QUEENSLAND

WADER

Issue number 20 WINTER: JUNE 1997

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

**CHARLES’ NEW SITE**

Through the network of wader aficionados news spread. Murmured excitement stunned realisation, verbal confirmation, muted elation, wonder, anticipation and doubt. Could it be true?

At the appointed time and place l gathered with the other wader devotees to view the treasures of the new site. We were not disappointed. Stunning vistas of thousands of waders……...possibly 20 species; exact figures would follow extensive erudite presentations of noted physiological details.

But the beauty and bounty of the natural system defies full description by data. Dozens of views containing distant flocks and the occasional closeup allowing recognition of details that enlarged our eyes and caught our breath.

This was beyond belief... THE BEST EVER!

l could not believe it existed! l experienced the privilege of group recognition of superlative natural examples.

Afterwards we tried to discuss, through our exhilaration, the incredibly good fortune of finding a new site.

What luck! Charles' chance buy of an old suitcase full of slides, faded photographs, newsletters and some paperwork. Pity we couldn't play the old (magnetic!?} videos…… technology (evolution?) erases its predecessors.

But as I left the new site to walk into the urban night l felt disquiet.

Despite the accepted (presented) opinion, could the migration process have been maintained?

Could we, even now, possibly be **seeing** those waders on our beaches?

What about those old letters? **Actually, written on paper!**

Were the requests to **‘act now’** ever responded to?

**"public education"** (as it was recognised) obviously failed and **"political guarantees”** were simply stallers.

If only l could travel back to the late years of the 20th Century...

Would I change the way things happened?

**Citizen No:** a-4\_2\_N\_8-B'ng?

**Codename:** an\_\_nQWSGtive-1

**Australian Metropolis** - [2050AD]

**QWSG CONTACTS**

All correspondence to: The Chairperson, QWSG,

CHAIRPERSON: Peter Driscoll PUBLICITY OFFICER: Diana O'Connor

TREASURER: Sheryl Keates COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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CONSERVATION OFFICERS: Nigel Roberts

Andrew Geering lvell Whyte

and Greg Miller Karen Welsh

LIBRARIAN: Dave Stewart Jim Whyte

Members are reminded their membership expires on the date shown on the newsletter address label.

ABOUT QUEENSLAND WADER

MEMBERSHlP

INFORMATION

Annual subscription rates:

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Student/Pensioner $ 9

Family $22

Receipt will be forwarded

with next edition of

Queens/and Wader.

Forward Application to:

Mrs S. Keates, The Treasurer,

Queensland Wader Study Group,

xxxxxxxxxxxx xxxx,

Carindale, Brisbane Qld 4152

Queensland Wader is a quarterly publication of the Queensland

Wader Study Group. Deadline for submission of material is one

week prior to beginning of publication month: Autumn - March;

Winter - June; Spring - September; Summer - December.

Contributions should be addressed to Leanne Bowden and Greg

Miller, The Editors, Queensland Wader, 60 Lydia Street, Kalinga,

Qld 4030. Computerised contributions should be in IBM Word or

Wordperfect. Opinions expressed in Queens/and Wader are those

of the individual contributors and are not necessarily those of the

Queensland Wader Study Group, nor the Queensland Ornithological

Society.

Advertising rates are $15.00 for one quarter column and $20.00

for a third of a column.

-., A A

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



l/We WiSh ‘£0 join/renew: (Single $12; Family $22, Student/Pensioner $9)

Title: ........... .. Name: .................................................... .. Payment enclosed:

Address: ................................................................................... Membership $ ......... ..

............... . ..Postcode: …………….. Donation… $…………

Phone: (Home) ........................ .. (Work) ........................ .. TOTAL $ ......... ..

What activities do you wish to participate in? WADER COUNTS, FIELD TRIPS, SClENTlFlC

DATA COLLECTION, SURVEYS, CLERICAL, OTHER? (Please specify).

SIGNATURE: .......................................................... .. DATE: .............................. ..

**From the Editors**

Firstly, many thanks to those who contributed material, followed by a plea for continuing and additional support for Spring: - e.g. articles from Council Members on their specific projects; reports from participants in activities; AND Count site descriptions.

**Err... Err... Errors**..... Counters - calendar of count dates, did you notice there's no such a thing in 1997 as a "Sat 28 Oct". In fact the date should have been "Sat 18th Oct".

Copy Deadline Spring - September Edition

The deadline for the next issue is one week prior to the beginning of the publication month, September, i.e. 25 August, 1997 (see page 2 for details).

**NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL**

**The Editors**

Committee Meetings

*A three-hour meeting was held on Tuesday 1 April with 11 members in attendance.*

Items discussed:

* financial matters – Eastern Curlew Project, Empire Point, Wader Course, additional equipment for cannon netting and data back-up, reduced Newsletter printing costs;
* debriefing after Wader Course;
* Counter’s questionnaire, ethics concerning private property entrance;
* Cannon netting insurance and public liability;
* Conservation – Aquaculture in Moreton Bay, Moreton Bay Alliance meeting, Moreton Bay Zoning Plan;
* Grants - Coastcare, Dynah ls, National Estate with AMCS Moreton, National Wetlands with Griffith Uni., Gaming Commission for Display Boards;
* Projects – committee formation to produce "Guide to Waders" Gulf Survey, Slide Storage.

*A four-hour meeting was held on Tuesday 20 May with 11 members in attendance.*

**Items discussed:**

financial matters - unexpended, unallocated funds; refund for Bank Charge withholding tax; increased interest rate;

newsletter - request for articles

Count program - Gold Coast; reallocation of sites; Townsville counts; complimentary newsletters for non-member counters; data backlog

Merchandise ~ QOSI sales, new T-shirt;

Conservation – Brisbane Gateway Ports; Boondall foreshore; amalgamation of Pumicestone & Moreton Bay Marine Parks; Couran Cove, Sth Stradbroke; Moreton Bay Fish Farming; BRMG and BR&MBWMS public consultation;

Projects - Dynah lsland dredge spoil; Empire Point Acid Sulphate soil test; Coastnet Internet Group.

The next meeting will be held in July.

Other Meetings

Attended by members on behalf of QWSG:

April, May, June: QOSI Council - Greg Miller, Diana O'Connor

April, May, June: Consultants & BCC re Dynah lsland — Greg Miller

April, May, June: Boondall Wetlands Management Committee - Greg Miller, lvell Whyte

April: Moreton Bay Fish Farming - Karen Welsh

06 May, Redland Shire Council re Empire Point – Peter Driscoll, Joyce Harding, Sheryl Keates, Greg Miller

10 May: AMCS, Public consultation by Brisbane River Management Group and Brisbane River & Moreton Bay Watewater Management Study - Leanne Bowden, John Dobson, Sandra Harding, Joyce Harding, Greg Miller.

16 May: Boral Impact Assessment Statement, phasing out Brisbane R. dredging - Greg Miller

16 May: Gateway Community Forum re Brisbane Gateway Port - Sandra Harding

17 May: Moreton Bay Alliance Meeting – Peter Driscoll, Sandra Harding (See Report)

**Farewell**

*— Fiona Johnson, Council Member*: Fiona has announced her return to Canberra. A member and Council member since 1993, (Peter's influence!) including two years as Secretary, Fiona discovered QWSG through QOSI. Already interested in birds on arrival in Brisbane, her affinity and interest were fully discovered and enhanced when she sought volunteer work, and Lynda Litz-Tyne directed her towards Peter.

“Do you know anything about Waders?" he enquired - "No", her honest reply. "Doesn't matter", he advised. Fiona can't remember whether he added they were "seductive" or "addictive" or both! Never the—less, they proved both, and have kept her fascinated ever since, and provided the opportunity to participate in Surveys of Great Sandy Strait, Shoalwater Bay and Southern Moreton Bay.

Fiona was also a regular counter, and her Lytton site has been quickly snavelled by Arthur and Sheryl Keates. Fiona is well aware that when she returns to Canberra (have you seen the temperatures there recent/y?), the common and mundane will become exiting, and she'll be grateful for a glimpse of any Sharp-tailed Sandpiper that happens to visit. We'll be expecting updates for "Messages from Friends"

Many thanks Fiona for all your hard work, particularly Secretarial, and for preparing the World Wader Locality Map that formed part of the Ramsar display. Thanks to your partner, Alex, too, public displays requiring display boards won't be the same again!

**Welcome Back**

*- Dave Stewart, Librarian*: Dave has returned to the Council after an absence of two years. Involved with waders and shorebird research long before QWSG was established in 1992, he was amongst those instrumental in having the group established. Dave ran many Wader Identification Days, as well as write articles an identification for the newsletter (which he’s about to start again). He is also a regular Counter, and collects information from possibly one of the least human disturbed sites in the Western Bay – Luggage Point. To add to his Batchelor of Science with Honours David has been spending his spare time com\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**More Member Profiles**

As introduced in the last newsletter, profiles are being prepared on all Members of the Council.

**lvell and Jim Whyte:** lvell and Jim were introduced to QWSG early in 1993 through their daughter, Mrs Raelee Mackay, who is also an active member. Peter was one of Raelee's lecturers at QUT when studying for her Bachelor of Applied Science. lvell had an interest in shorebirds, so Raelee took Mum along to a cannon netting at Fishermans Island, where lvell met lan Venables and Lynda Litz-Tyne from QOSI. Being only a novice wader watcher, she joined QOSI. With an overall interest in the environment, lvell was already a member of the AMCS, involved with revegetation work along Bulimba Creek. lvell soon joined Dave Stewart on his count at Luggage Point, with the former Treasurer, Gary Harch. She quickly discovered the unknown charms of one of our lesser known "seaside" locations. On a clear day, the vista from Peter's home at Mt Glorious, down to the Story Bridge and Riverside's skyscrapers, is clearly visible, whilst on the western side of the expansive saltpan, the 747 Jumbos glide in gracefully from international destinations whereas on the eastern side, Container ships are pushed into the Port by busy tugs; prawn trawlers and local fisherman zipping past for a day on the Bay. Criss-crossed by the footprints of foxes and pigs, the mud looks lighty solid. However, Ivell’s borrowed Welly boots were never seen again, as with one step they disappeared below the mud and only her foot re-appeared. \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Creek as well. ln company with Greg Nye, and later Andrew Geering, to provide wader knowledge whilst she was in learning mode, she paddled down Nudgee and Nundah creeks, dragging the canoe when there wasn't enough water. Then Jim, who lvell says "does this because he loves me" came to the rescue with a motorised tinny, and the journey is much easier now. lvell works for Australia Post, whilst Jim is a Direct Marketing Consultant, assisting business to develop and implement marketing programmes. Although he doesn't have the same passion as lvell, he likes birds, and is a great supporter, participating wherever possible, be it erecting displays, transporting people and equipment or cleaning up Dynah island. lvell's artistic talents were taken to their heights for RAMSAR 1996, when she created BART, the Bar-tailed Godwit, and a hand painted cloth chart of Moreton Bay and its waders. After four years, lvell has just handed over her Count Co-ordinator role to Linda and Phil Cross, but remains on the Council as a valued member.

