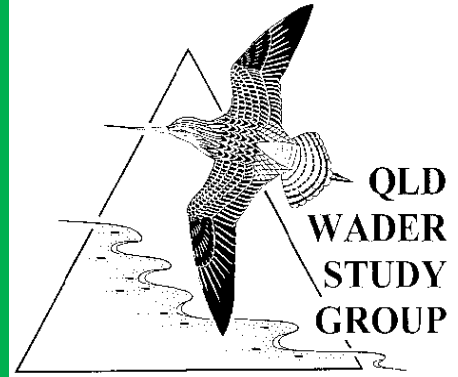


QUEENSLAND WADER



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Queensland Ornithological Society Incorporated. www.waders.org.au
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Pied Stilt Nesting at Manly Harbour Shorebird Roost

by Arthur Keates

Shorebird enthusiasts are all familiar with the common resident shorebird, Pied Stilt, *Himantopus leucocephalus*. Here I report on breeding of the species at Manly Harbour shorebird roost.

The Pied Stilt usually nest in colonies of up to 500 nests, occasionally solitarily (Marchant, S., & P.J. Higgins). In eastern Australia, the breeding season is generally August-December but also late summer, autumn and winter if conditions are suitable (Halse, S.A. & R.P. Jaensch).

After prolonged dry conditions in south-east Queensland, showers and thunderstorms produced widespread moderate falls, with locally heavier falls in far south-eastern Queensland and north-eastern New South Wales during the week ending 21 January. Rainfall totals in excess of 200 mm were recorded and again in the week ending 11 February thanks to a slow-moving coastal trough.

Prior to the widespread rainfall, counts of Pied Stilt at the Manly Harbour shorebird roost were 190 on 7 January dropping to 31 on 19 February when I suspected 2 pairs of stilts were nesting on the island being alerted by the constant yapping, bearing out one of the old common names for the species, "Dog-bird".

On regular visits to the site, over the following weeks I observed more and more birds apparently sitting on nests, reaching 13 on 5 March, when I also observed a pair copulating. Two days later, a further 5 birds were seen sitting on nests. As it is only a small area, some of the nests on the island were about only 3 m apart.



Pied Stilt performing distraction display near its nest (inset). Photo: A Keates

Approaching the nest of the pair at the southern end, the sitting bird immediately took to the air yapping incessantly. Alerted by my presence, other nesting birds did likewise until at least 20 agitated and noisy birds were flying around the roost site. Once I settled in a position to observe and conduct a shorebird count of the site, the island nesting birds soon returned to the nests while the others, presumably their mates, resumed feeding or roosting nearby in the shallow water. Because of my proximity to the pair at the southern end, they took longer to settle down. After landing and performing the classic distraction display while employing a mournful and pleading call, one of the birds soon returned to the nest.

On 7 March, a pair at the southern end of the island were observed keeping a watchful eye over a chick of not more than 3-4 days old while it walked among roosting shorebirds pecking at food in the shallow water.



Adult Pied Stilt watching over its chick. Photo: A Keates



Aggressive Pied Stilt forcing a cohort to duck into the water. Photo: A Keates

On 9 and 10 March, the king tides combined with rainfall of just over 50 mm, resulted in the flooding of most of the island roost destroying all of the nests on it. However, the antagonism shown by several agitated birds flying towards each other yapping, often making contact, indicated some were still nesting. In a concerted attack, 2 birds flew at and dropped down on an individual in the water forcing it to duck, momentarily submerging its head under the water before flying off - see sequence of photos from clockwise top left. This behaviour reported in Black Stilt (*Himantopus novaezelandiae*) has been appropriately described as "fly-and-drop" (Marchant, S., & P.J. Higgins).

On 14 March, an adult was seen keeping an eye on 3 chicks of no more than 3-4 days old while at least 4 birds were observed sitting on nests, possibly indicating re-nesting by the pairs on the island. Flying in wide circles around me in attempt to lure me away were presumably the mates of the nesting birds. Apart from the aerial performances, the birds on the island regularly walked towards roosting shorebirds, calling and raising their wings to move them away from their nests.

On regular visits over the following days until movement restrictions were imposed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, at least 3 juveniles and as many as 7 downy chicks were observed at the same time. Rather than yapping while in flight performing the distraction display, the call of the adults with young was mournful and pleading. It remains to be seen how many of the young will survive to reach adulthood.

Postscript: On 7 May, 134 Pied Stilt were counted at the roost, including 4 juveniles with their ever-protective parents nearby.

On 9 May, 148 Pied Stilt were counted at the roost, including 7 juveniles with their ever-protective parents nearby.

References:

Halse, S.A. & R.P. Jaensch. 1989. *Emu* 89: 232-49.

Marchant, S., & P.J. Higgins. (Eds) 1993: *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds. Volume 2: Raptors to Lapwings*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

A Senior on Migration

26 April 2020

This Bar-tailed Godwit with a plain orange flag was seen on April 20 2020 on Aphae Island (ROK). The band number was seen entirely, but unfortunately an image could not be obtained of the last digit. The band number is 072-80733. This bird was banded on June 24 in 2001 at an age of 1 and was caught again eight month later in February 2002. This bird is now migrating at an age of twenty and so one of the seniors on the annual journey.



Mackay Survey Report – 17th to 20th October 2019

by Linda Cross

The 13th survey of the Mackay region was conducted by the QWSG members and volunteers over the period 17th to 20th October. The area covered is 200km between Repulse Bay, just south of the Conway Ranges and Ince Bay south of Sarina.

With a total of 71 sites listed to be surveyed 16 members of the QWSG either flew or drove to Mackay from Brisbane, Maryborough and Rockhampton, and a further 3 members in the Mackay region also joined us for the count.

Weather conditions in Mackay prior to the survey were of concern, particularly for the boat teams as strong winds were being experienced over several days prior to the start. During previous surveys, the wind has been a significant factor in reducing the number of sites that were covered in the region and once again was looking problematic for those going out in boats.

Coverage of the southern section of the region on the Friday did not go well and was abandoned before any sites were surveyed when the strong winds damaged the boat soon after embarking. Thankfully, Steve Fisher (our skipper in Mackay), managed to repair his vessel so that surveys could be completed on Saturday and Sunday when the weather improved considerably.

Of the sites to be surveyed, 54 were completed and 3 new sites (Sandringham Bay Conservation Park, Habana Wharf Lagoon and Mackay Port Caravan Park), were added, bringing the total counts to 57. A dozen of these sites were wetland sites with predominately waterbird species and few waders. QWSG was unable to get access to a further 2 wetland sites and land access to sites at Dudgeon Point. However, the boat team on Sunday attempted to count 3 of the Dudgeon Point sites from the water and were able to get some species counts.

Not being able to cover the southern sites at Ince Bay on Friday due to strong winds, and not having full coverage of Dudgeon Point sites has resulted in a lower count of waders recorded for the region. If we had been able to survey all sites, it is quite possible that the total count would include a further 3,000 to 5,000 waders. Apart from sand plovers at Dudgeon Point site, all species seen were identified and a table listing the results of previous surveys, with the additional data from this last count is included with this report.

Our accommodation at Illawong Resort once again was beneficial with the location being close to the Airport for picking up and dropping off the members, and having a wader roost (Shellgrit Creek entrance), out in front of the resort was an added attraction for some. I personally completed 2 counts prior to the first survey day. It was quite interesting to see the change of species and numbers over the 3 days of counts (notably sand plovers). Lesser Sand Plover numbers decreased from 234 to 1 and Greater Sand Plover also decreasing from 166 to 1 within the 3-day period, while Whimbrel numbers increased from 28 to 109.

The total counts from the survey were 14,590 migratory and 850 resident waders. Other birds counted comprised of waterbirds (3,833), raptors (40), Silver Gull (227) and terns (3,003). Great Knot accounted for nearly 39% of all migratory wader species.

Wader breeding records reported are as follows:

Red-capped Plover – Seaforth Beach creek mouth (2 young approximately two thirds grown and broken wing display suggesting further nest/s) – Ball Bay near Seaforth (2 runners and 2 nests with 2 eggs each) – St. Helens Beach (2 chicks).

