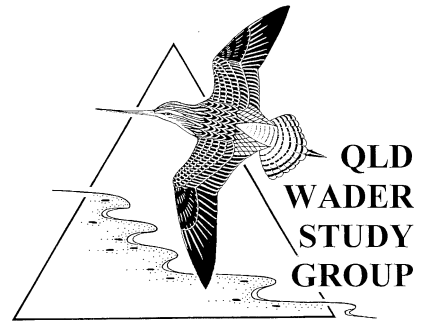


QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue number 37

SPRING 2001

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

Beach Stone-Curlews A Great Keppel Island update on success!

In September 2000 our pair of Beach Stone-Curlews started nesting again for the summer. Their solitary egg was laid in a scrape on the ground not far from the Shearing Shed at the back of the Leekes Creek Mudflats. This was, by far, the most successful nest site observed over the last seven years.

By November the chick had hatched and was observed twice over the next few weeks. Unfortunately, by late November 2000 it had disappeared, and after a thorough search by three QPWS staff and myself it could not be located.

Investigations in the Whitsunday area around the same time had found that most chicks in that area had died from exposure, apparently due to a period of torrential rainfall. One chick was found dead and not old enough to have waterproof plumage. It is believed that the same situation had occurred here on Great Keppel Island. Hope deteriorated over the next few months for another attempt at nesting as the two adults at first disappeared themselves and were then sighted only occasionally and in different areas.

However, during a canoe trip through the mangroves in late April 2001, three birds were seen on the edge of the mudflats. The two adults ran in separate directions and the third bird could not be found after a quick search. All observers agreed that it seemed to be of a much smaller size!

Two days later during a stop at the Shearing Shed while on a tour out to the Homestead, an adult was observed running towards the previous area with a large crab in its beak. It was met halfway by an obvious chick/juvenile. The other adult then also appeared with food. A day later the chick was seen close at hand and photographed!

Staff from the Rockhampton QPWS were keenly interested in attempting to band both the chick and the adults.

On Friday 4th May 2001, Paul O'Niell, a Principal Conservation Officer from the Rockhampton QPWS, along with two other QPWS staff and myself attempted to locate and band the two adult and one juvenile Beach Stone-Curlews, (BSC).

Upon arriving at the Shearing Shed we slowly walked into the mudflat area intent upon finding the three birds together before the chick could race away and hide. Luck was on our side as one adult and the chick were out in the open and their movements could be tracked with binoculars. The area where the chick went to ground was ascertained and we moved in to try to find it. Success was only minutes away when a very healthy chick about 6-8 weeks old was found under the trailing branches of a bloodwood and in amongst fallen timber and leaf litter. By then both parents were expressing their concern but keeping their distance!

During the next 20 minutes the scene was a hive of activity with measurements being recorded, photographs being taken and two plastic and one metal band being placed on its legs. The chick now has lovely green and red "bangles" on its right leg and a metal one on its left leg. The metal band has the number 11126161 stamped onto it and now identifies the chick and all future observations will be recorded against this number.

The significance of this successful banding of a BSC chick is highlighted by the fact that it is only the first BSC chick in Queensland and possibly only the third in the entire country to ever be banded! (Although this still needs to be validated).



Beach Stone-curlew Chick in the Hand after Banding

It will enable researchers to have a better idea of:-

- The length of time the chicks are dependent on their parents.
- The length of time the juveniles stay in their parents' territory.
- How far the juveniles travel after they sever their parental bonds and establish their own territories and partners.

Two attempts were made to try to catch the adults but they proved to be a bit more elusive! However, the attempts gave us an insight to the possible modifications of the trap design for future use both here and in other areas.

This success adds to the three adult BSCS, QPWS and the Whitsunday Volunteers have banded in the Whitsunday area. Over coming years it is hoped to band a number of adult pairs and chicks in the Whitsundays to ascertain their habitat requirements. This is important information to assist with the development of management plans in this area.

With possibly only 1000 pairs of BSC left in Australia, this successful breeding attempt and the information that may now be gathered from the bandings at Great Keppel Island and the Whitsundays are of great importance to the survival of the species.

By Russell Watson, a regular counter of Leekes Creek mudflats on Great Keppel Island

Email received: Subject: Height of Wader Flight

Dear all,

For the report on bird strike risk and airports I am working on, I am chasing information about heights that migratory waders fly between high tide roosts and feeding areas, when disturbed at roosts by predators or humans, and when travelling during migration. I have already been put on to useful references by Lane and Jessop 1985 (Stilt 6), Berney 1907 (Emu), Crawford 1978 (Aus. Bird Watcher), Hindwood and Hoskins 1954 (Emu 54), Le Souef 1913 (Emu 12), Serventy 1938 (Emu 38), Smith 1971 (Bird Observer), which all mention wader flying heights. I have personally observed waders at Broome and at Kooragang swirling up to considerable height when disturbed at roost and have seen a few wader flocks travelling to roost at heights higher than Stockton Bridge (42m) at Kooragang, although most seem to fly close to the water.

Has anyone come across any references other than those mentioned, or observed waders flying at heights, which they are willing to have quoted (with estimation of height if possible) as *pers. comm.*? Any help by way of leads to references or personal observations would be most appreciated.

Yours sincerely
 Max Maddock.
 64 Clarence Town Rd
 Glen Oak NSW 2320
 Phone/Fax 02 49 886 128
edmtt@cc.newcastle.edu.au

QWSG WINS PM'S AWARD

The Queensland Wader Study Group and QM Properties, developer of Pacific Harbour (PH) on Bribie Island, South-East Qld, have won the Prime Minister's 2001 Award for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships for the state of Queensland in the medium business category. Sixteen winners were announced across three categories from two hundred and thirty contending partnerships nationwide.