**Margaret Bernard and Andrew Geering**, Council Members:

(Prepared by Andrew) We both joined in early 1992. Our first banding trip was to Fisherman's island and it was to Fisherman’s Island and it was the second time Peter had ever caught anything dedication (blind faith) on those barren days and suggested we attend a second event assimilated into the Management

Committeee. Margaret and I immigrated from South Australia in July 1991. We were both finding our feet in Brisbane and thought the group was a great way to socialise with like-minded people. We also thought QWSG was a way of doing something constructive for the environment, learning about birds (we were both rank beginners at any type of bird-watching), and seeing the Bay. I have a Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree from Sydney University and a PhD from Adelaide University. Margaret has an Associate Diploma in Chemisty from the South Australian institute of Technology and a Bachelor of Applied Science from the Queensland University of Technology. We both work for the DPl, but at different locations. l work in the Plant Protection Unit at lndooroopilly and Margaret works at the Queensland Agricultural Biotechnology Centre located within the University of Queensland Campus at St. Lucia. l work on characterisation and diagnosis of viral diseases of bananas and Margaret works on plant genetic engineering. l am also a member of the Society for Growing Australian Plants and the Australasian Plant Pathology Society.

Andrew and Margaret were also Editors of this newsletter for four years, were involved in the crusade against Green Island Dredging, and attend most activities, meetings and surveys. Their regular count site is St. Helena island. Andrew is now Co-Conservation Officer along with Greg Miller, assisted by Sandra Harding.

**Publicity**

The Eastern Curlew Satellite Tracking Project has had two further appearances. A story appeared in Geo Magazine, May-June 1997 Volume 19 No. 3, pp 13-14. The filming on Moreton Island, with Jeremy Thompson interviewed, and all attendees filmed laying nets, entering hides and spotting with scopes, was shown on Totally Wild on Monday 19th May, 1997.

Dynah Island featured on Totally Wild on Wednesday 21st May, with Greg Miller, accompanied by lan Kerr of CoastCare.

A team of members cannon netting at Fishermans island, with Peter interviewed, formed part of Channel Nine's "Moreton Bay” documentary screened on Sunday 25th May.

lf you missed these stories, and wish to borrow a video of them, see Sandra or Joyce Harding.

Hot Tip from Clive Minton

(AWSG) - Wildscreen 8.00pm

18th July has waders.

**CoastNet**

CoastNet, a forum on the lnternet for communicating about coastal management issues, is sponsored by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories, and is an initiative arising from the Commonwealth Coastal Policy. Their brochure states that "lt’s all about talking, exchanging information and sharing expertise to improve coastal management in Australia".

Funding has been provided for a modem (QWSG@peg.apc.org) and other costs to participate. Nigel Roberts has received the equipment and will be networking on behalf of QWSG with "people from all around the world, including Federal, State and Local Governments, professional associations, industry and community interest groups, indigenous groups, research and scientiﬁc organisations”.

Should you wish to contact CoastNet yourself, access is free:

http:/lwww.erin.gov.au/marine/coastnet.

More Websites of interest are at the back of this newsletter. '

Nigel will provide an update in the next newsletter of discussion group progress.

**Grant – Guide to Waders of Moreton Bay**

A successful application was made to the Department of Environment for a $4,100 grant to produce a quality soft cover Guide book containing approximately thirty-two pages of full colour plates.

Subjects covered will include:

* a concise guide to species of waders with illustrations/photographs and simple keys for identification
* characteristics of waders, especially their migratory behaviour, migration routes and importance to coastal ecosystems
* the significance of Moreton Bay and other areas of South East Queensland to waders
* how waders use feeding and roosting areas of Moreton Bay
* how, where and when to ﬁnd waders in Moreton Bay and other parts of South East Queensland
* information on how we can conserve wader populations and their habitats
* information on co-operative international efforts into the study and conservation of waders including the role of Moreton Bay in the ﬂyway as a Shorebird Reserve Network Site.

A Committee has been formed to manage completion of this project.

**NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome the following people who have joined since the last list was printed in the Summer 1996/97

newsletter:

Pat Berry; Meryl & Ben Dobe; Diane Francis; Jon Irvine; Robert Mancini} Jon & Ben Nor/ing; Marilyn

Steenland; Keith & Patricia Walker.

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.

**MEMBERSHIP FEES**

**DON’T FORGET TO LOOK AT THE MAILING LABEL ON YOUR NEWSLETTER.**

*When you joined, you received a full 12 months membership, irrelevant of the time of year you joined.*

*The date to which you are ﬁnancial is noted on your mailing label.*

*Please check you are still ﬁnancial, to ensure you continue to receive Queensland Wader.*

**EASTERN CURLEW TRACKING PROJECT**

Peter Driscoll

*On Monday 11 February 1997, several years of dedicated work, research, funding requests, experimentation with radio transmitters and different harnesses, achieved a zenith when 12 Eastern Curlew were ﬁtted with Satellite transmitters, to coincide with their departure time for northern migration. (See QW No. 19 Autumn: March 1997). A full report on this ﬁrst phase of an ongoing international research project will shortly be prepared by Peter, however, the following is the most up-to-date information.*

Cyclone Justin in the Coral Sea (largest for 15 years), influenced the progress of six of the birds that left in early to mid-March from Moreton Bay. All of these birds made it as far as south eastern Papua New Guinea but no farther, two have returned to Moreton Bay, one is near Princess Charlotte Bay on Cape York Peninsula (north Queensland) and one remains in Papua New Guinea. One bird we know has perished and another almost certainly has, having been located in the eye of the cyclone for several days until contact was

lost.

The other six birds left over the period up until the first week in April. They moved in a more westerly route but out to sea from the Queensland coast and towards the Central Cordilla of New Guinea, presumably because they were not under the same influence of cyclonic north and north easterly winds. One bird made a conservative return flight of under 700 km to the Great Sandy Strait (another important coastal wetland north of Moreton Bay) but the other ﬁve have made substantial flights. One flew to the north of Papua New Guinea but returned to Moreton Bay within a week. Another flew as far as the Caroline islands (7 degrees north), then returned to Moreton Bay via New Ireland and the south east coast of Papua New Guinea over a period of more than a month, with a ﬁnal direct flight from PNG to south eastern Queensland of 1800 km.

Of the remaining three birds, two made it to Russia, one is ensconced within the breeding range in the Arum Region (50 degrees north, 130 degrees east). Signals from the second of these two birds is weak but it is located somewhere farther to the east and possibly moving around. The other bird to have made it well into the northern hemisphere recorded a dramatic 6500+ km non-stop flight from Moreton Bay but contact was lost somewhere to the east of Taiwan, hopefully because the transmitter fell off (they are designed to do so in due course).

By “about mid-May, all long distance ﬂights had ceased with combined flight distances for all twelve birds of over 60,000km. Five birds are back in their over wintering quarters, on their home patch of Moreton Bay, two are well within the breeding range, one is in North Queensland, another in Papua New Guinea, two have perished and the other, hopefully, jettisoned the back pack rather than ditched in the sea.

A printout from the NTT Website http://www. wnn. or. jp/wnn-n/migrant/english/3\_tran.html)

prepared by the l/Vild Bird Society of Japan follows. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the QWSG at all. “The Tattler” also contains a short excerpt.

**The Migration Route Satellite-tracked by ARCOBAT**

**Far East Curlew Tracking Documents**

Australia: Staff mail from Moreton Island

February 18th, 1997

Reported by Mutsuyuki Ueda of Research Center, Wild Bird Society of Japan

ln mid-eastern sea shore of Australia, near Brisbane. on Moreton Island in Queensland we captured and examined the curlews. The island is a wintering ground for the curlews, and they feed on crabs that are exposed by the low tide. On high tide, the curlews rest on the rocks and sandy beaches. The rocks that the curlews rest gets smaller as the tide comes in and it became an ideal place to capture and examine the birds.

To capture the Far Eastern Curlews we used what is called a Canon Net. The bullet that carries the net is placed in a canister along with a gun powder. When the birds came nearby, we ﬁxed one end of the net to the ground and launched the net toward the birds. The bullet on the end of the net pulls the net and it softly covers the birds. We placed the Cannon Net at Southern side of the Moreton Island and waited for the birds to come nearby. At first, the birds were cautious of the ignition cord and we were unable to capture the bird. But alter we hid the ignition cord with sea weeds and also buried it, on February 10th, we were able to capture the Far Eastern Curlew. We successfully captured 31 Far Eastern Curlews. On every bird, we attached a ﬂag and on the 15 largest Far Eastern Curlews, we attached a tracking device. Out of the 5 birds we attached the satellite tracking device "ArgoSat"

**A Far Eastern Curlew moved to Taiwan. Report by fax.**

April 14th, 1997

Reported by Mutsuyuki Ueda of Research Center, Wild Bird Society of Japan

16090 – Moved to Taiwan

16089 – Moved to Tabar Island, New Guinea

ArgoSat 29979 – still remaining in Papua new Guinea

**A Far Eastern Curlew returned to Australia.**

April 28th. 1997

Reported by Mutsuyuki Ueda of Research Center, Wild Bird Society of Japan

According to the data which obtained once on April 22nd and four times on April 27th, both at the same place, the 2 north heading birds, 16090 and 16091 have not made much progress.

Concerning ArgoSat 29979 which had been in Papua New Guinea, it ﬂew back to Australia again and was conﬁrmed at around Cape Melville, north of Cairns on the cast coast of Australia.

ArgoSat 29979\_

Move to 14°272’S - 144° 403’E

I will send a report upon receiving further data.

