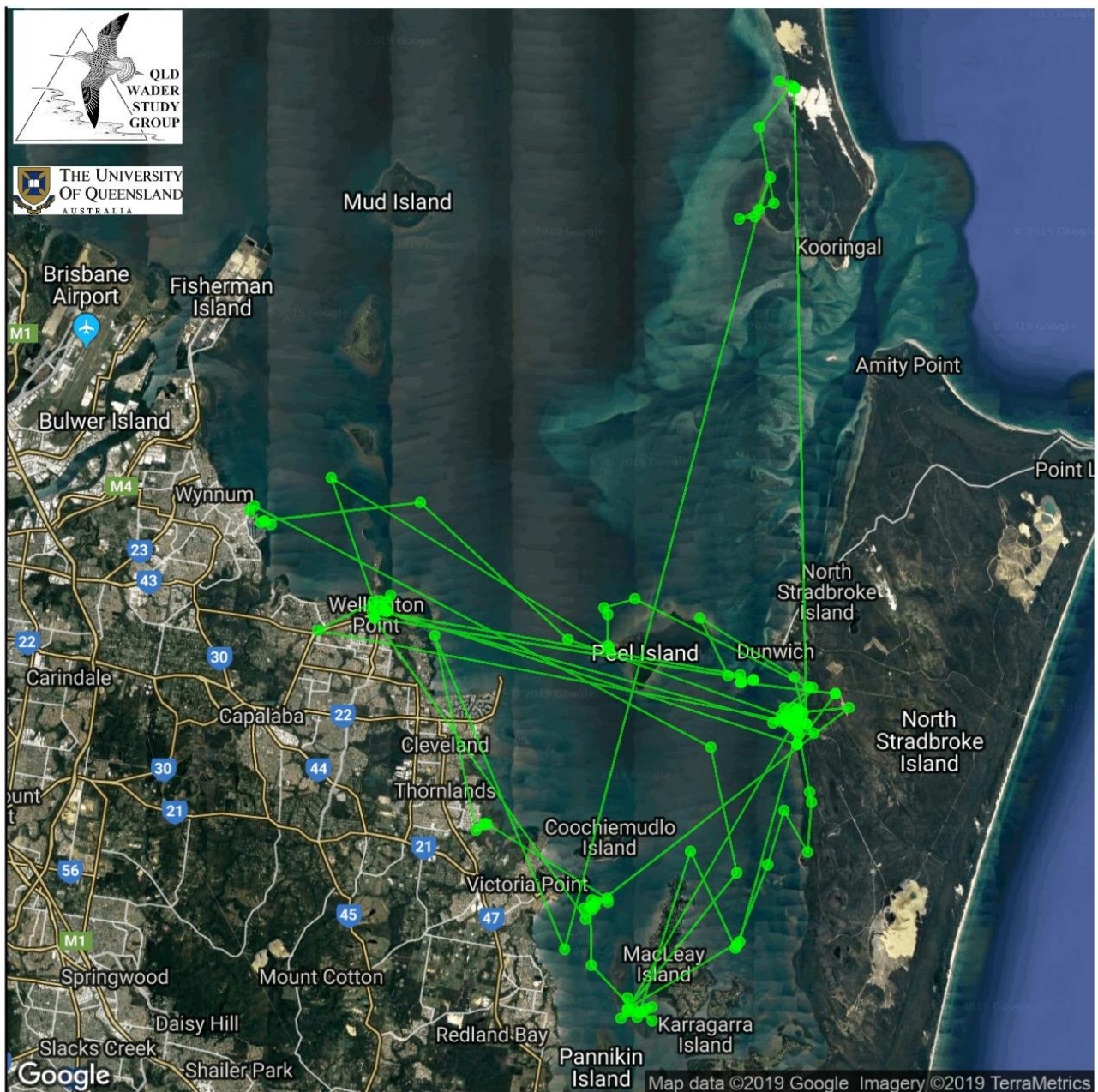


Above: International migration of five Eastern Curlews from Moreton Bay.

A sixth curlew (green) continues to move about Moreton Bay roosting and foraging as it has done since it was initially equipped with a tracking device as an immature bird in early March 2018.

This curlew, which wears green leg-flag AAJ, has yet to attempt its first northward migration, highlighting the year-round importance of Moreton Bay as a nursery for young shorebirds not yet ready to embark on their first migration north. Have you spotted AAJ recently?

Follow the Queensland Wader Study Group on Facebook or visit www.waders.org.au to keep up-to-speed on the tracking of Far Eastern Curlew and other migratory shorebirds of Moreton Bay.



Movements of one non-migrating immature bird (leg flag AAJ) within the Bay in April and May 2019.

Count Programme - Linda Cross

The **National Winter Count** is set down for 1 June 2019. Please try to do this important count on the weekend of 1 and 2 June 2019. If you are unable to do your count then, please try to do it either side of those dates or as close as possible to them.