Two flagged birds were observed during the survey. Both were at Armstrong south point site:

Bar-tailed Godwit – engraved green flag right tibia (banded in Moreton Bay south-east Queensland).
Great Knot – black flag over white flag right tibia (banded in Chongming Island, China).

Extracts of migratory wader counts are as follows:

Grey Plover: Baker's Creek beach north (70), Deadman's Creek New Beach (64), Sand Bay roost 1 (46)
Lesser Sand Plover: Baker's Creek beach north (468), O'Connell river mouth (400)
Greater Sand Plover: Baker's Creek beach north (215), O'Connell river mouth (200)
Black-tailed Godwit: O'Connell River mouth (8), Armstrong south arm (1), Habana Wharf (1)
Whimbrel: Baker's Creek north bank (194)
Far Eastern Curlew: Shellgrit Creek entrance (90)
Common Greenshank: McEwan's Beach swamp (29)

Grey-tailed Tattler: Baker's Creek beach north (175)
 Terek Sandpiper: Dunrock south arm (70)
 Ruddy Turnstone: Nell's Beach, Sand Bay (43), Dudgeon Point (25)
 Great Knot: O'Connell River mouth (2,000), Deadman's Creek New Beach (1,950), Nell's Beach, Sand Bay (975)
 Red Knot: Baker's Creek beach north (12), Deadman's Creek, New Beach (7)
 Red-necked Stint: Shellgrit Creek entrance (460), Baker's Creek beach north (390), Nell's Beach, Sand Bay (334)
 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper: Lake Barfield, Hay Point (101), Habana Wharf claypan (69).

Other species of interest observed include:

Beach Stone-curlew: Pioneer River mouth southbank (4)
 Black-fronted Dotterel: Mackay Port Caravan Park (7)
 Comb-crested Jacana: Lake Barfield, Hay Point (25)
 Common Tern: Baker's Creek beach north (1,472)
 Little Tern: Baker's Creek beach north (300)
 Lewin's Rail: Kinchant Dam Borrow Pits (1)

Please note: Due to lack of space, the species table that appears with this report includes only wader species and does not include all the years that the surveys were conducted.

QWSG thanks the following landowners for allowing survey teams onto or through their property to conduct the counts. Their cooperation is very much appreciated:

Joe & Phyllis Abela – owners of Habana Wharf
 Ron and Diane Pullen – owners of Tedlands, Koumala
 Keith Shegog – manager of Tedlands, Koumala
 Vic Welsh – owner of Tedland 2, Koumala
 Judy Hallett – owner of property backing onto Lake Barfield, Hay Point
 Mr. Ziebarth – caretaker at Judy Hallett's property while she was away.

I would particularly like to personally thank Stephanie Wabnik, Mackay Regional Council, who helped us obtain access to some sites, and who took my numerous calls (day and night), when we struck problems in the field.

QWSG extends a special thank you to Steve Fisher who supplied his vehicle, boat and services during 3 days of the survey period.

Without the assistance of the people and organisations I have listed in this report, these surveys would not have been possible. QWSG sincerely thank you all for your continued support. My apologies if I have omitted anyone.

The participants for this survey are listed below:

QWSG Members: Louis Backstrom, Robert Bush, Deirdre Chrzescijanski, Ken Cowell, Linda Cross, Phil Cross, Peter Driscoll, David Edwards, Cecile Espigole, Paul Finn, Rob Kernot, Steve Kerr, Will Price, Peter Rothlisberg, Floss Wainwright and Brad Woodworth.

QWSG Members in Mackay: Marlis Schoeb and Gerry Woodruff.

Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Limited: Emma Maxwell.

Mackay Regional Council: Stefanie Wabnik.

Other Mackay participants: Steve Fisher, Indus Fisher and Robert Zimsek.

Space filler because of formatting problem.

Australian Raven, Little Raven, Little Crow, Forest Raven, Torresian Crow, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Hooded Crow, Common Raven, White-necked Raven, Grey Jay, Alpine Chough, Clark's Nutcracker, Pinyon Jay, Red-billed Chough, Pied Crow, New Caledonian Crow, Plush-crested Jay, Piacpiac

Better known as CORVID - 19

Sorry about that!

MACKAY SURVEYS SPECIES	Oct 2003	Feb 2004	Jan 2006	Nov 2007	Nov 2008	Nov 2010	Nov 2012	Nov 2014	Nov 2017	Oct 2019
Queensland Warbler - Issue 112	12	4	1	3	-	3	June, July, August 2020	June, July, August 2020	June, July, August 2020	1
Beach Stone-curlew	2	7	10	13	18	7	1	12	10	9
Pied Oystercatcher	223	539	357	312	302	215	221	245	273	212
Sooty Oystercatcher	20	35	51	43	77	18	29	23	28	6
Pied Stilt	8	56	86	101	56	1	214	154	24	191
Masked Lapwing	76	51	68	102	75	57	168	224	330	132
Red-kneed Dotterel	3	-	-	-	-	-	21	4	10	4
Pacific Golden Plover	775	39	7	349	677	158	304	448	368	402
Grey Plover	39	175	81	156	159	187	134	447	84	225
Red-capped Plover	419	157	99	366	542	186	345	315	614	244
Double-banded Plover	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Lesser Sand Plover	499	1887	2637	1980	424	2308	335	1322	2368	1334
Greater Sand Plover	1462	1078	817	2732	1148	701	1318	985	1211	660
Black-fronted Dotterel	19	1	6	5	4	10	35	17	14	12
Comb-crested Jacana	1	1	7	12	29	47	65	59	43	39
Latham's Snipe	-	-	-	-	1	-	8	5	-	-
Black-tailed Godwit	116	71	-	-	-	2	241	17	48	10
Bar-tailed Godwit	1530	2343	2854	3324	4343	3188	2673	1796	2954	1448
Little Curlew	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Whimbrel	1647	975	1002	1673	1960	985	938	1542	2507	875
Far Eastern Curlew	1235	294	422	533	808	714	789	794	1176	340
Marsh Sandpiper	2	11	13	22	5	2	32	7	1	13
Common Greenshank	148	90	136	189	143	105	49	107	76	61
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Grey-tailed Tattler	929	832	358	572	643	449	777	342	489	500
Wandering Tattler	-	-	-	-	9	-	3	-	1	-
Terek Sandpiper	172	329	118	369	55	227	44	66	43	108
Common Sandpiper	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ruddy Turnstone	10	38	53	122	102	61	175	51	135	117
Great Knot	1935	6047	4407	6701	5418	6753	5132	3513	6595	5801
Red Knot	251	7	8	5	17	44	8	2	36	28
Sanderling	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	1	-
Red-necked Stint	1676	749	628	3692	1976	1467	1666	3348	2175	1872
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1006	68	68	497	261	128	333	590	217	382

Curlew Sandpiper	191	5	44	221	22	57	59	111	45	44
Broad-billed Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Ruff	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Unidentified larger wader	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unidentified medium wader	202	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
Unidentified small wader	-	35	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unidentified Snipe sp.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unidentified Sand Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	370
Unidentified wader	150	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total migratory waders	13977	15074	13692	23140	18172	17538	15021	15493	21228	14590
Total resident waders	774	851	685	957	1103	544	1099	1061	1350	850
Total waders	14751	15925	14377	24097	19275	18082	16120	16554	22578	15440
Total migratory species	20	18	17	19	20	20	22	19	22	18
Total resident species	10	9	9	9	8	9	9	10	10	10
Total species	30	27	26	28	28	29	31	29	32	28

Great Sandy Strait Survey 21-23 February 2020

by Linda Cross

The first surveys of the Great Sandy Strait (GSS) region were completed by Peter Driscoll and published in Driscoll, P.V. (1993). QWSG has continued extensive surveys of the region since February 1995, and in total (including those completed by Peter), 18 surveys have been undertaken.

Timing for the most recent survey in February this year clashed with the most optimum dates selected for the count programme, which resulted in having to choose a weekend with a slightly higher tide than would have been preferred. Thankfully, weather conditions during most of the survey period were favourable with dry and warm days, but a moderate to strong south-easterly wind on the last day was uncomfortable for those in boats. Most sites were counted during Friday and Saturday, but a few were done on Sunday when there was some rain and stronger winds.

