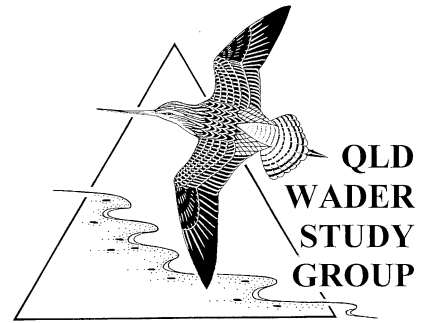


QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue number 29

SPRING 1999

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

Gulf of Carpentaria Shorebird Surveys

Progress report for fieldwork Spring 1998 and Autumn 1999

report prepared on behalf of the
QUEENSLAND WADER STUDY GROUP
for QLD ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY, JUNE 1999
by PETER V. DRISCOLL

Two fieldtrips have been undertaken since the progress report of mid 1998, in accordance with plans outlined in that report. Visits were made to the study area involving:

- a) 4 weeks of fieldwork and one week off between 1st September and 4th October 1998, and
- b) 8 weeks of fieldwork between 21st February and 16th April.

These periods do not include transit times of as much as 3 days each way to and from the study area.

The current study area was divided into 9 sections for the purpose of data collation and assessment. To date, fieldwork has been most intense in Sections E and F.

A presentation was made to the recent AWSG conference on Phillip Island on the basis of this interim report which outlines the fieldwork, basic results and planning to complete the study. In addition, the report gives the latest costing for the study.

Timing, personnel and activities

The 4 weeks last year were undertaken by Driscoll with logistics support during the first two weeks from Mark Read (EPA Crocodile Research). The ultralight and the Argo ATV with outboard were in use. Attention focused on two series of aerial counts of waders along sections A to I of the coastline and on high tide ground counts in Sections E and F. Visits were made to dry season freshwater wetland refuges on Delta Downs and Muttonhole Stations by vehicle with assistance from Read.

The fieldwork earlier this year was run in three stages. The initial focus was on catching and banding birds and fitting radio transmitters with volunteer assistance from Brian Venables and Karen Welsh. A team of mainly AQIS personnel, lead by Jonathan Lee, were also involved in the netting. We helped AQIS catch herons for their own research.

The second stage of the autumn fieldwork (throughout March), involved 4 people (Driscoll and volunteer participation from Mark Barter, Brian Venables and Jim Wilson) who undertook aerial and ground counts of birds roosting and feeding, primarily within sections E and F of the coastline and radio tracking of birds from the ultralight and by boat on a regular basis. Periodic longer flights were undertaken to census birds in Sections C to H and many observations were made of feeding behaviour and bird movements in relation to daily and fortnightly tidal cycles. Some attention was given to recording birds departing on migration and hinterland observations were made of birds in freshwater wetlands.

(Continued on page 3).

QWSG CONTACTS

All correspondence to: The Chairperson, QWSG, Faheys Road, Mt Glorious, Qld 4520

CHAIRPERSON:

Peter Driscoll (07) 3289 0237

MINUTE SECRETARY:

Diane Francis (07) 3300 1484

LIBRARIAN

Dave Stewart (07) 3378 8605

TREASURER:

Sheryl Keates (07) 3398 4898

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

David Edwards (07) 3262 2017

COUNT COORDINATOR:

Linda Cross (07) 5495 2758

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Lindsay Agnew (07) 3892 1790

Phil Cross (07) 5495 2758

Joyce Harding (07) 3372 1424

Eddie Hegerl (07) 3892 4774

Ivell Whyte (07) 3802 0757

Margaret Bernard (07) 3376 1241

Andrew Geering (07) 3376 1241

Sandra Harding (07) 3390 2179

Arthur Keates (07) 3398 4898

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 Receipt will be forwarded with next edition of *Queensland Wader*.
 Forward application to:
 Mrs Sheryl Keates,
 The QWSG Treasurer,
 5 Stanmere St,
 Carindale, Brisbane
 Qld 4152.

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Queensland Wader is a quarterly publication of the Queensland Wader Study Group. Contributions should be addressed to David Edwards, The QWSG Editor, 54 Elliott Street, Clayfield, Qld 4011 or E-mail to gouldian@ozemail.com.au Computerised contributions should be in IBM Word, ASCII or Rich Text.

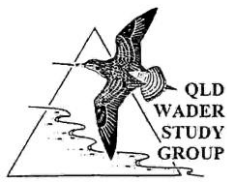
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Advertising Rates are \$15:00 for one quarter column and \$20:00 for a third of a column

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(continued from Page 1)

The third stage of the autumn fieldwork (first half of April) involved Driscoll and volunteer participation from Adrian Riegen and Brian Venables, who continued with the various counts and observations of movements, and radio tracking. An additional aspect of the fieldwork in April involved video recording of birds and habitat from the air and from the ground.

There were no major logistical or weather problems for either fieldtrip. However, high winds and dust storms on some days last September prevented any flying. Although there was high rainfall which persisted well into April this year, it mainly fell late in the day and at night. It fortunately had little bearing on our activities except to prevent us undertaking as many long distance flights as we had hoped, due to the threat of afternoon thunderstorms.

In March last year, floods delayed our arrival and limited our activities for at least the first three weeks of the fieldtrip. This year, roads were blocked again to Karumba but the rain was less intense and most equipment had been freighted in early, in anticipation of problems of access. Also, Barter, Driscoll, Wilson and Riegen all flew into Karumba rather than rely upon road access. Venables, Welsh and the AQIS team all managed to drive in after delays of no more than a few days.

The equipment in use this year was a 4WD (Venables), a boat with 25 hp outboard (jointly Venables and QWSG), an ultralight (Driscoll), an Argo ATV with outboard (QWSG), two tracking receivers (QWSG), five hand held two-way radios (QWSG), all netting and banding equipment (QWSG), and personal telescopes and camping equipment.

Strategy

In terms of the original objectives of the study given in the first interim report, the two recent fieldtrips were intended to:

- a) improve knowledge of numbers of waders using the more general region from the Qld border to Pormpurrav and
- b) lead to an understanding of habitat resources and utilisation by birds during the period of northward migration in at least the region closest to Karumba, where numbers are highest.

Work in regard to b) was hindered last year by the extreme and adverse weather conditions and associated delays in fieldwork. Furthermore, the extreme weather conditions and the possible unusual distribution of birds as a result, necessitated visiting the region during the southward migration (Sept last year) and revisiting during the northward migration (Feb-April this year). This year we also successfully conducted the telemetry study that was a specific objective of the project and it is proposed that no more tracking be undertaken.

Costing

A budget of approximately \$11,000 for the September fieldtrip and \$26,000 for the Feb-April fieldtrip was proposed in the last interim report. The funding so far received by QWSG is \$60,710 and total fieldwork expenses are approximately \$62,100 (the above plus expenses for the first trip). This difference and some other additional costs mean that QWSG is currently subsidising the project with approximately \$2,500. With the third payment of \$38,710 expected on acceptance of this report, there will be about \$36,000 for completion of the fieldwork. However, some of this fieldwork money may be needed to supplement the cost of the final stages of the project (in addition to the final \$4,000 payment).

Additional funding of \$5,000 (not budgeted above) was gained from Pasminco Century Project for assistance to purchase an all terrain vehicle (Argo), which was obtained just prior to the fieldwork in 1998 and has been used around the Karumba coastline during fieldwork since then, especially for cannon netting.

Results

A lot has been achieved using ground counts and species identification of both feeding and roosting birds, coupled with aerial counts, radio tracking and general observations. A summary or abbreviated presentation of results is given here for

- a) aerial counts (Table 1) and ground counts (Table 2),
- b) assessment of major roost sites for Sections E and F and,
- c) results from radio tracking. That is, the results presented here indicate a gross assessment of numbers, the level of detail available on roost sites, and the particulars of two of the 14 birds that were tracked.

What will be apparent from the final report will be an understanding of habitat partitioning of various species in the area, daily movements of birds, and the implications of some unusual aspects of the tides for how birds utilise the various feeding flats. Furthermore, the change in numbers of various species during the period of northward migration has enabled some insight into the importance of the area at this time of year. Also, six sightings of colour flagged birds were made during March and April.