The Tin Can Bay counters (Kelvin and Amelia Nielsen), will temporarily be unable to do regular counts of their sites in that area. We are therefore looking for anyone in the area who might be able to do them for an extended period. Starting now during the months when most of the migratory birds are away would give you a good chance to get to know the sites. We also have many other count sites along the Queensland coast that are not counted, so we are keen to hear from anyone who would like to get involved in the count programme.

During the monthly count at the Port of Brisbane complex in May, the counters covering the artificial roost spent quite some time looking for the Buff-breasted Sandpiper that has spent nearly 4 months at the site. However, the search for the bird was not fruitful and the last known recorded sighting was on 4 May 2019. One can only hope that the bird makes it to the breeding grounds, and from there into the flyway that will hopefully help it return to the continent where it belongs.

Although late summer has in the past produced early records of 1 or 2 cross Tasman visitors (Double-banded Plover), autumn heralds the main arrival of this species. A total of 15 count sites within the count programme have recorded the species during March, April and May. An unsuspected (and surprise), report was received for the species from Lake Coolmunda, which is just under 300 kilometres from the coast. The table below details records for the species.

Site	Date	Number of birds	
Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island	07.04.19	1	
Buckley's Hole, Bribie Island	07.04.19	1	1 bird also recorded 06.05.19
Caboolture River Mouth	03.05.19	1	
Bundaberg Port	05.05.19	1	
Lake Coolmunda	04.05.19	1	3 birds seen 07.05.19
Gregory Road, Hay's Inlet	06.04.19	2	
Redcliffe Airport Northside	04.05.19	9	
Garnett's Lagoon No.1, Hervey Bay	04.05.19	9	
East Geoff Skinner Reserve	06.04.19	11	
Noosa River Sandbanks	09.05.19	22	
Manly Harbour	10.05.19	26	First season record of 1 bird at this site on 14.02.19. A juvenile bird recorded with 7 adults in March
Port of Brisbane	05.05.19	29	
Geoff Skinner Reserve East	04.05.19	30	
King Street mudflats, Thornlands	06.04.19	38	
Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay	16.04.19	39	
Reeder's Point, Moreton Island	08.04.19	93	

As would be expected, most migratory species numbers have dropped on the April and May counts, but some of the resident species have increased (particularly Red-capped Plover, Pied Stilt and Red-necked Avocet).

Species and quantities extracted for this newsletter were taken from a few February, and all of March, April and May counts. Details of some of those extracts follow.

During the autumn Moreton Island Shorebird Survey undertaken by the QWSG on 8 April 2019 a staggering total of 1,516 Whimbrel were counted for all sites, with 1,200 of them being recorded at Dead Tree Beach site. Also, during the survey 3 Sanderling were recorded at Reeder's Point and the high count of Double-banded Plover listed in the table above.

An Asian Dowitcher was recorded at Manly Harbour on 17.02.19, 31.03.19 and 02.04.19. A Common Sandpiper was counted at Kedron Brook Wetlands on 24.03.19 and a Cox's Sandpiper was recorded at Kianawah Road Wetland on 09.03.19, 05.04.19 and 13.04.19. This is not a recognised species, but a hybrid offspring of a male Pectoral Sandpiper and a female Curlew Sandpiper.

I was surprised to see some of the larger counts for Far Eastern Curlew in early March, when in previous years the numbers have been much lower in that month.

Listed below are some high wader counts extracted from the count programme for the last few months. Additional high migratory and resident wader counts can be found in the "Interesting wader sighting" section.

4 Beach Stone-curlew – Reeder's Point, Moreton Island – 08.04.19
 511 Far Eastern Curlew – Geoff Skinner Reserve East – 09.03.19
 321 Far Eastern Curlew – Lytton No. 1 Claypan – 09.03.19
 2,200 Bar-tailed Godwit – Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island – 02.02.19
 1,845 Bar-tailed Godwit – Geoff Skinner Reserve West – 09.03.19
 275 Black-tailed Godwit – Gregory Road, Hay's Inlet – 09.03.19
 165 Pied Oystercatcher – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
 6 Sooty Oystercatcher – Wickham Point – 07.04.19 (and 6 on 09.03.19)
 6 Sooty Oystercatcher – Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay – 17.02.19
 36 Grey Plover – site 1 Boonooroo – 10.03.19
 339 Pacific Golden Plover – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
 317 Pacific Golden Plover – Luggage Point – 10.03.19
 325 Red-necked Avocet – Port of Brisbane complex – 07.04.19
 1,139 Pied Stilt – Kedron Brook Wetland – 24.03.19
 823 Pied Stilt – Redcliffe Airport Northside – 04.05.19
 24 Common Greenshank – site 3 Boonooroo – 08.03.19
 650 Great Knot – Maaroom – 09.03.19
 20 Red Knot – O'Regan's Creek West, Hervey Bay – 09.02.19 (some in breeding plumage)
 55 Marsh Sandpiper – Maaroom – 06.04.19
 156 Ruddy Turnstone – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
 84 Ruddy Turnstone – Manly Harbour – 06.04.19
 424 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
 1,020 Grey-tailed Tattler – Manly Harbour – 18.04.19
 105 Terek Sandpiper – Manly Harbour – 20.02.19
 72 Terek Sandpiper – Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay – 10.03.19
 195 Greater Sand Plover – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
 1,140 Lesser Sand Plover – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
 704 Curlew Sandpiper – Lytton No. 1 claypan – 09.03.19
 239 Red-capped Plover – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
 165 Red-capped Plover – Gregory Road, Hay's Inlet – 06.04.19
 76 Broad-billed Sandpiper – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
 1,576 Red-necked Stint – Port of Brisbane complex – 07.04.19
 1,180 Red-necked Stint – Geoff Skinner Reserve East – 09.03.19