The award was presented for QWSG and PH's joint effort in addressing migratory wader habitat problems in the Pumicestone Passage, South-East Queensland.

To win the award, QWSG and PH demonstrated that each party had made a considerable personnel contribution, and that each party had gained benefit from the alliance.

Occasional reports have appeared in this newsletter about the impending destruction of the Dux Creek roost, and our plans to relocate waders to other suitable areas. Thousands of waders use the roost, including as many as 1000 Eastern Curlew on peak passage. At the time of writing, the Dux Creek roost is being incrementally consumed by heavy machinery. It is now in the middle of a building site. Site workers are moving carefully around the birds until a new artificial roost nearby is ready.

To date our achievements are the publication of a management plan for migratory shorebirds in the central and southern Pumicestone Passage, and the construction of a small, prototype roost, from which lessons have been learned, prior to the construction of a major roost.

Pacific Harbour contributed funds, experienced environmental and construction personnel and a great deal of their time, as well as heavy earth-moving equipment. QWSG contributed wader expertise and a great deal of time.

Pacific Harbour has already enjoyed the benefits of favourable media reports, gaining a reputation in the Bribie Island community for its efforts to date. PH employees no longer have to deal with unhappy environmentalists at every stage of their activities. The money PH might have spent on litigation has gone to a worthy destination – roost building. The bird roost is to be a cornerstone of this upmarket waterfront development, featuring prominently in its promotion.

QWSG's gains to date are less tangible, although the award will be a handy flag to wave on appropriate occasions. Our dividends will flow when the major artificial roost is built this spring. We are optimistic that in time the roost will be accepted by waders. Education of local residents will play a vital role in its success.

Whilst there is yet little to show for our efforts, the planning, consultation, permit application, lobbying and waiting has already consumed a year and a half. During that time, two former adversaries have developed a relationship of trust, understanding and good humour. We are still environmentalists, and they are still developers. We did not try to convert them into bleeding heart greenies, nor they us into developers, but Pacific Harbour saw the sound business benefits which could flow from such an alliance, and decided to give it a try. Both parties have found the conciliatory and cooperative approach to solving an environmental problem to be infinitely more attractive than confrontation and litigation.

Jill Denning

QWSG Waders Course

Make a note in your diary for the Wader Course: Sat 24th November 2001.

Watch out for full details in future advertisements to be placed in all of the media, and let everyone know the details.

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

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

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

Bowen Saltworks QWSG Count

Date and Time: Sunday 26th August 2001 – 15:45 to 18:10.

Atlas area: Count within 500m Coordinates 20° 01' 12"S 148° 13' 43"E.

Observers: Jon Wren, Marion Cooper and Desley Williams.

Conditions: Temperature mid 20's°C, cloudless sky with a strong NE breeze.

Permission to be onsite provided by John Howard Manager Friday 24th August.

Same route followed as previous visits. Time taken was a little longer than usual as we took the opportunity to give the birds a thorough going over allowing us to detail various identifying features for individual species either settled or in flight. This proved most beneficial for all of us, as it has been two months since my last visit and things become a little bit rusty after a break.

We had the fortunate situation of having two scopes at our disposal. Marion's Kowa was magic and left my small scope for dead in zooming in on the wader with a clear sharp image. As usual distance plays a big factor in identifying this difficult family of birds, this occurred with a group of Godwits. I would lean more to Black-tailed Godwit due to the uniformity of plumage colour on the upperbody plus I believe one bird displayed a black tail in flight but the distance really beat us. Through the Kowa I was able to pick up straight bills which again indicated Black-tailed Godwits. Due to the distance we all decided to leave the count of 15 birds listed as Godwit sp.

Our sighting of 11 Red-necked Avocets feeding along the water edge further enhanced the survey count. This was a target bird for both Desley and Maureen and they were thrilled to find this beautiful bird. Black Swans were in good number but the real excitement started when the Brolga's decided to arrive and roost for the night. The Sun was setting low in the west when we spotted our first 3 Brolga's silhouetted in the fading light. This was duly noted but before we walked another 200m, more birds started to arrive in groups of 10 to 40 from a southerly direction, wave after wave flew in and alighted on or near the bund walls. I would estimate at least a total of 220+ birds. Along with the elegant flight we had numerous calls being emitted all around us. The birds would have been feeding in the horticultural paddocks along the Don River.

At the same time a mass of Magpie Geese were flying from Mullers Lagoon in a westerly direction no doubt to roost in the paddocks out at Merinda.

Excellent sightings were had of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Common Greenshank, Black-fronted Plover and Red-capped Plover which allowed us to observe the jizz of the various species.

Thanks to Maureen and Desley for providing some enjoyable company on the Bowen Saltworks wader count for August. No flags or bands observed.

Species list.

Pied Oyster-catcher 2; Masked Plover (Lapwing) 6 Northern form; Red-capped Plover 42; Black-fronted Plover 12; Black-winged Stilt 21 (Some juvenile birds); Red-necked Avocet 11; Eastern Curlew 26; Whimbrel 1; Greenshank 16; Godwit sp. 15; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 43 (Some still retaining slight breeding plumage.); Red-necked Stint 16; Curlew Sandpiper 4; Pelican 5; Darter 2; Little Pied Cormorant 13; White-faced Heron 5; Great Egret 2; Little Egret 1; Sacred Ibis 10; Straw-necked Ibis 7; Royal Spoonbill 5; Black Swan 26; Pacific Black Duck; Hardhead; Grey Teal; Osprey 1 (Feeding on nest on pylon.); Brahminy Kite 2; White bellied Sea Eagle 1; Silver Gull 71; Gull-billed Tern 65 (Breeding and non-breeding plumage.); Caspian Tern 49 (Breeding and non-breeding plumage.); Little Tern 1 (One bird breeding plumage.); Brolga 175+; Magpie Geese 100+; Richards Pipit; Bar shouldered Dove; Peaceful Dove; Torresian Crow; Cockatiel; Rainbow Lorikeet; Welcome Swallow; Willy Wagtail

Total of 43 species

By Jon Wren

Editor's Note: Thanks for the article Jon of interest to us all. If anyone else would like to produce a similar for their site, I'm sure all of us will find it enlightening.