Table 1 below gives counts for various coastline sections at different times of the year. A number of assessments were made for each part of the coastline during the periods indicated and the values given are the maximum bird numbers encountered. These aerial counts need to be interpreted with caution because of various biases involved and are not intended to be taken here as final estimates of numbers. What has been learnt from the ground surveys and from the repeated aerial counts will be used to carefully estimate numbers in the final report.

Table 1

Section	Aut 98	Spr 98	Aut 99
A		5421	
B		202	
C	2023	26387	13777
D	8350	15458	14038
E	16582	11660	20577
F	20809	18758	33746
G	1059	2540	10115
H	10601	5171	7105
I	375	911	
	59424	86883	99358

Table 2 gives a summary of the percentage contribution of species to grounds counts at various times since the beginning of the study. Information is not specific to any particular location or time within the periods indicated and the table is merely an overview of results to date. The total sample counts are more a measure of sampling effort rather than birds counted because much of these data are collated from repeated visits to various sites.

Table 2

Activity-->	Roost	Roost	Roost	Roost	Feeding	Feeding	Mangr feeding	Previous
Month -->	Mar-98	Sep-98	Mar-99	Apr-99	Apr-99	Mar-99	Mar-99	summary
Sample counts total -->	32000	11000	80000	71000	3200	18000	500	Driscoll '97
Species								
Black-tailed Godwit	34.22	12.69	9.74	4.86	4.85	14.18	16.89	25.09
Bar-tailed Godwit	1.73	0.59	1.27	1.61	0.13	0.77	1.36	0.99
Whimbrel	0.44	0.02	0.08	0.33	0.24	0.00	18.64	0.70
Eastern Curlew	0.83	0.05	0.17	0.10	0.72	0.01	8.16	0.47
Marsh Sandpiper	0.35	0.04	0.16	0.02	0.11	0.73	18.25	0.69
Common Greenshank	0.19	0.11	0.15	0.15	2.53	0.48	16.70	0.74
Terek Sandpiper	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.06	0.16	0.05	0.78	1.38
Grey-tailed Tattler	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.16	0.05	5.83	0.23
Ruddy Turnstone	0.10	0.00	0.07	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.12
Great Knot	43.25	37.78	65.50	56.96	58.41	59.01	0.19	32.60
Red Knot	4.94	36.39	16.18	34.56	29.89	19.48	0.00	2.22
Sanderling	0.38	0.44	0.06	0.10	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.02
Red-necked Stint	5.38	8.34	4.07	0.11	0.19	1.83	0.19	19.75
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	0.50	0.10	0.44	0.03	0.11	0.08	7.18	1.23
Curlew Sandpiper	0.95	1.56	0.12	0.01	0.48	0.10	0.00	2.96
Broad-billed Sandpiper	0.65	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.49
Pied Oystercatcher	0.88	0.12	0.15	0.58	0.35	0.39	1.75	0.26
Black-winged Stilt	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.49
Pacific Golden Plover	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.99
Grey Plover	0.43	0.04	0.11	0.05	0.19	0.45	2.91	0.35
Red-capped Plover	0.07	0.79	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.47
Lesser Sand Plover	0.61	0.72	0.35	0.30	1.36	0.72	0.00	2.47
Greater Sand Plover	2.89	0.14	0.48	0.09	0.13	0.54	0.78	2.47
Sand Plover spp.	0.34	0.00	0.92	0.00	0.00	1.05	0.00	?

Variation between results from the two years of this study and persistent differences to aerial survey results from the 1980s indicate regular usage of southern Gulf shoreline habitats by core species such as Red Knot and Great Knot but more opportunistic use of the region by species such as Little Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

Incidental flights to southern Gulf plains have revealed very large concentrations of waterfowl and waterbirds with scattered but regular use of subcoastal freshwater wetlands by some migratory wader species and resident wader species.

The abstract of the recent talk on the project, quoted below, gives some indication of more general issues that have arisen and still need to be resolved but will be addressed in the final report.

“After the second year of a three study on waders in the south east Gulf of Carpentaria, it is still unclear why fewer birds, notably Black-tailed Godwit, are using the area than was the case ten years ago.

We are beginning to understand why local bird movements are more complex than elsewhere along the Australian coastline. Does this understanding suggest reasons for long term changes in numbers. For some species, is the Gulf a regular and reliable overwintering site, and for others variable, at times unacceptable or second best, or at times ideal? Perhaps to understand monsoonal coastal habitats of the Gulf we must reflect upon inland Australia”.

Planning

The remaining year of fieldwork will focus on understanding the broader context of use of the region by waders and looking at abundances at other times of the year, mid winter and mid summer.

It is planned at this stage to complete two final fieldtrips by January 2000. The first will be between mid July and mid August and the second in November and December.

The only other possible time for fieldwork is in late April to early May next year to give a fully rounded view of movements of birds away from the Gulf on northward migration. However, this latter exercise it is not considered a priority and will only be undertaken if resources and time permit.

By gathering data in mid winter and early summer, a year round knowledge of numbers and distribution of waders in the Gulf region will be possible. However, sampling at these times of year present some potential difficulties.

In winter, there will be few opportunities to work on low tides during the day because of the unusual seasonal nature of the tidal regimes and, similarly in summer there will be little opportunity to work on high tides. However, the distinctly seasonal nature of the tides and its possible effect on wader usage of the region, is a good reason for sampling at all times of the year, especially in view of the lower than expected total numbers of waders so far encountered in the Gulf.

With regards to this latter point, it is recommended that more general aerial reconnaissance and counting of the Gulf coastline be undertaken, possibly through the use of charter aircraft to fly well into the Northern Territory to check whether Black-tailed Godwits in particular are distributed here in lower numbers than were found in the 1980s. Another prospect would be to investigate the coastline of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya but discussions on this possibility are needed with the State Government Project Officer before it will be considered any further.

No cannon netting is intended for the remaining two fieldtrips which will largely be undertaken using the ultralight, as was the case last September. A boat may be used in November and assistance sought from Venables or from Read. The fewer people involved and absence of any catching will mean there will be sufficient funds to continue routine sampling but also to

- a) conduct a far ranging aerial count beyond the SE Gulf, possibly using charter aircraft, and,
- b) use helicopters if needed to get to the coast north of Burketown and around Inkerman even in wet conditions, to sample species composition from the ground in the most remote parts of the coastline where ground surveys have not been undertaken.

Acknowledgments

Again this year there was unrelenting enthusiasm by volunteer participants Mark Barter, Brian Venables, Karen Welsh and Jim Wilson. The project has relied heavily upon their help. Thanks also to Mark Read of the crocodile research unit for his involvement, and to all the folk of Karumba and neighbouring properties for their hospitality. The work is being funded by a National Heritage Trust grant from Environment Australia. Financial assistance from the Pasminco Century Project made possible the purchase of the all terrain vehicle.

Wader Watching in Hong Kong and Beidaihe, China

by Arthur and Sheryl Keates

On 24 April we left Brisbane for a week in Hong Kong to be followed by 3 weeks on an organised birdwatching tour in north eastern China.

We had read and heard that the world renowned Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve, managed by the World Wide Fund for Nature, Hong Kong, has spectacular concentrations of waders and waterbirds. Apparently, about 300 bird species have been recorded at Mai Po, including such rarities as Swinhoe's Egret, Black-faced Spoonbill, Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Nordmann's Greenshank.

The reserve consists of 400 ha of shrimp ponds, fish ponds and reed-beds and is separated from Deep Bay by mangroves. We found the reserve also to be a good site for passerines.

Entry to Mai Po is strictly by permit only. In fact, a visitor needs to have 2 permits, as well as be a member of the WWF HK and the Hong Kong Birdwatching Society to take advantage of the several bird hides in the reserve. On our experience, applications for the permits and memberships should be made well in advance, ours taking several months to be issued.

The reserve has several bird hides surrounding The Scrape where the waders roost at high tide as well as 2 overlooking the Deep Bay mudflats. Obviously, a visit to The Scrape needs to be made just before and just after high tide. The window of opportunity to best view the birds from the hides at Deep Bay starts as the mudflats become exposed as the tide recedes. A high tide of at least 2 m is essential.