No aerial count was conducted during this survey. In total 59 sites were listed for counting by land and boat. Of the 59 sites, only 49 were surveyed and another site that had not been counted for 15 years was visited, bringing the total number of counts to 50.

The total counts from the February survey were 20,161 migratory and 809 resident waders. The Bar-tailed Godwit count was 10,990, representing nearly 55% of the total migratory species counted. The next largest counts were Whimbrel (1,846) and Red-necked Stint (1,793), followed by Far Eastern Curlew (1,590). Of these 4 species, 3 (Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel and Far Eastern Curlew), are in internationally significant numbers. The percentage of the flyway population for these species is Bar-tailed Godwit (3.3%), Whimbrel (2.8%) and Far Eastern Curlew (4.5%) (Hansen, B.D. et al). Other birds counted during the survey comprised of waterbirds (1,301), raptors (35), seabirds (2), Silver Gull (135) and terns (1,286) made up of 6 species and, of those, 641 were Greater Crested Tern.

A flagged bird was reported from Moon Creek west entrance on Fraser Island during the survey period; a Red-necked Stint with black flag over yellow flag on the right tibia. The bird was flagged on the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia.

No breeding records were reported.

Extracts of higher wader counts from the survey are listed below:

Red-capped Plover: Garnet's Lagoon No. 1 Hervey Bay (115), Inskip Pt. (105)
 Lesser Sand Plover: Cooloola (422), Gables's Pt. Rocks, Hervey Bay (286)
 Greater Sand Plover: O'Regan's Creek westside, Hervey Bay (160), Pt. Vernon, Hervey Bay (147)
 Bar-tailed Godwit: Inskip Pt. (2,800), Moon Pt. Fraser Island (1,570), Maaroom (1,580), Boonooroo Site 1 (1,447)
 Whimbrel: Puthoo Creek, Moon Pt. Fraser Island (315), Toowoora Creek, Stewart Island (244)
 Far Eastern Curlew: Mangrove Pt. south claypan, Hervey Bay (386), Moon Pt. Fraser Island (230)
 Marsh Sandpiper: Maaroom (34)
 Common Greenshank: Tuan (52)
 Grey-tailed Tattler: mangroves West Carlo Island, Tin Can Bay (490)
 Great Knot: Maaroom (620)
 Red Knot: Maaroom (20)
 Red-necked Stint: Boonooroo Site 1 (797).

Other species of interest observed include:

4 Beach Stone-curlew – Inskip Pt.
 6 Double-banded Plover – Garnet's Lagoon No. 1, Hervey Bay
 2 Asian Dowitcher – Inskip Pt.
 5 Black-tailed Godwit - Maaroom
 1 Brown Noddy - Pelican Banks, Fraser Island
 1 Black Noddy – Inskip Pt.

QWSG sincerely thanks Kristy Murray, John Schwarzrock, and Natalie Kastner from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and Science (DES), for their assistance in organising and supplying vessels on Friday and Saturday to cover sites on Fraser Island and others within the GSS.

QWSG also sincerely thanks the following people for allowing survey teams onto or through their property to conduct the counts. Their cooperation is very much appreciated:

Garnet Bengsten – owner of Garnet's Lagoons at River Heads, Hervey Bay.
 Lindsay & Noela Titmarsh – owners of Tandora on the Mary River, Maryborough.

Jim and Jane Woods – owners of Woojari at Tinnanbar (access to Kauri Creek roost).
 Len and Colleen Crossley – caretakers of Woojari at Tinnanbar during the owner's absence.

Please note: Due to lack of space, the species table that appears with this report includes only waders and does not include all the years that the surveys were conducted.

Special thanks to the counters for their assistance, without them these surveys would not be possible.

The participants are listed below (I apologise for any omissions).

QWSG Members: John Bell, Rhianna Boyle, Donald & Lesley Bradley, Deirdre Chrzescijanski, Ken Cowell, Peter Driscoll, David Edwards, Cecile Espigole, Micha Jackson, Rob Kernot, John Knight, Amelia Nielsen, Kelvin Nielsen, Will Price, Peter Rothlisberg, Marilyn Sweetnam, Floss Wainwright, Dez Wells and Brad Woodworth.

Birdwatchers of Hervey Bay Members: Jane Barnes, Alice Ekin, Frank Ekin, Bill Gault, Evan Goodall, Kay Humphrey and Peter Tierney.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife (DES) staff: Troy Broome, Rene Burgess, Natalie Kastner, Noah Poole and John Schwarzrock.

Other helpers: Coryn Dennett and Peter Mansell.

References:

Driscoll, P.V. (1993) Survey of waders in the Great Sandy Strait, South-eastern Queensland, Australia. Stilt 22: 24-36
 Hansen, B.D., Fuller, R.A., Watkins, D., Rogers, D.I., Clemens, R.S., Newman, M., Woehler, E.J. and Weller, D.R. (2016) Revision of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Population Estimates for 37 Migratory Shorebird Species. Unpublished report for the Department of the Environment. BirdLife Australia, Melbourne.

GSS Surveys Species	Jan 2005	Oct 2009	Jan 2012	Dec 2013	Oct 2014	Feb 2016	Jan 2018	Feb 2020
Bush Stone-curlew	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beach Stone-curlew	-	4	11	3	6	9	6	9
Pied Oystercatcher	287	103	448	204	147	316	259	282
Sooty Oystercatcher	3	-	9	6	2	11	-	2
Pied Stilt	54	194	255	754	314	178	631	25
Red-necked Avocet	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Masked Lapwing	40	95	71	76	53	80	78	69
Red-kneed Dotterel	-	5	-	79	14	-	4	-
Pacific Golden Plover	24	129	239	213	134	196	373	138
Grey Plover	91	142	195	106	234	54	135	12
Red-capped Plover	210	157	491	468	82	308	379	420
Double-banded Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Lesser Sand Plover	2345	624	2099	489	824	408	291	1109
Greater Sand Plover	414	310	1019	33	286	15	808	396
Black-fronted Dotterel	1	3	1	6	2	2	5	1
Comb-crested Jacana	3	8	16	10	-	-	7	1
Latham's Snipe	-	-	2	5	2	1	-	-
Asian Dowitcher	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	2
Black-tailed Godwit	43	8	4	10	2	14	5	5
Bar-tailed Godwit	8869	13727	17076	12585	13807	10210	9616	10990
Whimbrel	396	1419	1746	904	1321	831	1196	1846
Far Eastern Curlew	2279	1865	3110	1301	1275	1417	1219	1590
Marsh Sandpiper	50	10	4	51	10	25	58	54
Common Greenshank	186	463	241	189	194	162	191	96
Wood Sandpiper	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
Grey-tailed Tattler	696	2154	1638	635	1164	1987	1344	640
Wandering Tattler	-	5	6	-	-	2	6	-
Terek Sandpiper	130	258	658	239	136	631	147	-
Ruddy Turnstone	14	19	25	3	10	34	1	16
Great Knot	2094	2082	1182	1461	889	2569	2218	1270
Red Knot	4	228	201	25	180	56	4	23
Sanderling	-	-	-	10	18	-	24	-
Red-necked Stint	2774	1462	1947	1085	2102	1294	1503	1793
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	102	318	195	271	179	84	104	24

Curlew Sandpiper	291	194	177	182	242	100	187	151
Broad-billed Sandpiper	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Australian Pratincole	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total migratory waders	20805	25421	31764	19797	23009	20097	19430	20161
Total resident waders	598	571	1302	1607	620	904	1369	809
Total waders	21403	25992	33066	21404	23629	21001	20799	20970
Total migratory species	18	22	20	20	20	22	20	19
Total resident species	7	9	8	10	8	7	8	8
Total species	25	31	30	30	28	29	28	27
Unidentified Small Wader	3	-	820	-	-	-	-	-
Unidentified Medium Wader	-	25	615	-	-	-	-	-
Total Waders	21406	26017	34501	21404	23629	21001	20799	20970
Total roost sites counted	25	51	48	54	48	35	59	50
Aerial count conducted	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Myanmar Shorebirds Get Four-Fold Expansion in Protected Wetland – Birdlife 03-04-2020

One of Asia's most important shorebird sanctuaries has just quadrupled in size thanks to years of advocacy from our Myanmar Partner. Here's how they connected insight with action to help birds on the brink and the people who live alongside them.