**The ﬁrst report of Far Eastern Curlews**

April 2nd 1997

Reported by Mutsuyuki Ueda of Research Center, Wild Bird Society of Japan

The ﬁrst data of a Far Eastern Curlew's transit point has delivered. Except for this, it seems that one Far Eastern Curlew has moved to nearby Taiwan and another one has moved to slightly North of 1609l. But this is not deﬁnite so l will gather data once again to be able to send a certain report.

29976: move to 5° 39'S - 146° 29‘E on March 18, and stop the signal

29971: move to 10° 29'S - 149° 55'E on March 23 and stay there

21026: move to 10° 11'S - 148° 37'E on March 18

16087: move to 10° 02S - 151°09'E on March 16

move to 19° 29S - 147° 16‘E on March 19

move to 22°30'S - 150° 43'E on April 2

16088: move to 22° 29'S - 150° 00'E on March 19

16091: move to 7° 05'N - 134° 24‘E on March 29

**A Far Eastern Curlew has conﬁrmed at the breeding grounds**

May 16th 1997

Reported by Mutsuyuki Ueda of Research Center, Wild Bird Society of Japan

As l reported last week, the ArgoSat 29979 returned to Australia and still staying there. I assume that it will not proceed any further north within this year. Regarding other birds, 16091 has conﬁrmed at its breeding ground.

l will keep an eye on I609! whether it breeds there or move further north.

**2 Far Eastern Curlews are now in the breeding ground**

May 16th 1997

Reported by Mutsuyuki Ueda of Research Center, Wild Bird Society of Japan

Following 16091, 16090 has confirmed at the breeding ground. It is necessary to keep an eye on whether they breed there or move further north.

l am scheduled to visit Khingansky Nature Reserve for research from May 23 to June 6. This is the place where 16091 is at the moment. It will not be possible to send a report during that period but, l hope to be able to report upon my return.

**Moreton Bay Alliance Meeting 17 May 1997**

Sandra Harding

I attended this meeting on 17 May 1997 at Central Wynnum State School. There were a number of conservation groups represented including the Queensland Conservation Council, Friends of Stradbroke Island and Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS). The meeting is chaired and catered for by the Moreton Bay Branch of the AMCS.

Several matters were raised and discussed.

The ABC TV report on bifenthrin and possible impacts on the aquatic fauna in Moreton Bay. Academics at Griffith University reported a serious decline in the aquatic fauna over the last few years corresponding with the use of bifenthrin in replace of organophosphates for use in pesticides. There is concern with the lack of

action on behalf of the Department of Environment.

The management of the Bayside Regional Park in Brisbane was raised with regard to general maintenance.

There was an ad in the Courier Mail concerning a Commonwealth Environment Powers Inquiry. The closing date for submissions to the terms of reference for the inquiry is 20 June 1997. The Senate inquiry has been sought in response to a series of “short-sighted and alarming" decisions, including the approval of Point Lillias, near Geelong, as the site of Victoria's chemical storage facility. This has meant that Australia is only the second nation to excise part of a Ramsar site.

The Gateway Community Forum to coordinate community groups in regard to the Brisbane Gateway Ports Project has been formed. QWSG has submitted our key issues of concern with the project to the Forum. There is still little known, and it is expected that a discussion paper will be released at some time in the future. Just the disposal of spoil (to extend the Port seaward) from dredging deeper navigational channels could severely impact on the sand and water movement of the Bay.

A trip to the Couran Cove Resort under construction on South Stradbroke Island, which has been advertised as taking into account ecotourism concepts, was set for 28 June 1997. If you wish to raise questions of the developers, these should be submitted to the Moreton Bay Alliance beforehand. l have subsequently heard that the sewage treatment will not be at tertiary level which would impact on the water quality of this area of the Bay.

The next meeting will be held on the 16 August 1997. The newsletter of the Moreton Bay Alliance is "Baycare News". News items for the newsletter can be sent to the Moreton Bay Branch of the AMCS, Ph Mary Patchett on (07) xxxx xxxx.

**University Research about to commence on Eastern Curlew Ecology – Nigel Roberts**

*A some of you may know, over the past ﬁve months l’ve been busy scoping and preparing a Master of Philosophy research program I will undertake over the next two years. As I plan to work closely with the QWSG I’ve written this brief summary on what drives me to take this on and what it is that I’ll actually be doing.*

l don't really remember if the first encounter I had with waders was crawling on my belly through the sand dunes at Swan Bay with Kees Hulsman, or possibly it was Cannon Netting on some beach, at the time unknown to this lad from the western suburbs, with a group of people whose dedication seemed to border on the extreme. Whichever it was, it proved to be addictive. During my first year of the Environmental Science degree at Griffith University in 1991, I became actively involved with the QWSG's Cannon Netting Program and assisted on numerous outings.

In 1994 I took a hiatus from twitching waders whilst I explored South East Asia and upon returning re-explored employment in the public service - needless to say which I enjoyed the most. Now I feel like I've come around again to the beginning of some cycle and I find myself staring down the barrel of another 2 years full time at university. Yet, I feel a lot more confident this time. Over the past 12 months I've re-affirmed my commitment toward the research of migratory waders. I’ve involved myself in numerous Cannon Netting outings, I've enjoyed picking back up on the radio telemetry work that was started back in the QWSG’s early days and was very happy to have been involved in the recent Eastern Curlew Satellite tracking project, a particularly exciting project that is on the cutting edge of this kind of research. With the QWSG in a co-operative effort with the Wild Bird Society of Japan, the prospect of good information generation from the project seems inevitable. With the QWSG going so strong I’m honoured to now be a member of the Council.

The decision for me to commit to further research of these delightful aveformes was therefore relatively easy. I'm particularly happy to be focusing my research on the ecology of the Eastern Curlew. l enjoy watching their graceful meandering over the feeding flats in amongst the host of other species with whom they share their habitat. Considered globally to be a rare species, the Curlew has made Moreton Bay, along with the Great Sandy Straits, a Queensland stronghold. These areas support sufficient percentages of the total global population for them to be recognised as internationally significant non-breeding grounds for the species and we are lucky enough to have them right on our door step. Environment Australia (formerly the Australian Nature Conservation Agency) has recognised the Eastern Curlew along with four other species (Latham's Snipe, Great Knot, Red-necked Stint and Little Tern) as being of special interest for research.

On my initial journeys into the scientific literature on waders (of which there is a mountain) l soon discovered a number of interesting facts. We, in the Asia Pacific, are somewhat behind our colleagues in other parts of the world in terms of wader research. In the Netherlands for instance, Dutch scientists can conduct experiments on waders in artificial tidal cages where tides and conditions can be varied independent of the natural cycle - indeed a wonderful facility. They and others in Europe and North America have begun modelling wader feeding grounds on scales fine enough to determine what areas waders value most. Even with these cutting-edge techniques significant knowledge gaps still exist. Many of you may know of this and other research, as was described to us by many of these visiting experts in March 1996 at the AWSG Shorebird conference prior to Ramsar.

Research in our region also recognises the existence of these gaps in the knowledge of migratory shorebird ecology. Environment Australia has also identified two priority areas for research to improve the management of migratory birds. Priority 1: shorebird feeding requirements and priority 2: Shorebird disturbance studies. Congdon & Catterall (1994) in a study of Eastern Curlew recommended that quantitative sampling replicated on a regional basis was required to answer questions such as determining whether birds are faithful to particular feeding locations and if so, what factors influence this choice. In conjunction they also recommended the use of local studies on feeding ecology and movement studies of marked individuals to clarify the habitat requirement of Curlew in Australia. Others in the field have identified similar objectives for research and recommended that studies be undertaken that increase knowledge of abundance, distribution, movements and food requirements of shorebird populations in Queensland. More information on how species respond (eg. behavioural changes) to human induced disturbance is required to determine the extent of threat species may be facing.

I've therefore targeted my research toward one of the major areas in which knowledge was lacking, which is, what factors are important in influencing choice of habitat for feeding birds. My preliminary review of the literature reveals that available field techniques to determine what factors influence feeding bird abundance and feeding ecology may be limited. This limitation is evident in: a) the number of proven, or ‘standardised’ techniques available; b) their applicability to the tropics / sub tropics; and c) their applicability to such a morphologically distinct species such as the Eastern Curlew.

I've proposed to undertake a program of research that in its first year will aim to determine what field methods are the most valid and reliable sources of data for our conditions for determining the patterns of abundance of feeding Eastern Curlew and measuring aspects of their feeding ecology. l plan to complete this after one field season of testing as well as the inevitable university course work. l will then write-up the

project by developing a number of ‘in progress’ papers that lead to a final research thesis.

At this stage, the second year is planned as an independent study that will build further on the first in the form of an analysis of factors which determine the abundance and feeding ecology of Eastern Curlew at selected sites within Moreton Bay using the most precise and accurate method available. It is perceived that this will be in the context of differences in habitat quality, both spatially and temporally, for example prey availability, feeding area, substrate type, roost proximity, stage of the tide etc.

l know, from the experience of other post-graduate researchers that I'm in for an interesting time. As the project gets going it will become very ﬁeld work intensive. If you, or anyone you know may wish to assist me with some of this field work or other aspects, l will most likely be making requests for assistance at a later date in this newsletter. It is my intention to keep the membership of the QWSG up to date on my progress through articles similar to this. I'm sure that all this hard work will also be very enjoyable - otherwise l really shouldn't be doing it.

References: Congdon, B. and Catterall C. P., 1994. Factors inﬂuencing the Eastern Curlew's distribution and choice of foraging sites among tidal ﬂats of Moreton Bay, South-eastern Queensland. Wildlife Research **21**, 507-518.

**The Latest on JAMBA and CAMBA!!**

Kira Schlusser

*Following the Autumn article on the Japan and China Migratory Bird Agreement Conference, Kira Schlusser, (Senior Project Ofﬁcer, Wetlands, Waterways and Waterbirds Section of Environment Australia's Biodiversity Group) contacted the Editors and offered this article, which will also appear in Wetlands Australia.*

Australia, Japan and the People's Republic of China agreed on outcomes to promote the conservation of migratory birds at the ninth bilateral consultative meeting with Japan and the third bilateral consultative meeting with China held in Tokyo from 24-28 February 1997.

Australia, Japan, and the P.R. China exchanged national reports. The reports described the actions taken since the last meetings by each nation towards migratory bird conservation.