We spent 3 days at Mai Po, the last day being our most successful, the approaching typhoon had not yet had an adverse affect on the weather, the tide was at its highest during our visit and we were in the hides at the right time. From the hides at The Scrape we confidently identified 2 Nordmann's Greenshanks having been alerted to their presence by another birder who had just left the hide. From there we went to the HKBWS floating hide at Deep Bay. On arrival the tide was just about to turn and hundreds of Common and Spotted Redshanks arrived early, sitting on the water as they anxiously waited for the tide to recede.

A spectacle unfolded in the next 45 minutes as thousands of waders arrived and the feeding started. A Swinhoe's Egret made a welcome appearance within 30 m of the hide but stayed only a short time. As the birds went about their business, the birder we had met earlier arrived to count them, quite a daunting task.

We keenly studied the hundreds of Greater and Lesser Sand Plovers and Red-necked Stints hoping for the elusive Spoon-billed Sandpiper, but alas it was not to be. A Peregrine Falcon swooped in over the thousands of waders, many of which did not return within optimum viewing distance.

After leaving the hide we saw a group of Black-faced Spoonbills roosting nearby. We had seen 17 on our first day at Mai Po, but this day there were 30, including one fitted with a satellite transmitter by researchers from the Wild Bird Society of Japan. For information about this project see the following web site: http://wnnserv.wnn.or.jp/wnn-n/migrant/english/2_kur.html

Species of waders and waterbirds observed by us at Mai Po, mostly at The Scrape and the Deep Bay mudflats were:-

Little Grebe	Kentish Plover	Spotted Redshank
Great Cormorant	Greater Sandplover	Common Greenshank
Grey Heron	Lesser Sandplover	Nordmann's Greenshank
Chinese Pond Heron	Pacific Golden Plover	Marsh Sandpiper
Black-crowned Night Heron	Grey Plover	Great Knot
Striated Heron	Ruddy Turnstone	Red Knot
Little Egret	Eurasian Curlew	Curlew Sandpiper
Cattle Egret	Whimbrel	Sanderling
Great Egret	Black-tailed Godwit	Red-necked Phalarope
Swinhoe's Egret	Bar-tailed Godwit	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Intermediate Egret	Asian Dowitcher	Broad-billed Sandpiper
Black-faced Spoonbill	Common Sandpiper	Red-necked Stint
White-breasted Waterhen	Wood Sandpiper	Long-toed Stint
Common Moorhen	Grey-tailed Tattler	Gull-billed Tern
Pied Avocet	Terek Sandpiper	Little Tern
Little Ringed Plover	Common Redshank	

Among the thousands of waders, we picked out a Lesser Sand Plover with a yellow leg flag (WA) and 2 Curlew Sandpipers, 1 with a yellow leg flag and 1 with an orange leg flag (Vic).

Our Hong Kong birdwatching was not limited to Mai Po and Deep Bay. In the company of Mike Kilburn, an excellent local guide, we saw Common, Pintail, Swinhoe's and Painted Snipes at Shek Sheung (Long Valley) and at Tsim Bei Tsui we added Green Sandpiper and Black-headed Gull to our list.

After our rewarding stay in Hong Kong, having seen 127 bird species, we left for Beijing where we joined a Sunbirder group led by English guide Paul Holt and co-led by Hannu Jannes of Finland, both of whom were excellent birders.

It was Wader Study Group member and experienced local birder Tom Tarrant, who planted the seed in our minds of a trip to Beidaihe. After reading Martin Williams' web site we were tempted. The web site address is:- <http://members.tripod.com/~MartinWilliams/beidaihe/beidaihebirding.html>

From Beijing we travelled by train to Beidaihe, a seaside resort situated on the Bay of Bohai at the northern most extent of the North China Sea. Most of our birding in China was concentrated around Beidaihe. We made regular forays to the Henghe Reservoir and nearby sandflats, the Yanghe estuary, Qilihai and local marshes. Happy Island, and the mudflats at Lao Yu Jian from where we left for the island, were very good spots for waders and gulls.

In our 3 weeks we observed the following species-

Little Grebe	Long-billed Plover	Common Greenshank
Grey Heron	Little Ringed Plover	Marsh Sandpiper
Purple Heron	Kentish Plover	Great Knot
Chinese Pond Heron	Greater Sandplover	Red Knot
Black-crowned Night Heron	Lesser Sandplover	Curlew Sandpiper
Striated Heron	Grey-headed Lapwing	Sanderling
Little Egret	Eurasian Woodcock	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Cattle Egret	Common Snipe	Dunlin
Great Egret	Pintail Snipe	Broad-billed Sandpiper
Intermediate Egret	Swinhoe's Snipe	Red-necked Stint
Yellow Bittern	Eurasian Curlew	Temminck's Stint
Great Bittern	Eastern Curlew	Long-toed Stint
Black Stork	Little Curlew	Black-tailed Gull
Baillon's Crake	Whimbrel	Common Gull
White-breasted Waterhen	Black-tailed Godwit	Black-headed Gull
Watercock	Bar-tailed Godwit	Saunders' Gull
Common Moorhen	Asian Dowitcher	Relict Gull
Painted Snipe	Common Sandpiper	Gull-billed Tern
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Ruddy Turnstone	Common Tern
Black-winged Stilt	Wood Sandpiper	Little Tern
Pied Avocet	Green Sandpiper	Whiskered Tern
Oriental Pratincole	Terek Sandpiper	White-winged Black Tern
Pacific Golden Plover	Common Redshank	
Grey Plover	Spotted Redshank	

Of course it wasn't all wader watching, there were many species of passerines on migration. At the end of the tour, we had seen 211 bird species, including 5 species of wagtails, 22 species of warbler and 12 species of buntings.

One of the participants on the tour was Dave Gosney, a well known wildlife photographer in Britain. His web site contains photos and a short report of the birding around Beidaihe - <http://www.birdguides.com>

Apart from the obvious excitement in seeing species we had not seen before, seeing waders in full breeding plumage was a delight in itself. How absolutely stunning many of the them looked, particularly Spotted Redshank, Dunlin, Grey Plover, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Sanderling.

After 4 weeks, we had seen all the wader species we had hoped for except Spoon-billed Sandpiper, excuse enough for another trip. Even with our success, we were pleased to return to the "Lucky Country".

By Arthur and Sheryl Keates

April/May 1999 China counts

E-mail Date: Sunday, 16 May 1999

The Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG) has been involved for the fourth year running in training, surveying and wader counting activities at important wader sites in China during northward migration. This year we first returned to Shuangtaizihekou National Nature Reserve and then visited the proposed Linghekou Provincial Nature Reserve and the Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve for the first time. These three Reserves are located on the northern Yellow Sea coast which is the final staging area before the breeding grounds for many wader species. Additionally, a count was carried out at the Huang He National Nature Reserve by a Chinese team made up from staff from Wetlands International - China Programme and the Reserve. Team members had been trained on our previous visits in 1997 and 1998. All this year's activities were conducted on behalf of Wetlands International - Oceania with funding from Environment Australia. Brief count results and observations follow:

HUANG HE (37d 56m N; 118d 51m E) - 4 to 9 April 1999. Coastline length surveyed was approximately 110 km. This is the earliest count that has been carried out at the site, the previous two being at the end of April and the beginning of May. The count totalled 64,614 birds of 21 species. Species present in internationally significant numbers were Kentish Plover (24,313), Dunlin (13,450), Eurasian Curlew (9,766), Grey Plover (4,133), Black-tailed Godwit (2,894) and Eastern Curlew (1,125). Useful information on the timing of migration for the different species was obtained. Dunlin, the two curlew species, Black-tailed Godwit and Grey Plover were present in lower numbers than in late April, whilst those of Kentish Plover were higher. Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Great and Red Knots, and Lesser Sand Plovers had yet to arrive in significant numbers.

SHUANGTAIZIHEKOU (41d 07m N; 122d 03m E) - 20-25 April 1999. Coastline length surveyed was about 47 km. The count of 27,501 birds of 29 species compared with 63,641 of 36 species in mid-May 1998. Species present in internationally significant numbers were Dunlin (7,699), Grey Plover (4,428), Bar-tailed Godwit (3,738), Kentish Plover (1,367), Eurasian Curlew (966), Eastern Curlew (526), Spotted Redshank (115) and Black-winged Stilt (109). Kentish Plover, Spotted Redshank and Black-winged Stilt are additions to the list of internationally important species at the site, the others being Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Dunlin and Grey Plover.