50% of the world's Spoon-Billed Sandpipers (Critically Endangered) overwinter here © Yann Muzika
By Ding Li Yong

Twenty years ago, few conservationists knew about the Gulf of Mottama and the secrets hidden within its complex coastline. Its location in southern Myanmar is, like many parts of the country, rugged and difficult to access. However, in the early 2010s, everything changed when surveys lead by BANCA (BirdLife in Myanmar) and international experts from the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force revealed more than 200 Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Calidris pygmaea* overwintering there – fifty percent of the world's population. This makes the Gulf of Mottama the region's single most important site for the Critically Endangered wader.

Alongside the affectionately-titled “Spoonie”, the Gulf boasts some of the largest congregations of shorebirds in Southeast Asia, with over 90,000 birds overwintering here annually. These include significant numbers of imperiled species such as the Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* and Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* (both Near Threatened), and the Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* (Endangered).

It's no wonder these species want to spend the winter here: the Gulf of Mottama is a vast wetland of great diversity. It sits near the mouths of two of Myanmar's most important rivers: the Sittaung, which drains from the hills to the north, and the mighty Salween, which spills into the Gulf from the east at the town of Mawlamyine. On the eastern fringe, near the village of Thein Ngu, are the forested hills of Kelatha. The coastline between Yangon, Myanmar's largest city, and Mawlamyine contains some of the least-disturbed coastal mudflats and salt marshes in Southeast Asia.

Quenched daily by a tidal bore sweeping up from the Andaman Sea, the Gulf's wetlands are extremely dynamic, with mud islands rising and vanishing in as little as a month. At low tide, the vast mudflats protrude for kilometres out to sea, dotted with thousands of shorebirds including large flocks of curlews, godwits and more.

Armed with this knowledge, BANCA and their collaborators went straight to work to secure the protection of this precious landscape. BANCA staff worked closely with local people, who were found to be hunting shorebirds in substantial numbers, putting the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other declining species at risk. By offering seed funding for assets such as livestock, building materials and fishing boats, they empowered local people to explore alternative livelihoods, weaning them off the need to hunt wild birds. BANCA also worked closely with the local government and village leaders to involve them in the site's protection, forming Local Conservation Groups of enthusiastic community members.



Sustainable fishing offers local people an alternative income © BANCA

Through dedicated advocacy from Banca and allied NGOs, in 2017 the Myanmar Government declared about 40,000 hectares of in the eastern side of the Gulf of Mottama, a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar convention – thus setting the momentum for more conservation activity in the region.

The establishment of the eastern Gulf as a Ramsar Site was not only a major breakthrough, but also provided the impetus for the less-surveyed western site of the Gulf to be considered for conservation. After another two years of consultation with local stakeholders, early this year the Myanmar Government finalised the extension of the Gulf of Mottama Ramsar Site, quadrupling the area to 161,030 hectares, and extending into the Bago and Yangon regions.

The extension of the Gulf of Mottama Ramsar site is a major step forward in wetland conservation in Myanmar and Southeast Asia as a whole. It protects a vast area of coastline from harmful development, while providing a framework for stronger conservation action and engagement with local communities. The gulf is now one of the largest Ramsar sites in Southeast Asia, a region where there are still large gaps in wetland conservation.

Because the gulf's western coast is one of the least-surveyed areas in the region, it has bought more time for conservationists to gain a better understanding of how shorebirds are distributed, and how to engage townspeople as effectively as possible.

BANCA's work to conserve the Spoon-billed Sandpiper is also earning dividends for other species, not to mention wetlands in general. Local fisheries are now better-managed, and other threatened shorebirds benefit from action to save "Spoonie", thus protecting one of the finest coastal landscapes for migratory waterbirds in all of Southeast Asia. Most of all, work to conserve the Gulf of Mottama will secure the vital ecosystem services – such as clean water, climate regulation and flood prevention – that Myanmar's coastal communities will to rely on for generations to come.

The Battle to Keep Albania's Protected Areas Protected

BirdLife17 Apr 2020

After a momentous victory to protect a National Park from development, Albania's entire protected area system came under threat. Here's how a local coalition of NGOs reacted.



Albania has the only Dalmatian Pelican breeding site on the Adriatic coast © Taulant Bino By Tilen Basle

Beaches may not be the first thing that comes to mind when picturing Albania, but nonetheless the country boasts some of the last stretches of pristine Adriatic coastline: kilometres of shore without a tourist resort or tanning beachgoer in sight. Just occasional fishermen, a cow or two, and a few Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius* running along the shore.

Some sections of Albanian coast are home to a remarkable ensemble of biodiversity that has lived in harmony with people for many centuries. But whilst rich in nature, Albania is not so rich economically. As the country develops and aspires for EU membership, can its pristine coasts be protected from the irreversible damage seen in neighbouring Balkan nations?

One such place is Divjaka-Karavasta National Park, home to more than 260 bird species – 18 of which are globally threatened – and harbouring huge numbers of migrating and wintering waterbirds each year. A colony of Dalmatian Pelicans *Pelecanus crispus* (Near Threatened) also finds its home in the lagoon – the only coastal breeding site for the species along the Adriatic coast. But recently, this safe haven came under serious attack as a private investor, Mabetex Group, together with divisions of public authorities, revealed a plan to build a new 'tourist city' within the core of Divjaka-Karavasta. Whilst sustainable development and ecotourism are important for Albania, it doesn't take much to figure out that the kind of resort proposed doesn't belong next to an important pelican colony in a National Park.



An aerial view of the pelican's breeding island in Divjaka © Arian Koci

Thankfully, an NGO coalition led by the Albanian Ornithological Society (AOS) quickly raised their concerns and entered a long and exhausting battle, supported by grants from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)*. November 2019 brought victory, when Albania's Strategic Investment Committee decided to reject Mabetex's proposal – an important moment for nature conservation and the nongovernmental sector in Albania. However, celebrations didn't last long as new threats appeared on the horizon.

Around the same time, the National Agency for Protected Areas and the Ministry of Tourism & Environment initiated an internal process to revise Albania's protected area network. This proposed revision turned out to be the biggest threat to nature in the whole of the Balkans: with one flick of a pen, coastal protected areas would be reduced on average by at least 22%. This act would undo more than 15 years of science and conservation work on Albania's protected areas", says Borut Rubinič, CEPF Programme Officer for the Balkans. "Coastal areas would be hit the most, some facing a reduction of almost 40%."

It was clear that investments from abroad and economic interests were fueling the push to reclaim pristine nature for the price of unsustainable development. "For the NGO coalition, the revision of protected areas seemed to be just an excuse to get those investments through", says Taulant Bino, Head of the AOS.

Nature conservationists did not rest on their laurels, but stepped up again, this time forming a coalition of 21 NGOs that reminded the Minister of Tourism and Environment of his government's commitment to protect existing protected areas. "The latest version of the revised boundaries of coastal protected areas indeed shows an improvement: now only a 5% reduction compared to 22%", says Besjana Sevo, Project Manager, AOS. This is a good first step, and our NGO coalition remains committed to the

Another important Albanian coastal wetland is also under threat. Part of the larger Vjore-Narte Protected Area, Narta Lagoon is a stunning Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) rich in marine life, including the Mediterranean Monk Seal (Endangered), diverse plant species and a key 'landing' and refueling site for waterbirds – not aeroplanes. The Albanian government continues to push for the construction of an airport here, despite a failed attempt last year and coordinated opposition from NGOs.

"To build an airport in an area with such a large presence of bird species would be devastating," says Xherri Xhemal, Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA). "The entire ecosystem of Vjore-Narte would also be affected. It's a clear violation of the regulatory and legal standards on protected areas."



Narta Lagoon, another vital wetland, risks being obliterated by an airport © Xherri Xhemal / PPNEA

Let's not forget the hardest hit wetlands are those of international importance – such as Ramsar Sites, IBAs, KBAs, Candidate Emerald Sites and potential Natura 2000 sites. “If Albania truly aspires to begin negotiations for accession into the EU, it must look to its neighbour, Montenegro”, says Rubinič. “The protection of Ulcinj Salina was an EU condition to start the negotiation process. Albania should expect the same and start thinking about developing sustainable tourism in its extraordinarily biodiversity-rich protected areas.”

