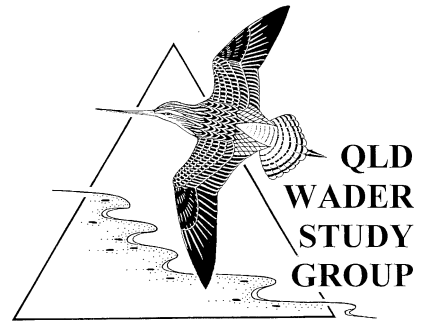


QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue number 45

Spring 2003

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

It Takes Guts to Migrate

KINGSTON, Rhode Island, July 8, 2003 (ENS) - It is well known that it takes strong flight muscles and a keen sense of direction for birds to migrate long distances to and from their breeding grounds. It also takes guts, according to University of Rhode Island researcher and physiological ecologist Scott McWilliams.

Studies completed by McWilliams have shown that birds have a flexible digestive system that they modify to meet the changing energy demands of migration.

"The gut of a migratory bird is a really dynamic organ," McWilliams said. "In preparation for migration, the gut increases in size tremendously over several days,"

"It expands, its cells get larger and it produces new cells so the bird can dramatically increase its food intake and store up energy for the long flight," the Rhode Island researcher explained.

And because the digestive system is one of the most metabolically active tissues in the body and it consumes a great deal of energy, McWilliams said, it shuts down during migration so more energy can be diverted to fueling flight.

This affects birds when they stop to feed at sites along their migration route. As their digestive system is shut down, the birds must eat less until their gut becomes acclimated and can operate efficiently again.

"We have known for many years that birds recovering from a migration flight do not immediately regain body mass, but we didn't know why," McWilliams said. "Now it is clear that this digestive constraint is responsible for the delay and likely affects the pace of a bird's migration."

Funded by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and with logistical support provided by The Nature Conservancy, McWilliams' field studies have involved both free and captive birds, mostly white-throated sparrows, red-eyed vireos and yellow-rumped warblers.

The research offers a new understanding of the protein requirements of migratory birds and this need for protein may have a significant impact on habitat management at key migratory stopover sites.

"To build their digestive tract, birds need foods available in the environment that have sufficient protein," McWilliams said. "When birds feed only on fruits that are high in fat and low in protein, they may have to delay their migration. To help birds ensure a successful migration, we need to ensure, for example, that shrubs along their migratory routes have fruits with higher protein amounts."

Analysing the Counts - Ruddy Turnstone

I have started analysing the QWSG database and, although it is early days yet, here is a report on Ruddy Turnstones. I am starting with this species not because Queensland is a significant over-wintering destination but simply because they are the first of the migratory waders on the RAOU No. list (No. 129). (Perhaps it is also because it was the first wader I ever identified. I can still 'see' them on the airstrip on Lord Howe Island even though it was twenty years ago!)

Best sites

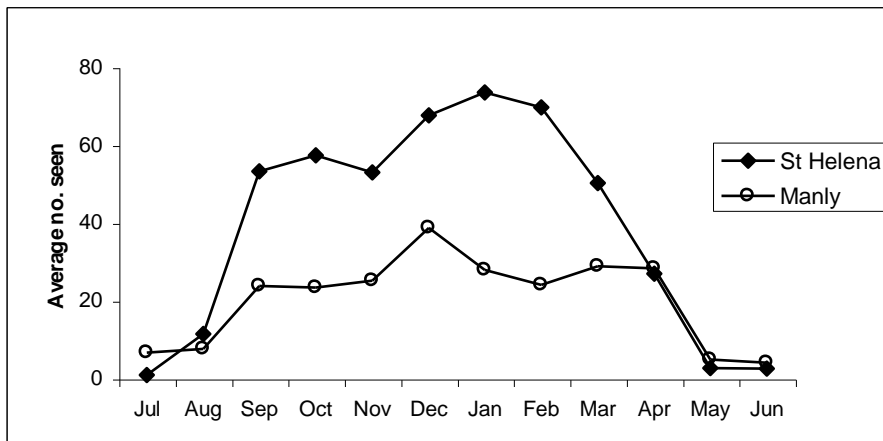
In the QWSG database, the highest number of Ruddy Turnstones recorded is 140. This was at the pier on St Helena Island (Moreton Bay) in October 1994. The pier has consistently been a favoured high tide roost site over nine years of counts. The turnstones also use the three other high-tide roosts on St Helena. Over the four sites, the high-tide count (HTC) of Ruddy Turnstones during the summer months (Oct-Mar) has averaged 66.

Two other sites in Moreton Bay are also popular high-tide roosts. These are Manly Boat Harbour and the strand between Scarborough and Clontarf. On these sites, the average HTC during the summer months has been 27 and 26 respectively.

The next most popular sites are outside of Moreton Bay. They are Boonooroo (south of Maryborough) and the Town Beach at Mackay. At these two sites, the average HTC over summer has been 10 and 14 respectively.

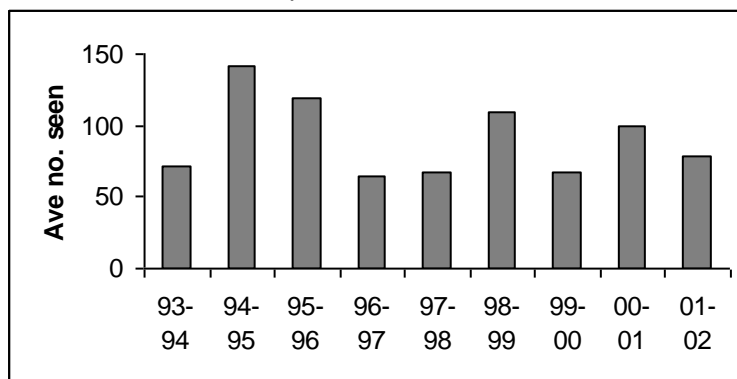
Arrival and departure dates

Ruddy Turnstones arrive in Moreton Bay in September and leave in April (see graph); few over-winter.