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to include all articles in the paper version of the newsletter as there is a page limit for posting, so "Interesting wader sightings" and "Not waders but of interest anyway" sections may not appear. However, if you have an email address please ask for the electronic version, which has all the articles that could not be included in the paper version. The electronic version is also in colour.

You might recall a paragraph written by Arthur Keates that was included in the count programme article of the last newsletter (issue 107), explaining the take off and departure of waders on their northward migration. I was lucky enough (along with other members), to witness this event during the Manly Harbour wader ID day on 13 April 2019. The weather conditions were favourable for a departure to take place, and although Arthur mentioned visiting exposed mudflats late in the afternoon, it is apparent that the birds also take off from high tide roosts. Read the outing report in this newsletter for quite a descriptive story. Those of us who hung around in the cold wind as dusk approached to watch this spectacle were pleased that we did. I was quite enthralled and now that I know what to look for, I will certainly put this on the calendar for 2020.

Unfortunately, I was unable to finish the 2018 Port Report for this newsletter. It will appear in the next issue.

Breeding records:

Pied Oystercatcher – nesting at Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island on 10.03.19 and 2 immatures recorded at Manly Harbour on 17.03.19, 26.03.19 and 16.04.19. Although these 2 birds were not a result of breeding on the site, they are listed here as a record of successful breeding for the species.

Sooty Oystercatcher – 1 brownish immature with 2 adults at Kingscliff Main Beach, NSW on 24.02.19. Although not a count site and not a chick, I have recorded the information because successful breeding records for this species are very uncommon.

Black-fronted Dotterel – 1 fluffy chick with 2 adults at Bundaberg Port on 10.03.19.

Red-capped Plover – 2 sets of 2 chicks approximately 2 weeks old at Queensland Aluminium Limited (Ashpond), Gladstone on 02.05.19

Counters not entering their counts online, please continue to send them to me at my email or postal address as follows: xenus69@xxx.com

Snail mail: Phone: xxxx xxxx

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 address phillipcross50@xxxx.com Please contact Phil or myself for the Leg Flag Observation Report Form.

Interesting wader sightings

- 195 Whimbrel – Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay – 10.03.19
- 44 Masked Lapwing – Cairns Esplanade – 04.05.19
- 713 Pied Stilt – Toorbul Sandfly Bay and Toorbul combined – 06.05.19
- 3 Sooty Oystercatcher – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
- 224 Pacific Golden Plover – Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay – 10.03.19
- 207 Great Knot – Cairns Esplanade – 05.03.19
- 35 Marsh Sandpiper – Garnett's Lagoon No. 1 & No. 2 combined, Hervey Bay – 09.02.19
- 27 Marsh Sandpiper – Pine River Wetlands Reserve – 06.04.19
- 8 Red Knot – Maaroom – 09.03.19
- 407 Grey-tailed Tattler – Port of Brisbane complex – 07.04.19
- 35 Terek Sandpiper – Maaroom – 09.03.19
- 3 Terek Sandpiper – Sandbank No. 2 Caloundra – 09.05.19 (last record at site was 11 years ago)
- 369 Lesser Sand Plover – Point Vernon, Hervey Bay – 09.02.19
- 30 Black-fronted Dotterel – Queensland Aluminium Limited combined sites, Gladstone – 21.03.19
- 26 Broad-billed Sandpiper – Manly Harbour – 17.03.19
- 2 Beach Stone-curlew – site 3, Boonooroo – 05.05.19
- 2 Beach Stone-curlew – Kinka Beach, Yeppoon – 04.05.19 (also during March and April counts)
- 2 Beach Stone-curlew – Noosa River Sandbanks and Maroochy River Sandbar during March counts