**Eastern Curlew**

A pilot cooperative project on the Eastern Curlew had been developed from discussions at the 1995 round of talks under JAMBA and CAMBA. Researchers in Australia and Japan attached satellite transmitters in 1996 to 12 Eastern Curlews in Moreton Bay to track their migration. At the 1997 round of bilateral meetings Australia, Japan and the P.R. China agreed to commit to a joint five-year research plan for the Eastern Curlew and augment the work with colour flagging (see below) and training activities.

**Colour Flagging Protocol**

One of the tools used for studying the movements of birds are coloured flags that are usually attached to the leg or wing. Since birds that migrate between countries carry a coloured flag from where they were first sighted, it is important different colours are used for each region.

In response to a need to work cooperatively, Environment Australia commissioned a Colour Flagging Protocol which was prepared by Wetlands International - Oceania and tabled at the Tokyo meetings.

Japan and the P.R. China agreed to provide comments back to Australia by mid-1997. The aim is to have countries in the flyway adopt the Colour Flagging Protocol as a standard for long-distance migration studies.

**Special interest Species**

Special interest species are chosen as flagships to highlight and focus efforts on the conservation of shorebirds. The Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattler, Macquarie Island subspecies of the Wandering Albatross and the Short-tailed Albatross are the special interest species under JAMBA, while the species under CAMBA are the Eastern Curlew, Great Knot and Red-necked Stint.

**East Asian – Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network**

The Network plays a pivotal role in highlighting the importance of shorebird habitat and. encouraging their appropriate management. During the meetings, Australia, Japan and the P.R. China agreed to continue to promote and work through the Shorebird Reserve Network and speciﬁcally, work towards increasing the number of sites and participating countries.

**The Asia-Pacific Wetland Managers’ Training Program**

Australia outlined the history of the Training Program and Japan agreed to provide information about its training program so that Australia could prepare an annual calendar of training courses in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia agreed to continue to provide joint training courses on shorebird management with the P.R. China.

The next consultative meetings will be held in the P.R.China in 1999.

**MESSAGES FROM FRIENDS**

Roma - Gary Harch

The Parish of St Paul ’s Roma

The Ven Gary Harch B.A. B.Sun/.

Archdeacon of the West

“Since my last news of nil waders, I have been taken to some local waterbird sites by the local Department of Environment Ranger, Craig Eddie. (The good old standby of the local sewerage works being one of them). There are at least five sites around the town that he has been regularly counting for a number of years and I will be forwarding information about these from now on - lots of waterbirds, ducks of many different species, grebes etc with a few waders.

However, I'm also becoming aware of a number of dams on private property and every time I see them there are always a few waders around.

This is only one small part of SW Queensland and obviously there must be quite reasonable numbers of several species of waders, if we could only count all the dams! While the coast obviously has the large numbers of the species that are only found on the coast and in particular the migratory birds, it has been interesting to start to note the numbers of the waders that stay within Australia and (probably?) live away from the coast all or most of the time.

At the present time the only waders I'm recording are Black-winged Stilts, Masked Lapwings & Black-fronted plovers. In June/July I'm off to Currawinya and hopefully I'll be able to find out what is happening out there.

Regards, Gary Harch

*Editor’s Note:* Gary also sympathised with us about the feeling of writing newsletters, quoting "I have to get one out in a couple of weeks - but I keep putting it off. Mind you, today, I did go birdwatching, and have spent all of tonight writing up count sheets. Oh, for the blissful days of just wading through mud carrying gear and crouching for hours on end banding, without having to worry about the paper work, that was always some else’s job”.

**LOOK WHAT TTHE ‘CURLEW BROUGHT!**

A BABY GIRL!!

To Jeremy and Shoko Thompson: a daughter, Sophie Marie, on Thursday 8th May, 1997

For those of you who don't know him, Jeremy has been a member of the QWSG since the end of 1992. Not only that, but as Senior Principal Conservation Officer in Wildlife Management Planning, Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, Jeremy is able to mix business with pleasure, and be the Queensland Government's Project Officer for the Eastern Curlew Satellite Tracking Project.

He traversed the Southern Hemisphere to gain his qualifications. After graduating in 1976 from Toowong State High School in Brisbane, he gained a Bachelor of Science and a Diploma in Wildlife Management from the University of Otago in New Zealand; and a Masters in Conservation Biology from the University of Nairobi, on Love Birds (Genus: Agapornis). He did return to Australia to complete his PhD in 1992, on "Spatial and Temporal Patterns of Shorebird Habitat Utilisation in Moreton Bay Queensland, supervised by Prof. Jiro Kikkawa. However, he hasn't spent all his time in Universities. Prior to undertaking his Masters, he worked in East Africa for two years in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and, whilst preparing his PhD, he completed five consultancies on Waders in Moreton Bay for the Department of Environment.

After his PhD, he worked with the Japan Wildlife Research Centre as a post-doctoral fellowship from the Japan Science and Technology Agency, and finally returned to Australia in 1992 to commence work with the Queensland Department of Environment.

Jeremy has also been a member of QOSI since 1987, their Vice President during 1993, the Editor of their journal ”Sunbird", as well as an editorial board member for the Journal of the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology in Japan.

All those wondrous qualifications and ornithological achievements, and to Sophie, he'll simply be Dad!!!

CONGRATULATIONS JEREMY and SHOKO FROM MEMBERS OF THE QWSG.

Hope you can still ﬁnd time to be involved with Wader watching and Wader researchl!

**COUNT PROGRAMME** - by Phil and Linda Cross

*Since our last report, we have been fairly busy getting our Count Programme System up and running. It*

*proved to be a little more tasking than we thought, but we ﬁnally see the light at the end of the tunnel.*

Our first job was getting all the summer counts together to pass on for feeding into the database. We particularly enjoyed reading the number and variety of species recorded at each count site. It certainly wet our appetite to visit them. Some sites are familiar to us, but most are new.

**OUTSTANDING SUMMER COUNTS**

If you haven't already done so, please send your summer count immediately, as AWSG is waiting.

We had the chance to visit new count sites at the Maroochy River mouth on 25th May and experienced the problems counter Shirley Rooke et al face when counting this area. We were surprised that any birds choose to frequent this area, as on the day we visited, there were people fishing from the shore and in boats, walking their dogs (on and off leads, even though the signs clearly say "No Dogs Allowed" and three noisy jet skis. Surprisingly, there were still a few waders to count, including Pied Oystercatchers, Pelicans, Grey-tailed Tattlers, Bar-tailed Godwits, Pied Cormorants, Silver Gull, Red-capped Plovers, Double-banded Plovers and 1500+ Crested Terns on a sand bank close to Goat Island.

Visiting other count sites in the future will certainly help us understand some of the problems that could have an effect on the birds.

Other duties included corresponding with some of our members and we sincerely apologise if we have not written to you yet, but hope you will understand and allow us a little extra time to catch up. This also applies to new members who have indicated they are interested in the count programme - we promise we will get to you soon.

If you cannot do your count, please inform us as soon as possible so we can organise a standby counter.

On the subject of designated count days, we would like to remind counters that ideally the count should take place on that day. If this is not possible, a count on either side of the count day will do. The following week is not really suitable as the tide conditions will be different. Having said that, any count sheets will be gratefully accepted and fed into the database.

**Counter Survey:** The Questionnaires are coming in slowly, and we have received 17 responses from a possible 35. It would be greatly appreciated if forms could be returned soon. As promised in a previous newsletter, if you wish to visit a site with a counter on count day, please contact us. The following counters have indicated they would be happy for newcomers to join them.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Counter | Site |
| WHYTE: Jim & lvell | Boondall Wetlands |
| WREN: Jon | Bowen |
| BOWDEN: Leanne (& Greg Miller) | Brisbane Airport |
| FIEN: lvan & Joyce | Caboolture River Mouth |
| CHAMBERLAIN: Jill | Caloundra Area |
| MCNAMARA: Owen & Deb | Cleveland, Nandeebie Park |
| CROSS: Phil & Linda | Deception Bay |
| BIGG: Frank | Dux Creek, Bribie island |
| DRISCOLL: Peter | Fisherman ls & Moreton Island |
| RUDDELL: A & J | Gladstone |
| BRADLEY: Donald & Lesley | Hervey Bay, Point Vernon |
| O'CONNOR: Diana | Kallangur, Brays Lagoon |
| KEATES: Arthur & Sheryl | Lytton |
| DOBE: Meryl | Macleay Island |
| COLLIS: Glen | Pine Rivers Wetlands |
| HARDING: Sandra | Thornlands, Thornlands Rd |
| DURRANT: Bev | Toorbul |

**Wader Identification Days:** We will be holding regular wader identification days starting in the Spring at various locations. Arthur and Sheryl Keates have currently set down a day for Manly Boat Harbour on Saturday 4th October.

However, as this is a few months off, we suggest you contact Arthur and Sheryl closer to the day.

AWSG WINTER COUNT

Weekend of 28/29 June

High of 1.92 at 4.13pm

If your count area is large, perhaps arrive a little earlier to enable all the birds to be counted before dark.

(Numbers should be lower at this time of the year.)

It would be preferable if you could . do the count on this weekend. However, if that is not possible, the following weekend will do.

QWSG MERCHANDISE:

We still have stocks of Polo Neck Shirts for $30 and Coffee Mugs for $8. We have added The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds to our merchandise for a great saving cost only $20. (Normally $35 retail). We are also of trying to obtain Simpson and Day Field Guides for the same price of $20.

All enquiries should be directed to us, or see us at QOSl's monthly

Phil and Linda Cross

COUNT SITES

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

**WADER WATCH** – Natasha Taylor

*Welcome. Before you all start madly looking through wader watch, may I have your attention?*

It is fantastic that more and more sites are counted throughout Queensland, but it means lots and lots of data to be entered, so l need your help. When you are filling in the survey sheet, remember that I have to read your writing. Trying to interpret words, abbreviations and especially differentiating the number 1 and letter l slows me down. It's great to have your additional notes on what the waders are doing and other species in the area (it all goes into the data base). Occasionally we forget to fill in the boxes for survey conditions and even date and times. Just remember that the usefulness of the data depends on what you write on ‘those sheets‘.