An open letter to all those working for Shorebird Conservation

The Wetlands Centre Australia (TWC) has been given funding to build a Shorebird Education program to compliment the existing Australasian Shorebird Network and the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Strategy and Shorebird Action Plan. We would like to do this in collaboration with your organisation and others working along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

The Wetlands Centre Australia is located in the Hunter Region of New South Wales. It has been operating since 1986 as a community-owned centre demonstrating wetland conservation and education. The Wetlands Centre has had a long record of interest and activity in wetlands and waterbirds. The Hunter region itself is an important east coast staging area for migratory waterbirds, and has an excellent level of volunteer monitoring and banding activity through Hunter Bird Observers and Wader Study Groups. The Hunter Estuary also includes a Ramsar site, Kooragang Wetlands and two major wetland rehabilitation projects.

TWC will be serving as the Australian coordinator and contact for Shorebird Education initiatives throughout Australia and New Zealand. We will be hooking up with other contacts along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and building the network by getting new contacts on board through established Bird Group networks or other wetlands-related centres.

This is an exciting time to develop shorebird projects and there are many opportunities which might be pursued. The key point is to develop products and strategies which work in our home countries AND foster cross-country exchange. A key objective is to build awareness of the habitat needs of migratory birds and the importance of international cooperation for conservation. Education initiatives include liaising with schools, contacts and centres along the flyway, developing some generic education products which could be customized for local applications and providing opportunities for cross-country interaction.

There are great initiatives already in place (Shorebird Sister Schools Project) or being renewed (Wetland Link International) which will compliment and support shorebird education initiatives.

We would like to be involved with your shorebird programs and we are well placed to provide the following service:

- Foster networks of schools, educators and experts along the flyway;
- Provide links to wetland related networks in other countries through our participation in Wetland Link International;
- Coordinate educational initiatives through those networks;
- Provide a GREAT location for launches, announcements, meetings related to shorebirds;
- Provide office space for shorebird related work;
- Contribute to or be responsible for educational products, community monitoring initiatives to support shorebird conservation.

We are very excited to be able to make a contribution to the important work of shorebird conservation and education. It is a good time to take advantage of the swelling political will and capture the community's interest in these wonderful birds and their spectacular journeys. Please include us on your mailing list and we look forward to communicating with you in the future.

Christine Prietto
 Shorebird Education Australia
 The Wetlands Centre Australia
 christine.prietto@det.nsw.edu.au

MARKED SHOREBIRDERS

Marked *Pluvialis* plovers might come your way this fall. We've been banding Pacific and American Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis fulva* and *P. dominica*) and Black-bellied Plovers (*P. squatarola*) for many years at Oahu, Hawaii and/or Nome, Alaska. More recently, we started marking Pacific Golden-Plovers at Johnston Atoll south of Hawaii. Each bird wears a metal band plus some combination of colour-bands (a few have flags). Please send sightings to:

Wally Johnson, Dept. of Ecology, Montana State University,
 Bozeman, MT 59717 (e-mail owjohnson2105@aol.com; tele 406-587-7305; FAX
 406-994-3190).

NEWS FROM RAMSAR

The 8th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties(COP), observer states, international organisations, non-governmental organizations, and wetland experts will be held in Valencia, Spain in November 2002. They will be assessing the progress of the Convention and will discuss emerging issues in wetland conservation and sustainable use. The theme of this COP will be "Wetlands: water, life and culture". A Web page has been set up to report developments (http://ramsar.org/index_cop8.htm).

In July 2000 Australia announced landmark legislation - *The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* - which gives special legal status and protection to Wetlands of International Importance and migratory birds, which are declared to be of "national environmental significance". The Act also enshrines what have been called the Australian Ramsar Management Principles, which give guidance on what is expected in the management plans for Ramsar-listed areas. Extracts are available at (http://ramsar.org/w.n.australia_legislation.htm).

On World Wetlands Day Australia announced the designation of three new Wetlands of International Importance, as well as extensions for four existing Ramsar sites. The three new sites are in Western Australia which were effective on 5 January 2001 are:

Becher Point Wetlands (677ha): a good example of shrub swamps and seasonal marshes that have formed in an extensive sequence of interdunal depressions that have arisen from seaward advancement of the coastline over recent millennia, a type of wetland system that is rare in southwestern Australia.

Lake Gore (4,017ha): a near permanent saline lake and part of a down- stream system of inter-connected lakes and swamps which are intermittently inundated. Lake Gore itself supports the largest known populations of Hooded Plover *Thinornis rubricollis* (up to one third of the global population), is important for moulting by thousands of Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*, and supports thousands of Banded Stilt *Cladorhynchus leucocephalus* (up to 10% of the global population).

Muir-byenup System (10,631ha): a suite of partly inter-connected lakes and swamps of varied size, salinity, permanence, and substrate in an internally-draining catchment. The open lakes are used for moulting by thousands of Australian Shelduck and for drought refuge by tens of thousands of other duck. The sedge/shrub-dominated swamps support an important population of Australian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* and three types of nationally vulnerable orchid.

