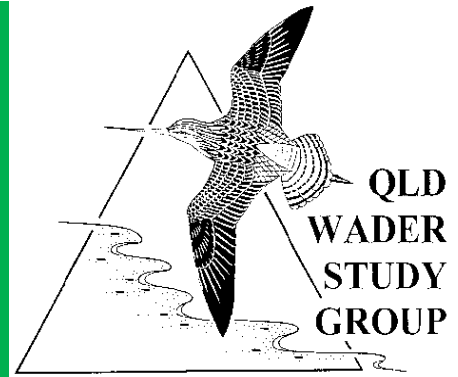


# QUEENSLAND WADER



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## An Unprecedented Wave of Avian Flu Has Been Devastating Bird Populations Across the Northern Hemisphere

Birdlife - 8 AUGUST 2022

By Liam Hughes



Header image: Seabirds, such as Northern Gannets, have been particularly impacted © Eleanor Hamilton

**A new, highly pathogenic form of avian flu has been sweeping through wild bird populations across the Northern hemisphere. The unprecedented levels of mortality seen in some species of seabirds have left conservationists extremely concerned about the disease's long-term impacts.**

As we emerge from the most devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, another pandemic has been wreaking havoc on wild bird populations throughout the northern hemisphere. A new, deadly and highly pathogenic form of avian influenza (bird flu) is rapidly circulating across a wide range of species, devastating populations and leaving conservationists significantly concerned about its long-term ramifications. Over 400,000 dead wild birds have been recorded over the last year – a vast underestimate given only a fraction of birds are tested – from over 2,600 outbreaks in non-poultry birds, over twice the amount as the previous large waves of avian influenza in 2016-2017 and 2021.

An early sign of the devastation occurred when over 300 Demoiselle Cranes were killed in an outbreak of the disease in India in November 2021, while the virus had also been circulating among seabird populations in Southern Africa. The virus soon spread west – likely carried by wild birds migrating to their wintering grounds. In December, 5,000 Common Cranes in Israel were found to have died from the disease, and outbreaks have since been recorded in nearly every European country, leading to widespread deaths across numerous species, including more than 2,000 Near Threatened Dalmatian Pelicans in Greece.

The virus was soon recorded in North America – a continent that only recorded its first case of avian influenza in 2014 – and has since been found in over 50 of the continent's wild species, from Great Horned Owls and Bald Eagles to Northern Gannets and Black-billed Magpies.

The virus has also been wreaking havoc on the poultry industry. In desperate attempts to control the spread, over 37 million chickens have been culled in the USA alone, with many European countries also culling poultry and domesticated wildfowl in unprecedented numbers.



Hundreds of dead seabirds are being found washed ashore © Shkiredim / Shutterstock

### Worrying new strain

The highly pathogenic dominant lineage of avian influenza currently circulating is H5N1. First emerging in 1996 in domestic geese farms in East Asia, the disease spread rapidly across poultry farms. Since then, there have been multiple outbreaks in wild bird populations in Asia – particularly among ducks, geese and swans – which have occasionally spread to Europe when these species migrate. While these outbreaks have had significant localised impacts on populations, they have typically only affected a handful of species before petering out, and in Europe have largely been restricted to the Autumn and Winter months.

However, the latest form of H5N1, which is believed to have emerged in 2014, has several concerning characteristics that suggest the virus is becoming better adapted to infecting wild birds. Most worrying is its seemingly higher transmissibility, resulting in a far higher proportion of wild bird populations becoming infected and unfortunately dying. “High percentages of species’ populations are impacted by the active strain of H5N1”, says Willem Van den Bossche, Senior flyways officer for BirdLife. “For example, 40 per cent of the south-east European Dalmatian Pelican population and more than 80 per cent of the UK’s Great Skua population have been affected”.

Unlike previous waves in Europe, outbreaks in the last two years have also continued through summer, suggesting Avian flu may now be endemic within the continent’s wild birds. It is also able to infect a much wider range of species than previous forms. “It is extremely worrying that the active strain of H5N1 stays present all year round, in a large number of species and seems to be able to jump quickly from species to species.” Says Van den Bossche. “This change suggests a shift of infection from winter migrants to wild birds that are resident or summer visitors in Europe and the US, including those that breed in colonies.”

One such group are seabirds, which have been particularly impacted during this wave. Their densely packed colonies provide ample opportunity for the virus to spread rapidly, and the numbers of reported dead birds is devastating. The Netherlands lost up to 80% of its breeding population of Sandwich Terns in a couple of weeks, and large-scale outbreaks have been recorded across seabird colonies in the UK, a country home to globally important breeding populations of several species. Across many Scottish islands, multiple mass mortality events of seabird colonies have been reported, including the world’s largest population of Northern Gannets at St Abbs Head, which has halved. Similar mass mortality events have been recorded in North America, with over 20,000 dead Northern Gannets being washed ashore in Canada.