Nature conservationists in Albania won a series of very important battles, but they haven't won the war yet. Threats still loom over protected areas in Albania, as there are governmental bodies that have authority over the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and its decisions – but the NGO response is growing stronger.

Full Impact of Mysterious Brazil Oil Spill Remains Unknown

BirdLife 20 Feb 2020

Last summer, an oil spill of unknown origin hit Brazil's northeast coast – just as migrating shorebirds arrived in the area. Our Partner SAVE Brasil has been campaigning for action and striving to measure the impact on birds - but more support is urgently needed.



In August 2019, strange blobs of oil started to wash up along Brazil's northeast coast, sparking fear among local people and conservationists. Despite many theories, the source of the oil remains mysterious. What we do know is that to date, more than 5,000 tonnes of oil have been cleared up from about 1,000 locations. The oil has contaminated estuaries, beaches, mangroves and reefs along 4,000 km of Brazil's shoreline, and is still being washed up as we speak.

At the time the oil started to hit, shorebirds were using this stretch of coast as a rest stop on migration to their southern wintering grounds, or settling down to spend the winter there outright. A particular concern is the Red Knot *Calidris canutus* – a large sandpiper known for gorging itself and doubling in weight before setting off on migration. The species is globally listed as Near Threatened, but the American subspecies, the *rufa* Red Knot, may be in more trouble still: large numbers overwinter in the areas affected by the oil spill.



The oil spill could spell disaster for a rare Red Knot sub-species © Scott Heron

One significant site was Mangue Seco, an Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA). Here, birds were found with oil on both their feet and wings, implying that they had picked it up when touching down to rest on the sand. A Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* was found covered in oil nearby, having migrated all the way from Canada. Oil ruins the waterproofing on birds' feathers and can poison them directly if they swallow it when preening. In some places, rescued birds were found so coated in oil that they were unable to move.

This is just one of eleven vital bird habitats that have been contaminated. Even more worryingly, oil has reached 30 of Brazil's federal protected areas in the region. When the government was slow to respond to the crisis, hundreds of local community members hurried to clean up the beaches with their own hands. The oil spill, dubbed the largest environmental crisis in the history of Brazil, is expected to jeopardise the livelihoods of up to 144,000 fishermen and shellfish farmers along the coast. Artisanal fishing was already being undermined by pollution and depleted fish stocks. Now, the oil spill has caused a 70% decrease in sales of fish and other seafood.

We do not yet know the full impact of the disaster on bird populations. Our Partner SAVE Brasil is currently collaborating with other organisations to discover more. To encourage action, they sent out a letter to several levels of the Brazilian government on behalf of the National Shorebird Conservation Plan, outlining the impact of oil on shorebirds and the measures required to protect them.

Certain authorities are already beginning to take notice. Some beaches had been using a large tractor to scrape oil off the top layer of sand – but this also removes a lot of seaweed, molluscs and other vital bird food sources. At least one state has changed to a different technique after reading the letter. Furthermore, the federal environmental agency ICMBio promised support for monitoring shorebird populations throughout this winter, but more action still is urgently required.



Mangue Seco, an Important Bird & Biodiversity Area, in happier times © Leo Francini

Count Programme

by Linda Cross

I hope QWSG counters have not gone stir crazy during the lockdown period we have all had to endure since the end of March. Perhaps your bird watching hobby has kept you engaged enough to help you pass the time. A few people have taken the lockdown period to get their life list up to date and some have managed to combine recording passerines instead of waders during their daily exercise. No doubt there has been a lot of house cleaning and de-cluttering as well, but some might find that boring. I have been kept busy preparing reports that you will read in this edition of the newsletter.

It is fortunate that the count programme has missed just one count month (April), which was disappointing given that there may have been good counts to add to the database. As I type, counters are busy entering their May counts onto the website. There are some count sites that are still in lockdown due to government restrictions but in time we hope to return to full normal activities soon.

I have the unenviable task of reporting the passing of 2 people (Dorothy Pashniak and Barbara Dickson), who both died within a month of each other and both from breast cancer. Dorothy on 27 February and Barbara on 17 March. Both were past members of the count programme. In addition to wader counts, Dorothy and Barbara were heavily involved in counting terns with Jill Deney for many years.

Dorothy spent some time paddling in her kayak around the Tin Can Bay area and from March 2006 to April 2015 she submitted 94 counts from 14 different sites which are predominantly mangrove areas where she would find Grey-tailed Tattler and Terek Sandpiper roosting in the mangrove trees.

Barbara counted Wickham Point on the Sunshine Coast from September 1999 until the end of 2015 and continued to fill in for the new counter while she was away. Barbara's contribution to the count programme for Wickham Point was 148 counts. However, Barbara was also involved in boat surveys in the Pumicestone Passage from early 2000 through to June 2014, standby counter at times for Maroochy River sites, involved in a couple of Great Sandy Strait surveys and was involved in the boat surveys in the Noosa River through to the end of August 2019 until she became ill. There are an additional 134 counts in the database that Barbara has completed herself or in company with others.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families of both Barbara and Dorothy for their loss which was saddened even more when family, friends and colleagues could not pay their respects at the funerals during the Covid-19 restrictions.

On the 22 February 2020, a Kentish Plover was sighted by Jane Cooksley at the mouth of Noosa River on the Sunshine Coast and subsequently seen and photographed by numerous bird watchers over 7 days. The last sighting reported on eBird was 28 February. The bird was recorded on a couple of QWSG counts and added to the database.



Kentish Plover

Photograph by
Maggie Overend

Note the white collar around the neck, which separates it from the Red-capped Plover species it associated with.

As mentioned in the newsletter number 111, the first Double-banded Plover recorded for the season was a single bird at Manly Harbour on 10 February 2020. Since then, a further 11 count sites have recorded the species from the middle of March onwards. In the table below are the maximum counts for the species at count sites since their arrival.

Count Site	Date	Quantity
Garnet's Lagoon No. 1, Hervey Bay	22 February 2020	6
Maroochy River sand bar	3 March 2020	1
Wave Break Sand Island, Gold Coast	19 March 2020	25
Mirapool Beach, Moreton Island	23 April 2020	11
Sandbank off Amity Point	23 April 2020	66
Manly Harbour	28 April 2020	14
Caboolture River mouth	8 May 2020	7
Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay	8 May 2020	30
Kinka Beach, Yeppoon	9 May 2020	2
Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island	9 May 2020	3
Geoff Skinner Reserve East	9 May 2020	53
King Street mudflat, Thornlands	10 May 2020	22

We would like to remind members that the new counter for Tweed Heads (Erina Forrest) is looking for anyone in the Gold Coast/Tweed Heads area that would be willing to help her conduct the counts. Please contact Erina by email at erina.forrest@gmail.com

Most extracts from counts listed below have been taken from the February and March surveys. However, there are a few from April which are from surveys completed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service officers, normally done in conjunction with QWSG members who were unable to attend during the government movement restrictions. Additionally, there are some inclusions from May counts that have been entered onto the website soon after the survey date. Additional wader counts can be found in the "Interesting wader sightings" section which may not appear in the paper version of the newsletter due to lack of space.