Extensions to:

Macquarie Marshes NSW, which was expanded by 583ha in May 2000 in a public/private stewardship agreement to a total area of 18,726 hectares;

Rod River floodplain WA, a large system of river, seasonal creek, tidal mudflat and floodplain wetlands from 102,000 to 141,453 hectares;

Peel-Yalgorup system WA, a large system of shallow estuary and saline, brackish and freshwater lakes from 21,000 to 26,530 hectares;

Toolibin Lake WA, the last large *Casuarina obesa*-dominated wetland with mostly living trees, in the inland agricultural area of southwestern Australia from 437 to 493 hectares; and

Vasse-Wonnerup system WA, an extensive, shallow, nutrient-enriched wetland system with widely varying salinities from 740 to 1,115 hectares.

While these newly declared and extended sites are good news, it is sad that most Australian states have failed to declare new wetland areas for conservation and wise use under the Ramsar Convention since the 7th COP at San Jose, Costa Rica, 1999. We also anticipate seeing the management principles reflected in the management plan for the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar site when it is prepared.

Prepared by Joyce Harding

Information from:

Newsletter of the Convention on Wetlands, Issue 32, June 2001.

Modified Table taken from Stilt 39

Modified Table of the numbers and percentage of the Flyway population of migratory waders occurring in Australia (Watkins 1993) and their percentage distribution for Queensland. Also shown is the percentage of the Australian and Flyway population being monitored in Australia up to the early 1990s (Driscoll 1997).

| Species | Aust. pop | Flyway (%) | QLD | Aust. (%) | Flyway (%) |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----|--------------|---------------|
| Lathams Snipe | 36 000 | 100 | 14 | 1 | 1.0 |
| Black-tailed Godwit | 81 000 | 50 | 64 | 0.5 | 0 |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | 165 000 | 50 | 27 | 11 | 5.5 |
| Little Curlew | 180 000 | 100 | 22 | 0 | 0 |
| Whimbrel | 10 000 | 25 | 81 | 4 | 1.0 |
| Eastern Curlew | 19 000 | 90 | 67 | 16 | 14.0 |
| Marsh Sandpiper | 9 000 | 10 | 25 | 4 | 0.4 |
| Common Greenshank | 20 000 | 50 | 21 | 11 | 5.5 |
| Wood Sandpiper | 6 000 | 10 | 17 | 1 | 0.1 |
| Terek Sandpiper | 18 000 | 50 | 46 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Common Sandpiper | 3 000 | 10 | 25 | 2 | 0.2 |
| Grey-tailed Tattler | 36 000 | 75 | 61 | 3 | 2.3 |
| Ruddy Turnstone | 14 000 | 50 | 18 | 14 | 7.0 |
| Great Knot | 319 000 | 100 | 28 | 2 | 2.0 |
| Red Knot | 153 000 | 60 | 23 | 4 | 2.4 |
| Sanderling | 8 000 | 75 | 3 | 10 | 8.5 |
| Red-necked Stint | 353 000 | 75 | 14 | 18 | 14.0 |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | 166 000 | 100 | 7 | 12 | 12.0 |
| Curlew Sandpiper | 188 000 | 75 | 8 | 18 | 14.0 |
| Broad-billed Sandpiper | 8 000 | 50 | 23 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Pacific Golden Plover | 9 000 | 10 | 47 | 18 | 1.8 |
| Grey Plover | 12 000 | 75 | 15 | 15 | 11.0 |
| Double-banded Plover | 30 000 | 60 | 3 | 1 | 0.6 |
| Lesser Sand Plover | 20 000 | 75 | 76 | 6 | 4.5 |
| Greater Sand Plover | 74 000 | 75 | 12 | 1 | 0.8 |
| Oriental Plover | 40 000 | 90 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Oriental Pratincole | 60 000 | 90 | | 0 | 0 |

Wilson, J.R. 2001. The Australasian Wader Studies Group Population

Green Flag Sightings in New Zealand 1999 – May 2001

| DATE SEEN | QTY | LOCATION | OBSERVER | |
|--------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Bar-tailed Godwit | | | | |
| 01.02.99 | 1 | Papakanui Spit - Kaipara Harbour | G Pulham et al | 3626S 17412E |
| 16.09.99 | 1 | Karaka - Manukau Harbour | T Habraken | 3705S 17449E |
| 26.09.99 | 1 | Farewell Spit - South Island | R. Schukard et al | |
| 21.11.99 | 1 | Karaka - Manukau Harbour | T Habraken | 3705S 17449E |
| 26.12.99 | 2 | Tapora South - Kaipara Harbour | G Grant, G Pulham | 3623S 17415E |
| 30.12.99 | 1 | Mangawhai - Nth Auckland | T Habraken | 3605S 17436E |
| 15.01.01 | 1 | Ohiwa Harbour - Bay of Plenty | W Perry | 3800S 17707E |
| Red Knot | | | | |
| 20.02.99 | 2 | Karaka - Manukau | B & B Woolley | |
| 26.12.99 | 2 | Tapora South - Kaipara | G Grant, G Pulham | |
| 20.02.00 | 1 | Karaka - Manukau | T Habraken | |
| 01.10.00 | 1 | Karaka - Manukau | T Habraken et al | |
| 24.02.01 | 1 | Karaka - Manukau | T Habraken | |
| 23.03.01 | 1 | Karaka - Manukau | T Habraken | |

Taken from *The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bulletin 179* - Spring 2001

Mai Po Birdringing

The Lions Club Hong Kong South has generously provided funding for the Bird-ringing Group to begin colour leg-flagging waders this year. This involves catching waders and placing colour 'leg-flags' on their legs where the colour combination is unique to that country or region of a particular country. There is an agreement amongst wader researches along the East Asian-Australian Flyway, that this is the combination that will be used in Hong Kong under this project. The idea is that once the bird is released and continues along its migration, any birdwatchers who sees it can identify that it has used Hong Kong along its migration. From this work, which is also taking place in many other parts of Asia, we hope to get a better idea of how waders migrate through the region.