Birds of prey and scavengers have also been impacted more than in previous waves, likely catching the virus through feeding on infected birds or carcasses. Nearly all of Western Europe's birds of prey species have been recorded with the virus, and it has again impacted some populations significantly – for instance, 30% of the Netherlands wintering population of Peregrine Falcons was wiped out in 2021. Worryingly, multiple predatory mammal species have also tested positive for the virus, from otters and seals to foxes and martens.

However, unlike previous strains of H5N1, not all infected birds die from the disease, and some species seem to be more severely impacted than others. There have also been some reports of infected birds showing no signs of disease. Researchers are trying to work out the reasons for these differing impacts, as it is likely contributing to the virus's spread.



40 per cent of the south-eastern European population of Dalmatian Pelicans died from the disease © Nicram-Sabod / Shutterstock

### Preventing the spread

Controlling the virus once it has spreading amongst wild birds is extremely challenging and will require coordinated efforts. Increased monitoring of the disease is crucial and would allow us to understand the full scale of its impacts, as well as where and how it is spreading, allowing conservationists to act effectively. Most countries, however, only test a fraction of dead birds, meaning current figures vastly underestimate the wave's impact. "BirdLife is urging governments to set up monitoring systems to track avian flu across a wide range of species and sites." Says Van den Bossche. "More capacity is also needed to remove the corpses of birds dying of avian flu as quickly as possible from the environment, as the virus stays active for days or weeks and this risks the disease spreading to other birds in breeding colonies, or to scavenging species."



Avian influenza has been recorded in several Great Skua colonies in the UK, a country home to roughly 90 per cent of its global breeding population © Eleanor Hamilton



The challenges of reducing the spread amongst wild birds, however, mean most of our tools to stop the virus spreading are ultimately aimed at its source – poultry farms. Reducing the intensity of poultry farms would significantly reduce the spread of disease, as the thousands of birds packed shoulder to shoulder provides the perfect opportunity for flu to sweep through the flocks. Avian flu can spread through bird faeces and feathers as well as human boots and clothes, so strict biosecurity measures are also essential. In a similar vein, substantially reducing or eliminating the potential for contact between domesticated and wild populations is also important to limit the virus's spread. This can include bringing domesticated birds indoors, ensuring buildings are properly bio-secure, and in the longer-term ensuring farms are located away from areas where large numbers of birds congregate, such as wetlands and other important migratory sites.

Vaccinating poultry is another potential tool to reduce the spread. Although currently banned in the EU and USA, largely due to fears they may contribute to the virus develop further worrying mutations, following this unprecedented wave, some European countries are assessing this option. "Vaccines are currently used in poultry farms in South-East Asia and the pros and cons of their use should be explored urgently, as vaccination could be a last resort to try to stop the spread and save some of the tiny and isolated wild bird populations that may be at risk", says Van den Bossche.

These species with small, isolated populations, such as several petrel species, are particularly concerning conservationists, as a single avian flu outbreak could result in devastating impacts. As well as measures to counter avian flu directly, the risks it poses to wild birds are exacerbated by the many other threats impacting them, from habitat loss to overexploitation and climate change. "Effectively conserving the most important sites for nature, particularly Key Biodiversity Areas, restoring degraded habitats, mitigating threats and implementing targeted recovery actions are essential responses to the wider biodiversity crisis, as well as delivering indirect benefits to minimise the impacts of avian influenza," said Dr Stuart Butchart, BirdLife's Chief Scientist.

## **The Australasian Shorebird Virtual Flyway Conference** **Global Strategies – Local Actions**

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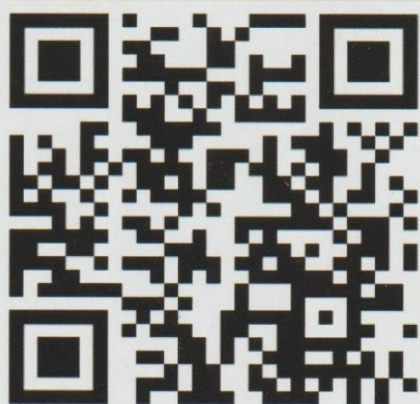
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## Working with Industry to Provide Safe Passage for Migratory Soaring Birds

Tens of thousands of soaring birds cross the Red Sea and Great Rift Valley every year during seasonal migration. Unfortunately, huge development pressures threaten these magnificent animals.



Many of these threats can be traced back to our increasing consumption of energy and food. Tourism is also creating significant changes in land use which threaten critical habitats. Finally, the indiscriminate hunting and illegal killing of birds is shockingly widespread in the region, with devastating consequences and mortality rates.

Luckily, governments are starting to recognize the urgency of protecting nature. “There should be a peace treaty between Man and the tree as well as Man and birds, because we continue to transgress upon them,” said Michel Aoun, the President of Lebanon.