Trend in numbers

The graph below shows the combined summer counts for St Helena and Manly Boat Harbour over the last nine years. Broadly speaking, the population has been relatively stable. Although the numbers have varied from year to year, there is no indication of an up or down trend.



Judy Caughley

29th August 2003

Mackay Wader Survey

Planning for the final wader survey in Mackay is currently underway for the 11th and 12th of October. The final report for this year's surveys is due on the 28 November. In addition, a range of options for further funding has been put forward to WWF for next year. Based on these options, Bianca Priest, Shorebird Conservation Officer, WWF Australia is preparing a project proposal for Stage 2 in Mackay.

The 2003 Shorebird Taskforce meeting held in Sydney on July 8th and 9th decided on another five new priority shorebird sites, they include:

Great Sandy Strait (QLD)
 Clarence Estuary (NSW)
 Peel Harvey Estuary (WA)
 Fog Bay (NT)
 Altona (VIC)
 + the Gulf of Carpentaria as 0.5 of a site.

The focus at this time will be follow-up activities at current priority sites and initiating activities at two new priority sites - the Great Sandy Strait and the Clarence Estuary. Effort will also be made to value-add to work already underway in the Gulf. The other priority sites will wait until the third year of funding.

Therefore, if you have not yet been involved in the Mackay Project, there may be the opportunity for you to help next year.

Sandra Harding



Scanning for Waders in the Mackay area

News on the Shorebird Action Plan

News on the Shorebird Action Plan will now also appear on the Internet at Environment Australia:

<http://www.ea.gov.au/water/wetlands/mwp/news/index.html>

The Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy:

<http://www.wetlands.org/IWC/awc/waterbirdstrategy/News.htm>

Wetlands International – China Program:

<http://www.wetwonder.org/ASP/egNEWS/default.asp?classid=1>

Natural Resource Management SEQ Inc.: Report on the first meeting

The inaugural general meeting of Natural Resource Management SEQ Inc. was held on July 25, 2003 in Brisbane. The management committee was elected with members from Landcare groups, Environment, Local Government, Coastal and Marine, Traditional Owners, Rural Industries, Urban Industries, Research and Education, and SEQ Western Catchment Group. QWSG is an ordinary member in the environment group with voting rights.

NRM SEQ Inc. has been formulated by Federal and State governments to be a community organization to develop and put into action a Regional NRM Plan. This plan will integrate Regional Plans ie, Local Government, Water Resources and Catchment Management. Volunteer groups plus the general community will be part of the long term planning process to have a strategy in place in 2021. Scott Smith of Department of Natural Resources & Mines gave an overall picture of the expectations held by State government of the long term outcomes of this "Partnership" between governments and community in the quest for sustainable development and environmental protection in south east Queensland.

Joyce Harding
25/07/03

Kapar Power Station is the first Shorebird Network Site in Malaysia, bringing the Shorebird Site Network to 33 sites in 11 countries. Of a total 23 countries in the Flyway, internationally important sites are known to occur in 20 countries.

Sightings of Australian Flagged Waders Reported from Each Country

Dear All,

I thought it might be of interest to you to see a summary list of the sightings in each country over the years of waders leg flagged in Australia. These records are all now in our flag database, which also contains an additional 1881 flagged birds seen in Australia away from their original flagging location and 224 waders flagged overseas and subsequently seen in Australia.

It is nice to see that the volume of data generated annually is continuing to grow, due to the efforts of a great many people throughout the East Asian/Australasian Flyway. The volume of movement data resulting from leg flagging is now some 10 times that which has resulted from banding recoveries (i.e. where the specific band number is known). Flagging therefore has been extremely beneficial in increasing the rate of data generation on migration routes and key stopover locations for each species within the East Asian/Australasian Flyway.

Please do everything you possibly can to continue to encourage people to go out and look for flagged birds and to report them. This can be done either by direct email to me at: mintons@ozemail.com.au or by completing the form on the AWSG website www.tasweb.com.au/awsq/index.htm

If you have any comments or questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in the flagging or flag reporting processes very much indeed for their, most successful, efforts.

Best wishes,
Clive Minton.

Table of results on next page



The Arrival of Bar-Tailed Godwits at Manly: Their Subspecies and Age

The majority of Bar-tailed Godwits that migrate to eastern Australia and New Zealand are the *baueri* subspecies that breeds in northern and western Alaska while the *menzbieri* subspecies that migrates to north west Australia breeds in central northern Siberia.

It is known from flag sightings in recent years that, on northward migration, both subspecies use major staging sites in the extensive intertidal areas of the Yellow Sea. In contrast, all band recoveries and leg-flag sightings in this area during peak southward migration have been of the *menzbieri* subspecies. There is growing evidence to support the view that, on southward migration, most, if not all, of the *baueri* subspecies makes a direct non-stop flight across the Pacific Ocean to New Zealand and eastern Australia.¹

To help establish whether there is a link between observations of departing flocks on the coast of south-west Alaska and new arrivals on the non-breeding grounds, counts of Bar-tailed Godwits were carried out at the Manly Boat Harbour roost in Moreton Bay, south-east Queensland. The counts were carried out from September through to early December 2002.