The two curlew species and Kentish Plover were present in much higher numbers than in mid-May 1998, Bar-tailed Godwit and Grey Plover in very similar numbers, whilst Great Knot (24,915 in 1998; 719 in 1999), Whimbrel, Wood Sandpiper, Red Knot, Dunlin and Lesser Sand Plover had yet to arrive in significant numbers.

LINGHEKOU (40d 55m N; 121d 16m E) - 26-29 April 1999. This proposed Reserve lies directly to the west of Shuangtaizihekou and has a mudflat length of about 36 km. The count totalled 34,445 birds of 24 species. Species present in internationally important numbers were Great Knot (17,540), Dunlin (7,128), Grey Plover (2,739), Kentish Plover (635), Sanderling (105) and Eurasian Curlew (154).

The presence of large numbers of Great Knot (versus few at Shuangtaizihekou a couple of days earlier) indicates that this species moves up from South Korea in large numbers over a short period in late April.

We have now covered about 65% of the mudflats of northern Liaodong Wan at different times during the last two years and the count data indicate that in excess of 250,000 waders could be staging through the region on northward migration.

YALU JIANG (39d 49m N; 123d 57m E) - 2 to 9 May 1999. The Reserve has a mudflat length of about 50 km and is located on the China - North Korea border. A total of 151,708 birds of 25 species were counted. Species numbers of international significance were Great Knot (54,718), Bar-tailed Godwit (51,918), Dunlin (25,181), Grey Plover (3,995), Eastern Curlew (2,529), Broad-billed Sandpiper (729), Lesser Sand Plover (306) and Spotted Redshank (162).

These are by far the largest numbers of Bar-tailed Godwit seen during the last four years of surveys indicating that they prefer a more westerly migration route than Great Knot, which occur commonly across the whole Liaoning Province coastline. Wader numbers would be expected to increase considerably by 20 May as more birds and species arrive. We got the distinct impression that Red Knot numbers were increasing; we also recorded all the Broad-billed Sandpipers on our final day.

The site has tremendous potential for study of birds preparing and leaving for the final flight to the breeding grounds in Far East Russia and Alaska. The mudflats are readily accessible and birds easily observed. Unlike other sites visited in the last four years, high tides (except the lowest neaps) reach the sea wall and birds are forced to roost in very large numbers in adjacent fish ponds. Fortunately the mud flats are very extensive due to the 4-6 m rise and fall and there appears to have been little reclamation in the last decade. Birds coming off intermediate roosts close to the sea wall present spectacular sights. On one occasion we had in excess of 50,000 birds, mostly Great Knot, in view at the one time. If the wader numbers become a bit daunting, relaxation is available watching massive passerine migration!

Recent count data clearly demonstrate the great importance of the Yellow Sea mudflats for waders on northward migration. The Liaoning Province coastline, plus North Korea, is of particular importance because this region contains the closest available mudflats to the breeding grounds (at this time of the year) for many species.

To place the region in perspective, the Yellow Sea mudflats have an area which is 2 ½ times that of the Waddensee, whilst those in the northern part (Liaodong Wan and Korea Bay) are similar in area to the Waddensee.

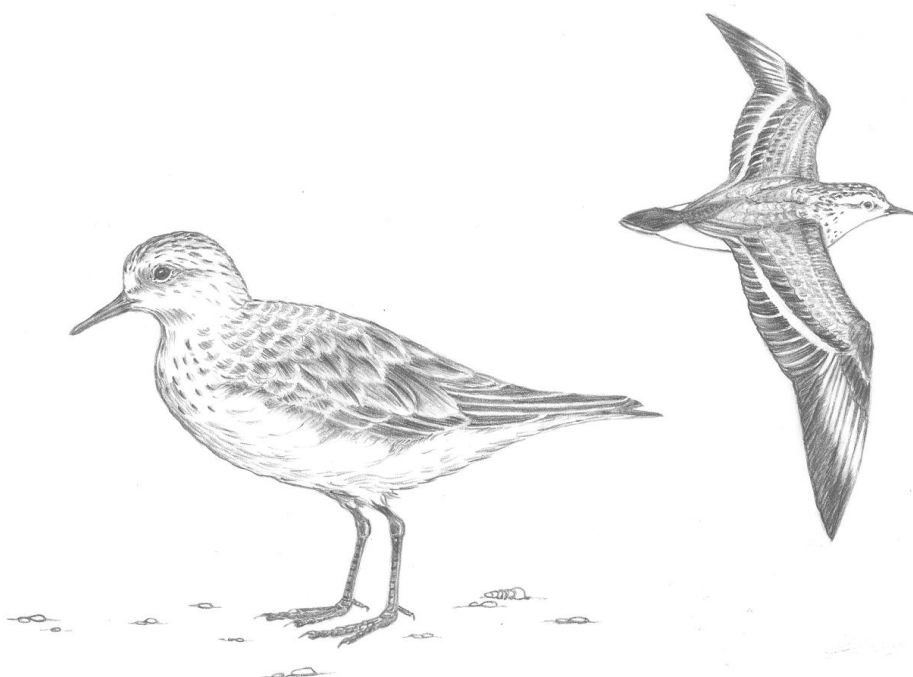
A total of 13 leg-flagged birds were seen:

- 6 Bar-tailed Godwit from north-west Australia
- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit from south-east Australia
- 2 Bar-tailed Godwit from New Zealand
- 2 Red Knot from New Zealand
- 1 Sanderling from south-east Australia
- 1 Great Knot from north-west Australia.

Initial indications are that north-west Australian godwit (*menzbieri*) mostly migrate through Liaodong Wan, whilst eastern Australian and New Zealand godwit (*baueri*) pass through Korea Bay. Godwit flag sighting dates provide evidence for non-stop flights from Australia to the northern yellow Sea. The Sanderling sighting on 27 April indicates a fast passage from the non-breeding grounds.

Detailed count information is available in four separate Excel files. These include previous years' count data where available. Please let me know if you would like to have copies.

Mark Barter e-mail: barter@world.net
 Chair, Asia-Pacific Shorebird Working Group
 21 Chivalry Avenue
 Glen Waverley VIC 3150
 AUSTRALIA



Wader breeding in Russian Arctic in 1998

E-mail Date: Friday, 15 January 1999

Please find below a summary of wader breeding conditions in Russian Arctic in 1998 compiled on the basis of information of correspondents from 30 sites. It is a result of activities of the Working Group on Waders in CIS, as well as a contribution to the International breeding conditions survey, aiming at collating of a similar kind of information on the circumpolar scale. An extended information about this international survey will be posted to Waders-L in the near future.

Wader breeding conditions in the Russian tundra in 1998

A late spring and cold conditions prevailed once again over most of the tundra regions of Russia. However, several reports, mainly from north-central Siberia, indicated average or early dates for phenological events. Extensive spring flooding, which was recorded on the southern Yamal and western Taimyr Rivers as well as the Anabar and Lena Rivers, undoubtedly influenced distribution, numbers and time of bird breeding on these floodplains. Cool and dry summer weather followed, except sites on Yamal, Taimyr, the Anabar River and Wrangel Island where the summer was warm.

Peak lemming numbers were recorded in two sites: on Yugorsky Peninsula, NE European Russia (Siberian Lemming - *Lemmus sibiricus*), and close to the Kolyma Delta, Yakutia (Collared Lemming - *Dicrostonyx torquatus*). Moderate lemming numbers were found at the coastal Yana Delta. A small increase in numbers took place near the Pechora Delta, and possibly in the southern part of the Lena Delta and certainly on Wrangel Island. In all of the other 26 sites monitored lemmings were either rare or not seen at all, but voles, (*Microtus*, *Clethrionomys*) were numerous in seven southern sites. Arctic Foxes (*Alopex lagopus*) and Snowy Owls (*Nyctea scandiaca*) actively bred only near the Kolyma Delta and on Wrangel Island. All over the rest of the Russian tundra area Arctic Foxes were found breeding only occasionally. Pomarine Skua (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) nested only on Yugorsky, on Wrangel and possibly near the Kolyma.