Bush Stone-curlew: Endeavour River claypan, Cooktown (6 on 06.05.20)

Beach Stone-curlew: Kakadu Beach roost, Bribie Island (4 on 08.04.20)

Pied Oystercatcher: Manly Harbour (204 on 01.03.20), Port of Brisbane complex (126 on 16.02.20)

Sooty Oystercatcher: Wickham Point (8 on 16.02.20 and 8 on 29.03.20)

Pied Stilt: Kedron Brook Wetlands (272 on 15.03.20)

Red-necked Avocet: Port of Brisbane complex (69 on 16.02.20, only record for this species in the past 3 months)

Masked Lapwing: Bishop's Marsh Toorbul (94 on 14.03.20)
 Red-kneed Dotterel: Pine River Northside (5 on 13.02.20, only record for this species in the past 3 months)
 Pacific Golden Plover: Port of Brisbane complex (354 on 16.02.20), Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay (246 on 21.03.20)
 Grey Plover: Port of Brisbane complex (29 on 16.02.20), Reeder's Point, Moreton Island (26 on 23.04.20), Sandbank off Amity Point (21 on 23.04.20), Boonooroo Site 1 (18 on 15.02.20)
 Red-capped Plover: Queensland Aluminium complex, Gladstone (174 on 14.02.20), Garnet's Lagoon No. 1, Hervey Bay (125 on 09.05.20)
 Lesser Sand Plover: Port of Brisbane complex (577 on 16.02.20), Boonooroo Site 1 (327 on 15.02.20)
 Greater Sand Plover: O'Regan's Creek westside, Hervey Bay (250 on 14.03.20)
 Black-fronted Dotterel: Queensland Aluminium complex, Gladstone (13 on 14.02.20), Kianawah Road Wetland (12 on 29.03.20)
 Black-tailed Godwit: Pine River Wetland Reserve (378 on 15.02.20), Manly Harbour (68 on 03.03.20)
 Bar-tailed Godwit: Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island (2,470 on 08.03.20), Toorbul (2,223 on 28.02.20), Manly Harbour (2,074 on 23.03.20), Maaroom (1,900 on 14.03.20)
 Whimbrel: Toorbul (410 on 28.02.20), Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay (235 on 21.03.20)
 Far Eastern Curlew: Geoff Skinner Reserve East (314 on 15.02.20), Toorbul (309 on 29.02.20)
 Marsh Sandpiper: Maaroom (74 on 14.03.20), Pine River Wetland Reserve (32 on 15.02.20)
 Common Greenshank: Thangawan Creek, Great Sandy Strait (21 on 15.02.20), Manly Harbour (21 on 14.03.20), Shellgrit Creek entrance, Mackay (20 on 21.03.20)
 Grey-tailed Tattler: Manly Harbour (1,270 on 19.04.20)
 Terek Sandpiper: Maaroom (140 on 28.03.20), Manly Harbour (142 on 30.03.20)
 Common Sandpiper: Godwin Beach (4 on 19.01.20), Endeavour River mouth, Cooktown (2 on 13.02.20)
 Ruddy Turnstone: Port of Brisbane complex (163 on 16.02.20), Manly Harbour (128 on 05.04.20)
 Great Knot: Maaroom (352 on 15.02.20), Cairns Esplanade (348 on 14.03.20)
 Red Knot: Boonooroo Site 1 (71 on 13.03.20), Maaroom (12 on 14.03.20), Cairns Esplanade (10 on 14.03.20)
 Sanderling: Mirapool Beach, Moreton Island (4 on 23.04.20)
 Red-necked Stint: Gregory Road, Hay's Inlet (850 on 15.02.20), Manly Harbour (1,060 on 10.03.20), Geoff Skinner Reserve East and West combined (1,019 on 14.03.20),
 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper: Godwin Beach (222 on 02.02.20), Port of Brisbane complex (212 on 16.02.20)
 Curlew Sandpiper: Manly Harbour (709 on 28.03.20)
 Broad-billed Sandpiper: Port of Brisbane complex (6 on 16.02.20), Manly Harbour (16 on 23.03.20).

Breeding records:

Pied Oystercatcher: Adult pair with 1 immature at Toorbul 1km north on 14.03.20, at least 6 immatures at Manly Harbour on 01.03.20.

Pied Stilt: A bird on a nest at the Port of Brisbane complex on 16.02.20, up to 18 pairs nesting at Manly Harbour between 29.02.20 and 07.03.20 including a 1-day old chick before extremely high tide flooded most of the nests. Numerous birds reported nesting after the flooding on 10.03.20, and many young sighted, with up to 16 chicks and 6 birds on nests on 28.03.20. Recent records for Manly Harbour include 2 juvenile, 5 chicks and 1 nest on 05.04.20 and 7 juveniles on 09.05.20. See separate report in this newsletter. Three juveniles at Kedron Brook Wetlands on 16.05.20.

Masked Lapwing: Bird sitting on nest with 3 eggs at Maaroom on 14.03.20, bird sitting on nest with 3 eggs and a one-week old chick at Maaroom on 28.03.20.

Red-capped Plover: Pair copulating in dredge spoil area at Manly Harbour on 23.02.20, pair possibly nesting in dredge spoil area at Manly Harbour on 14.03.20

Black-fronted Dotterel: 5 immatures (quite possibly bred at site), at Kianawah Road Wetland on 29.03.20.

Comb-crested Jacana: 4 immatures at Ewan Maddock Dam on 03.05.20

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

Snail mail: 40 Thompson Road, Bellmere. Qld 4510 Phone: 5495 2758

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 phillipcros50@gmail.com
 Please contact Phil or myself for the Leg Flag Observation Report Form.

Happy counting,
 Linda Cross.

Not waders but of interest anyway – as per IOC species list

Errata:

209 Australian White Ibis reported in newsletter 111, at Beck Road, Caloundra on 16.12.19. Should have read Bells Creek Road, Caloundra.

- 4 Wandering Whistling Duck – Endeavour River claypan, Cooktown – 07.03.20
- 2 Wandering Whistling Duck – Buckley's Hole, Bribie Island – 09.02.20 and 09.05.20
- 57 Maned Duck – Bishop's Marsh, Toorbul – 14.03.20
- 8 Australasian Shoveler – Garnet's Lagoon No. 2, Hervey Bay – 15.02.20
- Grey Teal – (pair adults with 3 ducklings) – Manly Harbour – early May 2020
- 2 Black-necked Stork – Kinka Wetland, Yeppoon – 09.05.20
- 202 Australian White Ibis – Nathan Road East, Redcliffe – 15.02.20
- 83 Glossy Ibis – Redcliffe Airport Northside – 15.02.20
- 22 Glossy Ibis – Nathan Road Wetland, Redcliffe – 09.05.20
- 1 Yellow-billed Spoonbill – Bishop's Marsh, Toorbul – 14.03.20
- 280 Eastern Cattle Egret – Garnet's Lagoon No. 1, Hervey Bay – 11.04.20
- 5 White-necked Heron – Kinka Wetland, Yeppoon – 28.03.20 (3 on 09.05.20)
- 1 Great-billed Heron – Barron River, Cairns – 15.02.20
- 1 Pacific Reef Egret (unusual at site) – Garnet's Lagoon No. 1, Hervey Bay – 15.02.20
- Australian Pelican (abandoned egg on island) – Manly Harbour – 05.05.20
- 1 Australasian Gannet – offshore Wickham Point – 09.05.20
- 1 Great Cormorant – Kedron Brook Wetlands – 16.05.20
- 2 Wedge-tailed Eagle – O'Regan's Creek westside, Hervey Bay – 14.03.20
- 1 Wedge-tailed Eagle – Pine River Wetland Reserve – 09.05.20
- 606 Silver Gull – Port of Brisbane complex – 16.02.20
- 1 Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica* subspecies *affinis*) – Gregory Road Hay's Inlet – 15.02.20
- 1 Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica* subspecies *affinis*) – Toorbul – 09.05.20
- 7 Lesser Crested Tern – St. Helena Island Pier – 27.04.20
- 6 Lesser Crested Tern – Sandbank off Amity Point – 23.04.20
- 4 Lesser Crested Tern – Manly Harbour – 30.04.20
- 900 Little Tern – Maroochy River North Shore – 17.02.20
- 1,500 Common Tern – Maroochy River Northshore – 17.02.20
- 4 Whiskered Tern – Kinka Wetland, Yeppoon – 09.05.20
- 1 Australian Hobby – Endeavour River Claypan, Cooktown – 07.03.20
- 1 Peregrine Falcon – Manly Harbour – 30.03.20
- 1 Peregrine Falcon – Garnet's Lagoon No. 1, Hervey Bay – 09.05.20

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@gmail.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 13 plain flags, 31 misread, 27 unread and 1532 engraved flags have been added to the database since the last newsletter; the overall total being a surprising 25% reduction compared to the previous quarter's total, perhaps Covid-19 restrictions kept wader watchers at home!

A total of 19 different species with a flag were recorded - Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Double-banded Plover, Far Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Greater Sand 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.

Thank you to the observers who reported these sightings – Tony Cotter, George Diggles, Micha Jackson, Gary Kane, Arthur Keates, Sheryl Keates, Helen Leonard, Penn Lloyd, Katrina Logan, Kristy Murray, Brian Russell, Michael Strong, Tom Tarrant, Melissa Whitby, Brad Woodworth and Jeremy Wynne.