We all understand that each site has to be registered and defined before Peter Driscoll gives it a unique 4 letter code (the "site code" ), it is a time consuming job to match up your sheet with the unique site code. Many counters record their site code on the count sheet and this speeds up the process. However, incorrect or invented (ie. for new sites) site codes make site-matching difficult. If you do not know your site code please ring Linda Cross, and until you have a code, a detailed description of the site name will be helpful (eg. there are several sites with very similar names).

There appears to be a new version of the count sheet out there, a one-page landscape format. Sorry to ask, but could you please go back to the original two-page survey forms, as there are some teething problems.

Do not get put off, counters are really doing a great job, but when we’re all volunteers, with little spare time, every bit of co-operation helps us all to complete our tasks that much quicker.

**Flags**

Flags are changing. There are moves at foot to use more than one flag and on different parts of the leg on the same banded bird. This means we will not only have to record the colour of the flag but also which leg, where on the leg, and in what order the coloured flags are on the leg. This flagging method will allow birds to be banded in more locations than what is presently available with the single colour flagging system. Peter has suggested that we start thinking about describing the flag location on the leg, so we will be well practised.

Leg Flag Banding Legend (colour = where banded)

Green = Brisbane/Queensland O

Orange = Victoria)

Yellow = Northern Western Australia.

White = New Zealand (some species banded in New South Wales

Blue = Japan

**Green Leg Flag Sightings**

2 Bar-tailed Godwit seen by Jill Chamberlain at Osprey House, Dohles Rocks Rd. 9-12-96

1 Bar-tailed Godwit seen by Edward Kleiber at Tweed River entrance, Tweed Heads 17-12-96

1 Bar-tailed Godwit, Edward Kleiber at Shallow Bay, Tweed Heads 19-12-96, 27-12-96, 20-2-97

1 Bar-tailed Godwit, E Kleiber, Tony's Sandbar, Tweed Hds 22-12,31-12-96, 6-1,18-1,24-1,30-1,3-2,28-2,10- 4-97

2 Ruddy Turnstone seen by Andrew Geering at St Helena Island pier 11-1-97

6 Bar-tailed Godwits seen by Andrew Geering at St Helena island pier 11-1-97

3 Great Knots seen by Andrew Geering at St Helena Island pier 11-1 -97

1 Ruddy Turnstone seen by Andrew Geering at St Helena island pier 3-2-97

1 Black-tailed Godwit seen by Glen Collis and Diana O'Connor at Pine Rivers 22-2-97

4 Bar-tailed Godwits seen by Diana O'Connor at Bray's Lagoon, North Pine River 22-2-97

6 Ruddy Turnstone seen by Andrew Geering at St Helena island pier 22-2-97

2 Bar-tailed Godwit seen by Andrew Geering at St Helena Island homestead 22-2-97

2 Whimbrel seen by Andrew Geering at St Helena Island homestead 22-2-97

1 Bar-tailed Godwit seen by Jean Corney and Bev Durrant at Toorbul 23-2-97

1 Bar-tailed Godwit seen by Greg Miller and Leanne Bowden at Nudgee Beach 16-3-97, 31-3-97

3 Mongolian Plovers seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour 22-3-97

1 Grey-tailed Tattler seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour 22-3-97

1 Great Knot seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour 22-3-97

1 Curlew Sandpiper seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour 22-3-97

1 Bar-tailed Godwit seen by Arthur Keates at Acacia Street, Wellington Point 22-3-97

1 Ruddy Turnstone seen by Arthur and Sheryl Keates at St Helena Island north 23-3-97

1 Ruddy Turnstone seen by Arthur and Sheryl Keates at St Helena Island pier 23-3-97

1 Grey-tailed Tattler seen by Arthur and Sheryl Keates at St Helena Island pier 23-3-97

2 Bar-tailed Godwit seen by Arthur and Sheryl Keates at St Helena Island pier 23-3-97

7 Bar-tailed Godwits seen by Jim and lvell Whyte at Cabbage Tree Creek 23-3-97

2 Great Knots seen by Jim and lvell Whyte at Cabbage Tree Creek 23-3-97

1 Large Sand Plover seen by Mike ad Linda Lewis at Manly Boat Harbour 23-3-97

1 Great Knot seen by Greg Miller and Leanne Bowden at Manly Boat Harbour 24-3-97

1 Bar-tailed Godwit seen by Edward Kleiber at Manly 27-3-97

1 Ruddy Turnstone seen by Edward Kleiber at Manly 27-3-97

2 Mongolian Plover seen by Edward Kleiber at Manly 27-3-97

2 Large Sand Plover seen by Edward Kleiber at Manly 27-3-97

1 Great Knot seen by Greg Miller and Leanne Bowden at Nudgee Beach 31-3-97

1 Bar-tailed Godwits seen by Andrew Geering at St Helena Island pier 20-4-97

**Blue Leg Flag Sightings \***

1 Grey-tailed Tattler seen by Chris Barnes and Eric Zillmann at Boonooroo 17-11-96

1 Grey-tailed Tattler seen by Edward Kleiber at Tweed River entrance, Tweed Heads 12-12, 17-12, 18-12, 19-12, 22-12, 25-12, 30-12, 31-12-96, 1-1, 7-1, 19-1, 24-1,25-1, 26-1, 27-1, 30-1, 31-1, 14-2, 18-2, 22-2, 1-3, 2-3, 3-3, 5-3, 7-3, 8-3, 14-3, 15-3, 16-3, 17-3, 20-3, 21-3, 22-3, 23-3, 24-3, 26-3, 28-3, 29-3, 30-3, 1-4, 3-4, 4-4, 12-4-97,

1 Grey-tailed Tattler, Edward Kleiber & lan Watson at Tweed River entrance, Tweed Heads 22-1-96

1 Grey-tailed Tattler seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour 22-3-97

1 Grey-tailed Tattler seen by Arthur Keates at Acacia Street, Wellington Point 22-3-97

1 Grey-tailed Tattler seen by Edward Kleiber at Shallow Bay, Tweed Heads 9-4-97, 10-4-97

**Orange Leg Flag Sightings**

1 Red-necked Stint seen by Edward Kleiber at Mirapool, Moreton lsland 9-2-97

1 Bar-tailed Godwit, Greg Miller & Leanne Bowden at Wavebreak island, Moreton Bay 22-3-97

1 Pied Oystercatcher seen by Edward Kleiber at Manly 27-3-97

**Other Colour Leg Flag Sightings and Banded Birds**

1 Pied Oystercatchers with metal band, Edward Kleiber at Shallow Bay, Tweed Heads 29-12-96

1 Pied Oystercatchers with metal band, Edward Kleiber at Tony's Sandbar, Tweed Heads 6-1-97

1 Caspian Tern - metal band, E. Kleiber, Tweed River entrance, Tweed Heads 12-3-9, 1-4-97, 10-4-97, 12-4-97

3 Pied Oystercatchers with metal band seen by Arthur Keates at Manly Boat Harbour 22-3-97

1 Little Tern with metal band seen by Arthur and Sheryl Keates at St Helena Island pier 23-3-97

1 Crested Tern with metal band seen by Arthur and Sheryl Keates at St Helena Island pier 23-3-97

4 Pied Oystercatchers with metal band seen by Edward Kleiber at Manly 27-3-97

1 Pied Oystercatchers with yellow ﬂag seen by Edward Kleiber at Manly 27-3-97

1 Silver Gull with light t>\_lu\_e ﬂag ,\_Edward Kleiber at Tweed River entrance, Tweed Heads 28-3-97, 2-4-97, 11-4-97

2 Silver Gull with metal band, E. Kleiber, Tweed River entrance, Tweed Heads 28-3-97, 29-3-97, 2-4-97, 11-4-97

3 Silver Gull with metal band, Edward Kleiber at Tweed River entrance, Tweed Heads 30-3-97

1 Silver Gull with metal band, Edward Kleiber, Tweed River entrance, Tweed Heads 5-4-97, 12-4-97

1 Silver Gull with blue and pink ﬂag seen by Edward Kleiber at Tony's island, Tweed Heads 5-4-97

**ACTIVITY REPORTS**

**Cannon Netting - Fishermans Island - 8 & 9 March 1997**

Sandra Harding

On Saturday we put out two nets in the afternoon. It was quite hard to determine the appropriate place, however Peter had ideas as to where the birds roost. The area is removed from any tidal influence being enclosed by a bund wall for reclamation. The substrate of mud and coral fragments had not totally firmed up as we found out.

On Sunday there was a third net to set up and this was placed in a new area on a bund wall, where Grey-tailed Tattlers roost. Everyone came prepared for hot conditions, but the morning was cooler than expected.

Two nets were fired and 33 Lesser Golden Plovers were caught in the first net and 10 Grey-tailed Tattlers in the second. There was much interest in seeing the birds in the hand and trying to photograph them. Bill length measurements which give an indication of the sex, was important for some members. Processing was fun as the wind had risen and gusts of sand were stinging the eyes. Zoe, the youngest helper coped very well. There was a substantial difference in the weight of the birds, the ones about to migrate were much heavier than others.

Rescuing the Tattlers from the second net tested one’s dedication, as the birds flew out over the water and landed in the water. There were enough people to wade out (up to the waist) and rapidly extract them.

Finally, all the equipment was replaced in the trailer and accounted for. Where did the missing cannons go? - ln the car of course. Some very yummy turkish delights were provided by Arthur which somehow seemed deserved.

It is always amazing to go to Fishermans island to see how far the land extends compared to before. l wonder what the eventual roost area will be, with more and more reclamation.

Additional notes from Peter Driscoll

Saturday afternoon - myself, Arthur and Sheryl Keates, Dave Milton, Sandra Harding, Andrew Geering and Margaret Bernard set the large and small net, John Dobson had advised on locations - some drizzle and strong SE winds, also on Sunday, as a result of Cyclone Justin.

Sunday ~ myself, Arthur and Sheryl, Dave and Sandra, Phil Venable (Joey, Lizzie and friend Jim), Diana O'Connor, Dave Stewart, Natasha Taylor and daughter Zoe, Tony and Mrs Cotter and 4 children, and, from Uni of Old, for research on UV reflectance on birds – lan Owens, Jack Pettigrew, and Fran Hausman. At

9.10, fired large net and caught 33 Pacific Golden Plover. Fired on group of Tattlers - Phil, Dave and l went "into the drink” for them – no injuries. Finished banding by 12.30pm, left site by 2pm.