Almost unanimously, correspondents considered wader breeding results as being good in areas west from the Yenisey. Further east breeding output was scored mostly as "low"; however, some data indicate rather good breeding at the Anabar, coastal Yana Delta, near the Kolyma Delta and on the western part of Wrangel. The situation on the mainland eastward from the Kolyma is not clear, but it has always been patchy.

Some increase in lemming numbers can be expected on the Kola, Yamal and Taimyr Peninsulas and the Lena Delta, with peak numbers on Wrangel and possibly on NW Taimyr in 1999. As a result, quite high wader breeding output can be predicted for West and Central Siberia as well as for Wrangel. High predation rates will possibly result in few young being raised by birds in eastern Yakutia.

Pavel Tomkovich, e-mail: tomkovic@1.zoomus.bio.msu.ru

ATTENTION: MANLY BOAT HARBOUR UNDER THREAT??

It has come to our attention that the high tide roost at Manly Boat Harbour is under threat from dredge spillage dumping. The Boat Harbour is silting up and is in need of dredging, the problem that arises is from the disposal of this dredge spillage, and the fact that there is pollution in this waste, from the boats and yachts that use the Harbour, plus run-off through storm water drains. The bunds that the waders use has been ear-marked as the site for this waste, which, we feel, would completely cover the whole of the Manly site.

During the summer months thousands of migratory waders use Manly Boat Harbour as resting roost site at high tide, then use Moreton Bay for feeding. With the decreasing areas in the Bay available for roosting, Manly Boat Harbour is becoming more and more vital to these amazing travellers.

The QWSG, with others, is stating forcefully the case for the Waders with the relevant authorities. We feel that the birds are being neglected and endangered by all the suggested alternatives. Little thought has been given the future of the birds nor to the protection of the site for use either as is or as an educational birdwatchers' site.

We may well need you help in the future to lobby governments against the destruction of this international well-known site. Check out the newspapers, society newsletters and the various electronic birding sites, particularly Birding Aus.

The Satellite Tracking Eastern Curlews from Australia on Northward Migration by Peter Driscoll

QWSG and the Wild Bird Society of Japan (WBSJ) have had another season of tracking Eastern Curlews from Australia on northward migration, this time with the help of the Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG). Five birds were fitted with satellite transmitters on 2nd February at Manly Boat Harbour in Moreton Bay. Eight birds were fitted on 22nd February at Westernport in Victoria.

Birds have also been caught on the breeding grounds on the Kamchatka Peninsula and mid Amur basin, and six have been fitted with transmitters by Mutsuyuki Ueta of WBSJ, Aleksey Antonov of Khingansky Nature Reserve and Yuri Arutukhin of Kamchatka Institute of Ecology and Nature Management. Their southward migration is now being monitored.

All birds carry harness back packs with a total weight of no more than 28 gm. The harness is designed to break lose after a period of more than 12 months. The design of the back pack has been developed over several years but to some degree still seems to hinder the flight of the birds. Over the years we have recaptured three birds that have carried a back pack and all have been in good condition. Numerous observations have also been made of birds carrying the transmitters with apparent ease.

What follows is a brief report on what we know of the fate and movements of the 13 birds fitted in Australia in February, beginning with those caught in Westernport. The best story comes at the very end, so read on.

The signal from **Astrid** (04535) was very weak right from the start and we have only one location record from the banding site. Another 4 weak signals up until 18th April gave no indication of position. There appears to have been a technical failure but we can't be sure.

Rosemary (09915) left Westernport on 28th March and soon afterwards was above south west Queensland 1400 km away at an average speed of more than 60 kph. On 30th March she was recorded in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria and quickly moved to Cooktown, clocking up another 1600 km. However, between 1st and 4th April she turned south east down the Queensland coastline and stopped for about 2 weeks up until 17th April in the Great Sandy Strait. On 18th April she moved to Moreton Bay and stayed there until 31st May when she appears to have flown directly back to Victoria. She returned to Westernport but more recently, Corner Inlet, where she was recaptured by the VWSG on 18th July. The transmitter was removed and she was released in good condition weighing about 800 gm.

Julie (10279) left Victoria, returned and left again. Between 18th and 25th March she made a 3200 km round trip to south east Queensland but returned to Westernport where she stayed until 11th April. Sometime over the next two days she had travelled 2600 km to Cooktown but decided to turn south east along the Queensland coastline and settled in the Great Sandy Strait between 16th and 20th April. It was a short stay, she was in the Hunter Estuary between 23rd and 25th April, just south of Bega between 27th and 30th April and back in Westernport via Corner Inlet by 4th May, where she has stayed.

Between 1st and 3rd April, **Femmie** (09917) made it to the south west coastline of Irian Jaya, 3800 km in a direct line from Westernport. However she passed a point more than 500 km inland of Bundaberg, increasing the flight distance to over 4000 km, probably non stop. However, there she stayed briefly before flying to Bowling Green Bay, south of Townsville, 1900 km away. She was in Bowling Green Bay between 8th and 27th April and sometime between then and 12th May she made her way back to Westernport, where she has been since.

Jenny (10278) undertook a very similar journey to Femmie from Westernport to the south west coastline of Irian Jaya but across central western Queensland rather than closer to the coast. She also left earlier on 22nd March and was in Irian Jaya in a few days suggesting a direct overland flight. Like Femmie, after a short while she turned south east but only to go 420 km to just west of the PNG border near Merauke on the coast. She stayed there between 28th March and 17th April. Sometime between then and 24th April she flew to near the mouth of the Fitzroy River and stayed until 1st May. She subsequently moved to Hervey Bay where she also stayed for about a week until 11th May. By the 18th May she was back in Westernport via the NSW coastline near Newcastle.

Gloria (09916) may have left at the same time as Jenny on the evening of 22nd March, and followed a similar route. By midnight she was 400 km due north of Melbourne and in just over two days she was on the southern coastline of Irian Jaya, close to where Jenny spent several days. Gloria clocked up an average speed of 78 kph for the bulk of this flight (2600 km) between Melbourne and the south east corner of the Gulf

of Carpentaria. Between 25th March and 4th April she stayed in the one place in Irian Jaya and then moved 160 km to the south east to a position about 100 km north west of Merauke. On about 12th April, Gloria moved to the east coast of Cape York Peninsula between the Lockhart River and Princess Charlotte Bay. Between 19th April and 22nd April she moved to near the mouth of the Styx River in the Broad Sound where she stayed for 5 days before moving to the Great Sandy Strait where she stayed for almost 3 weeks. By 31st May she was back in Victoria in Corner Inlet and then moved on to Westernport.

Doris (10296) arrived in Pumicestone Passage from Victoria sometime before 21st March where she stayed until 1st April when she flew 3000 km over a period of few days to the north coast of PNG near Vanimo. However, by 7th April she was back in Queensland in Cleveland Bay near Townsville until 19th April. On 22nd April she was in Pumicestone Passage again and stayed there for 3 weeks before returning to Victoria by 18th May.

Brenda (04534) made what was probably a direct flight of 4500 km from Westernport across the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Moluccas sometime between 28th March and 2nd April. However, by 5th April she had back tracked directly south to the coastline of Australia north of Wyndham. She may then have moved a little farther to the south west but at this stage her transmitter, which had never performed very well, degenerated to the point of there have been no further fixes on her location.

Five birds from Moreton Bay were carrying transmitters this year and two of these were tracked to the breeding grounds (read on!).

Sheryl (10023) left Moreton Bay on about 26th March and travelled 2800 km to near Wewak on the north side of PNG before turning back to arrive on the Queensland coastline on 1st April. She settled in Bowling Green Bay just south of Townsville for the period between 4th and 18th April and perhaps after a shorter stay near the Broad Sound was back in Moreton Bay by 6th May.

Sally's (10280) story is a little more complicated. She left Moreton Bay late on 23rd March and within 2 days had travelled 2200 km to cross the southern PNG coastline near Daru. She then headed north west to the south west coast of Irian Jaya but also turned around at about this point. After just a few more days by 29th March, she was on Cape York Peninsula near Weipa where she stayed until about 10th April. Then she made her way back to Moreton Bay over the following 8 days.