The Birdringing Group has begun a long-term study of bird use of the reedbeds in gei wai #8 at Mai Po. It is hoped that the results from this study can help in providing information for improved management of the reedbeds in future."

Waterfowl Monitoring at the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site

HKBWS has carried out the waterbird monitoring programme since spring 1998 and has been active for nearly three years. In order to have a better monitoring programme for the waterbirds in Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site and to improve its effectiveness, an overseas expert, Mr. Doug Watkins of Wetlands International was invited to examine the Programme from January 12 – 16, 2001.

Mr. Watkins did site visits and had discussions with the HKBWS Waterfowl Count Coordinator to understand field conditions, survey methodology and process.

A public lecture namely "Waterfowl Monitoring in Hong Kong: Methods, results and global perspective" was held on January 15. Mr. Watkins was able to provide an instructive international perspective that illustrated just how the monitoring programme, in particular the monthly counts and the shorebird surveys, fits into a broader framework of monitoring along the Asia-Pacific flyway.

Mr. Watkins provided a report on his findings and gave advice on what modifications might be necessary to make the survey scientifically sound and conform with latest practices and international standards.

Education and Publicity

Contents of the Waterfowl Count reports, summaries and activities have been uploaded on the Society website at www.hkbws.org.hk/waterbird/index.html. A leaflet on waterfowl count has been produced. Members who would like to get some leaflets or stock for distribution, are welcome to contact the Society Office at 2377 4387.

MANLY WADER ROOST UPDATE

By Arthur Keates

Members familiar with the history of the reclamation area at Manly Boat Harbour will be aware that the construction of a wader roost on the area is a condition of the Manly Boat Harbour's User Group's licence to dredge the harbour.

In short, the reclamation area is to be divided in half by a moat. The northern part is to be set aside for the roost site and the southern part for a dredge spoil rehandling facility.

Construction of the wader roost is now underway with work starting in earnest on 20th August. Before that, QWSG had opportunity to give comments on the design plan for the roost. On August 6th, QWSG signed off on the twice-revised plan. With cooperation from the User's Group, Environmental Protection Agency and

Port of Brisbane Corporation, we hope we have a design for what, in time, will prove to be a viable wader roost site.

Fill from the southern half of the reclamation area is being used to form an island roost. Of particular importance is the height of, and angle of the slopes to, the island. The water around the island will be tidal, its level being controlled by inlet and outlet pipes.

While the conditions of the licence restrict the placement of dredge spoil in any area used by migratory waders to the period between 1st April and 31st August, it is doubtful the construction work will be completed before the end of that period.

However, it is to be hoped that I will next be able to report to members that the construction of the roost site has been satisfactorily completed and is being used by waders. Then, it will be a matter of turning attention to ensuring the long-term management and protection of the site.



Views of the work at Manly Boat Harbour. Birds seen feeding are mainly Red Knot.

WHICH GODWITS AND KNOTS COME TO NEW ZEALAND?

Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit are the two most numerous Arctic waders visiting New Zealand and it is generally thought that the *rogersi* subspecies of Knot breeding on the Chukotka Peninsula of eastern Siberia and the *baueri* subspecies of godwit from Alaska are the ones reaching New Zealand.

We have been looking more closely at the two species in the Auckland area since Pavel Tomkovich was here in March 2000. He was convinced Red Knot from the New Siberian Islands were also reaching New Zealand, based on slight differences in the breeding plumage and departure strategies. Most New Siberian Island birds are thought to migrate to northwest Australia, and there was little evidence of them moving from northwest Australia to southeast Australia and New Zealand.

Since the leg-flagging scheme got underway, yellow flagged Red Knot from northwest Australia have been turning up in New Zealand. Two were caught at Miranda on 06.01.99, but we were unable to detect any difference in plumage between them and other knot of the same age caught that day. Exactly how many different birds have come from northwest Australia is hard to say.

The following sightings are a selection covering all sites where yellow flagged knot have been recorded in New Zealand and may represent a minimum number of individuals although the two seen at Karaka in August 1999 could have been those caught at Miranda in January 1999, as they were not adults at that time, and were unlikely to return to Siberia in March 1999. However, they could well have moved to the Manukau as knots are known to do.

| Date | Qty | Site |
|----------|-----|----------------------------------|
| 18.10.96 | 1 | Mangere, Manukau H. |
| 22.11.98 | 1 | Mangere, Manukau H. |
| 15.08.99 | 2 | Karaka, Manukau H. |
| 26.12.99 | 1 | Tapora Sth, Kaipara H. |
| 06.01.99 | 2 | Miranda, FoT |
| 16.11.97 | 1 | Manawatu Est, Manawatu |
| 06.02.98 | 1 | Te Whanga Lagoon, Chatham Is. |
| 29.11.98 | 1 | Avon-Heathcote Est, Christchurch |
| 16.01.00 | 1 | Takahiwai, Northland |
| 02.12.00 | 1 | Mangawhai Spit, Auckland |

Adding to the theory that some birds come from the New Siberian Islands are the two Red Knot C-45469 and C-46826 recovered in central Yakutia, Russia, which were almost certainly on their way north to the New Siberian Islands.

C-45469, an adult banded at Jordan's-Kaipara H., 36°30'S 174°20'E on 23.02.89 and C-46826 an adult banded at Jordan's-Kaipara H., on 07.03.93, were both recovered in Yakutia, Russia 68°40'N 143°30'E on 30.05.99 by E Syroechkovski, 11,950km from banding site and on a direct flight path to the New Siberian Islands.