Not waders but of interest anyway

- 39 Australasian Shoveler – Garnett's Lagoon No. 1, Hervey Bay – 04.05.19
- 2 Australasian Shoveler – Buckley's Hole, Bribie Island 01.05.19, Nathan Road Wetlands 04.05.19 and Port of Brisbane complex 05.05.19
- 8 Cotton Pygmy Goose – Ewan Maddock Dam – 07.03.19 (6 also recorded on 12.05.19)
- 2 Radjah Shelduck – Kinka Beach Sandbar, Yeppoon – 04.05.19
- 373 Grey Teal – Garnett's Lagoon No. 1 & No. 2 combined, Hervey Bay – 09.02.19
- 349 Chestnut Teal – Port of Brisbane complex – 05.05.19
- 160 Magpie Goose – Bundaberg Port – 05.05.19
- 5 Pacific Reef Heron (all grey) – Goat Island Moreton Bay – 08.04.19
- 1 White-necked Heron – Bundaberg Port – 07.0.19
- 4 Buff-banded Rail (2 adults & 2 chicks) – Luggage Point – 10.03.19
- 3 White-browed Crake – Endeavour River Claypan, Cooktown – 06.03.19 (also heard 03.04.19)
- c3900 Common Tern – Maroochy River Northshore – 11.03.19
- 646 Little Tern – Port of Brisbane complex – 10.03.19
- 120 White-winged Black Tern – Maroochy River Sandbar – 10.04.19
- 60 White-winged Black Tern – Maroochy River Northshore – 10.04.19
- 28 Lesser Crested Tern – O'Regan's Creek Westside, Hervey Bay – 04.05.19
- 4 Wandering Whistling Duck – Port of Brisbane complex – 05.05.19
- 131 Little Pied Cormorant – Port of Brisbane complex – 05.05.19
- 3 Great Crested Grebe – Ewan Maddock Dam – 17.02.19
- 200 Gull-billed Tern – Day's Gutter, Moreton Island – 08.04.19 (in excess of 100 recorded at 10 other sites in March, April and May)
- 31 Yellow-billed Spoonbill – Garnett's Lagoon No. 1 & No. 2 combined, Hervey Bay – 09.02.19
- 180 Royal Spoonbill – Port of Brisbane complex – 05.05.19

13 Brolga – Kinka Wetlands, Yeppoon – 04.05.19
 1 Brolga – Nathan Road Redcliffe – 04.05.19 (last recorded at site 4 years ago)
 373 Black Swan – sighted in the passage from Toorbul roost – 06.05.19
 91 Glossy Ibis – Garnett's Lagoons No. 1 and No. 2 combined, Hervey Bay – 09.03.19
 81 Glossy Ibis – Nathan Road Wetland, Redcliffe – 04.05.19
 4 Black-shouldered Kite (2 adults & 2 juveniles) – Kedron Brook Wetlands – 06.05.19
 1 Collared Sparrowhawk – Queensland Aluminium Limited (Entrance mudflats), Gladstone – 08.04.19
 1 Collared Sparrowhawk – Port of Brisbane complex – 05.05.19
 1 Wedge-tailed Eagle – Luggage Point – 05.05.19
 2 Australian Hobby – Bundaberg Port – 07.04.19
 1 Nankeen Night Heron – Buckley's Hole, Bribie Island – 24.03.19 and 06.05.19
 141 Australian Pelican – Sandbank off Amity Point, Moreton Bay – 08.04.19
 2 Black-necked Stork – on Bribie Island foreshore across from Beck Road Caloundra – 02.04.19
 2 Black-necked Stork – Endeavour River Claypan, Cooktown – 03.04.19
 2 Black-necked Stork – Garnett's Lagoon No. 1, Hervey Bay – 04.05.19
 1 Black-necked Stork recorded at Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon during the March, April and May surveys and
 1 bird at Bundaberg Port on 05.05.19

Happy counting.
Linda Cross.

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. phillipcross50@xxxxl.com

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 seen in QLD

A quantity of 9 plain flags together with 22 misread, 17 unread and 1631 engraved green flag sightings have been added to the database since the last newsletter.

A total of 19 different species recorded - Bar-tailed Godwit, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Double-banded Plover, Far Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Greater Sand Plover, Grey Plover, Grey-tailed Tattler, Lesser Sand Plover, Pacific Golden Plover, Pied Oystercatcher, Pied Stilt, Red-capped Plover, Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Terek Sandpiper and Whimbrel.

GREEN leg flag sightings seen INTERSTATE

None

GREEN leg flag sightings seen OVERSEAS

A reconciliation of the Qld Wader Study Group leg flag database to the equivalent database in New Zealand has resulted in more than 60 green flag sightings (some dating back to 2009) being added to the Qld database, all of these have been listed below.

Bar-tailed Godwit

ABW on flag – 2.4.2018 – Yalu Jiang China – David Melville
 DAA on flag – 8.4.2018 – Yalu Jiang China – David Melville
 APH on flag – 19.4.2019 – Daijyu-garami Higashiyoga-cho Saga-ken Japan – Unknown observer
 EP on flag – 1.1.2011 – Big Sand Island Kaipara Auckland – Tony Habraken
 EP on flag – 30.1.2011 – Big Sand Island Kaipara Auckland – Tony Habraken
 FX on flag – 21.3.2009 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – Tony Habraken
 FX on flag – 6.4.2009 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – B. Keeley
 FX on flag – 14 & 24.12.2009 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – Tony Habraken
 FX on flag – 11 & 25.2.2010 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – Tony Habraken
 FX on flag – 3.11.2010 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – Tony Habraken

Bar-tailed Godwit - continued

FX on flag – 6.12.2010 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – Tony Habraken
 FX on flag – 3 & 19.1.2011 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – Tony Habraken
 FX on flag – 16.2.2011 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – Tony Habraken
 FX on flag – 1.3.2011 - Clifton Beach Whitford Auckland – Tony Habraken
 HC on flag – 10.10.2011 – Bells Island Waimea Inlet Nelson – David & Julia Melville
 HC on flag – 10.3.2012 – Motueka Sandspit Nelson – Robert Schuckard
 AK on flag – 9.3.2013 – Miranda North Island N Z - Tony Habraken
 ACU on flag – 12.4.2013 – Papakanui Spit Kaipara Harbour – Ian Southey
 ALB on flag – 13, 14 & 18.4.2013 – Karaka Manukau Harbour Auckland – Tony Habraken
 AJU on flag – 14.4.2013 – Clark's Bay Manukau Harbour Auckland – Tony Habraken
 ABR on flag – 18 & 25.4.2013 – Karaka Manukau Harbour Auckland – Tony Habraken
 ABR on flag – 25.5.2013 – Clark's Bay Manukau Harbour Auckland – Tony Habraken
 AMJ on flag – 27.4.2013 – Big Sand Island Kaipara Auckland – Tony Habraken, Gwen Pulham & D. Wilson
 AJN on flag – 4.5.2013 – Miranda North Island N Z - Tony Habraken
 ALK on flag – 19.5.2013 – Miranda North Island N Z - Tony Habraken
 AJU on flag – 25.5.2013 – Clark's Bay Manukau Harbour Auckland – Tony Habraken
 BJK on flag – 16.12.2013 – Miranda North Island N Z - Tony Habraken & Adrian Boyle
 AHY on flag – 28.2.2015 – Ohiwa Harbour Bay of Plenty N Z - Tim Barnard
 AJN on flag – 7.3.2015 – Miranda North Island N Z – Ian Southey
 AJN on flag – 15.3.2015 – Miranda North Island N Z - Tony Habraken
 AJN on flag – 30.11.2015 – Miranda North Island N Z - Theunis Piersma
 AJN on flag – 10.12.2017 – Miranda North Island N Z - Emilla Lai
 ABW on flag – 11.10.2015 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Sue Cook
 ABW on flag – 24.10.2015 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Jonas Kotlarz
 ABW on flag – 26.12.2015 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Jonas Kotlarz
 ABW on flag – 22.1.2016 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 ABW on flag – 15.2.2017 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Gwen Pulham
 ABW on flag – 4.3.2017 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 ABW on flag – 3 & 17.2.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 ABW on flag – 10 & 15.3.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 ABW on flag – 16.3.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Sue Cook
 ABW on flag – 23.9.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward & Sue Cook
 ABW on flag – 26.10.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 ABW on flag – 23.2.2019 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 ACC on flag – 21.9.2015 – Maketu Bay of Plenty – Tim Barnard
 AHH on flag – 21.1.2016 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Jonas Kotlarz & Paul-August Schult
 AHH on flag – 12.2.2016 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 AHH on flag – 3.1.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 AHH on flag – 25.2.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Sue Cook
 AHH on flag – 6 & 13.3.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Sue Cook
 AHH on flag – 17 & 21.3.2018 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward
 AHH on flag – 5.1.2019 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward & Sue Cook
 AHH on flag – 23.2.2019 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward & Sue Cook
 AHH on flag – 16.3.2019 – Omaha Sandspit North Auckland – Marie Ward & Sue Cook
 AKX on flag – 21.11.2017 – Miranda North Island N Z – Louise Clewley
 ANJ on flag – 16.2.2016 – Miranda North Island N Z – Andreas Kim
 BET on flag – 25.11.2018 – Banana Mullet Farewell Spit – Willie Cook
 BEY on flag – 23.2.2019 – Farewell Spit Gobi Nelson – David Melville
 BDE on flag – 25.3.2019 – Miranda North Island N Z – Amanda Hunt
 BDE on flag – 12.4.2019 – Miranda North Island N Z – David Melville

Red Knot

ABE on flag – 11.1.2014 – Big Sand Island Kaipara Auckland – Tony Habraken

Far Eastern Curlew

AAL on flag – 9.4.2019 – Komesu Beach Itoman City Okinawa Japan - Manami Tomida

Grey-tailed Tattler

Engraved flag unread – 6.5.2019 – North of Sukagawa Japan – Ishikawa Shigeru

ORANGE (Victoria) leg flag sightings seen in QLD.Bar-tailed Godwit

CHH on flag – 7.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates

Great Knot

Plain flag – 13.2.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 Plain flag – 16.2.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 25.2.2019 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Sue Lee
 Plain flag – 2 & 3.3.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 9.3.2019 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Kristy Murray
 Plain flag – 17.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 Plain flag – 31.3.2019 – Manly – Arthur Keates & Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 2.4.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 3.4.2019 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Ian & Jill Brown

OVERSEAS FLAGGED birds seen in QLD**Black over white or white over black (Shanghai, China) leg flag sightings**Great Knot

J62 on white flag – 13.2.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 X28 on white flag – 24.2.2019 – Bushland Beach Townsville – John Lowry
 Plain flags – 29.3.2019 – Maaroom – Cecile Espigole

Blue (Japanese) leg flag sightingsGrey-tailed Tattler

Plain flag – 21.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 Plain flag – 6.4.2019 – Toorbul Sandfly Bay – Dez Wells
 Plain flag – 13.4.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 13.4.2019 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 18 & 24.4.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 Plain flag – 26, 27 & 29.4.2019 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter

Blue over White (Japanese) leg flag sightingsGrey-tailed Tattler

191 on blue flag – 13.2.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 191 on blue flag – 26.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 191 on blue flag – 13.4.2019 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 191 on blue flag – 22.4.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 315 on blue flag – 7.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 315 on blue flag – 17.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 315 on blue flag – 31.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 315 on blue flag – 2, 4 & 12.4.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 315 on blue flag – 10 & 11.4.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 315 on blue flag – 16.4.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 568 on blue flag – 16.3.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 568 on blue flag – 26 & 31.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 568 on blue flag – 2.4.2019 – Manly – Tony Cotter & Arthur Keates
 568 on blue flag – 28.4.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 569 on blue flag – 13.2.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 569 on blue flag – 17.2.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 569 on blue flag – 24.3.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 569 on blue flag – 2.4.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 667 on blue flag – 3.3.2019 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 667 on blue flag – 17.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 667 on blue flag – 24.3.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 667 on blue flag – 31.3.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 667 on blue flag – 12.4.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 667 on blue flag – 13 & 14.4.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter

Grey-tailed Tattler - continued

667 on blue flag – 27.4.2019 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
667 on blue flag – 4.5.2019 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
Engraved flag unread – 30.3.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
Engraved flag unread – 6.4.2019 – Toorbul Sandfly Bay – Dez Wells
Engraved flag unread – 7.4.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
Engraved flag unread – 18.4.2019 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
Engraved flag unread – 25 & 26.4.2019 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
Engraved flag unread – 2.5.2019 – Manly Harbour – Tony Cotter & Arthur Keates

Red-necked Stint

Plain flags - 12.3.2019 – Cairns Esplanade – Hidetoshi Kudo
K95 on blue flag - 17.3.2019 – Cairns Esplanade – Sally Sheldon
Plain flags - 8.4.2019 – Qld Aluminium Gladstone – Margaret Worthington

Black over Yellow (Russia) leg flag sightingsRed-necked Stint

Plain flags – 12.3.2019 – Cairns Esplanade – Hidetoshi Kudo
Plain flags – 17.3.2019 – Cairns Esplanade – Sally Sheldon

Pied Oystercatcher Yellow leg flag (2 digit) sightings

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

P2 on flag – 7.3.2019 – Mouth Currumbin River Palm Beach – Andrew Mitchell

Caspian Tern Orange flag (Victoria)

V3 on flag – 8.12.2018 – Buckley's Hole Sandbar – Dez Wells
K9 on flag – 8.12.2018 – Buckley's Hole Sandbar – Dez Wells
47 on flag – 7.4.2019 – Buckley's Hole Sandbar – Dez Wells

Wader ID Day Reports

TOORBUL WADER ID DAY REPORT 12 MARCH 2019

Very hot and humid conditions greeted the 18 people who joined both Phil and I at this identification session. There was a slight north east breeze as we assembled at the roost, but it was still very hot. We eventually moved to the west of the roost in order to gain the benefit of the breeze that was being blocked by the mangroves.

The site continues to record very low wader species diversity with only 5 migratory and 4 resident species to observe, although some attendees saw a sixth migratory species (Common Greenshank), at the Sand Fly Bay site just north of the main Toorbul roost. One surprise resident species at the roost was a lone Sooty Oystercatcher mingling with the Pied Oystercatchers.



By Linda Cross

There were no Black-tailed Godwit within the flock of Bar-tailed Godwit to compare the species, but there was 1 Red Knot hiding with the Great Knot that took some time to find and show people the difference between them.

No overseas flagged birds were observed, but many green flags were seen on 3 species of waders (Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel and Great Knot), which were added to the QWSG leg flag database. A count was also conducted at the roost and added to the QWSG count database.

Just before we finished viewing the birds a school bus arrived with 25 students from Albany Creek State High School. The teacher accompanying them was Dez Wells, who is the QWSG monthly counter for the site, so a few of us stayed and volunteered our scopes and knowledge to help the students complete a unit on Shorebird Ecology.

Birds seen at and around the main Toorbul Roost during the ID session (F/O – fly over):

150 Black Swan flying in the passage, 8 Maned Duck, 2 Pacific Black Duck F/O, 1 Australian White Ibis, 7 Royal Spoonbill, 1 Intermediate Egret F/O, 1 Australian Pelican, 1 Little Pied Cormorant F/O, 1 Australasian Darter F/O, 1 Eastern Osprey, 26 Pied Oystercatcher, 1 Sooty Oystercatcher, 156 Pied Stilt, 1 Masked Lapwing, 1,090 Bar-tailed Godwit, 194 Whimbrel, 74 Far Eastern Curlew, 56 Great Knot, 1 Red Knot, 1 Silver Gull, 22 Gull-billed Tern, 12 Caspian Tern and 1 Little Tern.

At Toorbul Sandfly Bay roost Sue Lee counted:

20 Royal Spoonbill, 30 Pied Stilt and 6 Common Greenshank.

Sue also stopped at Bishop's Marsh after leaving Toorbul and observed:

10 Grey Teal (estimate), 20 Pied Stilt (estimate), and 3 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

By Linda Cross.

MANLY SHOREBIRD ROOST REPORT 13 APRIL 2019

It was a glorious sunny afternoon even with the moderate to strong SSE wind; ideal conditions for migration departure.

We recorded 3 species of resident shorebird and 17 species of migratory shorebird, although some species were in low numbers. Many of the Lesser Sand Plover and Ruddy Turnstone were in stunning breeding plumage. In contrast, the majority of the Bar-tailed Godwit were in drab non-breeding plumage. Of the dozen or so Great Knot, only 3 or 4 showed breeding plumage and the lone Red Knot had only a slight trace of breeding plumage. Of the trans-Tasman migrant, Double-banded Plover, only 1 had remnant breeding plumage, the others all in non-breeding plumage.

Birds of several species fitted with a Queensland green engraved leg flag were observed including a Bar-tailed Godwit fitted with a satellite transmitter. No overseas or interstate flagged birds were observed.

The following species were observed at the roost:

Little Black Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Black-shouldered Kite, Eastern Great Egret, Little Egret, Australian Pelican, Pied Oystercatcher, Pied Stilt, Pacific Golden Plover, Red-capped Plover, Double-banded Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Greater Sand Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Far Eastern Curlew, Common Greenshank, Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Great Knot, Red Knot, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Silver Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Greater Crested Tern and Little Tern.

Undoubtedly, the highlight of the day came late in the afternoon. At 16:20 a flock of Lesser Sand Plover in a distinct line apart from most of their cohorts caught our attention. From what we could see of the flock from our vantage point, it varied in size from 34 to well over 60, strung out over about 5 m. All of the birds appeared to be in good physical condition and nearly all were in well-advanced breeding plumage. Keeping company with the flock was a lone Curlew Sandpiper, also in advanced breeding plumage. The chattering and restlessness intensified and several of the birds lifted off the ground raising their wings. It seemed apparent migration departure was on their minds, but were the conditions right?

Soon after being joined by up to 20 Red-necked Stint, the flock took to the air, circling over the water on the eastern side of the roost then returning to the island, quite clearly a pre-migration departure check. A few minutes later, a slightly larger flock repeated the performance but something was still not quite right; perhaps it was just a little early in the day.

For the third time, the flock took to the air. They headed out over the northern rock wall flying a little higher than previous lift-offs. Anxiously we watched but yet again the birds returned to the roost. It was still not quite the time to go.



Part of the flock of Lesser Sand Plover returning to the roost following a pre-migration departure check. Photo: Matteo Grilli

At 16:50, a mixed flock took to the air but this time clearly more purposely. With no hesitation the birds headed straight over the northern rock wall rising higher all the while bearing initially in a north-easterly direction and then veering northerly. As the birds gained altitude, the flock became more organised, stretching out in a line, presumably

in a V-formation. We estimated the make-up of the flock to be Lesser Sand Plover (80), Red-necked Stint (30) and Curlew Sandpiper (1).

Having just watched the birds disappear out of sight, a flock of 8 Whimbrel and 1 Bar-tailed Godwit left the roost and headed towards St Helena Is. However, only 5 of the Whimbrel were seen to gain altitude and direction indicating a migration departure.

The late afternoon provided ideal light to look through the birds remaining before we called it a day. We had been privileged to witness the start of an epic migration. Where would their next stop be? Will they find enough food to fuel the next leg of their journey? Will they survive the perils of the journey? Do they have the energy and strength to reach the breeding grounds? Will they breed successfully? Will they make the return journey safely? With questions running through our minds, we hopped in our vehicles and drove away in comfort while the birds were winging their way north. Farewell feathered friends, safe travelling.