Min (10022) did what Julie did. She left, turned back and started out again. On about 8th March she left Moreton Bay and got at least as far as just south of Cape Melville on Cape York Peninsula. After just another few days she was on the coast just south of Ingham in Halifax Bay where she stayed between 13th and 26th March. She then headed north again to at least 100 km inland along the Irian Jaya-PNG border. However, 3 days later on 2nd April she was back in Queensland. She settled in at Port Musgrave, north of Weipa where she stayed for 11 weeks until 19th June before returning over a two week period to Moreton Bay.

Alfonse (04548) and Wendy were the star performers. Alfonse, the only male tracked, left Moreton Bay perhaps late on 21st or early on 22nd March and was 1730 km away out over the Coral Sea (13.4 deg S, 146.6 deg E) at 6:30 am on 23rd March. Between then and 26th March at 8 am, he had travelled a minimum of 3640 km at an average speed of 50 kph over PNG and the western Pacific to off the coast of the Philippines (11.9 deg N, 125.7 deg E). He may have subsequently made first landfall on the island of Taiwan and again on the Chinese mainland. However, he spent most of the next 4 weeks up until 26th April, around the eastern shoreline of the Yellow Sea. A week later on 2nd May he was on the breeding grounds north of Khabarovsk at 49.7deg N, 135.4 deg E. His signal was weakening all the time from a failing battery or less than perfect transmitter. He appeared to stay at this high latitude at least until 25th June when signals became too weak to record a position. Over the next month, 4 faint signals were received but they revealed nothing of his whereabouts.

Wendy (10024) has travelled to the breeding grounds and we are still in contact with her. She left Moreton Bay probably late on 22nd March and travelled across the centre of New Guinea to the Chinese coastline, opposite Taiwan, a journey of 6900 km (shortest route on a great circle). It appeared to be a non stop flight but unfortunately we don't have records of just when she started or when she finished. She may have flown this distance in as little as five days. She was at rest for at least four days between 31st March and 3rd April but by 10th April she had travelled a further 1750 km to the West Korea Bay, just near the Chinese-North Korean border. She settled in here until 23rd April and then, as quickly as ever, she was a further 1600 km north by 26th April which is where she stayed on the breeding grounds for 7 weeks until 10th June.

We have accurate positions of her on the breeding grounds at around 51.5 deg N, 137.25 deg E (north of Komsomolsk). The big bonus is she is still being tracked and is hopefully poised for the southward journey from the east coast of North Korea.

Epilogue: the hard work now begins in getting as much as possible from the last three years of dedication to this project by members of WBSJ, VWSG and QWSG. Many thanks also to the Governments of Australia and Japan and the Qld State Government. There is much to be made of the data scientifically and with respect to the conservation needs of these birds and other wader species. QWSG will keep you informed.

AUSTRALASIAN WADER STUDIES GROUP CONFERENCE

By Sandra Harding

The Australasian Wader Studies Group conference was held at Phillip Island, Victoria on the 12th to 13th June 1999. Speakers and posters covered all aspects of wader biology, conservation and habitat management. A range of people attended including academics, rangers, amateur counters, banders and birdwatchers and government officers from all across Australia. The abstracts from the papers presented will be in the next issue of 'Stilt', available from the QWSG. While all the papers were extremely interesting I will just provide a few snippets.

Managing a breeding population of Hooded Plovers *Thinornis Rubricollis* in a high use recreational National Park - Bernice Dowling

A breeding population of Hooded Plovers coexists with recreational users of the Mornington Peninsula National Park, which include walkers, surfers, swimmers, fishermen and dog walkers. Management introduced by Parks Victoria aimed to decrease nest trampling and decrease disturbance by Park visitors in breeding areas. Management actions included fencing walking tracks from car parks to the beaches and closing informal tracks. A small number of beaches with breeding Hooded Plovers were temporarily closed to the public using signs and regular ranger patrols. Restricted access for dogs and diligent enforcement of dog regulations by parks staff limited the influence of dogs on the birds. In conjunction with these management actions, a community awareness program was undertaken. Posters and brochures were provided to park visitors to assist them to identify Hooded Plovers and to understand management objectives. Excellent media coverage of the program resulted in two television segments being broadcast and regular newspaper articles in the Melbourne and the local papers.

A Quarter Century of Wader Counts in Western Port (The BOCA Survey) - Richard H Loyn and others

The Bird Observers Club of Australia began counting waders and other water birds at high-tide roosts in Western Port in 1973. The paper discussed wader numbers from 1973-98. Of particular interest was the changes in herbivorous Black Swan and waders reflecting seagrass losses.

International Frameworks for Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds - Tom Scotney

In the Asia Pacific region there is no effective formal multilateral conservation agreement in relation to migratory waterbirds. Nine bilateral agreements, including JAMBA and CAMBA, have provided the only formal basis for international cooperation. A recommendation at the Costa Rica Ramsar conference was for contracting parties to support the development of a multilateral agreement.

The Response of Foraging Waders to Human Recreation Disturbance at Rhyll, Phillip Island, Victoria - Iain Taylor

From November 1997 to March 1998 the responses of a range of foraging wader species to the three main recreation activities at Rhyll; walking, dog-walking and bait digging were examined. For species such as Eastern Curlew and Whimbrel it is possible that disturbance may reduce the extent of suitable foraging areas, at least during daytime. The implications of this may depend on the extent to which the birds can compensate by nocturnal feeding.

Wader Counts on the North Coast of the Yellow Sea - Jim Wilson and Mark Barter

For the first time parts of the north Yellow Sea coasts of China were counted in May 1998 and April to May 1999. In the Liadong Wan, one of the main areas, 103,000 waders were counted, including 10 species of international significance. It is provisionally estimated that about 1,000,000 waders could be using the Yalu River Estuary and adjacent coastlines. It is possibly one of the world's top 10 wader sites.

Thanks to Sandra for taking the time to write this article whilst attending such a busy meeting, Editor

Wader book information request.

By Lindsay Agnew

Squinting through a scope, how often have we thought there must be an easier to sort out those waders and later, felt chuffed when we convinced ourselves that we really, really were looking at a Lesser and not a Greater Sand Plover (can we ever be sure?). In the process of sorting out what is what, you will have consciously or otherwise been filing away clues and cues to assist you identifying the bird the next time it's encountered. If these cues and mental keys have worked for you, they're just as likely to be a help to someone else. So how about dusting off those well held secrets and share them around.

In developing the QWSG book on waders of south-east Queensland, we would like to offer the reader the benefit of our hard earned or cunningly gained identification methods. No matter how long you have been looking at waders or how odd you think your ID tricks or methods are, we would like to know. Don't be shy, if you think you might be able to assist, please contact myself on aggies@ozemail.com.au or 07 3892 1790 or David Stewart on 07 3378 8605.

We are also still on the hunt for high quality photographs (suitable for publication) of waders found in our region, including many of the common species. For anyone wishing to donate slides or specifically photograph the species we need, please contact David Stewart.

Many thanks, Lindsay (your secret's safe with me) Agnew

CD BIRD CALLS OF THE BROOME REGION (NEW RELEASE)

The CD contains calls of 82 bird species of this region (this can be defined as within a 70 kilometre radius of Broome Bird Observatory).

A major feature is that 42 species of shorebirds are presented and a number of the calls recorded are possibly world firsts, particularly migratory calls. Also included are 40 species of bush birds, with all the mangrove species of the region featured. A four minute introductory voiceover, with background sounds of excited calls of migrating waders, provides useful information about the content of the CD.

Many of the calls were recorded in the vicinity of Broome Bird Observatory which is on the shore of Roebuck Bay and lies 11 kilometres to the east of Broome township. The large congregations of shorebirds of many species at Roebuck Bay are well known internationally. Each year enthusiasts with an interest in shorebirds and their migration come to the observatory to experience the phenomenon of the incredible numbers of birds. It is quite something to hear the excited and frenzied calling of waders while watching them mass into single species flocks as they prepare to migrate to the northern hemisphere. The main purpose of this CD is to assist people in identifying waders on call as an aid to visual recognition.

It is interesting that some species of bushbirds in this region have calls quite different to the same species in other parts of Australia eg. Rufous Whistler and Grey Shrike-thrush. Calls of all the mangrove species of the region are presented as well as a number of other species regularly seen in the area.