Bar-tailed Godwit in the Australasian region are now generally considered to belong to two subspecies, *baueri* from Alaska and *menzbieri* from northeastern Siberia. The former found predominantly in southeast Australia and New Zealand and the latter in northwest Australia. The most obvious difference visible in the field is the whiter rump of *menzbieri*.

The godwits at Yalu Jiang (northern Yellow Sea, China) in the second half of May 2000 showed very distinctive white rumps and the only leg flags seen were yellow, from northwest Australia. A year earlier at Yalu Jiang in early May godwits flagged in southeast Australia, Queensland and New Zealand were present. Although no comments were made about the rump colour at the time, they were likely to have been *baueri* godwits heading for Alaska. The Alaskan coast becomes ice free earlier than northern Siberia, so Alaskan godwit seem to pass through Yalu Jiang earlier in the season.

Looking closely at godwits in New Zealand, it is possible to see that a few do have whiter rumps. The NZWSG had hoped to catch a good number of them to investigate this but were unable to do so this year.

There are just nine records to date of yellow flagged Bar-tailed Godwits in New Zealand. As godwit appear to be fairly site faithful, it may well be that yellow flagged birds return here year after year. If that is true, then these nine records may represent only 3-4 individual birds.

| | | | |
|----------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 12.12.93 | 1 | Jordan's, Kaipara H. | S Hayes |
| 12.03.97 | 1 | Papakanui Spit, Kaipara H. | G Pulham |
| 20.10.96 | 1 | Miranda, FoT | D Lawrie et al |
| 09.11.96 | 2 | Miranda, FoT | K Woodley et al |
| 03.03.97 | 2 | Miranda, FoT | S Davies |
| 30.11.97 | 1 | Miranda, FoT | K Woodley et al |
| 28.02.98 | 1 | Miranda, FoT | T Habraken |
| 25.10.98 | 1 | Miranda, FoT | W Perry et al |
| 11.02.01 | 1 | Thames, FoT | C. Care |

There is still much to be learnt about the Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit that come to New Zealand and keen observers can help by looking more carefully for plumage differences.

QWSG CONTACTS

QUEENSLAND WADER

The Official Quarterly Publication of
Queensland Wader Study Group

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscription rates:

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|--------------------|---------|
| Single: | \$12:00 |
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Receipt will be forwarded with next edition of Queensland Wader.

Forward application to:

Mrs Sheryl Keates,
QWSG Treasurer,
5 Stanmere St,
Carindale, Brisbane
Qld 4152.

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

Copy Deadline for the next issue of Queensland Wader is August 30th 2001

Contributions should be addressed to:

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

Computerised contributions should be in IBM Word, ASCII or Rich Text.

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

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| |
|---|
| WADER WATCH <i>Linda and Phil Cross, Peter Driscoll, Joyce Harding</i> |
|---|

Leg Flag Banding Legend (colour = where banded)

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

Green leg flag sightings

- 1 Eastern Curlew with green flag – Manly Boat Harbour - Arthur Keates and David Edwards – 19.5.01
 2 Eastern Curlew with green flag – Manly Boat Harbour - Arthur & Sheryl – 23.6.01
 1 Great Knot with green flag – Nudgee Beach – Ivell Whyte – 30.8.01

Other wader leg flag sightings

- 1 Pied Oystercatcher with white or metal band on both legs and one white or metal band on one leg – Amity Point – Martin Waugh – 23.6.01
 1 Pied Oystercatcher with metal band – Manly Boat Harbour – Arthur & Sheryk Keates – 23.6.01
 1 Red Knot with Orange flag – Caloundra Sandbanks- Jill Dening, Jill Harbison & Barb Dickson – 16.8.01
 2 Red Knot with orange flag – Nudgee Beach- Ivell Whyte – 30.8.01
 1 Red Knot with orange flag – Toorbul- Phil Cross – 1.9.01

Other leg flag sightings and banded birds

- 1 Caspian Tern (juvenile) with orange flag and metal band – Caloundra Sandbanks - Jill Dening, Jill Harbison & Barb Dickson – seen several times from 3.5.01 to 21.6.01
 1 Caspian Tern with metal band – Caloundra Sandbanks - Jill Dening, Jill Harbison & Barb Dickson – seen several times from 3.5.01 to 19.8.01
 1 Caspian Tern with metal band – Tony's Island Tweed Heads – Edward Kleiber – 7.5.01
 1 Caspian Tern with metal band – Toorbul – Arthur & Sheryl Keates – 12.5.01
 1 Caspian Tern with white band – Amity Point – Martin Waugh – 19.8.01
 1 Caspian Tern with two white/metal band – Amity Point – Martin Waugh – 23.6.01
 1 Caspian Tern with metal band – Buckley's Hole area Bribie Island – Jill Dening, Trevor & Kym Ford 8.8.01
 1 Caspian Tern with metal band – Amity Point – Martin Waugh – 19.8.01
 1 Crested Tern with metal band- Caloundra Sandbanks- Jill Dening, Jill Harbison & Barb Dickson – 21.6.01
 1 Crested Tern with metal band - Tony's Island Tweed Heads – Edward Kleiber – 7.7.01
 4 Crested Tern one with orange band and three with metal band - Caloundra Sandbanks- Jill Dening, Jill Harbison & Barb Dickson – 16.8.01