As can be seen from the Table, the numbers roosting at the site throughout the first 3 weeks of September were low, lower in fact than the average winter count of 255. It is suggested that nothing of significance can be read into the higher number recorded on September 1st or the very low numbers on September 13th and 21st. These may well be due to any one or more local factors on the day, including disturbance at other roost sites and the height of the high tide. It could even be that birds over-wintering in Moreton Bay moved further south in mid-September. On the other hand, the slight increase on the September 28th count was probably due to arriving migrants even though no breeding plumage was recorded on any of the birds.

October 6th saw a significant increase in numbers but still no juveniles were identified. One wonders now whether there may well have been a few juveniles in the large flock. Significantly, on that date about 300 birds had traces of breeding plumage, confirming the arrival of migrating birds. Although there was a slight drop in total birds on October 13th, the first juveniles for the Australasian summer were recorded.

The percentage of juveniles remained much the same until double the number appeared on November 2nd. While the percentage for that date is the highest recorded, it should be borne in mind that the total number of birds for the day was an estimate only. An accurate count in all likelihood would have revealed a total more consistent with the weeks before and after. Again, the estimated count on November 30th may be slightly understated resulting in the percentage for that date being a little higher.

With these considerations in mind, the data is consistent in showing just over 1% of the totals being juveniles. In itself, the data is inconclusive to confirm the direct migration link, certainly to south east Queensland. Significantly, the peak in arrivals is later than that one would expect for birds departing the breeding grounds from mid-August to early September. However, one can speculate that an explanation for this is that birds arriving directly from the breeding grounds first make landfall in northern Australia before making their way further south, including to Moreton Bay. Such an explanation is consistent with the data showing a continuing build up in numbers in late November and early December. Accepting the numbers of juveniles present at this time and their fairly constant percentages, clearly the increase is a result of the arrival of adults and not juveniles.

While it cannot be said the data in itself supports the direct migration view, it may be of help in providing evidence when read with other data, particularly observations on departures from Alaska and arrivals in other parts of eastern Australia and New Zealand.

MANLY ROOST COUNTS OF BAR-TAILED GODWITS

Date (2002)	Total	Juvs	%	Date(2002)	Total	Juvs	%				
1 September	481	-	-	6 October	1008			2 November	900	15	1.66
8 September	219	-	-	13 October	870	5	0.57	9 November	1396	16	1.15
13 September	121	-	-	20 October	711	5	0.70	30 November	2000	25	1.25
21 September	128	-	-	26 October	1130	8	0.71	8 December	2934	30	1.02
28 September	600	-	-								

Barter, M.A. 2002. Shorebirds of the Yellow Sea: Importance, threats and conservation status. Wetlands International Global Series 9, International Wader Studies 12, Canberra, Australia.

WADER WATCH Linda and Phil Cross, Joyce Harding

Leg Flag Banding Legend (colour = where banded)

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

There are more leg flag sightings detailed in the Wader ID Day report included in this newsletter.

Green leg flag sightings

1 Eastern Curlew – Manly Boat Harbour – Sandra Harding, David Milton, Barry & Joanna Morgan – 18.5.03

1 Eastern Curlew – Manly Boat Harbour – Graham Palmer, Barry & Joanna Morgan – 14.6.03

1 Ruddy Turnstone – Fisherman Island – Linda Cross – 6.4.03

1 Lesser Sand Plover – Fisherman Island – Linda Cross – 1.3.03

Interstate & overseas Green leg flag sightings

None reported

Orange leg flag sightings

We wish to advise that the following sighting below, listed in issue No. 43 of Queensland Wader, had the date recorded as 6.1.03 and was incorrect. Our apologies for the error.

1 Great Knot – Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island – Esther Townsend – 5.1.03

1 Eastern Curlew – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight, Don & Rhonda Jennings – 5.5.03

1 Eastern Curlew – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight & Laurie Baldwin – 6.5.03

1 Eastern Curlew (with orange flag on both left and right tibia) – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight & Norm McKendrick – 7.8.03

1 Eastern Curlew (with orange flag on both left and right tibia) – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight, Mick & Marilyn Overheu – 22.8.03

1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Manly Boat Harbour – Sandra Harding, David Milton, Barry & Joanna Morgan – 18.5.03

1 Great Knot – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight & Peter Royall – 30.6.03

1 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – Fisherman Island – Linda Cross – 6.4.03

Japanese (Blue) leg flag sightings

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue flag left tibia and metal band right tibia – Caloundra Sandbank No 1 – Jill Dening, Judy Caughley and Barb Dickson – 28.2.03 (flagged Lake Furen, Hokkaido)

1 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue flag left tibia – Cape Hillsborough (during Mackay survey) – Leonie Daws & Joyce Harding – 12.4.03

Other wader leg flag sightings

1 Great Knot – orange flag on left tarsus – Toorbul – Esther Townsend – 18.5.03

1 Great Knot – orange flag on left tarsus – Toorbul – Dez Wells & Carla Picone – 14.6.03

(The bird above seen by Esther, Dez and Carla is most likely to be the Korean Peninsula flagged bird that has been recorded at this site on a number of occasions. The white flag on the left tibia is very difficult to see. However, the fact that the orange flag is on the left tarsus suggests that this bird was not flagged in Australia.)

Other leg flag sightings and banded birds

1 Pied Oystercatcher – metal band right tarsus - Esther Townsend – Toorbul – 13.6.03

1 Double-banded Plover – metal band left tarsus – Martin Waugh – Amity Point, North Stradbroke Island – 14.6.03

1 Pied Oystercatcher – metal band right tarsus – Martin Waugh – Amity Point, North Stradbroke Island – 14.6.03

1 Caspian Tern – orange flag right tarsus and metal band on left tarsus – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 5.7.03

As the next two sections were not recorded in the previous newsletter I have recorded those and additional ones this time.