**St Helena Island - 4 8: 5 April 1997**

Nigel Roberts

*The main purpose for this weekend trip was the capture of birds on the Sunday, hopefully a nice ﬂock of the Ruddy Turnstones which seem to favour this island.*

As a supplement to the recent wader course run by the QWSG, Andrew Geering (the regular QWSG counter for the site) had gained approval from the island rangers to bring over about 40 people for a day's survey of the island's delights, especially the chance to see waders and to put some newly acquired identification skills to the test – a great opportunity to see parts of the island not usually open to the public.

On the Saturday morning, which was calm and warm, about 40 keen people climbed aboard the charter boat whilst Peter Driscoll cruised across in the small tinny that has recently been purchased by the QWSG. On the island, the walk along the jetty gave us all a good look at Ruddy Turnstone, Little and Crested Tern, and even Common Tern. These birds have converted the quiet jetty handrails and old pylons, jutting out of the water, into a serviceable high tide roost. The rangers house was our H.Q. for the weekend and on the road up to it a small flock of Pacific Golden Plover were seen adjacent to the beach along the grassy bank.

Initially people were offered the chance to split into two groups, for a short walk or a longer version. Both groups had a relaxing look at the island's natural features and a quick look at some of the wader sites. After a bit of lunch, the group got down to some serious history lessons, with a very informative tour of the convict ruins with Roley (Roland Dowling), QNPWS Ranger and his ‘offsider‘ Ranger Kieran Hoey. Alas, the charter boat returned all too soon and the day people headed off the island at 4pm.

Eleven privileged people remained: Leanne Bowden, Peter Driscoll, Dave Edwards, Gary Fisher, Andrew Geering, Debbie Gleeson, Franziska Hausmann, Jon lrvine, Melanie Kee, Lorraine Murphy and myself.

ln terms of wader numbers not a lot had been seen during the day. The decision for placement of the nets was, therefore, left to Peter and Andrews previous knowledge of the site. The crew, now down to about nine people, laid three nets. Two were positioned on the north east facing beach, under the radio masts, with another on rubble left from coral mining 100m off shore. Placement of this third net left us with a wade back through thigh deep water as we had been caught by the tide - that is except for Lorraine who was carried across on Andrew‘s back. We were treated for our labours with views of the Glasshouse mountains framed in sunset.

ln contrast to the previous evening our early morning manoeuvres were met with views of a very ugly inversion layer developing over Brisbane, clearly visible from the island. The need to change our modes of transport was very evident lest we sacrifice our present air quality in short order.

The day's activities got under way as last minute adjustments were made to the equipment and the ﬁnal wiring of the nets was completed. The small tinny got dispatched to keep the operation mobile. Peter and l motored over to the boat jetty with the idea of persuading a few Ruddy Turnstones to fly round to the beach for a spot of leg-flagging. They swirled around our heads and cheekily re-alighted on their perches standing out of the water.

Peter turned to me with a wry grin and suggested that l should occupy the pylons whilst he moved the birds with the boat and that he would most definitely be back for me. So there l was perched, some distance from the jetty, with more birds swirling and dodging me until they headed across the small bay with Peter in pursuit. It was at this point that l hoped no boats came past.

Back in the boat (thankfully) we headed back to the nets to see how they were looking. No joy, the nets were empty. After a brief radio conversation with Andrew and the others back on land, Peter and l decided to do another “round-up", this time on the mangrove forested eastern shore. Up to that point we had all been wondering where all the waders were. in fact, Andrew commented that he had never seen such a lack of birds. Peter and l now had an answer. We found that large flocks of Whimbrel, Grey-tailed Tattler and Ruddy Turnstone were roosting in the mangroves. A mental note was made to put a cross on the map of important wader habitat in Moreton Bay. Near-by a small exposed sand bar accommodated a few Terns, Bar-tailed Godwits and Eastern Curlew. After a rather interesting tree slalom, double back, dodge the wobbygong, bird chase we emerged back at the netting area just as the tide was becoming crucial. Here we discovered only a small flock (12-20) of tattlers nowhere near the nets on the ever-enlarging coral rubble atoll. This was curtains for the cannon netting, we were unsuccessful - this time. Back at H.Q. over cups of tea we decided to pull up the gear and let Roley finish the tour we had begun the day before.

I’m sure I speak for all the members of the QWSG and those who were on St. Helena when l thank the QNPWS Rangers for their help over the entire weekend period. For me it was my first trip to the island and I was impressed by both the natural beauty and its history. From a personal perspective, I saw how our previous generations had efficiently dispatched not only their fellow humans but also the littoral rainforests that covered the island. in similarity to this l saw how our current generation is fouling the air over the city and destroying coral outcrops in a unique area where the warmer waters of the tropical north meet the cooler waters of the more temperate south. it demonstrated to me the need for society to turn away from such destructive practices.

**QOSI Outing - Wader Identiﬁcation - Toorbul - 12 April 1997 '**

Phil and Linda Cross

A total of twenty-three people turned up for this Wader Identification day.

In the group were two members who had travelled up from as far as the Gold Coast and two overseas visitors. One visitor, a young man from Canada had arrived in Australia only three weeks earlier, and the other, a lady from the USA had been out birding just prior to her leaving, and had crossed paths with QOSI President Julian Bieiewicz and his wife, Faye, shortly after their arrival in the USA.

With only a few of the QOSl members able to confidently identify all the species present, this indicates there is an obvious need for more outings specifically targeting Wader species.

There were fewer waders numerically than the previous outing (13 March, details in QOSI Newsletter Vol 28 No 4), however, many were in breeding plumage. Fourteen different species were sighted at Toorbui, and two more at Bishops Marsh.

More Wader identification Days will be held in different locations starting in Spring.

QWSG members who attended included: Leanne Bowden, Erna Brazier, Garth lnnes, Bob James, Greg Miller.

Species recorded: Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck, Paciﬁc Black duck, Little Pied Cormorant, Pied Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Osprey, Whistling Kite, Brahminy Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Bar-tai/ed Godwit, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlew, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Terek Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tatt/er, Ruddy Turnstone, Great Knot, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Pied Oystercatcher, B/ack-winged Stilt, Grey Plover, Red-capped Plover, Masked Lapwing, Silver Gull, Caspian Tern, Crested Tern, Noisy Miner, Rufous Whistler, Pied Butcherbird.

Editor’s Note: For any new members who missed this activity - QOSI had not planned this outing when the QWSG March newsletter went to print, and therefore was not listed in Activities.

Phil and Linda are also members of QOSl, and this article also appears in QOSI Newsletter Vol 28 No 5.

**SUMMARISED PRESS RELEASE FROM THE QUEENSLAND ENVIRQNMENT MINISTER – Hon Brian Littleproud**

**27 May 1997: BUDGET: ENVIRONMENT FUNDING COVERS KEY ISSUES**

National Park and coastal management, waste and pollution control are among the significant issues being addressed in this year's budget allocation for the environment portfolio.

The total outlay of $167.6 million was more than any under the previous Labor Government, though down on last year's record allocation.

"ln the context of all State Government initiatives which have a bearing on the environment, and the contributions from the Commonwealth's National Heritage Trust, generally the environment has fared well this year"

Highlights of the Budget for Environment include:

\* Protected areas: $18 million over the next three years to upgrade management of protected areas and address coastal management issues; over the next three years, $14.57 million spent on parks upgrading infrastructure and equipment; $2.25 million on Fraser Island over three years; and $1.18 million to local coastal management groups through the joint Coastcare program with the Commonwealth; an estimated 22,000 hectares will be added to the protected area estate this year;

\* Environmental protection: $7.6 million on issues such as $3.3 million to develop and implement the Queensland Waste Management Strategy - a scheme to manage commercial, industrial and domestic waste and encourage local governments to develop and implement regional waste management strategies; $3.2 million on continuing implementation of the Environmental Protection Act, $300,000 to fund production of a "State of the Environment" report; $300,000 for additional staff in planning and environmental assessment;

\* Pollution: $500,000 to complete and commence the South-East Queensland Regional Air Quality Strategy and improve air quality monitoring, in addition to ongoing activities in air quality monitoring and management;

\* Youth employment: National Parks will continue to benefit from the Youth Conservation Corps, with $300,000 a year over three years, creating employment training places for unemployed, disadvantaged young people;

\* Queensland Community History (Indigenous Heritage) Grants: Continuation of the program with funding of $350,000 a year for three years.

\* Sugar Coast Environmental Rescue Package: $2.5 million including purchase of 1000 hectares of additional habitat for the endangered mahogany glider and 600 hectares for other rare and threatened species;

\* Daintree Rescue Package: $3.085 million of a total $5.84 million in this Commonwealth-State program for purchase of environmentally significant freehold land, as well as construction of new, environmentally sensitive visitor facilities;

\* Tweed River Entrance Sand By-Passing Project: Allocation of $3.790 million includes calling of tenders for this project;

\* Queensland Herbarium: $2.24 million for completion of this $6 million project at Brisbane's Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens."

**23 May 1997: OUR COAST - CARED FOR EVERY DAY. PERFECT THE NEXT**

Community efforts to restore and protect the Queensland coastline have been given a boost of over $600,000 by the Federal and State Governments.

Coastcare funding will enable community groups to undertake a total of 52 coastal restoration, protection -and management projects at various locations along the Queensland coast.

Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill and Queensland Minister for Environment Brian Littleproud today announced funding of $618,823 for Coastcare projects in Queensland.

Senator Hill said local communities all around the country are making an invaluable contribution to the protection and rehabilitation of Australia's coasts. "Australians love their coasts and beaches. They are already out there working to restore and protect them. What we are seeking to do in cooperation with the State Government is to build on that community effort and enthusiasm by providing financial backing."

"The problems facing our coastal regions should not be underestimated. We have taken our beaches and seas for granted for far too long. With the help of Coastcare, the community is now turning that around."

Mr Littleproud said: "Apart from the primary conservation aspects, Queensland's coast, islands, reefs and clear waters are the jewels in the State's leisure and tourism crown. Ensuring their long-term protection and integrity is of critical importance to our future.

Coastcare is providing an effective vehicle for harnessing people power, and in its second year in Queensland its benefits are being felt at more and more locations up and down the coast as more and more people become aware of the difference they can make.