Interesting sightings

- 1 Red-kneed Dotterel – Trutes Wetlands, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson – 21.6.01 (rare at site)
 14 Red-kneed Dotterel – Pine Rivers Northside – David Edwards – 23.6.01
 2 Sanderling – Bushland Beach Townsville – Dez Wells – 23.6.01
 2 Australian Praticole – Jahnkes Lagoon Lockyer Valley – Bill Jolly, TH & Matthew Kwan – 7.8.01
 170 Red Knot – Mathiesen's Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 22.6.01
 1 Latham's Snipe – Minnipi Parklands – Sheryl Keates – 8.8.01
 1 Latham's Snipe – Tin Can Bay Sewage Works – John Cummings – 19.8.01

Not waders but of interest anyway

- 11,610 Common Tern – Sandbank No1 Caloundra – Jill Dening & Barb Dickson – 22.2.01
 2010 White-winged Black Tern – Maroochy River Sand Bar – Jill Dening – 13.3.01
 2 Black-necked Stork (nesting) – Lime Pocket, Pumicestone Passage – Jill Dening & Rob King – 23.6.01
 265 Brolga – Cleveland Road Mudflats Townsville area – Dez Wells – 24.6.01
 243 Great Egret – Cleveland Road Mudflats Townsville area – Dez Wells – 24.6.01
 44 Little Egret - - Cleveland Road Mudflats Townsville area – Dez Wells – 24.6.01
 2 White-fronted Tern – Buckley's Hole area Bribie Island – Jill Dening & Trevor Ford – 8.8.01
 Lesser Crested Tern – a number of sightings from St Helena Island, Amity Point, Manly Boat Harbour and Buckley's Hole area Bribie Island from 21.4.01 to 11.8.01 (biggest total, 6)
 1 Australian Crane – Dux Creek, Bribie Island – Trevor Ford – 22.7.01

COUNT PROGRAMME

This will be a shorter article than normal due to the fact that I am without a computer at present and have had to resort to my trusty old typewriter. Probably just as well that I did not get rid of it like so many people did when they got their computers.

Spring and warmer weather just around the corner will bring back the waders from the Northern Hemisphere, so clean off your scopes ready for those variety of plumages they will be sporting. Some of the juveniles plumage can look so much different to the adult plumage.

The Double-banded Plovers, which visit our shores during winter have been recorded at the following sites this year:-

- Amity Point, North Stradbroke Island
- Boonooroo, Adair St roost
- Caboolture River Mouth
- Cooloola roost, Tin Can Bay
- Dux Creek, Bribie Island
- Geoff Skinner Reserve (East & West sites)
- Inskip Point, Rainbow Beach area
- Manly Boat Harbour
- Maroochy River North Shore
- Noosa Bar
- Sandbank No 2, Caloundra
- Tony's Island, Tweed Heads
- Toorbul
- Wave Break Island, Gold Coast

The biggest number of Double-bandeds recorded, at any site this year, was 182 birds at the Geoff Skinner Reserve (East) on 23.6.01 when Ivell Whyte and Andy Eacott were standby counters for that month. Seven counters recorded some birds on their site during the count day of 19th August. Caboolture River Mouth having the most, with 40 being present on the day.

Red-necked Avocets have also been making an appearance at sites since May. Some counters were pleasantly surprised to see them for the first time, while others recording that they rarely get them. This species favours two sites in particular, Deception Bay and Fisherman Island. However, the following sites have recorded the species during recent counts.

- Dux Creek, Bribie Island
- Geoff Skinner Reserve (East)
- Kinka Beach, Yeppoon
- Lytton
- Maaroom, Great Sandy Strait
- Pine Rivers, Northside
- Pumicestone Passage
- Saltworks Bowen
- Terranora Broadwater and Trutes Bay, Tweed Head

Largest numbers to date are 138 at Deception Bay Mangrove site and 127 at Geoff Skinner Reserve (East) during count day on 19th August.

Following on from previous newsletters I continue with bird counts from other sites. TOOR and MRNS were counted on 23.3.01 and the other four sites on 24.3.01

TOOR - Toorbul (Main Roost) - Jean Corney (2 other roosts at Toorbul are TRNT & TRSF)

MRNS - Maroochy River North Shore - Jan Bedwell & Shirley Rooke

DBMN - Deception Bay Mangrove - Phil & Linda Cross

LUPO - Luggage Point - Grey Nye

PRWR - Pine Rivers Wetlands Reserve - Peter Chang

PVER - Point Veron Rocks Hervey Bay - Donald & Lesley Bradley

| SPECIES | TOOR | MRNS | DBMN | LUPO | PRWR | PVER |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Latham's Snipe | | | | | 1 | |
| Black-tailed Godwit | | | 237 | | | |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | 450 | 55 | 49 | 8 | 400 | |
| Whimbrel | 275 | 38 | 14 | 20 | 2 | 2 |
| Eastern Curlew | | | 2 | 7 | 58 | |
| Marsh Sandpiper | | | | 18 | | |
| Common Greenshank | | | | 68 | | 19 |
| Terek Sandpiper | 6 | | | | | |
| Common Sandpiper | | | | | | |
| Grey-tailed Tattler | 295 | | 6 | | | 14 |
| Ruddy Turnstone | 9 | | | | | 11 |
| Great Knot | 22 | | 30 | | 30 | |
| Red-necked Stint | | 1 | | 35 | | 265 |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | | | | 14 | | |
| Curlew Sandpiper | 56 | | 5 | 47 | | |
| Broad-billed Sandpiper | | | | | | |
| Bush-stone Curlew | | | | | | |
| Beach-stone Curlew | | | | | | |
| Pied Oystercatcher | | 4 | | | | |
| Sooty Oystercatcher | | | | | | 4 |
| Black-winged Stilt | | | 1132 | 260 | | |
| Pacific Golden Plover | | 93 | | 167 | | |
| Red-capped Plover | | 39 | | 33 | | |
| Lesser Sand Plover | 150 | | | | 330 | |
| Greater Sand Plover | 8 | 5 | | | | |
| Black-fronted Plover | | | | 5 | | |
| Masked Lapwing | | | 2 | 5 | 2 | |

GREAT SANDY STRAIT SPRING SURVEY - 4TH NOVEMBER

The next survey will be held on the 4th November 2001. High tide for most of the strait on Sunday morning is 2.95m at 10:11 hours (earlier for Moon Point, Fraser Island and Inskip Point).