Interesting sightings

- 6 Broad-billed Sandpiper – Ross River, Townsville – Dez Wells – 7.12.02
3 Broad-billed Sandpiper – Bermuda Avenue, Deception Bay – Phil & Linda Cross – 2.3.03
3 Broad-billed Sandpiper – Caboolture River Mouth – Ivan & Joyce Fien – 5.4.03
4 Sanderling – Sandy Point, Yeppoon area – Paul O'Neill & Rebecca White – 31.1.03
748 Lesser Sand Plover – Sandy Point, Yeppoon area – Paul O'Neill & Rebecca White – 31.1.03
26 Red-kneed Dotterel – Pine Rivers Northside – David Edwards – 1.2.03
16 Black-fronted Dotterel (one Red-kneed Dotterel with the group) – Bermuda Avenue Deception Bay – Phil & Linda Cross – 29.3.03
179 Red-capped Plover – Cooloola roost, Tin Can Bay – John Cummings – 1.2.03
112 Red-capped Plover – Young Avenue, Kinka Beach – John Thomson – 15.6.03
450 Terek Sandpiper – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – Donald & Lesley Bradley – 1.2.03
600 Terek Sandpiper – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight & Dummell McDonald – 23.3.03
4 Common Sandpiper – Cooloola roost, Tin Can Bay – John Cummings – 9.11.02 and again on 8.12.02
3 Common Sandpiper – Dalrymple Point to Doherty Creek site, Bowen – Jon Wren – 20.2.03
1 Wood Sandpiper – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 15.3.03, 28.3.03, 5.4.03 & 8.4.03
162 Red Knot – Inskip Point – John Cummings – 3.11.02
2857 Great Knot – Ross River, Townsville – Dez Wells – 7.12.02
3 Latham's Snipe – Banorah Point Sewage Plant, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson & Matthew Angus – 10.3.03
130 Marsh Sandpiper – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight & Judy Turner – 1.2.03
535 Black-winged Stilt – Deception Bay Mangrove site – Phil & Linda Cross – 5.4.03
103 Pacific Golden Plover – Maroochy River – Shirley Rooke – 31.1.03
94 Pacific Golden Plover – Bermuda Avenue, Deception Bay – Phil & Linda Cross – 2.3.03
140 Pacific Golden Plover – Shellgrit Creek, Mackay – Les & Dawn Thyer – 28.3.03
1 Grey Plover – Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island – Frank Bigg & Lois MacRae – 29.3.03
1 Grey Plover – Toorbul – Dez Wells – 5.4.03
262 Whimbrel – Toorbul – Esther Townsend – 5.4.03
66 Black-tailed Godwit – Toorbul – Dennis Stanbridge – 18.3.03 (uncommon at this site)
753 Eastern Curlew – Geoff Skinner Reserve – Michele Burford & Peter Rothlisberg – 1.2.03
456 Eastern Curlew – King Street, Thornlands – Joyce Harding – 18.2.03
500 Eastern Curlew – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight & Peter Royall – 7.2.03

Not waders but of interest anyway

- 1 Wedge-tailed Eagle – Young Avenue, Kinka Beach – John Thomson & Robert Black – 5.4.03
1 Wedge-tailed Eagle – Banora Point Sewage Plant, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson – 23.6.03
1 Grey Goshawk – Banora Point Sewage Plant, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson – 23.6.03
2 Little Eagle – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight & Marilyn Sweetnam – 11.4.03
1 Swamp Harrier – St Helena Island – Andrew Geering – 30.3.03
1 Square-tailed Kite – Young Avenue, Kinka Beach – John Thomson – 15.6.03
1 Peregrine Falcon – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 14.6.03
1 Australian Hobby – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 14.6.03
1 Baillon's Crake – Mathieson Homestead, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 18.1.03
1 Radjah Shelduck – Shellgrit Creek Mackay – Les & Dawn Thyer – 14.5.03
3 Radjah Shelduck – Young Avenue, Kinka Beach – John Thomson – 15.6.03
7 Freckled Duck – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight, David & Sue ApThomas – 8.7.03
1 Freckled Duck – Mullers Lagoon, Bowen – Tony Bischoff via Jon Wren – 31.5.03
1 Musk Duck – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight, David & Sue ApThomas – 6.7.03
2 Pink-eared Duck – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight, David & Sue ApThomas – 8.7.03
12 Australasian Shoveler – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight 20.5.03
1060 Grey Teal – Young Avenue, Kinka Beach – John Thomson – 15.6.03
2 Cotton Pygmy Goose – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 5.4.03
8 White-necked Heron – Bishops Marsh, Toorbul – Esther Townsend – 18.5.03
8 White-necked Heron – Young Avenue Kinka Beach – John Thomson – 18.5.03
41 White-faced Heron – Young Avenue, Kinka Beach – John Thomson – 15.6.03
80 Australian Pelican – Beck Road, Caloundra – Jill Chamberlain – 12.6.03
1000 Common Tern – Sandy Point, Yeppoon area – Paul O'Neill & Rebecca White – 5.12.02
1 Glossy Ibis – Cairns Esplanade – Keith Fisher – 1.2.03
4 Glossy Ibis – Keongs Dam, Oakey – Nicci Thompson – 1.2.03
17 Glossy Ibis – Garnett's Lagoons, Hervey Bay – John Knight – 8.7.03
58 Magpie Goose – in ploughed paddock behind King Street Thornlands roost – Joyce Harding – 1.2.03
420 Silver Gull – Scarborough to Clontarf count – Alex Bisgrove & Rob Stogdale – 2.2.03
4 Black-necked Stork (2 female, 1 male & 1 juvenile) – Cairns Airport – Keith Fisher – 1.2.03

Count Programme by Linda Cross

My paid employment commitment has kept me away from home and the computer for quite some time now, and will continue to do so for the next couple of months. However, I have managed to report the backlog of information from your count sheets and placed them under Wader Watch, or in this section of the newsletter. My sincere thanks to you all for your patience and understanding.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some people who have had to resign from the count programme this year.