GREEN leg flag sightings seen INTERSTATE

Nil

GREEN leg flag sightings seen OVERSEAS

In China

Bar-tailed Godwit

BKZ – 28.4.2020 – Yalu Jiang – Wang Xiaofei

In South Korea

Far-eastern Curlew

Unread ELF – 29.3.2020 - Shell Fish Harbour – Ju Yung-ki

Bar-tailed Godwit

AUN – 6.4.2020 – Shell Fish Harbour – Ju Yung-ki

BDV – 6.4.2020 – Shell Fish Harbour – Ju Yung-ki

BHK – 6.4.2020 – Shell Fish Harbour – Ju Yung-ki

CDK – 26.3.2020 – Shell Fish Harbour – Ju Yung-ki

FAX – 6.4.2020 – Shell Fish Harbour – Ju Yung-ki

Unread ELF – 26.3 & 6.4.2020 - Shell Fish Harbour – Ju Yung-ki

Plain flag – 6.3.2020 – Shell Fish Harbour – Ju Yung-ki

CJA – 28.4.2020 – Gungri tidal, Hongsung-gun, Chongchungnam-do – Jun Sik Tak

Bar-tailed Godwit - All the following were seen at Aphae Island by Andreas Kim

ABM – 4 & 6.4.2020

AVB – 6, 7 & 10.5.2020

AYD – 8, 9, 14 & 24.4.2020

AYD – 5, 7, 10 & 14.5.2020

AZA – 8, 9, 15.4.2020

AZV – 5.4.2020

BBD – 18.4.2020

BTF – 8 & 9.4.2020

CDC – 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18, 20, 24, & 26.4.2020

EC – 12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28 & 29.4.2020

EC – 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 & 14.5.2020

PR – 8, 9, 11, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 29.4.2020

PR – 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12 & 14.5.2020

Black-tailed Godwit

CAA – 6.5.2020 – Gongseri tidal, Inju-myeon, Chungcheongnam-do – Ji-Yeon Lee

Whimbrel

BYC – 18.4.2020 – Aphae Island – Andreas Kim

YELLOW (WA) leg flag sightings seen in Qld

Great Knot

Unread ELF – 15.2.2020 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Kristy Murray

ORANGE (Victoria) leg flag sightings seen in QLD.

Bar-tailed Godwit

HXW – 7 & 27.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates

HXW – 4.5.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates

Plain flag – 7.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates

Curlew Sandpiper

Unread ELF – 17.2.2020 – Maaroom Great Sandy – Arthur Keates et al

Great Knot

Plain flag – 15.2.20 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Kristy Murray
 Plain flag – 23.2.2020 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 21.3.2020 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 1 & 5.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 Plain flag – 7.3.20 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 Plain flag – 7.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 Plain flag – 15.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 Plain flag – 30 & 31.3.20 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Arthur Keates

OVERSEAS FLAGGED birds seen in QLD**Black over white or white over black (Shanghai, China) leg flag sightings**Curlew Sandpiper (with flags on Right tibia)

Plain flags – 29.3.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter

Curlew Sandpiper (All same bird with black over white on Left tibia and blue flag on right tibia)

Plain flags – 19 & 29.2.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 Plain flags – 1.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 Plain flags – 3.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Tom Tarrant
 Plain flags – 15 & 21.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 Plain flags – 16 & 23.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 Plain flags – 19.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates

Great Knot

J62 on white flag – 1.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 J62 on white flag – 3.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Tom Tarrant
 J62 on white flag – 1.3.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 J62 on white flag – 5, 16, 19 & 30.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 J62 on white flag – 7.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 J62 on white flag – 14.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Gary Kane
 J62 on white flag – 14, 15 & 21.3.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 J62 on white flag – 31.3.20 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Arthur Keates
 AA1 on white flag – 5, 10 & 30.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 AA1 on white flag – 7 & 15.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
 AA1 on white flag – 8, 15 & 21.3.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 AA1 on white flag – 31.3.20 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Arthur Keates
 AA1 on white flag – 1 & 2.4.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
 AA1 on white flag – 7.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
 AA1 on white flag – 10.4.20 – Queens Esplanade Thorneside – Jeremy Wynne

Lesser Sand Plover

Plain flags – 23.2.20 – Gables Point Rocks Hervey Bay – Don & Lesley Bradley

Terek Sandpiper

Plain flags – 3.3.20 – Burnett River Heads – Chris Barnes
 Plain flags – 31.3.20 – Corio Bay near Yeppoon – Mike Barker

Blue over yellow (Bohai Bay, China) leg flag sightingsCurlew Sandpiper

Plain flags – 29.3.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter

Black over yellow (Kamchatka, Russia) leg flag sightingsGreat Knot

Z_(second letter unread) on yellow flag, flags on Left tibia – 28.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Brad Woodworth

Red-necked Stint

Plain flags on Right tibia – 21.2.20 – Moon Creek Great Sandy – Peter Rothlisberg & David Edwards

Blue over white (Japanese) leg flag sightings**Grey-tailed Tattler**

- 568 on blue flag – 19.2.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- 568 on blue flag – 22.2.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
- 568 on blue flag – 27.2.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Arthur Keates
- 568 on blue flag – 1 & 21.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
- 568 on blue flag – 5.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- 568 on blue flag – 5, 14, 19, 23 & 30.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- 568 on blue flag – 27.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Tony Cotter
- 569 on blue flag – 1 & 15.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Melissa Whitby
- 569 on blue flag – 8.3.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
- 569 on blue flag – 1.4.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
- 569 on blue flag – 5, 14, 19, 21 & 23.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- Unread ELF on blue flag – 26.3.20 – Zilzie Headland near Rockhampton – Barry Ellis

Blue (Japanese - flagged in Hokkaido) leg flag sightings**Grey-tailed Tattler**

- Plain blue flag – 22.2.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
- Plain blue flag – 1.3.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
- Plain blue flag – 3.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Tom Tarrant
- Plain blue flag – 7 & 16.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- Plain blue flag (2 birds) – 1.4.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter
- Plain blue flag – 2.4.20 – Manly Lota Esplanade – Tony Cotter
- Plain blue flag – 30.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- Plain blue flag – 2.5.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter

White over blue (Taiwan) leg flag sightings**Curlew Sandpiper**

- E7 on white flag – 29.3.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Tony Cotter

Lesser Sand Plover

- A08 on white flag – 20.2.20 – Kakadu Beach Bribie – Margaret Overend & Mary Hynes
- A08 on white flag – 23.2.20 – Kakadu Beach Bribie – Michael Strong
- A08 on white flag – 7 & 26.3.20 – Kakadu Beach Bribie – Helen Leonard
- A08 on white flag – 8 & 22.3.20 – Kakadu Beach Bribie – Michael Strong

Red-necked Stint

- Unread ELF on white flag (flags on Left tibia) – 7.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- Unread ELF on white flag (flag on Right tibia) blue flag on Right tarsus – 10.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- J98 on white flag – 7.1.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates

Terek Sandpiper

- 598 on white flag – 17.2.20 – Maaroom Great Sandy – Arthur Keates & Jodie Rainbow

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.

- R3 – 3.7.19 – Wave Break Sand Island – Bob Westerman
- R3 – 16.8.19 – Wave Break Sand Island – Bob Westerman
- K3 – 19 & 22.2.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- K3 – 23.2.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates & Sheryl Keates
- K3 – 27.2.20 – Wynnum Esplanade – Arthur Keates
- K3 – 1 & 3.3.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- K3 – 4.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates
- B8 – 26.2.20 – Nandeebie Park Cleveland – Penn Lloyd
- S7 – 26.2.20 – GJ Walker Beach Cleveland – Penn Lloyd
- S7 – 4 & 5.4.20 – Manly Harbour – Arthur Keates

Caspian Tern Orange flag (Victoria)

- T3 – 29.2.20 – Toorbul – Phil & Linda Cross
- U8 – 11.4.20 – Kakadu Beach Bribie – Helen Leonard
- Unread ELF – 11 & 12.4.20 – Kakadu Beach Bribie – Helen Leonard

Wader ID Day Reports

Wader ID Report – Kakadu Roost, Bribie Island 9th February 2020

As this outing was held on the third highest (2.69m), tide for this summer, it was no surprise to find the birds already gathered at the roost when we arrived.