Successful 1996/97 projects include:

\* removing bamboo from coastal rainforest Bingil Bay

\* monitoring nesting sea turtles near Mackay

\* coastal bird surveys- Townsville region

\* coastal and dune restoration - Bribie Island

\* community management and education - Nelly Bay habitat reserve, Magnetic Island

\* implementation stage 1 – Foreshore Management Plan, Rainbow Beach

\* Seagrass and Dugong study in Hervey Bay

\* revegetation of Coochiemudlo Island foreshores

\* Noosa shire stormwater awareness program

Contact Queensland Coastcare Coordinator, Kath Gosden

**27 April 1997: COASTAL PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL APPOINTED**

A new Coastal Protection Advisory Council appointed by the State Government will assess community projects submitted for funding under the joint Commonwealth-State Coastcare scheme.

Minister Brian Littleproud said the Council would also review the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 and generally provide advice on coastal management issues.

These would include areas needing special management; coastal plans; preventive and remedial measures; assistance to local government; development of public and community programs; and research and other studies.

The Council will be chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Environment, Mr Tom Tolhurst, and will have representatives of the Department of Primary Industries, Forestry and Fisheries; the Department of Natural Resources; and the Department of Local Government and Planning, as well as representatives of other organisations.

Other members of the Council are:

\* BARBARA ANN WILDIN, representing local government, nominated by Local Government Association of Queensland lnc.;

\* CHARLES JOHN LARGE, representing local government, nominated by Local Government Association of Queensland Inc;

\* ROBERT ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, representing local government,‘ nominated by Local Government Association of Queensland Inc;

\* ANTHONY IAN CHARTERS, representing tourism, nominated by Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry;

\* TERRANCE SCANLAN, representing industry, nominated by Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland;

\* JOHN MELVIN TANZER, representing fishing, nominated by Queensland Fisheries Management Authority;

\* DAVID TREVOR NEIL, representing conservation, nominated by Australian Marine Conservation Society; and

\* JOSEPH DAVID, representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests, nominated by Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care.

**29 April 1997: PROPOSAL T0 AMALGAMATE MORETON BAY AND PUMICESTONE PASSAGE MARINE PARKS**

Moreton Bay Marine Park and Pumicestone Passage Marine Park will be amalgamated under a proposal tabled in Parliament today.

"Pumicestone Passage Marine Park was declared in 1986. Moreton Bay Marine Park was declared in 1993," he told Parliament. "Given that the areas adjoin, it is proposed to amalgamate the two Marine Parks by revoking them and redeclaring them as one Marine Park called Moreton Bay Marine Park."

The proposal will also overcome inconsistences in boundary definitions in the existing parks and include some areas and exclude others.

To be included are various freehold parcels with the consent of the owners; areas of tidal land which are not freehold and not included originally; and from the existing southern boundary on the eastern and western sides of South Stradbroke Island to the Gold Coast Seaway.

To be excluded are an area of existing carpark and dredge spoil pond at Toondah Harbour; a freehold area on the Boondall Wetlands owned by Brisbane City Council which were inadvertently shown on gazetted maps; and a number of upstream areas of streams entering the Bay.

The proposal has been tabled for 14 sitting days before being put as a motion and subsequently submitted for approval to the Governor-in-Council.

**The State of the Brisbane River Moreton Bay 8; Waterways Report and the Draft Brisbane River Management Plan**

Leanne Bowden

*This is not a Press Release - simply a compilation of information gained both from attending the launch of the above documents on 3rd June, and from documentation provided on the day.*

An opportunity is being presented to provide comment and feedback. I honestly believe it is important for people to respond to offers of consultation when such opportunities arise. It's part of your democratic right to let your elected representative, be it his or her public servants, know what you want them to achieve on your behalf.

The Brisbane River discharges into Moreton Bay, important habitat for our favourite birds. Therefore, we must insist that appropriate management of the River and the Bay is essential to preserve their overwintering grounds.

**DRAFT BRISBANE RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN – Invitation to provide feedback**

The Draft Brisbane River Management Plan provides a framework and direction for the groups that are working to improve the river, or who use the river in different ways. This is the ﬁrst step toward reaching an agreement on a proposed management framework and the priority of each management strategy. State and local government, industry and community groups and individuals should continue to have a say in the future of the Brisbane River System.

The Brisbane River Management Group and the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay Wastewater Management Study are conducting consultations with key groups through 1997.

Your opinion is important. We want to know what you value about the Brisbane River, what you feel are the most important issues, and what industry and community can do to help. We are also interested to hear your feedback on the outcomes proposed in the draft Management Plan for the Brisbane River, or on the proposed implementation arrangements.

A number of Information sheets have been developed for circulation in the community. They explain some of the main issues that relate to water quality or the ecosystem and provide details on what we currently know about them and their history, and identify some of the areas we need to investigate further.

If you would like to provide comments; tell us what is important to you about the Brisbane River system; obtain a copy of the draft Management Plan; or the State of the Brisbane River, Moreton Bay and Waterways Report; or information sheets, please write to, or phone the address below.

Brisbane River Management Group Secretariat

PO Box 155

BRISBANE ALBERT STREET QLD 4002

(07) 3227 8410 or (07) 3227 7767

fax (07) 3225 1501

**STATE OF THE BRISBANE RIVER MORETON BAY & WATERWAYS:**

**Key findings**

* Moreton Bay and Pumicestone Passage are recognised internationally as unique aquatic environments, particularly for marine life including dugong and turtles and migratory birds.
* The water quality and habitats of western and southern Moreton Bay and adjacent shores are declining gradually, particularly in terms of sediment (turbidity) and nutrient accumulation.
* The Brisbane River is the most significant contributor of sediment and nutrient pollutants to Moreton Bay.
* Environmental warning signs in Moreton Bay such as seagrass loss, localised harmful algal blooms, reduced fisheries stock and localised loss of animal diversity are increasing.
* Particular habitats needing greater protection are seagrasses (which support dugong, turtles and fish), inter-tidal areas (which support wading birds and fish), mangroves, salt marshes and coral reefs.
* The lower Brisbane River estuary does not meet national standards for primary contact such as swimming.
* Recent tests on Moreton Bay marine life indicate low levels of metals and pesticides. A broader analysis of marine life will now be undertaken.
* Particular areas of high impact or “hot spots" include:
  + western Moreton Bay (Bramble Bay, Hayes lnlet and Deception Bay)
  + southern Bay areas
  + tidal Bremer River to lower Brisbane River estuary
* Other waterway areas \_ showing signs of concern include Brisbane River (Mt Crosby Weir to Bremer River junction), Pumicestone Passage, and Wivenhoe Dam.
* The importance of toxicants, for example pesticides, are likely to be an issue for bottom-dwelling creatures in western Moreton Bay and waterways. The impacts of toxicants are the subject of several investigations.

To obtain a copy of the State of the Brisbane River, Moreton Bay & Waterways Report, which includes a Survey form to provide feedback,

please contact:

Brisbane River Mangement Group

OR

Brisbane River and Moreton Bay Wastewater Management Study

**NEWS FROM AWSG**

The following items have been reproduced from “The Tattler" No 11, April 1997 with the permission of their Editor, Phil Straw. This Newsletter of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway" is produced by the Australasian Wader Studies Group. Membership of the AWSG is available to anyone interested in the study and conservation of waders. Members receive the Group's biannual journal "The Stilt" and quarterly newsletter “The Tattler". Application for membership should be forwarded to: The Secretary, AWSG,

**JAMBA & CAMBA meetings**

**Background**

The Ninth Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) and the Third China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA) were held in Tokyo, Japan from 24-26 February 1997.

**National Reports -**

Japan, China and Australia exchanged national reports and outlined the key activities which have been undertaken since the last meeting. Australia undertook to forward copies of its recently adopted The Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia to the delegations representing Japan and the People’s Republic of China for their information.

**Eastern Curlew -**

Japan gave a presentation on their recent work which has resulted in 12 Eastem Curlew’s caught at Moreton Bay having satellite transmitters attached. The northward migration of these birds will now be plotted over the next few weeks (see update elsewhere in this newsletter). Funds for this have come from a sponsor in Japan (NTT a communications company) and Environment Australia. It was noted that while satellite tracking may prove to be a very effective research tool, other forms of study (colour ﬂagging, banding etc) should not be abandoned. Therefore, Australia, China and Japan agreed to develop a joint ﬁve-year research plan for the Eastern Curlew. Details for how to progress this plan were arranged at a meeting subsequent to the JAMBA and CAMBA Consultative meetings and will now be progressed by the Liaison Ofﬁcers.

**Colour Marking Protocol**

At the Eighth Consultative meeting under the JAMBA Australia undertook to prepare a draft protocol on colour marking studies for use along the East Asian - Australasian ﬂyway. Wetlands International – Oceania Program were engaged by Environment Australia to prepare the draft protocol which was completed in late January 1997. The report entitled A Draﬂ Protocol for Colour Marking of Migratory Shorebirds in the East-Asian Australasian Flyway was circulated to a small group of experts within Australia for comment by the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes in the fortnight prior to the JAMBA/CAMBA meetings. Based on these comments it was modiﬁed and reduced in scope to consider only colour ﬂagging activities. The modiﬁed draft was tabled at the meeting and Japan and China agreed to provide comments back to Australia by the end of May 1997. During this period comments are also being sought from members of the Migratory Species Network.

The other issue discussed under this item was the process and timing for gaining adoption of the Colour Flagging Protocol by all the countries of the ﬂyway.

The following was agreed:

1. That it was desirable for Japan, China and Australia to agree on, and adopt, the Protocol before seeking its adoption by other countries, and
2. That this should be done as soon as possible so that by the next consultative meeting it would be possible to examine results from the projects being undertaken in accordance with the Protocol.

With this agreement it was decided that Japan and China would provide comments back to Australia on the draft Protocol by the end of May 1997.

**Progress with implementing the East Asian - Australasian Shorebird Network**

The three countries reviewed their actions since the launch of the Network at the Brisbane Ramsar Conference in March 1996. Australia provided copies of its new poster promoting the flyway which had been prepared in English, Japanese and mandarin. The three countries acknowledged that a priority had to be to increase the number of sites and participating nations in order for the network to be become fully effective.

It was noted that New Zealand (present in the JAMBA meeting as an observer) had demonstrated a high level of support for the ﬂyway and had its two most important shorebird habitats listed as Shorebird Reserve Network sites. The ﬁrst site dedication ceremony is to be held at the Firth of Thames in March 1997.