The cover of the CD contains information about habitat, behaviour of the bird while the call was recorded, and the locality of each recording. In some instances a number of different calls for each species are presented. Each call is clearly separated from other calls and the length of each call is indicated. Voice identification follows call. The total length of the CD is 69 mins 2 secs.

The CD is prepared in such a way that it can be used by the general public, as well as educators or scientists. It is hoped that people who have the opportunity to hear this CD will wish to experience the amazing phenomenon of migrating shorebirds.

This CD will be available through the Sales Table in the near future, if you are interested please check out the last page of this Newsletter and contact Linda Cross on 07 5495 2758 or E-mail xenus@big.net.au. Although it's title is for Broome WA there are 42 wader species included, so will be of interest to all wader watchers. Editor.

COUNT PROGRAMME

Linda Cross

By the time this Newsletter reaches you spring will have sprung and 1999 will soon be at a close. I don't know about the rest of you but the year is going by at such a pace that I don't feel I have achieved much this year.

There is an increase in the number of Eastern Curlew at some sites since late July and over the next couple of weeks we should see the return of other species. What is interesting is the large number of Red-necked Avocets (a few juveniles included) roosting in one of the Deception Bay sites. Such a large number have not been seen at the site since 1995. Also of interest is the report of a pair of Banded Lapwing at Cabbage Tree Creek site.

Beach Stone-curlew sightings have increased since the last newsletter. 2 birds with a nest and egg at Sandy Point Rockhampton seen by Paul O'Neill & Russell Watson – 3 birds at Far Beach Bakers Creek Mackay seen by Rob Farnes – 7 birds at Cairns Airport seen by Grahame Finnigan – 1 bird at Cooloola seen by John Cummings & Kelvin Neilsen – 1 bird at Darymple Point Bowen seen by Jon Wren – 4 birds at Great Keppel Island seen by Russell Watson – 2 birds at Pioneer River Mackay seen by Les Thyer – 3 birds at Cairns Esplanade seen by Keith & Lindsay Fisher and 1 bird at Tangalooma Resort seen by Ros Laundon on 31-7-99. All sightings occurred between 10-10-98 and 21-6-99. Birds were seen at some sites on more than one occasion.

Breeding notes of sedentary waders are as follows. Pied Oystercatcher nest at Sandy Point Rockhampton seen by Paul O'Neill & Russell Watson on 10-10-98 – 2 Masked Lapwing chicks at Dux Creek Bribie Island seen by Trevor Ford & Frank Bigg on 15-5-99 and 4 Red-capped Plover chicks at Cairns Airport seen by Grahame Finnigan on 16-5-99.

Only 7 Sooty Oystercatcher reported from 3 sites. 2 birds at Dalrymple Point Bowen seen by Jon Wren on 19-4-99 – 4 birds at Great Keppel Island seen by Russell Watson on 14-5-99 and 1 bird at Dux Creek Bribie Island seen by Trevor Ford & Frank Bigg on 15-5-99.

Some more sightings of Double-banded Plover appear below:

Eddie Kleiber – 16 at Tony's Island Tweed Heads on 25-4-99 – 15 on 25-5-99 – 18 on 4-7-99 and 15 on 29-7-99.

Jill Chamberlain – 9 at sandbank No. 2 Caloundra on 13-5-99 and 19 on 1-8-99 (in breeding plumage).

Russell Watson – 2 at Great Keppel Island on 14-5-99.

Shirley Rooke, John & Lyle Hansen – 14 at Maroochy River North Shore on 14-5-99.

Paul O'Neill & Russell Watson – 9 at Sandy Point Rockhampton on 15-5-99.

Trevor Ford & Frank Bigg – 22 at Dux Creek Bribie Island on 15-5-99 and 12 on 31-7-99 seen by Frank Bigg & Lois McRae.

Ivan Fien – **50** at Caboolture River Mouth on 15-5-99.

There are some outstanding count sheets for the National Winter Count. I would appreciate it if you could send them in as soon as possible. If you did not do the count please let know.

I could not finish this article without once again asking for **more counters**. If you want to learn more about waders we would love to hear from you. Please note that I can now be contacted at xenus@big.net.au as well as on 07 5495 2758

Happy Counting
Linda Cross.

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

Leg Flag Banding Legend (colour = where banded)

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

Green leg flags sightings - Queensland

- 6 Eastern Curlew – 2 (1 with transmitter) seen by Phil Battley at Manly Boat Harbour on 15-5-99,
(2 with transmitter) seen by Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Manly Boat Harbour on 30-5-99 and
1 seen by Arthur & Sheryl Keates at Lota on 31-7-99.
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – David Edwards at Nudgee Beach on 25-7-99.
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Martin Waugh at Amity Point on 29-4-99.
2 Ruddy Turnstone – Andrew Geering at St Helena Island Pier on 17-4-99.

Other leg flag sightings and banded birds.

- Eastern Curlew – one with orange leg flag and transmitter seen by Trevor Ford at Dux Creek
Bribie Island on 5-5-99.
Grey-tailed Tattler – one with blue leg flag seen by Rosemary Payet at Toolakea (Townsville
Area) on 6-2-99.
Pied Oystercatcher – 2 with metal band on left leg seen by Pat Barry at Woody Point on
25-5-99 and one with white band on left leg and metal band on right leg seen by Martin
Waugh at Amity Point on 31-7-99.
Caspian Tern – one with metal band on right leg seen by Martin Waugh at Amity Point on
31-7-99.
Crested Tern – one with white band on left leg seen by Martin Waugh at Amity Point on
31-7-99 and 2 with a metal band on right lower leg seen by Eddie Kleiber at Hastings
Point on 1-8-99.
Lesser Crested Tern – one with metal band on left leg seen by Martin Waugh at Amity Point on
31-7-99.

Interesting sightings

- 310 Red-necked Avocet (includes 8 juvenile) – Phil & Linda Cross at Deception Bay on 31-7-99.
148 Red-necked Avocet - David Edwards at Fisherman's Island on 15-5-99.
24 Red-kneed Dotterel – David Edwards at Pine Rivers North Shore on 16-5-99.
2 Red-kneed Dotterel – David Edwards at Aspley Driving Range 15-5-99.
20 Black-fronted Dotterel – Linda Cross at Deception Bay on 15-5-99.
3 Black-fronted Dotterel – (first record on site) A & J Ruddell at Clinton Ash Ponds Gladstone on
9-5-99.
1 Wood Sandpiper – John Cummings & Kelvin Nielsen at Tin Can Bay Sewage Works on 3-4-99.
250 Pacific Golden Plover – Rob Farnes at Bakers Creek Mackay on 19-3-99.
2 Common Sandpiper – Grahame Finnigan at Barron River (Cairns) on 31-1-99.

Not waders, but of interest anyway.

- 2 Banded Plover – Ivell & Jim Whyte at Cabbage Tree Creek on 31-7-99.
38 White-faced Heron – Jill Denning at Poverty Creek Mission Point on 31-7-99.
10 Chestnut Teal ducklings – Linda Cross at Deception Bay on 15-5-99.
8 Nankeen Night Heron – Ivell & Jim Whyte at Cabbage Tree Creek on 15-5-99.
1 Australian Gannet (juvenile) – Trevor Ford & Frank Bigg at Dux Creek Bribie Island on 15-5-99.
And one seen by Jean Corney at Toorbul on the same day.
14 Rajah Shelduck – John Thomson & Rob MacFarlane at Kinka Beach on 15-5-99.
Yellow-billed Spoonbill – have been sighted at a number of sites, 4 at Bishops Marsh Toorbul by
Jean Corney on 15-5-99, 1 at Caboolture River Mouth by Ivan Fien on 15-5-99 and
1 at Cobaki Wetlands by Ian Watson & Eddie Kleiber (rare on the Tweed).
Little Tern – 6 nests and 1 chick sighted at Sandy Point Rockhampton by Paul O'Neill and Russell
Watson on 20-12-98.
Lesser Crested Tern – have been sighted at a number of sites, Sandy Point Rockhampton by Paul O'Neill &
Russell Watson, Cairns Esplanade and Barron River by Grahame Finnigan, St Helena
Island by Andrew Geering, Dalrymple Point Bowen by Jon Wren and Amity Point by Martin
Waugh between 10-10-98 and 15-5-99.