When the 10 other attendees joined Phil and I, weather conditions were warm and humid with full cloud cover and a light north-easterly breeze. Towards the end of the outing, dark clouds could be seen, and thunder could be heard to the west, but thankfully the rain held off for the outing.

Two Brahminy Kite initially disturbed the birds, and then later, a sub-adult White-bellied Sea Eagle flew over and caused more disturbance to the flock. Although unsettled for quite some time, the birds did eventually settle down, closer to the bird hide, making it easier for the group to get good views of the different species.

A single Black-tailed Godwit was quite close to the hide and everyone was able to see the difference between it and the hundreds of Bar-tailed Godwit, and eventually everyone got to see Red Knot within the large flock. There were varying stages of breeding plumage on some Bar-tailed Godwit and 2 Lesser Sand Plover had a trace, but 1 Lesser Sand Plover had quite advanced breeding plumage.



Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwit – Photo Peter Davies



Buff-banded Rail chicks – Photo Peter Davies

A single Sooty Oystercatcher was seen at the southern end of the roost along with 4 Beach Stone-curlew, so most of the group headed down to the southern hide for a better look and were also rewarded with views and photographs of 2 adult Buff-banded Rail with 4 small black chicks and a juvenile Striated Heron.

Having the large flock of birds up closer than usual made it somewhat easier to read the many green leg flags (49), on Bar-tailed Godwit, Great Knot and Lesser Sand Plover (banded in south-east Queensland). The group observed 9 migratory, and 6 resident, wader species.

A count was conducted, (although the Bar-tailed Godwit count may have been undercounted) and added to the QWSG database.

Birds seen: (F/O – Flying over).

1 Pacific Black Duck, 1 Striated Heron (juvenile), 1 Great Egret (F/O), 1 Little Pied Cormorant, 2 Brahminy Kite, 1 White-bellied Sea Eagle (F/O), 6 Buff-banded Rail (includes 4 chicks), 4 Beach Stone-curlew, 13 Pied Oystercatcher, 1 Sooty Oystercatcher, 16 Pied Stilt, 2 Masked Lapwing, 2 Red-capped Plover (includes 1 juvenile), 35 Lesser Sand Plover, 1 Black-tailed Godwit, c1830 Bar-tailed Godwit, 1 Whimbrel, 8 Far Eastern Curlew, 104 Great Knot, 2 Red Knot, 1 Red-necked Stint, 1 Curlew Sandpiper, 3 Silver Gull, 3 Caspian Tern, 1 Greater Crested Tern and 14 Little Tern.

Linda Cross.

Toorbul Wader ID Day Report 29th February 2020

A total of 9 other attendees joined Phil and I at the main Toorbul roost to view the waders. Included attendees were new QWSG members Stephen and Amanda Sanburg who drove down from Gympie for the identification session. Weather conditions were hot, dry and a little humid with a gentle wind from the south east.

When we arrived, many Far Eastern Curlew were stretched out along the foreshore by the picnic table and an even larger group of waders were at the roost itself. The Far Eastern Curlew were very vocal and a little nervous, which was not helped when 2 men came out of the mangroves carrying a bin and then headed across the road to a house close by.

Most of the waders were also nervous and were put up a couple of times by raptors. A count of the Whimbrel was completed just before they all flew off and headed to the mangroves in the passage. Just after 13:00 hours a Peregrine Falcon came swooping very low over the flock and put everything up except for pelicans, oystercatchers and terns.

Unfortunately, species diversity was again low for this site with 5 migratory and 3 resident waders, which included a single Sooty Oystercatcher. However, the count for some species was quite high, particularly the Far Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel and Bar-tailed Godwit. No Black-tailed Godwit or Red Knot were observed within the flock.

No overseas flagged birds were observed, but many engraved green leg flags were seen on 4 species of waders (Pied Oystercatchers, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel and Great Knot), all being flagged in south-east Queensland.

A count was conducted at the roost site and added to the QWSG database. The number of Far Eastern Curlew recorded during the count was 187. The 309 listed in the species below were seen and counted after the ID session had finished while some of the group were having a late lunch.

Birds seen at Toorbul: (F/O – fly over). (H – Heard).

48 Black Swan on the roost (a couple hundred more in the passage), 1 Australian White Ibis (F/O), 1 Intermediate Egret, 1 White-faced Heron (F/O), 11 Australian Pelican, 3 Little Pied Cormorant (F/O), 1 Eastern Osprey (F/O), 2 Whistling Kite, (F/O), 17 Pied Oystercatcher, 1 Sooty Oystercatcher, 2 Masked Lapwing, 1343 Bar-tailed Godwit, 266 Whimbrel, 309 Far Eastern Curlew, 5 Common Greenshank, 76 Great Knot, 1 Silver Gull, 2 Gull-billed (Australian), Tern, 34 Caspian Tern and 1 Peregrine Falcon.

New Bird Education Website BIRDS OF SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND

The Bird Education Group of Birds Queensland and Birdlife Southern Queensland has created the website www.ourlocalbirds.com. The website has two principal sections: *Learning about birds* and *Teaching about birds*.

In this initial launch of the website, the section *Learning about birds* focuses on 18 birds commonly seen in [urban and suburban settings](#). Each species has descriptive text as well as numerous photos, videos and audio (audio may not work depending on your browser settings). In the future, there are plans to extend the website to include birds frequently seen in other habitats such as Open Forest, Wetlands, Rainforest, Grasslands, Beaches and Mudflats.

The section *Teaching About Birds* has been designed for primary school age students, their teachers and home educators. It provides a basic teaching model aligned with objectives in the Australian Science Curriculum for each year level: 1-6. This section could be useful to parents in this last week of online learning at home in Queensland. It could also be a valuable online resource for teachers and for parents or grandparents who would like to develop bird watching

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.

**Please check to see what Government restrictions apply,
plus visit the BQ website for up to date information**

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

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have joined recently:

Niel L. BRUCE, Tim & Lisa GALE, Kevin KEEFFE,
Lewis LAWRENCE, Amanda & Stephen SANBURG,
Gerry WOODRUFF

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

Many thanks too to those who have included a donation with their renewal or membership fee. This is greatly appreciated as such donations make on-going work possible.

PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR RENEWAL IS DUE!

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

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS Please notify the Membership Secretary 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 2020**

Contributions should be addressed to:

David Edwards, the QWSG Editor, 54 Elliott Street, Clayfield, Qld 4011
or E-mail to: gouldian@ozemail.com.au

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admin@jrdsons.com.au



Count Activities – 2020

QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Program 2020

Sat 6th Jun 1.98m at 09:38
 Sat 25th Jul 1.94m at 13:03
 Sat 22nd Aug 2.10m at 11:55
 Sat 19th Sep 2.27m at 10:49
 Sat 17th Oct 2.39m at 09:44
 Sat 7th Nov 2.12m at 13:47
 Sat 5th Dec 2.32m at 12:39

National Winter Count

COUNTERS PLEASE FOLLOW**ALL GOVERNMENT DIRECTIONS UNTIL****RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED.**

Port of Brisbane Count Dates 2020

Sun 7th Jun 1.89m at 10:26 Meet 08:35
 Sun 26th Jul 1.95m at 13:59 Meet 12:10
 Sun 23rd Aug 2.11m at 12:45 Meet 10:55
 Sun 20th Sep 2.30m at 11:36 Meet 09:45
 Sun 18th Oct 2.46m at 10:30 Meet 08:40
 Sun 8th Nov 2.11m at 14:52 Meet 13:00
 Sun 6th Dec 2.28m at 13:28 Meet 11:50

National Winter Count

COUNTERS PLEASE FOLLOW**PETER and LINDA'S DIRECTIONS with****REGARDS to the PORT.**

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

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: **OR** **Please post this form to:** QWSG Membership Secretary
 Qld Wader Study Group PO Box 3138,
 BSB: 313 140 (Bank Australia) SOUTH BRISBANE,
 Account number: 08305297 QLD 4101.