By Arthur & Sheryl Keates

Changes on the QWSG Committee

Rachelle Harding is stepping down as our Treasurer. Rachelle has found that, because of an increased schedule at work, she is unable to give the position of QWSG Treasurer the time that she thinks it deserves. Rachelle very kindly helped us out when we were in need of a Treasurer, though she has little interest in waders! However, she says that she has enjoyed the work and been delighted that she could help the QWSG by introducing MYOB to the Treasurer's role. I on behalf of the QWSG Committee and all QWSG members sincerely thank Rachelle for the work she has done and wish her well for the future.

For several years the QWSG Committee has been toying with the idea of separating the role of Treasurer / membership into the two roles, and, would you believe it the opportunity has arisen to get this underway.

So firstly, Judith Giles has very kindly taken on the role as QWSG Treasurer, with the assistance of Wayne Lock. Both of these members have a history of Book-keeping and Accountancy so we can be assured that the financial running of the QWSG is in good hands.

Secondly, Gordana Pozvek will take up the new position of Membership Secretary. Gordana is already sorting out the membership data base and looking forward to having contact with you all over time.

So, there are changes going on, I am sure everything will run smoothly, but as soon as you say that the Gremlins hear and make mischief, so please be understanding.

Once again, many thanks to the outgoing Rachelle and the incoming, Judith, Wayne and Gordana.

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, Rae Clark
Secretary, Robert Bush
Treasurer, Judith Giles

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.
Brunswick Room, Merthyr Road Uniting Church, 52 Merthyr Road, New Farm.
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 CONTACTS

QUEENSLAND WADER

The Official Quarterly Publication of Queensland Wader Study Group

Website www.waders.org.au

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/QueenslandWaderStudyGroup/>

MEMBERS of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE of the QWSG

<u>CHAIRPERSON:</u>	David Edwards	chairperson@waders.org.au
<u>TREASURER</u>	Judith Giles	treasurer@waders.org.au
<u>SECRETARY:</u>	Peter Rothlisberg	secretary@waders.org.au
<u>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</u>	Gordana Pozvek	membership@waders.org.au
<u>NEWSLETTER EDITOR:</u>	David Edwards	newsletter@waders.org.au

COMMITTEE

Robert Bush	Jon Coleman
Paul Finn	Sandra Harding
Sheryl Keates	Wayne Lock
Andrew Moss	Brad Woodworth

<u>COUNT COORDINATOR:</u>	Linda Cross
<u>LEG FLAG COORDINATOR</u>	Phil Cross

BQ PRESIDENT Rae Clark Email president@birdsqueensland.org.au

CORRESPONDENCE All correspondence to:
The QWSG Chairperson,
54, Elliott Street,
CLAYFIELD,
QLD 4011

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS Annual subscription rates:
Single: \$15:00
Student/Pensioner: \$10:00
Family: \$25:00
A receipt will be forwarded if required.

Forward application to:

Membership Secretary or QWSG Treasurer,
PO Box 3138,
SOUTH BRISBANE,
QLD 4101.

Members are reminded their membership expires on the date shown on the newsletter address label, and the membership joining/renewal form is now on the back page. **Note:** that your subscription will fall due twelve (12) months after date of joining the QWSG or date of renewal, and only one further newsletter will be sent after expiry of your subscription.

Copy Deadline for the next issue of Queensland Wader is **August 18th 2019**

Contributions should be addressed to:

David Edwards, the QWSG Editor, 54 Elliott Street, Clayfield, Qld 4011
or E-mail to: newsletter@waders.org.au

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

Advertising Rates are \$20:00 for one-quarter page and \$25:00 for a third of a page.

PRINTED BY: Mr Bob Durrington of J.R. Durrington & Sons Pty Ltd.
admin@jrdsons.com.au



Count Activities – 2019

QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Program 2019

1st Jun	2.04m at 07:44	National Winter Count		
Sat 6th Jul	1.90m at 12:17		Sat 3rd Aug	2.01m at 11:12
Sat 31st Aug	2.10m at 10:07		Sat 28th Sep	2.16m at 09:02
Sat 19th Oct	2.15m at 12:50		Sat 16th Nov	2.35m at 11:52
Sat 14th Dec	2.53m at 10:59			

Port of Brisbane Count Dates 2019

Sun 2nd Jun	2.02m at 08:27	Meet 07:10	Nat Winter Count		
Sun 7th Jul	1.89m at 13:12	Meet 11:20		Sun 4th Aug	2.03m at 12:02 Meet 10:10
Sun 1st Sep	2.16m at 10:55	Meet 09:05		Sun 29th Sep	2.26m at 09:49 Meet 08:00
Sun 20th Oct	2.11m at 13:44	Meet 11:55		Sun 17th Nov	2.31m at 12:38 Meet 10:50
Sun 15th Dec	2.52m at 11:43	Meet 09:55			

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 (Bank Australia)

Account number: 08305297

or

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

Cheques to be made out to: Qld Wader Study Group