Australia suggested that to assist Japan, China and Australia to focus their cooperative activities under the ﬂyway initiative it would be useful to have the Liaison Ofﬁcers prepare a coordinated action program for the next two years. This should not be a detailed planning exercise but rather a listing of key activities the three countries could pursue in implementing the ﬂyway. There was discussion of the key subject areas this action plan should focus on and it was agreed that the following were priorities:

1. agreeing to adopt and implement the Colour Flagging Protocol prior to the next consultative meetings;
2. working to increase the number of sites and participating countries in the Shorebird Reserve Network;
3. completing the Shorebird Action Plan under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy as soon as possible and then pursuing the actions it describes;
4. promoting awareness of the ﬂyway and the Shorebird Reserve Network;
5. investigating a systematic approach for monitoring shorebirds across the ﬂyway;
6. ensuring that the management of flyway Network sites gains priority under training initiatives being supported by the countries;
7. encouraging local people and government involvement in site management such as through site twinning arrangements.

**The Asia-Paciﬁc Wetland Manager's Training Program**

Australia outlined the history of this proposed program as follows. At the 1996 Ramsar Conference, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment announced the establishment of the *Asia-Paciﬁc Wetland Manager ’s Training Program*. The Program is to be supported by the National Wetlands Program administered by the Biodiversity Group of Environment Australia.

**Next consultative meetings -**

It was agreed that the next consultative meetings under CAMBA, JAMBA and CJMBA should be in China in 1999. It is desirable that these take place prior to May 1999 when the next Ramsar Conference will be held Costa Rica.

**Discussion and outcomes agreed to by Japan and Australia**

**Amendments to the Annexes -**

Australia informed Japan that it had added the Macquarie Island sub-species of the Wandering Albatross to its endangered bird annex and that in the light of the review of the taxonomy of Australian birds they would be notiﬁed of any further changes to the general and endangered bird Annexes at the next consultative meeting.

**Special Interest Species under JAMBA -**

**Little Tern** - It was agreed that as no immediate action was possible on resolving the issues surrounding the genetic similarity of this species across its range, the species should not continue as one of “special interest”.

Accordingly, the Little Tern was replaced by the **Grey-tailed Tattler** as a Special Interest Species under JAMBA. As an immediate follow-up action, the Liaison Officers are to exchange available information

on the conservation status and breeding biology of the Grey-tailed Tattler. It was agreed that this species should be a high priority for attention under the program to be developed for implementation of the Colour Marking Protocol - see above. Note also that subsequent advice (Limpus pers. comm.) is that several studies have shown a strong positive correlation between the abundance of Grey-tailed Tattlers and seagrass distribution. This could prove a useful indirect indicator of seagrass health etc.

**Latham’s Snipe** - Discussion focussed on the now documented extension to the range of this species and that any further action would most appropriately be census work in Japan. It was decided to remove Latham’s Snipe from the “special interest” category and for it to be replaced by the **Macquarie Island subspecies of the Wandering Albatross** and the **Short-tailed Albatross** which is included on Japan’s endangered bird annex. The Liaison Ofﬁcers are to exchange information on the conservation status and breeding biology of these species. In addition, Australia offered to provide a copy of the Threat Abatement Plan for albatross and seabirds being prepared at present when it is completed.

**Site twinning -**

Information was exchanged on the proposed twinning between Boondall Wetlands in Moreton Bay and Yatsu Tidal Flat in Narashino City. Such twinning arrangements were acknowledged as a positive way to promote migratory bird conservation and cooperative actions between local people and governments.

**Discussion and outcomes agreed to by China and Australia**

**Observers** - Japan was admitted to observe, and participate, in discussions relating to plans for future cooperation (Agenda Item 6) onwards.

**Amendments to the Annex -**

Australia informed China that following the review of the taxonomy of Australian birds they would be notiﬁed of any implications to the Annex at the next consultative meeting. China advised they had no changes to make to the Annex.

**Special Interest Species under CAMBA -**

Eastern Curlew - It was agreed that this species would continue as a Special Interest Species under CAMBA (as it is under JAMBA also). Refer to comments above about joint action on this species.

Great Knot and Red-necked Stint - Mr Barter gave a presentation detailing the current state of knowledge on these two species. It was agreed that both species should continue as Special Interest Species under CAMBA and that through the Liaison Ofﬁcers Action Plans would be developed for both species as soon as possible. These Plans are to describe the range of cooperative actions to be taken, with priority being given to focussing colour ﬂagging and site manager training activities on these species.

**Other areas of cooperation -**

These discussions focussed mostly on training activities. Australia advised China that it would be continuing to support the ongoing work of Wetlands International in training site managers in China. ($40,000 is to be provided for this activity in the next year).

Australia also advised that it would continue to support the regular participation of Chinese ornithologists on the North-West Australia Wader Expeditions undertaken by the Australian Wader Studies Group. Mr Barter reiterated the support of the AWSG for this being continued.

China requested support for obtaining a cannon net.

Australia advised that advice could be provided on how to make a cannon net and training in its use could be considered as part of the ongoing training work in China.

Australia advised that it saw an escalation in dialogue between the banding schemes of the region, and especially China’s and Australia’s, as highly desirable to facilitate some of the above activities being developed. China agreed and each will encourage the respective managers to communicate more regularly (the manager of China’s National Bird Banding Scheme was a member of the Chinese delegation).

**Vietnam - loss of wader habitat**

Cam Ranh Bay provides an important staging and wintering area for shorebirds and threatened species such as Chinese Egret and Spoon-billed Sandpiper have been recorded. However, over the last three years there has been extensive shrimp pond developments extending over several hundred hectares of the inter-tidal area. Furthermore, many of the shrimp-pond bunds have been built using coral.

**Tracking Eastern Curlew migration**

A project is underway using lightweight satellite transmitters to study the northward migration of Eastern Curlews (*Numenius madagascariensis*) from Moreton Bay, Queensland. It is the ﬁrst phase of a broader study into the ecology and movements of the species.

The work is being undertaken by the Wild Bird Society of Japan and the Queensland Wader Study Group with support from the Queensland Department of Environment. The project is funded by the Governments of Australia and Japan, and assisted by the Japanese telecommunications company NTT. American and Japanese PTTs are being used.

The movements of these birds are being tracked with much interest. The information received so far is not only providing details of the route taken by the birds but their behaviour when encountering the recent cyclones. Full details will undoubtedly appear in The Stilt and elsewhere.

According to the latest information (5 May) one bird was located near Harbin, China on the morning of 30 April has travelled further north and into the Russian Federation, 150 km north-east of Blagovescenski in the Amur Region. Another bird, previously tracked to the Philippines, was last recorded off the coast of Jiangsu Province (about 300 km NNW of Shanghai.

The last two birds to depart from Moreton Bay (second week of April) have since turned south. One made it up over Papua New Guinea while the other ﬂew as far north as the Caroline Islands (7° N).

The tracking of these birds is providing us with valuable information on migratory routes of Eastern Curlew essential to the conservation of this species. It will be interesting to see if the two leading birds nest in one of the three sites recorded by Pavel Tomkovich: Amur River on the border with China, Yakutiya and Kamchatka Peninsula.

**Disturbance of waders**

Information on disturbance factors effecting waders (Shorebirds). Anyone who has a list of references on this topic is asked to send details to Phil Straw. This sort of information is invaluable for providing input into conservation strategies (input into the objection to the Fivebough development, Jet Skis at Yamba in NSW and Comer Inlet in Victoria are a few instances). Currently David Rohweder at Lismore University is in need of references on disturbances by people, vehicles, dogs etc on wader feeding and breeding habitats.

**A piece of additional news from Phil:**

The papers from the March 1996 Shorebird

Conference held in Brisbane are getting closer. Phil has spent the intervening months chasing papers from Speakers. - QWSG Editors

**ACTIVITIES - 1997**

**Wader Counts (generaI monitoring)**

Sat 28 & Sun 29 June AWSG winter count. High of 1.98m at 4.13pm on Saturday

Sat 23 August High of 2.10m at 1.15pm

Sat 20 Sept High of 2.26m at 12.01pm

Sat 18 Oct High of 2.41m at 10.54am

Sat 15 Nov High of 2.48m at 9.51am

Completed count forms should be returned to Mr and Mrs Cross

**Cannon Netting**

21-22 June Moreton Island weekend, High of 1.91m at 9.36am Saturday

26-27 July North Stradbroke Island weekend, High of 1.98m at 2.20pm Saturday

Sun 7 Sept Nudgee Beach area - High of 1.93m at 12.30pm

Sun 5 Oct Fisherman islands - High of 2.10m at 11.28am

Contact: Peter Driscoll (07) 3289 0237 three days in advance to confirm time and place. For weekend trips, at least one week in advance. As well as listed activities, netting outings are mounted "opportunistically" when it appears there may be a good chance of success.

**Other Activities**

Sat 4 Oct Wader identification Day - Manly Boat Harbour

Contact Arthur & Sheryl Keates

Other Conservation Activities of Interest

*Please note: This listing is as a "goodwill" gesture to other groups with similar interests, with their permission. However, OWSG may not always be up-to-date with changes. Please always check with the contact name to ensure accuracy.*

Monthly Trips Southern Ocean Seabird Study Association (SOSSA) - day trip to observe seabirds. in conjunction with and departing from Seaworld, Southport spit, Boat leaves early morning, cost $55 per person.

Contact: Paul Walbridge

Thursday 3 July 7.30pm QOSI General Meeting - Qld Museum: Raptor l.D.; Caring for Wildlife

12-13 July QOSI — Campout at Elanda Point, Lake Cootharaba

Contact Jan England

Friday 18 July TV - 8pm Wildscreen - may have a show on Waders, but not sure what context Thursday

7 August 7.30pm QOSI General Meeting - Old Museum

Shorebird Identification - Ian Venables

A Naturalist's Look at Saskatoon and Southern Ontario

Thursday 28 Aug 7.00am QOSI. Boondall Wetlands Reserve

Contact: Dawn Muir

Thursday 4 Sep 7.30pm QOSI General Meeting - Old Museum

Urban Magpies - Dr Stuart Pell

Penguins & Associates of the Antarctic Peninsula and Sub-Antarctic Islands