Judith Ruddell, Jean Corney, Lois and Ian MacRae.

Judith along with her husband Alan counted Clinton Ash ponds in Gladstone for many years. Sadly Alan passed away suddenly 2 years ago and Judith endeavoured to continue the counts alone. Since then, the Clinton Ash ponds have all been filled in and unfortunately for the waders, more habitats have been lost. Subsequently Judith no longer has a site to count and without Alan, getting to other remote sites is not possible.

Jean has been counting the Toorbul sites for more than 12 years and has been conducting them on her own for a number of years since the ill health and subsequent death of Bev Durrant. The three sites and numerous birds that use the sites have certainly kept Jean pretty busy on count days. Jean is hopeful that she might once again be able to assist us in the future. Esther Townsend and Dez Wells have now adopted the Toorbul sites.

Lois has also been conducting counts for more than 12 years. Along with Frank Bigg they surveyed the large Dux Creek site, which has now also gone leaving them a much-reduced site in the form of the new man made Kakadu Beach roost. Ian also joined Lois on many occasions to help with the monthly monitoring. Unfortunately, due to Ian's illness, Lois needs to spend more time with him. Lois has offered to help out in future if we need her, but Frank Bigg, along with a new assistant, will continue to count the Kakadu Beach roost.

Our sincere thanks to all of you for your dedication to the count programme and best wishes for the future.

Our New Zealand visitor (Double-banded Plover) was first sighted this year at Geoff Skinner Reserve on 2nd March, with a total of 10 birds. Since then they have been recorded at Tony's Island Tweed Heads, Caloundra Sandbanks, Manly Boat Harbour, Caboolture River Mouth, Maroochy River North Shore, Amity Point South Stradbroke Island, Fisherman Island and Cooloola roost, Tin Can Bay. The largest number recorded at one site was 23 birds. At this point in time I am unable to report the details of their departure due to the fact that there was no count in July and the August count (30th) had not been completed at the time this article was written. It will be interesting to see if any of the species have remained this late. The last late record we have for 2002 was, 2 birds seen at Sandy Point, Yeppoon area on 9.9.02.

Where have all the waders gone? This was the subject of an email I received from Jill Dening after the June National Winter count, and was similarly stated by me after we completed the count at our sites in June. What surprised me was the fact that we did not have one migratory wader on either of our roosts, which I thought was most unusual.

After receiving the email from Jill I decided to take a closer look at the June count sheets as they arrived and found that other counters were making similar comments. The following sites did not record any migratory waders during the June count: -

Deception Bay – 2 roosts	Donnybrook
Kakadu Beach Bribie Island	Lytton
Nandebie Park, Cleveland	Lota
Pelican Waters, Caloundra	Wickham Point, Caloundra
Point Vernon, Hervey Bay	Scarborough to Clontarf coastline
Pine Rivers Northside	Empire Point

Manly Boat Harbour, which normally supports a large number of waders, recorded only 28 Eastern Curlew on site. No other waders whatsoever! Other sites recorded only a handful of species and numbers. At the same time, large numbers of waders were being counted in the Hervey Bay area and comments have been made from that area about the surprisingly large number of smaller waders seen feeding at low tide.

Was the food source better in the Great Sandy Strait than Moreton Bay? Has anybody observed large numbers of waders during the winter months in other parts of Queensland? We would be interested to hear from anybody who can supply us with an answer to the second question.

Happy counting.
Linda Cross.

Errata. Our apologies for an error recorded in Issue No 43 of Queensland Wader. In the Count Programme article under Broad-billed Sandpiper the 2 birds recorded at Toorbul were seen on 8.2.03 and not 8.2.02 as reported.

Port of Brisbane Counts

With the southern migration already under way and wader numbers due to increase at the POB sites, it would be good to have some extra helpers on the counts. Anyone wishing to join us please contact Michele Burford on 3822 3759 (Home) 3875 6723 (Work) or email her at m.burford@griffith.edu.au

Calender and Timetable for Port of Brisbane Visits

Sun 28 th September	Sun 26 th October
Sun 23 rd November	Sun 14 th December

Beach-stone Curlew sightings – extracts from count sheets

- 2 – Sandy Point, Yeppoon area – Paul O'Neill & Rebecca White – 5.12.02
- 2 – Black Soil Creek, Townsville region – Dez Wells – 8.12.02
- 2 Adults & (1 dead young killed by vehicle on track) – Sandy Point, Yeppoon area – Paul O'Neill & Rebecca White – 7.1.03
- 3 – Cairns Airport – Keith Fisher – 19.1.03 and again on 1.3.03
- 1 – Flinders Beach, South Stradbroke Island – Martin Waugh 19.3.03
- 1 – Amity Point – Martin Waugh – 15.4.03, 16.5.03 and again on 14.6.03
- 2 – Pioneer River, Mackay – Les & Dawn Thyer – 13.6.03
- 1 – Maaroom – John Bell – 14.6.03

Sooty Oystercatcher sightings – extracts from count sheets

- 1 – Pioneer River, Mackay – Les & Dawn Thyer – 14.5.03
- 8 – Wickham Point, Caloundra – Barb Dickson – 2.3.03
- 6 – Wickham Point, Caloundra – Barb Dickson – 29.3.03
- 7 – Wickham Point, Caloundra – Barb Dickson – 5.4.03
- 4 – Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island – Frank Bigg & Lois MacRae – 29.3.03

Wandering Tattler sightings – extracts from count sheets

- 1 – Point Vernon, Hervey Bay – Donald & Lesley Bradley – 4.3.03
- 1 – Ukerebagh Passage, Tweed Heads – Marion Williams – 26.4.03

WADER ID DAYS for 2003

Sunday 14th September 2003 at Toorbul

High tide at 1.98m at 11:33 hours (40 mins later for Toorbul). Meeting time will be 10:00. Bring lunch and your field guides to get you back into the swing for the new season

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. Phil & Linda Cross 07 5495 2758 or David Edwards 07 3262 2017

Other dates suitable in Sept, Oct and Nov are all taken up with wader counts, POB counts, Mackay trip, and Wader Course, so make the most of this ID Day.

News on the Saemangeum Reclamation

Court Order Halts Saemangeum Reclamation – For Now!

A temporary stop to the construction of the dyke sealing the fate of the Saemangeum tidal flats - and one of the most important staging areas for shorebirds in the world - has come about due to the dedicated efforts of conservationists in Korea. The pro-developers have launched an appeal against the stop work order. If they are successful in their appeal, the last 2.7 km of sea wall will be completed very quickly.

The outcome of this case will form a landmark in environmental history. It is therefore important that conservationists worldwide lend support to the decision to halt the destruction of this important site. Destruction of the tidal flats is likely to have a major impact on migratory shorebirds throughout the Australasian East-Asian Flyway.

Saemangeum is the most important site for shorebirds and migratory waterbirds in East Asia. Its 30,000 hectares of tidal flats and shallows support around 30 species of waterbird in internationally important concentrations. These include at least eight globally threatened birds, among them Black-faced Spoonbill *Platylea minor*, Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*, Saunders's Gull *Larus saundersi*, Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes* and 10 percent of the global population of Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*.

For more information on Saemangeum, see the following web site:

<http://www.wbkenglish.com/saemref.asp>, which includes addresses of embassies and other agencies where letters of concern/protest can be sent.

Saemangeum Project Put on Hold

The Korean Times (16th July 2003)

By Soh Ji-young Staff Reporter

The Seoul Administrative Court yesterday ordered temporary suspension of the controversial Saemangeum reclamation project until a court decision is made on its continuation.

Accepting the petition filed by environmentalists and residents in the region, the court said it recognizes the need to urgently suspend the project in light of the massive environment destruction which is feared to erupt.

“All of the construction work in progress under the reclamation project should be suspended,” the court said.

“While the purpose of the project is to create farmland and develop water resources, there is little possibility that the newly formed freshwater lake will be able to be used for agricultural purposes due to the serious water pollution which is expected,” the court said in its ruling. Initiated in 1991, the project is aimed at turning 40,100 hectares of mud flats in the Saemangeum region, some 250 kilometres southwest of Seoul, into 28,300 hectares of farmland and a freshwater lake by building a 33-kilometre seawall to seal off the mouths of the two rivers that run through the area. As of yesterday, only 2.7 kilometres of the seawall remained incomplete. The court said that the completion of the sea dike may bring about environmental damage such as water pollution and destruction of the tidal flats, which will need phenomenal funds to be restored. More than 3,500 residents and environment activists filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Prime Minister in 2001, demanding the government to scrap the project. When constructors sped up the construction of the sea dike despite the mounting opposition, residents filed an injunction in June, requesting the court to suspend the project until it lands a decision on the ongoing suit.

With the court's decision, chances are increasing that the project may be ordered to be largely altered or scrapped altogether in light of its negative impact on the environment. The court's final ruling is expected to come in two or three months. Local environment groups welcomed the decision, saying it is a reflection of the fierce public opposition to the project. “The court evidently recognized the fact that the project has already lost its purpose for which it came into being,” said Jang Ji-young of the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement, the nation's largest environmental group. “The government must stop pursuing the project for political purposes and accept the voices of the people who oppose the project,” she said. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry said it will immediately file an appeal with a higher court. The North Cholla government and resident groups in favor of the project vowed to exert all-out efforts to push for the continuation of the project.

A step closer to the end of Awase, Japan?

Those who attended the Ramsar COP8 at Valencia last year may remember that Japanese conservationists particularly focused their efforts on the issue of an ongoing landfill project at Awase Tidal Flat in Okinawa. Construction work on this project started last October. Rocks have been dropped into an area of the sea enclosed by a pollution screen, and construction of a bridge to the landfill site has also started.

However, in consideration of the breeding season of a threatened fish – the blue mud hopper (*Scartelaos histophorus*) - work on the landfill has been suspended from April to the end of July. The Minister in charge of the project announced last week that the landfill will resume on August 1st.

Letters of concern:

International organisations including the Ramsar Bureau and BirdLife International have sent letters of concern on this issue to the Japanese Government. The Ramsar Bureau sent its letter in March last year, and COP8 adopted Resolution VIII.37 calling for conservation of the migratory waterbirds of the Asia-Pacific and their habitats. BirdLife International sent its letter of concern in March this year; it emphasised that Awase Tidal Flat supports the highest number of staging and wintering migratory shorebirds in Okinawa and that it has the highest wintering population of Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) in Japan.

New findings on seagrass communities:

Local conservationists in Okinawa noticed that a report prepared by the developers last December mentioned an important seagrass species, *Halophila ovata* (or *decipiens*), at Awase without going into any further details. Until that time the number of seagrass species recorded at Awase was eight, not including *H. ovata*. Local conservationists confirmed the presence of *H. ovata* at Awase on 19 February 2003 within the planned landfill site.

So far, a total of 16 seagrass species have been identified in Japan. Of these, 10 (or 11) are found in Okinawa, and Awase now has nine of them. *H. ovata* has been found at only two other locations in Okinawa, and is classified as vulnerable in Japan's Red Data Book (Ministry of Environment, 2000).

In addition, local conservationists recently found what appears to be yet another seagrass species at the site. Japanese seagrass experts are working on it, but according to newspaper articles it is likely that a new species has been found at Awase; it is said to be morphologically similar to *Halophila hawaiiiana*. If this is a new species, it should be classified as threatened in the RDB.

The Okinawa General Office, responsible for the landfill project, has established a committee to review the viability of seagrass transplanting methods and other issues; it will meet two or more times this month. Although it includes representatives from national and local conservation NGOs, this committee is unlikely to reach a consensus, which means that the landfill project will probably resume next month.

We think these recent findings at Awase make the ongoing landfill project a totally unacceptable reversal in the history of wetland conservation. Taking the situation in Awase together with the ongoing huge loss (40,000 ha!) of intertidal mudflat at Saemangeum in South Korea, another generation may pass in East Asia before a true understanding is reached of the importance of coastal wetlands in general and the spirit of the Ramsar Convention in particular.

For more details:

<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/awase/save/english/> or
<http://save-awasehigata.hp.infoseek.co.jp/sub15.htm>

Contact: /TSUJI Atsuo
JAWAN (Japan Wetlands Action Network)
tsuji_atsuo@mrj.biglobe.ne.jp

Australasian Shorebird Conference - Canberra

The program for the fourth AWSG Shorebird Conference, 14th – 15th December 2003, is well advanced and is shaping up to be a very interesting program. Due to the interest in many of the sessions it will be necessary to hold several Round Table Discussions outside of the Conference Program.

A condensed version of the program so far is outlined below, however for further details about the program, Round Table Discussions and registrations keep an eye on the AWSG website:

<http://www.tasweb.com.au/awsg>

DAY 1

Session 1

Endangered endemic species: This session will focus on some endangered endemic shorebirds including the Shore Plover (*Thinornis novaeseelandiae*) of New Zealand, the Australia Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*) - now accepted as a separate species endemic to Australia - and the Hooded Plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*).

Session 2

NGO involvement: This session will look at how people in local communities are working to address key conservation issues for shorebirds and their habitats.

The role of wetland centres throughout the Flyway such as those in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and including the new super centre in Hong Kong.

NGO program in Saemangeum (hopefully good news) and shorebird habitat management issues at Werribee sewage treatment works, the Firth of Thames, New Zealand and Moreton Bay, Queensland.

Session 3

Knowledge for conservation: How shorebird research is providing the information needed for conservation. This will include results of 25 years of research in Australia including banding and flagging, radio tracking, aerial and ground surveys.

Session 4

Education and awareness: Activities to inform communities about shorebirds and their conservation. This will include working with schools in various countries (sister school programs), twinning important shorebird sites in Australia and New Zealand with China, Japan and other Flyway countries, the story behind "A Year on the Wing".

DAY 2

Session 5

The need to identify critical habitat in the Flyway: What we know and don't know about important stopover sites in the Flyway. The Spoon-billed Sandpiper will be used as a flagship species to identify problems on nesting grounds in far eastern Russia, at stopover sites such as Saemangeum and non-breeding sites such as eastern India as well as more common species that may be under threat over the longer term.

Session 6

Frameworks for Shorebird Conservation: This session will include community involvement in shorebird conservation as well as national and international cooperative frameworks and conservation strategies.

Session 7

Key wetlands in the Flyway: Papers will cover the status of shorebirds – gaps in our knowledge, the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk - temporary home to millions of shorebirds on migration and key to the future of a major proportion of our migratory species.

Session 8

Our Future Role in Shorebird Conservation across the Flyway. This will be a discussion and workshop session to discuss issues relating to shorebird conservation across the Flyway, joint research projects and how voluntary groups can help in exciting studies in many countries in the Flyway – **your** chance to become involved!

The proceedings from this conference will be produced as a special international publication jointly with Wetlands International, International Wader Study Group and the AWSG of Birds Australia. Copies will be made available free of charge to registered attendees of the Conference.

To register your interest contact Phil Straw **now:** pstraw@optusnet.com.au

Tel: 61 2 9597 7765.

P.O. Box 2006 Rockdale Delivery Centre, NSW 2216, Australia.

<http://www.tasweb.com.au/awsg>

Some Quick Notes from the QWSG Committee Meeting July 2003

- **Data Sub committee:** An update on last meeting held on 31 May. Data checking is continuing prior to data analysis
- **Mackay Project Report:** Next survey is on 11/12th October. SH is sorting out a room with Mackay City Council for the Saturday night talk. ID day will be on Friday morning
- **Saemangeum Impacts study:** Request for counting of a number of shorebirds which use the Saemangeum wetlands in Korea at high tide roost sites in Queensland during summer months to monitor the impact of the reclamation project. DM to extract summaries of Moreton Bay data for key species
- **Visit by Andrew Silcock:** Andrew (Birds Australia) is proposing to visit QWSG so committee members can comment on maps that have been generated of key shorebird areas
- **Draft Moreton Bay Shorebird Management Plan:** Comments on plan required by mid August
- **Wader workshop:** Date is now 1st Nov 2003 at PoB visitor centre.
- **Help** requested with activities planned by BCC at Boondall and Tinchitamba wetlands in mid August.
- **Brochures:** suggested that brochures developed as part of Gulf survey be sent to high school teachers in the Gulf of Carpentaria region. Committee agreed. The need for a brochure on Moreton Bay was mentioned. Committee agreed to this in principle, time permitting.

Major Tern Site on Qld Coast

A small community-driven monitoring project, established to assess the conservation value of intertidal habitat for marine birds in a rapidly expanding Queensland coastal town, may have discovered the major Australian wintering ground of the Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo longipennis*. Dozens of observations of flagged Little Tern also confirm the site as an important post-breeding staging point for the small, threatened population of the Little Tern.

Mixed flocks of up to 42,000 terns have been recorded during the three-year, weekly monitoring project, showing Caloundra to be the major known site for terns on the Australian mainland.

Caloundra lies approximately 75km north of Brisbane, at the southern end of the Sunshine Coast (Lat 26° 48' 50"S, Long 153° 07' 35" E.). It has a population of approximately 80,000 citizens. It also has one of Australia's highest biodiversity values, in that it lies in the crossover zone at the southern end of the sub-tropical climate zone and at the northern end of the temperate zone. Despite intensive agriculture and urban development, most of its ecosystems, from mountain to sea, remain intact.

Migratory terns begin to arrive in Caloundra from their northern hemisphere breeding grounds, in October. Last departures are in mid to late April. They consist of the Common Tern *Sterna hirundo longipennis*, White-winged Black Tern *Sterna leucopterus*, and the Little Tern *Sterna albifrons sinensis*. Their favoured intertidal sandbanks are situated adjacent to the Caloundra CBD and inside the sheltered northern entrance to the Pumicestone Passage - the water body separating Bribie Island from the Queensland mainland.

As tern activity patterns are driven by light and not tides, in order to assess abundances it is necessary to observe the greater proportion of the flocks on the wing as they arrive during the evening from the sea. Under these circumstances it is not possible to separate the birds at species level. However, on any survey day during the season, flocks of varying sizes are present loafing on the sandbanks. Over three seasons, the composition of these loafing flocks averaged 19% Little Tern, 12% White-winged Black Tern and 68% Common Tern. When these figures are examined with the addition of Unidentified Migrant Terns (observed on the wing heading for the sandbanks at dusk), they averaged at 8% Little Tern, 5% White-winged Black Tern, 29% Common Tern and 57% Unidentified Migrant Tern.

A report will be produced during the coming months to provide Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and Caloundra City Council with adequate information to make informed decisions about appropriate management of the area. Although the sandbanks lie within the Moreton Bay Marine Park, which is a Ramsar site, they are subject to increasing levels of human recreational activity.

Jill Denning

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.

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Forward application to:
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Sinnamon Park,
Q 4073

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 **November 18th 2003**

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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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: President, Peter Crow (07) 3398 5118; Secretary, Rod Cox (07) 3398 8775; Treasurer, Les Taylor (07) 3878 1381.

Monthly Meetings

Birds Queensland - 7.45pm Queensland Museum Brisbane

1st Thursday each month except January, when there is no meeting.

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.

Books

- \$19:80 Shorebird Conservation in the Asia-Pacific Region.
- \$24:00 Simpson & Day Field Guide (2000 print)
- \$15:00 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.

No longer in stock: Birds of Bribie Island, Pumicestone Passage and Environs

However, they can be obtained from BIEPA by contacting Kathleen Catalan on 3408 7338

CD \$22:00 Bird calls of the Broome region (includes 42 Wader Species).

Cloth Badges \$8.00 We now have the new bottle green 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.

Our QWSG logo Polo Shirt stock is very low and we are looking at purchasing more stock in the New Year. A number of members missed out on the size and colour of their choice when we obtained the last stock and asked that we advise them when new stock was to be ordered so they could choose the one they wanted. Here is your chance to get the colour you want in your size by placing an order in advance.

At this point in time we envisage continuing with the colours we had previously: - Bottle Green, Jade, Navy, Royal Blue, Maroon, Grey Marle and Cream. However, if you have a favourite colour that we did not have there is a possibility that we can get it for you. Sizes varied from small through to XXXL in the last stock, but larger sizes were available.

If you are interested in placing an order, or wish to discuss the matter further please contact me by phone or email.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new member who have joined recently :

Deb & Fraser Stanley, Lyn Cole, Dummell McDonald
Judith Lukin-Amundsen, Rachel Blakey, Boyd Essex

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.



Activities 2003

Monthly Count Program

Sat 27 th September	High Tide of 2.16m at 10.14am
Sat 25 th October	High Tide of 2.25m at 09.08am
Sat 22 nd November	High Tide of 2.25m at 08.00am
Sat 13 th December	High Tide of 2.25m at 12.13am

FISHERMAN ISLAND – PORT OF BRISBANE COUNTS

Calendar and Timetable for Port of Brisbane Visits

- Sun 28th Sep
- Sun 26th Oct
- Sun 23rd Nov
- Sun 14th Dec

Just a reminder that we will be continuing counting every month until the end of the year. Anyone wishing to join us please contact Michele Burford on 3822 3759 (Home) 3875 6723 (Work) or email her at m.burford@griffith.edu.au.

PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR RENEWAL IS DUE!



MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

I / We wish to join / renew: (Single \$15; Family \$25; Student/Pensioner \$10)

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

Address:.....

Membership: \$.....

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

Donation: \$.....

Phone: (Home) (Work)

Payment enclosed: \$.....

Fax / e-mail:

TOTAL \$.....

How did you hear about QWSG

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

SIGNATURE:

DATE:.....

Post to: QWSG Treasurer, 28 Peppertree Street, Sinnamon Park, Q 4073
Cheques to be made out to: Queensland Wader Study Group