These surveys are adding valuable information to our database of the wader numbers using the Great Sandy Strait region and are a great chance for counters and members to see waders that they may not get at their usual count sites, and lets you brush up on your identification skills of those waders.

If you are not confident in your identification skills this is the chance to get one to one tuition (much the same as joining our counters on their count day).

I need to get started on organising this survey and would appreciate an early response from those who want to assist. If you have helped before and would like to help again please contact me soon on 07 5495 2758 or at xenus@big.net.au.

Linda Cross

NEW MEMBERS

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

Ron Cohen, Chris and Karen Elmes, Doris Graham, Madeline Lenz and family
John Olds, Jan Olley and Adele van der Kamp

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.

WADER ID DAYS for 2001

Saturday 8th September 2001 at Toorbul.

Meet at 12 noon (or earlier if you wish) for a 1.91m high at 12:42pm Brisbane Bar (40 minutes later at Toorbul). Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane to the Donnybrook/Toorbul turn-off near the Big Fish. Turn off here and head east over the highway overpass. Continue on this road to Toorbul. Turn right at the T-junction then first left and then right, which brings you onto the Esplanade. Follow this road to the end (approximately 2kms), we will be on the left. Contact Phil & Linda Cross 07 5495 2758

Sunday 23rd September 2001 at Lytton

High tide is 2.01m at 13:58pm. Meet in the car park for a start at 3pm. The birds will be at the roost before 2pm if anyone wishes to arrive earlier for a longer look. However, the leaders will not be there until just before 3pm. Leaders Arthur & Sheryl Keates.

To get to Lytton, drive east along Lytton Rd following the signs to the Port of Brisbane, follow Pritchard St from the turn off to Fort Lytton National Park, turn left into Wynnum North Rd, continue to the end of the road and park in the car park. UBD 143 F11.

Contact Arthur & Sheryl Keates 07 3398 4898

Other Conservation Activities of Interest



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

Separate membership is required. Contacts: Dawn Muir, President (07) 3870 8076; Sheena Gillman, Secretary (07) 3372 4089; Treasurer, Rhelmae Hebbard (07) 5464 5343

Monthly Meetings

Birds Queensland - 7.45pm Queensland Museum Brisbane

1st Thursday each month except January.

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

QWSG MERDCHANDISE

Should you wish to purchase any of the QWSG Merchandise, items may be purchased at QOSI meetings held 1st Thursday of the month at the Queensland Museum **OR**...

Contact Linda Cross on 07 5495 2758 or E-mail at xenus@big.net.au

Postage is not included in the prices quoted.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------|---|
| Polo Neck Shirts | \$30:00 | Bottle Green, Maroon, Jade, Navy, Royal Blue, Cream. |
| T-shirts | \$22:00 | Avocet design short sleeve. Limited stock |
| Books | \$19:80 | Shorebird Conservation in the Asia-Pacific Region. |
| | \$24:00 | Simpson & Day Field Guide (2000 print) |
| | \$14:00 | Birds of Bribie Island, Pumicestone Passage and Environs |
| | \$14:00 | Wildflowers of Bribie Island |
| | \$15:00 | Kingfishers and Kookaburras by David Hollands |
| | \$ 3:30 | A Guide to Waders of Moreton Bay |
| | \$14:00 | A Birdwatcher's Guide to Redcliffe, Pine Rivers and Caboolture Shire. Wildlife Preservation Society of Caboolture. |
| CD | \$22:00 | Bird calls of the Broome region (includes 42 Wader Species). |
| Cloth Badges | \$8.00 | We now have the new white cloth badges, made to same design that appears on our Polo Shirts. They can be sewn onto your cap, hat, jacket, jumper & bag If you are interested please contact Linda. |



Activities 2001

Wader Counts (general monitoring)

WADER COUNT DATES (general monitoring) FOR 2001

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sat 22 nd September | High Tide of 2.09m at 13:05pm |
| Sat 20 th October | High Tide of 2.27m at 11:52am |
| Sun 18 th November | High Tide of 2.34m at 11:28am |
| Sun 16 th December | High Tide of 2.42m at 10:29am |

Counters in the regions of Mackay and the North Qld please choose a date as close as possible to the ones listed above with a tide high enough to push as many waders as possible into their respective roosts.

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

Cannon Netting

There are no scheduled cannon netting days planned for the next three months but netting outings are mounted "opportunistically" when it appears there may be a good chance of success, so the regulars will be warned and they will contact those who have shown interest in the past. If a date is arranged you will need to bring food and water, plus sun-screen and insect repellent.

PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR RENEWAL IS DUE!



MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

I/We wish to join/renew: (Single \$12; Family \$22; Student/Pensioner \$9)

Title.....Name:.....

Address:.....

Membership: \$.....

..... Postcode:.....

Donation: \$.....

Payment enclosed: _____

Phone: (Home) (Work)

Fax / e-mail:

TOTAL \$.....

How did you hear about QWSG

What activities do you wish to participate in? WADER COUNTS, FIELD TRIPS, SCIENTIFIC DATA COLLECTION, SURVEYS, CLERICAL, OTHER (specify.....)

SIGNATURE:

DATE:.....

Post to: QWSG Treasurer, 5, Stanmere Street, Carindale, Qld 4152