Copy Deadline for Summer Edition

The deadline for the next issue is the 26th November 1999.

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

Other Conservation Activities of Interest



QWSG is a special interest group of the Queensland Ornithological Society Inc. whose object is "To promote the scientific study and conservation of birds by all means possible, with particular reference to the birds of Queensland".

Separate membership is required. Contacts: Dawn Muir, President (07) 3870 8076; Sheena Gillman, Secretary (07) 3372 4089; Treasurer, Lyal Grundy (07) 3355 1050

Monthly Meetings

QOSI - 7.45pm Queensland Museum Brisbane

1st Thursday each month except January.

Entry via Dinosaur Garden in Grey Street. Doors open between 7.30 and 8.00pm.

THE MORETON BAY ENVIRONMENT ALLIANCE MEETINGS

Saturday August 21st at 12 pm to 1 pm at Wynnum Central State School, Florence St., Wynnum.

Daryl McGinn, Brisbane City Council's Manager of Mosquito and Vector Control will provide a presentation of the work of his department, including spraying methods in wetlands areas and the effects on birds, fish and other wildlife.

Saturday August 28th at 10 am to 12 Noon followed by refreshments at Wynnum Central State School, Florence St Wynnum a talk entitled 'Moreton Bay Study: a scientific basis for the Healthy Waterways Campaign' by Dr Bill Dennison

What parts of the Bay are healthy, not healthy and why?

How much has water quality changed over the last 80 years?

What is the pattern of water movement around the Bay, why is there mud in the Bay, where it is and what effect does it have on nutrients?

Please RSVP your attendance by August 25th to Moreton Bay Environment Alliance

Phone Mary Patchett on 3396 1285

The Lowlands Festival

The Lowlands Festival at Osprey House (Pine River) on Sunday 19th September. Start time is 11:00 am.

This years event will be much bigger than the others with Channel 7 being involved in a big way and advertising it, including Channel 7 celebrities attending the Festival.

For those wishing to see the Waders the high tide is at 1652 hours and is 1.85m. We have been informed that the waders will only be around for a short while on the incoming tide.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Andrew Collins, Carol Conaches, Erina Hill
Martin Schulz, and John, Jennie and Emily Truman.

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.

New South Wales Wader Study Group

Phil Straw is hoping to restart the NSW Wader Study Group, so if you are interested you can contact Phil at:- PO Box 2006, Rockdale DC, NSW 2216 or E-mail him at pstraw@mpx.com.au

The cost will be \$10:00 per annum, and at the moment this will take you through to 31st December 2000



ACTIVITIES - 1999

Wader Counts (general monitoring)

Contact: Linda Cross on 07 5495 2758 or at xenus@big.net.au
Completed count forms should be returned as soon as possible to:
Mrs L Cross at 40 Thompson Rd, Bellmere, Qld 4510.

WADER COUNTS DATES (general monitoring) FOR ALL OF 1999

Sun 12 th September	High Tide of 2.00m at 10:58am
Sun 10 th October	High Tide of 2.10m at 9:57am
Sat 13 th November	High Tide of 2.10m at 12:23pm
Sat 11 th December	High Tide of 2.27m at 11:27am

Wader ID Days

Sat 28th August at Manly Harbour. Meet by 8:30am prompt at the end of the road east of the Royal Queensland Yacht Clubhouse, Manly, for a high tide of 1.96m. UBD map 164 A6. We will access the Boat Harbour through locked gates, so it is important that everyone arrive on time as the gates will be locked at 8:30am.

Sat 11th September at Toorbul. Meet at 9:30am onwards for a 1.99m high at 11:00am. Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane to the Donnybrook / Toorbul turn-off near the Big Fish. Turn off here and head east over the highway overpass. Continue on this road to Toorbul. Turn right at the T-junction then first left and then right, which brings you onto the Esplanade. Follow this road to the end, we will be on the left.

Sat 6th November at Manly Boat Harbour. Meet at 7:30am for a 2.10m high at 8:20am. Directions as 28th August. Please ring Linda on 07 5495 2758 or Sheryl on 07 3398 4898 to confirm this date

Sun 12th December at Manly Boat Harbour. Meet at 11:00am for a 2.22m high at 7:58am. Directions as 28th August. Please ring Linda on 07 5495 2758 or Sheryl on 07 3398 4898 to confirm this date.

These days are a great way to learn in the field, so if you are beginning or are in need of a refresher now that the waders are coming back, come along with sunscreen, insect repellent, plus some food and drink, and a telescope if you have one. Please ring Linda on 07 5495 2758 or Sheryl on 07 3398 4898, if you have any queries.

Cannon Netting

<u>Sunday 29th August</u>	Venue: Dynah Island.	High tide at 11:00am of 2.02m.
<u>Sunday 31st October</u>	Venue: To be advised.	High tide at 2:45pm of 2.15m.

Contact: Peter Driscoll 07 3289 0237 three days in advance to confirm time and place. For weekend trips, please confirm at least one week in advance. As well as listed activities, netting outings are mounted "opportunistically" when it appears there may be a good chance of success. You will need to bring food and water, plus sun-screen and insect repellent.

COMMITTEE MEETING

The next committee meeting will be on Tues 19th October 1999. Venue to be announced.
Many thanks to the Australian Marine Conservation Society for the use of their premises over the years.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled to be held on Tues 18th January 2000, the venue is to be announced, so look out for it in the next Newsletter. All members of QWSG are cordially invited to attend this meeting. We hope to have other activities at this meeting not just the AGM, so please come along and meet the Committee and other QWSG members.

QWSG COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO WADERS (SHOREBIRDS) IN AUSTRALIA AND MORETON BAY

This course offers a unique opportunity to learn about a special group of birds, Waders. These birds are magnificent athletes, flying up to 25,000 km every year. They range from tiny 24 gram birds to the world's largest wader, over 1 kilogram, the Eastern Curlew. Moreton Bay, on Brisbane's doorstep, is an internationally significant area for waders, but most people are oblivious to their presence.

Seventeen resident and 36 migrant species of wader occur in Australia; in total, about 3 million birds. They feed on the shorelines of coastal and inland wetlands of Australia. The majority breed in the higher latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere in places like Siberia and Alaska, and travel the East Asian/Australasian flyway twice a year on migration. From September to April, a large number of species can be found in Moreton Bay, and we have an ideal opportunity to study these species. They face increasing pressures from

burgeoning human populations and habitat destruction throughout the flyway.

During this course you will be introduced to these fascinating birds through specific topics that include:

- Definition of waders and habitat;
- Field identification;
- Factors affecting local and regional distribution;
- Importance of Moreton Bay;
- The East Asian/Australasian Flyway;
- Energetics and physiology of migration;
- Threats to waders and their habitat;
- National and International conservation agreements.

The field trip will give you the opportunity to have a 'hands-on' chance to identify many of the species mentioned in the lectures with experienced wader-watchers.

THE COURSE CONSISTS OF TWO NIGHTS OF LECTURES AND ONE FIELD TRIP

COST: \$70:00 Cheques payable to Queensland Wader Study Group
 Post to: QWSG Wader Course, RGSQ, 112 Brookes Street, Fortitude Valley, Q 4006

LECTURES: **THURSDAY 21ST AND THURSDAY 28TH OCTOBER, 1999.**
 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm Supper included.
 Royal Geographical Society of Queensland,
 112, Brookes Street, Fortitude Valley.
 (Parking at rear of Building)

FIELD TRIP: **SUNDAY 24TH OCTOBER 1999, Morning.**
 At Manly. Details to be provided at first lecture.
 BYO food, drink and sun / insect protection.

CLOSING DATE: **Friday 15TH OCTOBER 1999.**

ENQUIRES: **Course:** Andrew Geering: 07 3376 1241 (Home)
 07 3896 9353 (Work)
Bookings: RGSQ: 07 3252 3856.

ENROLMENT FORM
INTRODUCTION TO WADERS (SHOREBIRDS) IN AUSTRALIA AND MORETON BAY

Course Fee: \$70:00 payable to Queensland Wader Study Group.
 Post to: QWSG Wader Course, RGSQ, 112, Brookes Street, Fortitude Valley, Q 4006.

Title: First Name: Last Name:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Organisation (if applicable):

Phone:

E-Mail Address: