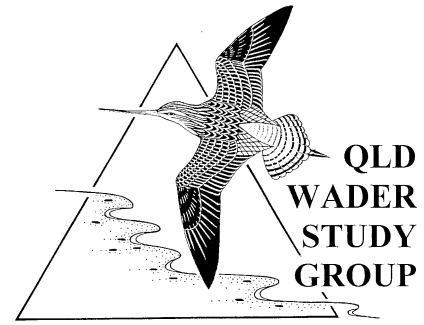


QUEENSLAND WADER



Issue number 51

Autumn 2005

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

Report presented at the AGM on Sun 19 December, 2004

SUMMARY OF QWSG ACTIVITIES IN 2004



Former QWSG Chair, Andrew Geering at the 2004 AGM

The QWSG had another successful year in 2004 and the range of activities was again very diverse for such a small group of active members. We continue to be sought for advice and help on coastal development issues by state government agencies, semi-government Corporations and local councils. I think we have tried to present a balanced approach in our dealings with these management agencies and they appear to value our advice. There are a number of new proposals for QWSG participation in projects during 2005 that will ensure another busy year is ahead.

After 2003, when QWSG undertook an extensive survey of the central coast in the Mackay region that involved a large number of members, 2004 seems like a consolidation year. During the year, the committee was focused on trying to complete existing projects before we undertook any new projects. This was partly successful and significant progress has been made on several of the larger, and more challenging projects that should see them completed during 2005.

- **QWSG Book** – During the year, Andrew Geering worked hard in trying to get the text of the book in a consistent format and ready for submission to a publisher. Sandra Harding has taken the initiative since then in getting the completed text compiled, onto CDs and sent to four natural history book publishers. We will expect to hear from one or more of these in the next few months and will make further decisions then.

- **Wader course** – Andrew Geering and Margaret Bernard organised another successful wader course in December 2004. The course was well attended with 48 participants. After a series of presentations on wader ID, migration and conservation issues, the group had lunch that was followed by a field trip to Manly Boat Harbour (MBH) artificial roost. QWSG appreciated the time and efforts of Pamela Pavey of the MBH User Group in allowing access to the roost and showing the participants the site. Feedback received from participants was all positive and the courses have all proved popular. The Brisbane Port Authority makes a major contribution to the success of the courses by providing the free use of their conference room at the Visitor Centre and charging lunches at cost. QWSG thanks Brad Kitchener and Wayne Young for their support and helping make the course a success again this year.
- **WWF Shorebird Project** –
 1. **Mackay** – One more survey was undertaken in the Mackay region in February 2004 to give a second summer count for the region. The total count of 19,106 was similar to than the peak numbers counted in January 2003 of 21,955, given the coverage was not as complete due to rough weather. Sandra Harding wrote a report of the process for identifying threats to waders through cooperation between the community, local and state governments Mackay project. This was published in the Australasian Wader Study Group journal, *Stilt* and The study was rounded out in early December 2004, when Sandra Harding joined Qld Parks and Wildlife Service staff on a survey of the mid-reef islands adjacent to Mackay. The number of wader seen was much lower than had been predicted from previous reconnaissance trips, but QWSG now has a reasonable understanding of wader distribution along that section of the central Queensland coast.
 2. **Great Sandy Strait** – In late November, Sandra Harding flew to Maryborough for a meeting with Maryborough City, Hervey Bay Shire and Cooloola Shire Councils, Qld Environmental Protection Agency and WWF to discuss the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) for the wader roosts in the Great Sandy Strait region from Point Vernon to Tin Can Bay. This GIS will be used by the town planners in the three councils when assessing coastal development applications. The role of QWSG will be to verify the location of each roost documented in our database and provide details on the species, their numbers at each roost and any site management recommendations. QWSG will undertake the ground-truthing of roosts at the end of January 2005 and the GIS is hoped to be ready for public demonstration by April-May 2005.
 3. **Southern Gulf of Carpentaria** – Ivell Whyte and Joyce Harding visited Karumba for the Southern Gulf Birds and Wetlands Forum from 5 – 6 May 2004 and presented a poster highlighting the waders in the region and QWSG projects there.
- **Port of Brisbane** – QWSG continued the monthly count program at the Port Of Brisbane with 12 counts in 2004. These counts are coordinated by Michele Burford continue to be well attended, with many members attending for one or more counts and enjoying the hospitality of Wayne Young with the BBQs on site after several counts. The Port of Brisbane has written to us in late 2004 offering to continue the current arrangements in 2005.
- **Newsletter and website** – There were four newsletters during 2004, including the extra large issue in September with details of the projects proposed under the QWSG 5-year plan. I thank David Edwards for his continuing efforts as editor, making each issue informative and topical with excerpts and articles from across Australia and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. The count program continues to be the backbone of the newsletter, with Linda Cross making a sterling effort to ensure all counts are recorded and passed on to Joyce Harding for data entry or Phil Cross for entry of the leg flag sightings. We also thank Ivell and Jim Whyte for their efforts in labelling and posting the newsletters to members and ensure they all arrive on time. The QWSG website has been off-line for much of 2004 while David and the committee grapple with the decisions about the style and content of the website and what its primary focus will be. These discussions will be finalised early in 2005 and we plan to shortly have a new look website up and operating at www.waders.com.au. In the meantime, members can look for information about coming QWSG events at the Birds Queensland website (<http://www.birdsqueensland.org.au>) and follow the link to their page about QWSG.

- **Count program and ID days** – The QWSG count program continued successfully during 2004 under the dedicated guidance of Linda Cross. There were 11 monthly counts at regular roost sites and 12 counts at the Port of Brisbane that are also incorporated into the QWSG count database. Joyce Harding has continued in her role as data entry person and has shown continued dedication to ensure that the counts are entered quickly after they were made. During 2004, the QWSG tried to engage a prominent statistician, Dr Bill Venable, to help analyse the count data for Moreton Bay. However, pressing work commitments have meant that progress has not been satisfactory and we are now exploring other ways of undertaking the analysis.



Wayne Young from the Port of Brisbane Corporation (POB) and our hard-working count coordinator, Linda Cross, in animated discussion during the post AGM BBQ kindly hosted by POB

- **NRM and Library** – During 2004, Joyce Harding attended four meetings of the SEQ Natural Resource Management Group as a representative of QWSG. This group has been set up to coordinate the spending the Natural Heritage Trust fund allocation to the region. Most of the business of the NRM is dealing with terrestrial land management issues, but if QWSG wants to undertake projects like the Empire Point roost development in the future, we need to be involved with NRM to have any chance of success. At the same time as all her other activities for the group, Joyce has taken on the cataloguing and expansion of the library of the group. She now has a list of titles she holds and can provide this on request to interested members.
- **Education project, posters and visit by Japanese birdwatchers** – During the year, Ivell Whyte has worked hard on the NHT-funded Education Project. She has almost finalised an educational kit for Queensland schools comprising a series of materials including a Powerpoint presentation, presenter's notes and activity sheets. Ivell has had help from David Edwards, Joyce Harding, daughter Raelee Carter and Lesley Bradley in compiling the content and making sure it was relevant to the school curriculum.

We also had a return visit by Hit Akotsu and 10 other Japanese birdwatchers. The visit was hosted by the Brisbane City Council, QWSG, Boondall to Tinch Tamba WPSQ members and volunteers from the Boondall Wetlands Visitor Centre in October 2004. Again, Ivell took a major role in helping ensure our visitors had a busy and productive visit. They all left having had a renewed appreciation of Australian waders and ways we have tried to manage threats to them. In between all this, Ivell was also busy during the year putting together a poster on QWSG and our count program for use at the Brisbane Exhibition and other venues.

I hope that members can see from this list of activities that the QWSG committee have had another busy and productive year. The profile of waders and QWSG is rising and lets all hope that this increase in public awareness will have direct benefits for the conservation of waders and their habitats in Queensland. We plan to undertake further activities in 2005, like the ground-truthing of wader roosts in the Great Sandy Strait that happened in late January. We believe activities such as this will have lasting benefits for the waders by getting information on waders included in the local government planning schemes.

Happy wader watching to all members in 2005.

David Milton QWSG Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

Accounts audited by BDO Kendalls

QUEENSLAND WADER STUDY GROUP BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2004

	2004	2003
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
Opening Balance	91,588	87,136
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	473	4,452
TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS	92,061	91,588
Represented by:		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank	73,124	67,210
Stock of Goods for Resale	535	384
	73,659	67,594
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Plant & Equipment	47,464	46,531
Provision for Depreciation	- 29,062	- 22,537
	18,402	23,994
TOTAL ASSETS	92,061	91,588

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2004

	2004	2003
INCOME		
Contract Income		
- BAC Surveys	3,300	-
- BCC	330	781
- GSS	-	3,850
- Gulf Survey Project	-	9,407
- Luggage Pt Surveys	2,200	-
- Mackay Surveys	2,960	16,040
- Port of Bris Surveys	8,130	2,980
Courses	1,188	627
Donations	900	1,390
Fundraising Income		
- Badges	32	-
- Books/Reports	108	284
- Shirts	-	120
- Other	22	88
GST Income	203	349
Interest	2,784	2,346
Membership	2,424	1,890
Miscellaneous Income	17	33
TOTAL INCOME	24,597	40,185
EXPENSES		
Bank Charges	83	62
Conference	1,142	-
Contract Expenses		
- BAC Surveys	1,302	-
- BCC	210	89
- GSS	-	589
- Gulf Survey Expenses	-	8,440
- Luggage Pt Surveys	2,000	-
- Mackay Surveys	5,874	12,431
- Port of Bris Surveys	675	300
Course Expenses	486	502

Depreciation Expense	6,525	6,915
Education & publicity material	1,626	46
Fundraising expenses	128	507
Gst Expenses	469	1,197
Insurance/Registration	997	995
Loss on disposal of plant & equipment	249	-
Membership Expenses	90	90
Miscellaneous Expenses	98	1,394
Newsletter Expenses	1,639	1,081
Postage & Stationery	531	334
Repairs & Maintenance	-	761
TOTAL EXPENSES	24,125	35,733
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	473	4,452

NOTES ON THE ACCOUNTS:

Income

Contract – BAC -\$3300 (1 off contract)
 GSS -none for 2004
 Gulf -none for 2004
 Luggage Pt -\$2200 (Final report payment)
 Mackay - \$2960 – down - WWF contract finished
 POB -\$8130 (Increase – new contract)
 Note: all income includes GST
 Course – increase - funds for last year's course (1/11/03)
 Donations – down
 Fundraising – down
 GST - down
 Interest – up (mainly T/D)
 Membership – up – 201 memberships (19 family, 33 complimentary)

Expenses

Bank charges – up slightly
 Conference - fuel & accommodation for Gulf
 Contract - BAC -\$1302
 GSS – none for 2004
 Gulf -none for 2004
 Luggage Pt surveys - \$2,000 final payment from previous year
 Mackay -\$5874 final payments
 POB - \$675 (increase from \$300)
 Course expenses - down
 Depreciation – down
 Education & Publicity –\$1626 – up (Mackay poster)
 GST – down – less contact money rec'd
 Insurance – about even
 Loss on disposal of plant & equipment - \$249 written off
 Newsletter Expenses – up (5yr plan included in Spring edition – more postage & printing costs)

Balance sheet

Accumulated Funds
 – Surplus \$473 – down (less income eg contracts)
 – Total funds – up slightly
 Current Assets -
 - Cash at bank \$73,124 - (\$39,893 Nigel's Estate)
 - Stock of goods for resale - \$535 – up – mainly books
 Non-Current Assets
 - Plant & Equipment \$47,464 – up slightly
 - Provision for Depreciation \$29,062 – up

Future For Amity Count Site?

The foreshores on the eastern side of Moreton Bay at Nth Stradbroke Island have changed considerably over the past 100 years.

The present Amity count site is a north-south aligned sandbank extending for 300 to 400 metres from the southern boundary of the Amity Camping ground.

The western side of the camp -ground was formed by a rock wall and back-filling in the latter half of the previous century. This western side was part of the eastern side of the Stradbroke Race Track. North of this area was undergoing much erosion with losses of dwellings, jetties and the kiosk. Horse racing ceased about 1930.

The race track area, and north, and south, is now part of the southern Rainbow Channel with a depth of 20 to 10 metres of water.

The count site sandbank over the past 15 years has moved in an easterly direction still roughly maintaining its north south alignment for about 80 to 100 metres. Erosion at the proximal or northern end, after killing the mangroves, has toppled several large trees (banksias and a large cypress pine) in the last 4 to 5 years and is now extending into the mangroves further east with increasing difficulties of access.

The site sandbank is now encroaching more and more into the area known as the Basin which formed safe anchorage for even large boats in inclement weather. The Basin is now much more shallow and the site sandbank has gradually become more narrow and is losing height. The southern 50 to 80 metres in recent times tends to curve towards the east. This is the zone mostly used by the waders and is popular for fishermen, boat visitors and families.

Additionally to these gradual changes noted, a dramatic change occurred in October 2004. About 100 metres south of the line of mangroves the sand spit was cut, leaving a channel 30 to 40 m wide with a deeper section about 5 to 10 m in the middle and 0.5 m in depth with a tide of 2 m. The site is now in two sections, with the northern end being slightly lower. At present any tide from 2.1 m upwards overtops the northern section in calm conditions. Obviously it will be worse in rough weather with larger tidal surges. In addition one has to negotiate about 40m of mangroves presenting difficulties for counting accurately and spotting flagged birds. After the experiences of the recent November count I was left pondering the future.

With a tide of 2.44m and starting 1½ hours before high tide, I had only a few minutes to do a rough count before it was impossible to keep the tripod and scope upright.

So, what of the future? The short answer for the coming summer counts would have to err on the side of pessimism in view of all past history and recent events. The situation may improve for the winter counts but in recent years a higher sandbank about 1km south of the present site is preferred by the birds during smaller tides. This could only be counted from a boat.

Emails:- with regard to some exciting news from New Zealand

Checked St Annes's Lagoon again this morning. Blowing very hard, but no sign of the reed warbler.

Oceanwings revealed some good birds, with good numbers of Westland petrels, and Salvin's albs. Also both Giant Petrel sp., Northern royal, White-capped, Antipodean, Gibson's and a Snowy Albatross. Also Sooty, Flesh-footed and Hutton's Shearwaters, and Grey-faced Petrel. Fantastic views of male and female Gull Bunting on the Kaikoura Peninsula.

At Lake Grassmere the bird seen yesterday proved to be a Marsh Sandpiper, and a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper also made an appearance. Perhaps more of note were three Bar-tailed Godwits (out of a total of 9) with orange over yellow flags on the right tibia. Apparently birds from South Australia, and surely a pretty amazing record?!

Brent Stephenson

Wrybill Birding Tours, NZ & Eco-Vista: Photography and Research

Reply

Dear Adrian and Brent,

Brent's sighting of three South Australian-flagged Godwit together at Lake Grassmere in the northeast corner of South Island, New Zealand, on the 1st December is even more amazing than you thought!!

These were almost certainly from a group of eight juvenile Bar-tailed Godwits (out of a flock of nine) that we caught near Port MacDonnell in South Australia on the 23rd November (only eight days previously)!

The place where these were caught does not normally have any Bar-tailed Godwits and we only see them there in years of good breeding productivity. We've only banded nine there previously - and all were also juveniles. One of the six from 1998 was subsequently recaptured in Victoria, and one of the three banded and orange/yellow leg-flagged in 2001 has subsequently been seen near Invercargill at the very south end of New Zealand (29/12/2003, 24/10/2004).

We knew these birds caught in South Australia on the 23rd of November were about to migrate and we suspected that their destination must be New Zealand. The average weight of the four males was 354 grams, and of the four females was 421 grams. Typical weight of moulting adults in southeast Australia at this time of the year is about 250 grams for males, and 300 grams for females. So they were carrying approximately a 40% addition of fat when we caught them, which should be more than sufficient for the near-3000km flight to South Island, New Zealand.

A truly amazing set of flag-sightings. Thank you very much Brent. Please keep an eye open to see if they remain there, or move on further.

These records also illustrate that not all juvenile migration is complete by mid-November. We've previously had a juvenile Turnstone banded in the same area of South Australia in late-November turn up near Auckland in North Island, New Zealand, only a month later.

Many, many thanks, and best wishes,
Clive.

Email - 2004 - a bad breeding year for Red-necked ??

Dear

All,

We completed the first activity of this year's monitoring program on the percentage of juveniles in the Red-necked Stint population by making two catches at Inverloch last weekend (4-5 December).

Because the percentage of juveniles at 6.6% seemed unusually low for this location, I have extracted from our files all data related to past Red-necked Stint catches at Inverloch.

This 6.6% figure for juveniles is the equal lowest (with 1992) figure for the 20 years for which we have data. 1992 is well known for being a disastrous breeding year for most species breeding in the Arctic (because of the coincidence of high predator levels and extremely poor weather conditions, strongly influenced by the dust clouds from the Mount Pinatubo volcanic eruption).

Obviously we need catches from all our other monitoring sites before we have an accurate estimate for Red-necked Stints and a comparable picture for other species. But as Inverloch is traditionally the site with by far the highest proportion of juveniles each year, the portends are not good for this year's breeding outcome. We have some limited data on other species already, but the results are not conclusive except that it appears that Bar-tailed Godwits (which in south-east Australia, come from Alaskan breeding grounds) appear to have bred well.

December and January are going to be very busy months (we hope to get our first Sharpie sample tomorrow and on Friday), and we will keep everyone posted with ensuing reports on our results.

Best wishes,
Clive

Not apparently the end of the matter- the government can still appeal - but very encouraging news from the Birds Korea website: <http://birdskorea.org>

Victory for the Saemangeum wetland - 04 Feb

Seoul Administration Court rules in favour of environmental concerns

(Yeonhap News: February 4th, 2005) On February 4th, 2005, the Seoul Administrative Court ruled in favor of environmental conservation in a legal suit challenging the controversial Saemangeum Reclamation Project brought by environmental groups and local people living around the Saemangeum tidal-flats.

The court ruled that no economic benefits can be expected from the Saemangeum reclamation project because of the anticipated economic losses caused by water pollution in the proposed reclamation reservoir, and by the destruction of the tidal-flat ecosystem.

The court ruled therefore that it is necessary to cancel or change the permit to reclaim the public water area, because the environmental, ecological and economic damage to be expected from the project is huge and irreversible. They listed the following reasons to support their ruling to change or cancel the original permit: the possibility of using land reclaimed through the project for agriculture is very low; it is anticipated that the water quality in the reclamation reservoir will be too poor to use for agriculture; estimates of economic benefits to be derived from converting the existing area to agriculture are flawed; and massive damage will be caused to the tidal-flat ecosystem.

The court added that no decision has yet been made on the end-use of the land to be reclaimed, but reiterated that it cannot be used for agriculture as water in the reclamation reservoir created for that purpose will be too polluted.

The court did not rule against continuing work to reinforce the existing sea-wall, **but did rule against construction of any further sea-wall required to close the remaining 2.7 km stretch that remains open.**

The massive and controversial reclamation project along the southwestern coastline of North Jeolla Province has therefore yet again run into another major hurdle due to this ruling.

Earlier, the court had tried to suggest a way forward by recommending that further research be conducted before their final ruling was made. It also recommended that the government should halt the project and set up a committee of experts to review fully the potential environmental and economic consequences of the reclamation. The court also suggested that parliament should legislate a special law to help iron out such issues. Although, environmental groups and local fishermen had welcomed these recommendations, the government and the ruling Uri Party openly rejected them on January 28th.

As the court has now ruled in favor of environmental conservation, the government will bring the case to the Seoul High Court.

(Translated by Ma Yong-Un [KFEM]; edited by Nial Moores [Birds Korea].)

Protection for shorebird habitat ???

The new Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park creates almost 500 kms of new green zone along the coastline over tidal foreshore flats. It will not include rivers, creeks, channels, estuaries or mangrove forest other than those that were already part of the four pre-existing marine parks.

Mudflats, salt-marshes and sandbanks at river mouths and estuaries are shorebird habitats and are needed by migrating waders. These areas seem to be unprotected in the plan.

Check out your local area or the places you plan to visit.
Website; <http://www.epa.qld.gov.au>

Port of Brisbane Corporation Count Results – 2004

Our second year of thorough monthly counts of waders and waterbirds have been completed for the Port of Brisbane Corporation (PBC). Once again, counts were conducted the day before, or after the scheduled monthly count day set down for the QWSG count programme.

The methodology stayed the same as the counts conducted in 2003, with numbers being listed under the appropriate habitat the birds were using. (Dry Open Area, Wet Margin, Broken Ground and Bund Wall). The group counted 56,124 waders during the twelve months, a little less than 2003 (57,302), which does not include the waterbirds.

There have been some changes to the sites within the PBC reclamation area during the year and expansion out into Moreton Bay is well underway with the outer sea wall and several internal bunds already completed.

S1 – this 21 hectare site has just about been filled in now, but there was some good sightings early in the year with 40 Grey Plover using it in February, 30 Double-banded Plover recorded in April and 45 of the same species using it in May.

S2 – a 18 hectare site that is also in the process of being filled, which had some good wader numbers using it in the early part of the year, but supporting fewer birds as the year progressed. Best numbers were, 445 Pacific Golden Plover and 1295 Lesser Sand Plover in January. One Broad-billed Sandpiper was counted at the site in February and March, and 850 Curlew Sandpiper also used the site in March. A total of 855 Red-necked Stint and 160 Red-necked Avocets were counted in May and up to 62 Double-banded Plover used the site during June and July.

S3A – is another 18 hectare site, which along with S3B appears to be attracting a large number of waders possibly due to the fact that S1 & S2 are no longer suitable for them. Numerous good counts to list. 5558 Red-necked Stint & 52 Grey Plover in January, 331 Pacific Golden Plover in February, 2804 Red-necked Stint in March, 91 Red-necked Avocet in August, 543 Grey-tailed Tattler, 1319 Curlew Sandpiper, 1 Broad-billed Sandpiper in November and 350 Pacific Golden Plover in December. In June 2 Black-tailed Godwits were seen at this site with the only other record for this species coming from Area 5 on the same count day.

S3B – a smaller 10 hectare site along side S3A, which did not attract as many waders as 3A until the last count in December when 1523 Pacific Golden Plover, 1533 Red-necked Stint and 1886 Curlew Sandpiper were seen. A large group of 121 Pied Oystercatcher was seen during the January count.

J Paddock – just a very small portion in one corner of the original 10 hectare site remains with little or no birds. However the early arrival of one Double-banded Plover was recorded at this site in February and there was a breeding record of Red-capped Plover during the November count.

Area 5 – the 12 hectare site that is being transformed into a wader roost continues to take shape and not drawing too many waders during the earth works. However, 4 Black-tailed Godwits were seen on the June count, 513 Black-winged Stilt and 72 Red-necked Avocets in July, 154 Red-necked Avocet and 151 Red Knot in September, 12 Marsh Sandpiper and 248 Eastern Curlew in October.

Claypan – a 25 hectare site that has not changed and is a favourite spot for the Eastern Curlew with numbers varying from 142 in January, 192 in February through to 334 in August.

Visitors Centre – lake site has not attracted many wader species during the year, but continued to support a good variety of water birds.

New sea wall & internal bunds – is the newest addition to the PBC, which now extends another one point eight km out into Moreton Bay. The sea wall is the foundation for the new reclamation ponds that hopefully will support the waders for the next coming twenty years. Already the waders are starting to use the internal bund walls, particularly Grey-tailed Tattler, with 477 counted in October along with 580 Curlew Sandpiper.

Thirty-five flagged birds were seen as follows: -

January	1 orange flag, Red-necked Stint. 1 orange flag, Curlew Sandpiper. 1 blue flag, Grey-tailed Tattler. 5 green flags, Bar-tailed Godwit (4) and Lesser Sand Plover (1)
February	3 green flags, Bar-tailed Godwit (2) and Lesser Sand Plover (1)

March	1 orange flag, Red-necked Stint. 3 green flags, Bar-tailed Godwit (1) and Grey-tailed Tattler (2)
April	2 green flags, Grey-tailed Tattler
May	1 orange flag, Red-necked Stint
June	2 orange flags, Red-necked Stint (1) and Caspian Tern (1). Also 1 orange flag on lower leg and white flag on upper leg on Red-necked Stint (flagged in Korea)
July	1 orange flag, Eastern Curlew
September	1 orange flag, Bar-tailed Godwit
October	1 orange flag, Lesser Sand Plover. 2 green flags, Great Knot (1) and Grey-tailed Tattler (1)
November	3 orange flags, Curlew Sandpiper (2) and Great Knot (1). 3 green flags, Great Knot (2) and Bar-tailed Godwit (1)
December	3 green flags, Bar-tailed Godwit (2) and Great Knot (1)

Breeding records of Red-capped Plover species were recorded at S1 in February (nest with 2 eggs), 3A in August (1 chick), 3A in September (2 chicks), and J Paddocks in November (2 chicks)

Some other interesting sightings during the counts were:

January	1217 Little Tern and 5 White-winged Black Tern S2. 106 Chestnut Teal Area 5
February	304 Little Tern S1 and 114 Australian Pelican Area 5
March	489 Little Tern and 38 White-winged Black Tern S2, 4 juvenile Chestnut Teal Visitors Centre Lake
May	362 Silver Gull and 135 Chestnut Teal S3A
July	138 Royal Spoonbill Claypan
August	245 Royal Spoonbill and 1 Buff-banded Rail Visitors Centre Lake
November	400 Little Tern New Bund Walls
December	315 Little Tern New Bund Walls

Chestnut Teal were recorded in large number from May through to November, with the largest count being 643 in June and 538 in September. The biggest concentration of this species occurred in Area 5, which is a favoured site for this species.

Wader species (in taxonomic order) and numbers using the PBC during 2004 are included with this article. Many other waterbirds were also recorded using the sites, however, lack of space in the newsletter does not allow the printing of them.

Thank you to the PBC for their ongoing support of the QWSG and supplying the vehicles and equipment during the counts. A very special thanks to Wayne and Renee Young for their continual sacrifice of their time on the weekends of the count and organising the barbeques that followed a few of the counts.

Many thanks also to the following people who gave up their time to help complete the counts during 2004. Without your help it would not be possible to get such good results for the PBC and our own database. My apologies if I have omitted anyone from the list.

Dawn Beck, Margaret Bernard, Alf Boden, Michele Burford, Gene Burreson, Lyn & Phil Cole, Ken Cowell, Linda & Phil Cross, Peter Crow, David Edwards, Mark Gardner, Ben Garnett, Andrew Geering, Joyce Harding, Sandra Harding, Roy & Patrice Hose, Paul Hoskins, Dave Houghton, Arthur & Sheryl Keates, Marianne Keller, Rob Kernot, David Milton, Pete Nichols, Carol Northcote, David Peterson, Ralf Reeger, Peter Rothlisberg, Mark Sanders, Kath Shurcliff, Cameron Slack, Satoko Tadauca, Brian Tynan, Floss Wainwright, Tom Wheller, Jim & Ivell Whyte, Renee Young, Wayne Young (PBC) and Dan Pedersen (Seawall Alliance).

We have once again contracted with the PBC to continue counting in 2005 and still require people to assist us each month. If you are interested please see further details in this newsletter.

Linda Cross.

NB – Spreadsheet of the species and numbers observed can be found on the next page.

MYSMA - Monitoring Yellow Sea Migrants in Australia

Over the past two decades, the Yellow Sea coast has been identified as a region of enormous importance to shorebirds. It is now considered the single most important staging region in the East-Asian Pacific Flyway, with over two million shorebirds refuelling there during northwards migration. Much of the region is threatened by human use and reclamation of intertidal flats. A particularly topical issue at the moment is the proposed reclamation of Saemangeum (South Korea), arguably the single most important staging site in our flyway.

The loss of sites such as Saemangeum has prompted widespread concern that shorebird populations are declining. However, detecting and documenting such population changes is difficult, because the Yellow Sea is a vast region with few ornithologists. In addition, interpreting counts collected during migration is problematic, as little is known about turnover rates of migrating shorebirds.

A logical alternative to monitoring shorebirds in the Yellow Sea is to monitor them on their non-breeding grounds, where shorebirds remain for several months while they moult and fuel for northwards migration. Australia is a particularly suitable country for such monitoring. It has more wader-counters than many other parts of the flyway, and there is banding evidence to demonstrate that most of our shorebirds stage in the Yellow Sea.

In recognition of this, the AWSG set up a shorebird population monitoring project (the PMP) in the early 1980s, involving regular counts of shorebirds at a selection of Australian sites. Although the database from the PMP has proved a valuable resource, a review of the project (Wilson, 2001) concluded that it has deficiencies. Most sites are only counted once a summer, so we have a limited understanding of the inherent variability in the count data and can only detect gross population changes. Furthermore, not enough sites are being monitored on a regular basis. It is of particular concern that some of Australia's most important shorebird sites, especially those on the northern coast, remain unmonitored.

The AWSG is currently finalising a contract with the Department of Environment and Heritage to improve our capacity to monitor shorebird populations. The Monitoring Yellow Sea Migrants in Australia (MYSMA) project aims to reinvigorate the PMP, and in particular to initiate systematic counting programs at key Australian sites.

Fieldwork for this project began in late November and early December, with two surveys each of the following north-western Australian sites: a 60 km stretch of Eighty-mile Beach, Northern Roebuck Bay and Bush Point. These sites were not included in the original PMP, in large part because they were thought to be difficult sites making repeatable counts impossible. In the last few years, however, much has been learned about roosting behaviour of shorebirds at these sites, enabling repeatable count methods to be developed. On the northern shores of Roebuck Bay, for example, it was found that much of the scatter in counts was caused by birds roosting in inaccessible saltpans and mangrove clearings. These roosts are only suitable for shorebirds when flooded by spring tides or wet-season rains. They are not used when dry, as their microclimate becomes too hot for shorebirds. In these conditions virtually all shorebirds on northern Roebuck Bay are forced to roost on beaches along the northern shores, the closest local site where they can stand on a cool, moist (wave-washed) substrate. Counts of northern Roebuck Bay are now carried out on tides of 6 - 8.2 m height, before the wet-season rains begin, and they generate nicely reproducible data.

The two series of counts in 2004 were supervised by Chris Hassell, whose team included Danny Rogers, Adrian Boyle, George Swann, Graht and Clare Morton, Andrea Spencer, Lisa Collins, Tim Gale, Dan and Wendy Trudgpn and Ricki Coghlan. Early inspection of the data indicates that the surveys went well and produced nicely compatible results. Highlights included:

- Approximately 380,000 shorebirds using the three sites during the surveys
- A count of 1,729 Sanderling in Roebuck Bay (previous record count for the bay was 1,510) and of 13,615 Terek Sandpipers on Eighty-Mile Beach (previous record 9,820)
- This was the first count in Australia in which Gull-billed Terns were identified at subspecies level. Numbers of the migratory Asian race *affinis* were closely similar on both surveys (1,807 found on the first survey, 1,823 found on the second) and clearly demonstrate that this species is not, as was once thought, a rare vagrant to Australia.
- The discovery of a Sabine's Gull, the fifth record for Australia (and the first to be recorded on an Australian wader count sheet!).

Counts of some important species, notably Great Knot on Eighty-Mile Beach, appear to have been lower than in previous surveys. However, the previous surveys were not carried out in exactly the same way, and we have yet to establish whether different count methodologies may have influenced this result. With count methods now firmly established for subsequent surveys, this kind of interpretation problem should become easier to solve in the future. It is our hope and intention that these counts will be carried out annually from now on. Volunteer assistance from experienced wader counters on these surveys is greatly appreciated, and we would be interested to hear from anyone who may be interested in participating, or who has ideas about how to expand the coverage of the PW counts.

Danny Rogers (drogers@melbpc.com.au)
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From Tattler No. 42 January 2005

Research Studies for the Hunter Estuary

Hunter estuary wetland rehabilitation and ecohydraulics research project

Jennifer Spencer

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This project commenced in March 2004 and forms part of a multi-discipline collaborative research project between the Australian Catholic University and University of Newcastle. It has been divided into two PhD studies that will focus on the Hunter estuary and run concurrently until 2007. As the 'ecology' student, I will be investigating migratory shorebird roosting and feeding ecology. My project will be complemented by a 'hydrological' study conducted by Ms Alice Howe (University of Newcastle), who will be investigating the hydrological and vegetation characteristics of high tide roosts and intertidal feeding habitat.

The Hunter estuary has been recognised as the most important site for migratory shorebirds in New South Wales, supporting more than one per cent of Australian populations of sixteen migratory shorebird species. However, significant declines in the both migratory shorebird abundance and species diversity have been recorded over the past thirty years and these declines have occurred alongside extensive flood mitigation works and industrial development within the estuary.

The main aims of my project are to:

1. investigate the past and present distribution of migratory shorebird roosting and feeding habitat in the lower Hunter estuary;
2. measure shorebird density and habitat use at high tide roosts;
3. investigate aspects of shorebird foraging ecology and prey availability within feeding habitat.

One of the main aims of the hydrological study is to investigate the conditions that favour salt marsh and mangrove establishment within roost sites.

Both studies will focus on three important high tide roost sites (the Kooragang dykes, Stockton sand spit and Ash Island) and on intertidal feeding habitat in Fullerton Cove, a large tidal embayment within the estuary. My fieldwork will be conducted over two migratory shorebird non-breeding seasons, between September and March (2004-05; 2005-06), using a combination of ground and boat-based surveys to determine the distribution and relative abundance of migratory shorebirds in the estuary under different tidal conditions. During these surveys, total shorebird counts and behaviour will be recorded over high and low tide periods. I will also be investigating shorebird feeding rates and benthic invertebrate abundance within permanent study grids in Fullerton Cove.

As a major outcome of this research project, we hope to identify the relationships that govern roost and prey availability for migratory shorebirds to aid in the management and creation of shorebird habitat. Both projects have received generous support from the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project and the Hunter Bird Observers Club

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 this newsletter.

Green leg flag sightings

- 1 Eastern Curlew – Manly Boat Harbour – Graham Palmer et al – 13.11.04
1 Eastern Curlew – Manly Boat Harbour – John Esdaile & Linda Cross – 17.11.04
2 Eastern Curlew – Manly Boat Harbour – Andrew Geering & Phil Cross – 4.12.04
1 Eastern Curlew – Manly Boat Harbour – Sandra Harding et al – 18.12.04
4 Eastern Curlew – Manly Boat Harbour – David Milton et al – 22.1.05
3 Bar-tailed Godwit – Manly Boat Harbour – Colin Reid – 13.11.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Fisherman Island – David Edwards et al – 14.11.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Toorbul Sandfly Bay – Dez Wells – 14.11.04
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Manly Boat Harbour – Linda Cross – 17.11.04
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Manly Boat Harbour – Joanna Morgan et al – 18.12.04
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Pine Rivers Northside – David Edwards – 18.12.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Toorbul Sandfly bay – Dez Wells – 18.12.04
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Fisherman Island – Ivell Whyte et al – 19.12.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Lytton – David Edwards & Phil Cross – 16.1.05
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Lytton – Dave Houghton – 22.1.05
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Luggage Point – Ivell & Jim Whyte – 22.1.05
3 Bar-tailed Godwit – Manly Boat Harbour – Barry Morgan et al – 22.1.05
4 Bar-tailed Godwit – Pine River Northside – David Edwards – 22.1.05
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Fisherman Island – Ivell Whyte et al – 23.1.05
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Toorbul 1km North – Dez Wells – 23.1.05
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Toorbul – Dez Wells – 23.1.05
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Kakadu Beach - Wader ID Day – 12.2.05
2 Great Knot – Fisherman Island – Andrew Geering et al – 14.11.04
1 Great Knot – Toorbul 1km North – Dez Wells – 14.11.04
1 Great Knot – Toorbul Sandfly Bay – Dez Wells – 14.11.04
2 Great Knot – Toorbul Sandfly Bay – Dez Wells – 18.12.04
1 Great Knot – Fisherman Island – Andrew Geering et al – 19.12.04
3 Great Knot – Toorbul 1 km North – Arthur & Sheryl Keates, Phil & Linda Cross – 2.1.05
1 Great Knot – Toorbul 1km North – Judy Caughley & Robyn Black – 16.1.05
1 Great Knot – Toorbul 1km North – Esther Townsend – 22.1.05
4 Great Knot – Pine Rivers Northside – David Edwards – 22.1.05
1 Great Knot – Fisherman Island – Andrew Geering et al – 23.1.05
2 Great Knot – Toorbul Sandfly Bay – Dez Wells – 23.1.05
1 Great Knot – Toorbul 1km North – Dez Wells – 23.1.05
3 Great Knot – Kakadu Beach – Wader ID Day – 12.2.05
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Manly Boat Harbour – Colin Reid – 13.11.04
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Manly Boat Harbour – Barry Morgan et al – 18.12.04
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Fisherman Island – Andrew Geering et al – 23.1.05
1 Greater Sand Plover – Manly Boat Harbour – Dave Houghton & Kath Shurcliffe – 9.1.05
1 Lesser Sand Plover – Manly Boat Harbour – Andrew Geering & Linda Cross – 17.11.04
1 Lesser Sand Plover – Manly Boat Harbour – David Milton et al – 18.12.04
1 Lesser Sand Plover – Manly Boat Harbour – Sandra Harding et al – 22.1.05

Interstate & overseas Green leg flag sightings

- 2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Tern Mountain, Village of Chefornak, Yukon Delta, Alaska, USA – Heather Swensen – 24.8.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Tern Mountain, Village of Chefornak, Yukon Delta, Alaska, USA – Sarah Connors – 25.8.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Tern Mountain, Village of Chefornak, Yukon Delta, Alaska, USA – Heather Swensen & Sarah Connors – 6.9.04

- 1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Manawatu Estuary, Manawatu, North Island New Zealand – Ian Saville – 29.9.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Bells Island, Waimea Inlet, Near Nelson, New Zealand – Willie Cook & Don Cooper – 6.10.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Waikiri Creek, Kaipara, New Zealand – T. Moore – 13.11.04
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Karaka, Manukau Harbour, South Auckland, New Zealand – David Lawrie – 14.11.04
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Motueka Sandspit, Nelson, New Zealand – Colin Miskelly – 28.12.04
3 Bar-tailed Godwit – Kiwi Esplanade, Manukau Harbour, New Zealand – Gwen Pulham & R. Clough – 3.1.05
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Ohiwa Harbour, Bay of Plenty, New Zealand – Tim Barnard, Gwen Pulham & Simon Chamberlin – 4.1.05
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Jordan's Farm, SE Kaipara Harbour, Auckland, New Zealand – Tim Barnard, Gwen Pulham & Simon Chamberlin – 5.1.05
1 Bar-tailed Godwit – Karaka, Manukau Harbour, South Auckland, New Zealand – Gillian Vaughan – 15.1.05
2 Bar-tailed Godwit – Rabbit Island, Waimea Inlet, Near Nelson, New Zealand – David Melville – 13.2.05
1 Red Knot – Jordan's Farm, SE Kaipara Harbour, Auckland, New Zealand – Tim Barnard, Gwen Pulham & Simon Chamberlin – 5.1.05
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – Stockton Sandspit, Hunter Estuary, Newcastle, NSW – Fred Van Gessel – 11.12.04
1 Great Sand Plover – South Beach, Ballina, NSW – Bo Totterman – 8.10.04
1 Great Sand Plover – Flat Rock, between Lennox Head & Ballina, NSW – Bo Totterman – 17.12.04

Orange leg flag sightings

- 1 Great Knot – Fisherman Island – Andrew Geering et al – 14.11.04
1 Greater Sand Plover – Fisherman Island – Peter Rothlisberg – 23.1.05
1 Curlew Sandpiper – Fisherman Island – David Edwards et al – 14.11.04
1 Red-necked Stint – Karumba Point, Gulf of Carpentaria – Christopher Timewell – 30.9.04
1 Red-necked Stint – Manly Boat Harbour – Robert Black & Lorelle Campbell – 6.1.05
1 Red-necked Stint – Manly Boat Harbour – David Milton, Sandra Harding, Barry & Joanna Morgan – 22.1.05

Blue (Japanese) leg flag sightings

- 1 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue flag upper right leg – Manly Boat Harbour – Colin Reid – 13.11.04
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue upper left and white lower left – Manly Boat Harbour – Ivell Whyte et al – 17.11.04
1 Grey-tailed Tattler – blue flag on upper left leg – Mathieson Homestead – Rob Kernot & Bob Gleeson – 29.1.05

Other wader leg flag sightings

- 1 Eastern Curlew – white over black flag upper left leg – Mathieson Homestead – John Knight – 19.11.04 (flagged in China)
1 Curlew Sandpiper – orange above white flag upper right leg – Fisherman Island – Andrew Geering et al – 14.11.04 (this colour not allocated, awaiting reply from AWSG)
1 Terek Sandpiper – white upper left and blue lower left – Manly Boat Harbour – Colin Reid – 13.11.04 (flagged in Taiwan)
1 Terek Sandpiper – white upper left and blue lower left – Manly Boat Harbour – Linda Cross & Andrew Geering – 17.11.04 (flagged in Taiwan)

Other leg flag sightings and banded birds

- 1 Caspian Tern – orange flag lower right leg – Manly Boat Harbour – Dave Houghton & Kath Shurcliff – 13.11.04
1 Caspian Tern – orange flag left leg – Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island – Michael Strong – 21.11.04

Interesting sightings

Please note these sightings are not authenticated records. (Check article on page 18)

* = to be submitted to BQ RAC

** = to be submitted to BARC

- * 1 Ruff/Reeve – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 23.12.04 * To be submitted to BQ RAC
6 Painted Snipe – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 6.11.04
9 Latham's Snipe – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 6.11.04
1 Sanderling – Maroochy River North Shore – Shirley Rooke & Judith Hewett – 12.11.04
1 Grey Plover – Ukerabagh Nat Res, Tweed Heads – Matthew Angus & Ian Watson – 16.12.04 & 19.12.04
2 Broad-billed Sandpiper – Cairns Esplanade – Keith Fisher – 18.12.04
2 Red-kneed Dotterel – Keong's Dam, Oakey – Arthur & Sheryl Keates – 29.12.04
2 Red-kneed Dotterel – Kedron Brook Wetlands – Dez Wells – 23.1.05

48 Grey Plover – Sandy Point, Yeppoon – Robert Black – 12.1.05
8 Black-fronted Dotterel – Cairns Airport – Keith Fisher – 21.1.05
191 Red-necked Avocets – Deception Bay – Phil & Linda Cross – 22.1.05
80 Masked Lapwing – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 22.1.05
2 Asian Dowitcher – Tuan, Great Sandy Strait – Steve Winderlich & Anne O'Dea – 13.2.05

Not waders but of interest anyway

2 Black-necked Stork – Saltworks Bowen – Jon Wren – 14.11.04
1 Black-necked Stork – Cairns Airport – Keith Fisher – 18.12.04 & 21.1.05
2 Black-necked Stork (both birds standing on osprey nest on power pole) – Saltworks Bowen – Jon Wren – 18.1.05
1 Black-necked Stork – Bishop's Marsh, Toorbul – A & S Keates, P & L Cross – 2.1.05
1 Black-necked Stork – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 16.1.05
18 Glossy Ibis – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 18.10.04
4 Buff-banded Rail – Trutes Wetland, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson – 4.11.04
110 Whiskered Tern – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 14.11.04
341 Little Black Cormorant – Tweed River Entrance – Marion Williams – 19.11.04
2 Black Swan (1st record for site) – Caboolture River Mouth – Ivan Fien – 11.12.04
159 Royal Spoonbill – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 23.12.04
2 Australasian Shoveler – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 23.12.04
1 Australasian Shoveler – Cobaki Retirement Village Wetlands, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson, Matthew Angus & Eddie Kleiber – 17.1.05
31 Hoary-headed Grebe – Keong's Dam, Oakey – Arthur & Sheryl Keates – 29.12.04
510 Little Tern – Sandy Point, Yeppoon – Robert Black – 12.1.05
270 Little Tern – Port of Brisbane – during monthly count – 23.1.05
91 Australian Pelican – Garnett's Lagoons – John Knight – 16.1.05
1 Southern Boobook – Banorah Point Sewage Plant, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson – 19.1.05
17 White-faced Heron – Deception Bay – Phil & Linda Cross – 22.1.05
1 Spotless Crane – Kedron Brook Wetlands – Dez Wells – 23.1.05
2 Spotless Crane – Cobaki Retirement Village Wetlands, Tweed Heads – Ian Watson, Matthew Angus & Eddie Kleiber – 17.1.05
140 Chestnut Teal (several pairs with ducklings) – Kedron Brook Wetlands – Dez Wells – 23.1.05

Count Programme by Linda Cross

Each month when I receive your count sheets I check them for errors and then extract information, which I use for the count programme and wader watch articles. I am amazed at the volume I have extracted from your counts for the last three months and believe it to be a record, as it has filled seven pages of my notebook!

It is always difficult to decide what to put in the interesting sightings section and I always try to provide a variety as I know quite a number of members like that section of the newsletter. Unfortunately there is not enough room to put them all in and I apologise to those who might be disappointed when they find that their sighting, which they thought of interest, is not included. I would also like counters and members to read the separate article regarding future sightings of rare and vagrant species.

Les Thyer and Rorich Cole recorded 4 Double-banded Plover during their count at Pioneer River in Mackay on 21.1.05. If these birds are arrivals from New Zealand, then it is a very early record, beating the previous one on 4.2.04.

John Knight sent a photograph of an albinistic Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Garnett's Lagoons, which was still recorded at the site on 22.1.05. John and others saw the same bird again on 28.1.05 while mapping the roost sites in the Great Sandy Strait during the weekend of 29th & 30th January.

There has been an excellent count of some species during the last couple of months, with some of them being either unusually high, or not normally recorded at those sites. It is possible that some of them are the highest record for the site. The Marsh Sandpiper count at one of our sites in Deception Bay in January was the largest count we have recorded since we started counting it ten years ago. It has been really pleasing to see some of these counts, and I share them with you now in the count programme.

Eastern Curlew

480 Thornlands – 18.12.04
 c1000 Mangrove Pt south claypan,
 Hervey Bay – 29.1.05

558 West Geoff Skinner Reserve – 18.12.04
 685 Mathieson Homestead – 16.1.05

Bar-tailed Godwit

2319 Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island – 13.11.04
 2210 Manly Boat Harbour – 13.11.04

2000 Amity Point – 13.11.04
 2100 Mathieson Homestead – 19.11.04

Pacific Golden Plover

182 Shellgrit Creek, Mackay – 14.11.04
 87 Sandbank No 2, Caloundra – 22.1.05
 55 Manly Boat Harbour – 22.1.05
 13 Ukerebagh Passage, Tweed Hds – 31.1.05

161 Maroochy River Northshore – 17.12.04
 92 Point Halloran Reserve – 22.1.05
 755 Fisherman Island – 23.1.05

Whimbrel

274 Donnybrook – 19.12.04
 340 Mathieson Homestead – 16.1.05

258 Sandy Point, Yeppoon – 12.1.05
 213 Lytton – 22.1.05

Common Greenshank

110 Mathieson Homestead – 14.11.04
 43 Donnybrook – 19.12.04
 27 Pine Rivers Northside – 22.1.05

60 Caboolture River Mouth – 11.12.04
 31 Toorbul – 22.1.05
 26 Deception Bay – 22.1.05

Marsh Sandpiper

18 Maaroom – 13.11.04
 17 Trutes Bay, Tweed Heads – 21.12.04
 72 Garnett's Lagoons – 2.1.05
 33 Luggage Point – 22.1.05
 13 Lytton – 22.1.05

33 Donnybrook – 19.12.04
 c30 Keong's Dam, Oakey – 29.12.04
 61 Deception Bay – 22.1.05
 14 Young Ave, Kinka Beach – 22.1.05

Terek Sandpiper

45 Toonah Harbour – 5.10.04
 100 Maaroom – 22.1.05
 8 Thornlands – 22.1.05

550 Mathieson Homestead – 14.11.04
 98 Manly Boat Harbour – 22.1.05
 28 Acacia Avenue, Wellington Point – 22.1.05

Lesser Sand Plover

1664 Fisherman Island – 19.12.04
 1300 Sandy Point, Yeppoon – 12.1.05
 1549 Fisherman Island – 23.1.05

1077 Pioneer River, Mackay – 23.12.04
 1020 Pioneer River, Mackay – 21.1.05

The only other noticeably higher and unusual counts were 66 Red Knot at Queens Esplanade, Thornside, 250 Red Knot at Mathieson Homestead on 22.10.04, 1100 Grey-tailed Tattler at Mathieson Homestead on 19.11.04, 68 Red-capped Plover on a new roost at Kinka Beach, Yeppoon on 18.12.04, 141 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Donnybrook on 19.12.04, 350 Greater Sand Plover at Sandy Point, Yeppoon on 12.1.05, 1850 Red-necked Stints at Luggage Point on 22.1.05, 136 Pied Oystercatcher, 492 Grey-tailed Tattler and 20 Ruddy Turnstone at Manly Boat Harbour on 22.1.05, 325 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and 221 Black-tailed Godwit at Pine Rivers Northside on 22.1.05. There were also large numbers of some species during the Port of Brisbane counts over the last couple of months, but they will appear in a separate article.

That not so common Common Sandpiper has been appearing at a few sites. Normally recorded as a solitary bird, but a surprising number of 9 birds were seen at Cairns Airport on 21.1.05 and 5 visiting Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve on 22.1.05. Other records for this species are 1 at Pioneer River, Mackay on 25.10.04 and 1 bird on 23.12.04, and 1 at Caboolture River Mouth on 22.1.05.

Some more information extracted from count sheets on a number of species are listed below.

Beach Stone-curlew

1 Muralag Beach, Bowen – 31.8.04
 2 Pioneer River, Mackay – 21.1.05
 3 Cairns Airport – 21.1.05
 1 Gables Point Rocks, Hervey Bay – 22.1.05

Breeding records

2 Red-capped Plover chicks – Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island – 13.12.04
 1 Red-capped Plover chick – Seaforth Beach, Mackay region – 13.11.04
 2 Red-capped Plover young – Garnett's Lagoons – 22.1.05
 1 Red-capped Plover chick – Fisherman Island – 23.1.05
 1 Masked Lapwing chick – Seaforth beach, Mackay region – 31.1.05
 2 Black-winged Stilt chick – Lytton – 16.1.05
 3 Black-winged Stilt adults' feigning injury (possible nesting) – Deception Bay – 22.1.05
 Black-winged Stilt (eggs in several nests) – Kedron Brook Wetlands – Dez Wells – 23.1.05

The final extract from a count sheet sent in by Dave Houghton, who is a recent addition as a standby counter to the programme, gave me quite a chuckle. On his arrival at Lytton for the national summer count on 22nd January he disturbed a breeding attempt by a couple of young human residents in the bird hide. Apparently, it was a matter of red faces all round.

Welcome to the count programme Dave, where there is always the possibility of some excitement!

Thank you to all counters for sending in their National Summer Count sheets so quickly. There are only a couple of outstanding ones, which I will be chasing up very soon. So, if you have not already sent it, expect a call.

Happy counting.
 Linda Cross.

RARE AND VAGRANT BIRD SIGHTINGS

It is possible that most members are not aware that the Queensland Wader Study Group (QWSG) is a special interest group of the Queensland Ornithological Society Incorporated (QOSI), also known as Birds Queensland (BQ). Although we have a separate committee and are self-funded, the group is still accountable to QOSI/BQ, our accounts are audited as part of QOSI/BQ and our minutes are given to the QOSI/BQ committee.

It is for the above reason that the QWSG should also conform to the way QOSI/BQ process the sightings records that they receive. There is a list of rare Queensland birds and all reported sightings of any species on that list should be referred to the Birds Queensland Records Appraisal Committee (BQ RAC) for consideration. Any records of new bird species for Queensland should also be submitted to this body for appraisal. Species in bold text and marked with asterisks are on the Review List for Birds Australia Records Committee (BARC). Reported sightings of these species or of any new Australian birds will automatically be forwarded to the national committee for appraisal.

Unfortunately there is insufficient room in the newsletter to print the list or 'Rare bird report form', but a copy can be sent electronically, or by post. People can also down load rare bird report forms for both BQ RAC and BARC from the net or they can request them via the mail. Go to:

<http://users.bigpond.net.au/palliser/barc/review-list.htm>

If you have problems with downloads, or require the form and list please contact the following people:

Linda Cross	email: xenus@big.net.au	phone: 5495 2758
David Edwards	email: Gouldian@ozemail.com.au	phone: 3262 2017

Any rare birds recorded in QWSG newsletters from now on under the 'Interesting Sightings' section of Wader Watch will have the following above it:

Please note these sightings are not authenticated records

* = to be submitted to BQ RAC ** = to be submitted to BARC

Example:

* Ruff* ** Dunlin**

Linda Cross
 Count Co-ordinator
 on behalf of QWSG Committee.

WADER ID DAYS Reports

LYTTON ROOST WADER ID DAY REPORT 16 JANUARY 2005

There were a good number of 'experts' to help out the beginners the ratio being almost one to one. The weather was good to us and a good day was had by all.

Once again Lytton provided us with birds of similar types to identify. We were able to note the differences between the Bar-tailed and Black-tailed godwits, Marsh Sandpiper and Greenshank plus Curlew and Whimbrel. Also giving us good views were the Grey-tailed Tattlers and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers.

A mini highlight was to see two Black-necked Stint chicks scurrying around the mud flats.

Birds seen:

Chestnut Teal, Royal Spoonbill, Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, Greenshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Great knot, Golden Plover, Grey-tailed Tattler, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint.

Thanks to all those who made this a great day.

David Edwards

KAKADU BEACH ROOST WADER ID DAY REPORT 12 FEBRUARY 2005

With a 2.4m tide predicted for the day it was hoped that the man made roost would provide us with a good variety of waders for this identification day. Unfortunately this did not happen, which was a little disappointing for the eighteen members and guests that attended.

The vegetation growth on the roost has probably been a significant factor in keeping away the smaller waders that also generally use this man made roost. Pacific Harbour and Queensland Parks and Wildlife are aware of the situation and are already addressing the problem.

Although only three species of waders were present we did have excellent views due to the tide pushing them closer to the bird hide. After the initial identification some of the members kept themselves busy by deciding to do a count, and it was disturbing to hear that each one had a different total!

Birds seen (in taxonomic order):

2 Pacific Black Duck
 1 Australian Pelican
 1 Striated Heron
 1 Royal Spoonbill (flew past the roost, did not stop)
 1 Whistling Kite (put the birds up a couple of times as it flew over the roost)
 1032 Bar-tailed Godwit (some with breeding plumage evident)
 1 Eastern Curlew (on the roost early, flew off, then returned around 1500 hours)
 389 Great Knot (some with breeding plumage evident)
 3 Red Knot
 2 Pied Oystercatcher (flew past the roost early, then returned at 1500 hours with Golden Plovers)
 30 Pacific Golden Plovers (arrived at roost at 1500 hours with Oystercatchers after most people had left)
 1 Silver Gull

The following leg flagged birds were observed: -

3 Great Knot with green flag on the upper right leg (one also had metal band on lower left leg)
 2 Bar-tailed Godwit with a green flag on the upper right leg

Thank you to Ken Cowell, Floss Wainwright, Frank Bigg and Phil Cross for counting the birds enabling us to fill in a count sheet to add to the database.

Linda Cross.

WADER ID DAYS for March, April 2005

Unfortunately, because of the lack of suitable tides, height and timing, we are unable to organise any Wader ID days for March and April. We have our Count days, the Port of Brisbane counts plus other activities which is also restricting our ability to undertake these ID days. Watch out for dates as the waders return from August on

QWSG CONTACTS

QUEENSLAND WADER

The Official Quarterly Publication of
Queensland Wader Study Group

MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE QWSG

<u>CHAIRPERSON:</u>	David Milton	(07) 3390 2179	
<u>TREASURER:</u>	Sheryl Keates	(08) 8948 1794	or tattlers@tpg.com.au
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CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence to:
The QWSG Chairperson,
336 Prout Rd.,
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QLD 4156

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:
Single: \$15:00
Student/Pensioner: \$10:00
Family \$25:00

Receipt will be forwarded with next edition of Queensland Wader.

Forward application to:
QWSG Treasurer,
PO Box 958
NIGHTCLIFF
NT 0814

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 **May 18th 2005**

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.

Advertising Rates are \$20:00 for one quarter page and \$25:00 for a third of a page.

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Other Conservation Activities of Interest



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

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

Monthly Meetings

Birds Queensland - 7.45pm

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

Royal Geographical Society Meeting Room, 237 Milton Road, Milton.

Arrive after 7.15pm for a 7:45pm start.

QWSG MERDCHANDISE

Should you wish to purchase any of the QWSG Merchandise, items may be purchased at BQ Inc meetings held 1st Thursday of the month at the Royal Geographical Society Rooms **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 Limited stock.

Books

\$19:80 Shorebird Conservation in the Asia-Pacific Region.

\$ 3:30 A Guide to Waders of Moreton Bay (through Birds Queensland)

\$24:00 Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds

\$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
Wildflowers of Bribie Island

However, they can be obtained from BIEPA by contacting Kathleen Catalan on 07 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.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new member who have joined recently :

Tom & Kathryn BIGGS; Ken GRAY;

Nancy HAMMOND; Hugh POSSINGHAM

Floss WAINWRIGHT & Ken COWELL

Andrew WELLS; Ross & Janet WILLOUGHBY

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.

From *World Birdwatch* September 2004

A radio-tagged **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* flew almost 4,000 km from O'aku, Hawaii to the Alaskan peninsula in 70 hours. A minimum flight speed of 56 km per hour. ('Elepaio 64(1) :3)



Activities 2005

Monthly Count Programme

High Tides – Count Programme – 2005

Count Programme – 2005

Sun 13th Mar	2.21m at 11:30	Sun 21st Aug	2.00m at 10:37
Sat 9th Apr	2.25m at 09:45	Sun 18th Sep	2.08m at 09:32
Sat 7th May	2.07m at 08:35	Sat 22nd Oct	2.16m at 12:33
No count in June		Sun 20th Nov	2.22m at 12:06
Sun 24th Jul	1.90m at 11:45 National Winter Count	Sun 18th Dec	2.34m at 11:08

Please send completed count sheets to Linda Cross 40 Thompson Road, Bellmere, Qld. 4510

Port of Brisbane Count Dates – 2005

Sat 12th Mar	2.38m at 10:55 Meet 09:00	Sat 20th Aug	1.93m at 09:50 Meet 08:00
Sun 10th Apr	2.11m at 10:21 Meet 08:30	Sat 17th Sep	1.96m at 08:46 Meet 07:00
Sun 8th May	1.97m at 09:14 Meet 07:25	Sun 23rd Oct	2.04m at 13:18 Meet 11:30
Sun 5th Jun	1.81m at 08:05 Meet 07:00	Sat 19th Nov	2.31m at 11:28 Meet 09:40
Sat 23rd Jul	1.86m at 10:54 Meet 09:00	Sat 17th Dec	2.39m at 10:31 Meet 08:40

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..... First name:Surname Name:.....

Address:..... Membership: \$.....
 Postcode:..... Donation: \$.....
 Payment enclosed: \$.....

Phone: (Home) (Work)

Fax / e-mail:

TOTAL \$.....

How did you hear about QWSG

Are you a member of Birds Queensland?.....

What activities do you wish to participate in? (Please circle)

WADER COUNTS, FIELD TRIPS, SCIENTIFIC DATA COLLECTION, SURVEYS, CLERICAL,
 OTHER (specify.....)

SIGNATURE: DATE:.....

Post to: QWSG Treasurer, PO Box 958, NIGHTCLIFF, NT 0814

Cheques to be made out to: Queensland Wader Study Group