### **There are simple, straightforward solutions available.**

Misplaced, poorly-located energy structures continue to spread across the globe. Power lines are one of the major causes of unnatural death for birds across the African-Eurasian migratory flyway, since soaring birds tend to perch or nest on the electricity poles, putting them at high risk of electrocution. Collision with wind turbines is an additional source of death and injury of birds. But if decision-makers incorporate wildlife conservation into the planning stage of their projects, they can easily avert this devastation. For example, locating energy infrastructure far from migration flight paths will make these routes infinitely safer for soaring birds.



Storks resting near wind turbines © Laurentiuss / Shutterstock

Illegal killing is also a scourge. Around 25 million birds are illegally killed or captured each year around the world, and this figure is increasing all the time. The promotion of sustainable hunting and better law enforcement can reduce the impacts on bird populations to a minimum.

“There should be a peace treaty between Man and the tree as well as Man and birds, because we continue to transgress upon them.” Michel Aoun, the President of Lebanon.

## 25 MILLION birds are illegally killed or captured every year

Perhaps surprisingly, landfill sites and waste water treatment plants can provide important resting and feeding habitats for migrating and resident birds. When properly designed and managed, these sites can offer considerable benefits to nature and birds that often go hand in hand with the obvious social, health and economic benefits.



White Stork in Waste Landfill © FJAH / shutterstock

Birdwatching is a growing market internationally, yet still unexploited in the Middle East, despite its important economic potential. Businesses that take the protection of migratory birds into consideration can differentiate themselves from their competitors, becoming more attractive to regional and international tourists sensitive to environmental issues. Integrating birds' conservation into tourism practices could prove a great asset for tourism sector.

### Count Programme by Linda Cross

The 2022 National Winter count was scheduled for 16 July. In total, 89 sites were counted. Of these, only 32 were counted on the count day and 29 sites were surveyed the day before, or within 2 days of the actual count day. All other counts took place at various times, some as much as a week before or a week after the count day. Regrettably, 21 sites were not counted which is reflected in the total count. The count produced a total of 6,558 waders.

In the table below are the results for the National Winter count. Species listed as per IOC checklist January 2021. Also included in the last column are the totals for the 2021 winter count for comparison.

Species	FNQ	CQ	GSS	SC	NMB	CMB	SMB	GC/ TH	Totals 2022	Totals 2021
Bush Stone-curlew	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Beach Stone-curlew	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	6	8
Pied Oystercatcher	2	6	43	10	65	59	183	7	375	421
Sooty Oystercatcher	-	-	-	4	1	1	-	3	9	2
Pied Stilt	235	16	346	11	478	853	226	175	2340	3128
Red-necked Avocet	-	-	-	-	-	147	-	5	152	1188
Masked Lapwing	46	9	23	7	172	67	24	14	362	436
Red-kneed Dotterel	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	8

Pacific Golden Plover	-	-	-	9	10	-	23	-	42	55
Grey Plover	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	2
Red-capped Plover	17	33	47	22	68	144	14	3	348	643
Double-banded Plover	-	-	2	2	183	18	26	35	266	335
Lesser Sand Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	142
Greater Sand Plover	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	7
Black-fronted Dotterel	-	3	7	-	7	8	1	-	26	79
Comb-crested Jacana	-	-	9	-	1	-	-	-	10	-
Eurasian Whimbrel	7	-	1	4	34	60	2	-	108	160
Far Eastern Curlew	1	-	52	3	248	67	58	2	431	404
Bar-tailed Godwit	6	29	177	1	215	250	92	-	770	1289
Black-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Ruddy Turnstone	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	-
Great Knot	6	-	252	-	16	53	-	-	327	190
Red Knot	-	-	5	-	1	1	-	-	7	27
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	1
Curlew Sandpiper	-	-	8	-	1	150	-	-	159	121
Red-necked Stint	-	10	-	-	280	346	21	-	657	568
Sanderling	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-
Terek Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	20
Grey-tailed Tattler	-	-	10	-	-	118	1	-	129	33
Marsh Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Common Greenshank	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
Unidentified small wader	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	12
Unidentified medium wader	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Total Wader Species	10	8	14	11	18	20	14	8	29	27
Total Wader Numbers	323	115	982	79	1790	2350	675	244	6558	9308

**FNQ** – Far North Queensland – Burdekin River, Cairns and Cooktown (4 sites)

**CQ** – Central Queensland – Gladstone and Yeppoon (7 sites). (No counts for Bundaberg or Mackay)

**GSS** – Great Sandy Strait – Boonooroo, Maaroom and Hervey Bay (10 sites). (No counts for Tin Can Bay)

**SC** – Sunshine Coast – Caloundra, Maroochy River and Noosa River (10 sites)

**NMB** – North Moreton Bay – Moreton Island, Redcliffe, Deception Bay, Bribie Island and Toorbul (26 sites)

**CMB** – Central Moreton Bay – Port of Brisbane, St. Helena Island, Kedron Brook and Pine River (9 sites)

**SMB** – Southern Moreton Bay – Victoria Point, Thornlands, Cleveland, North Stradbroke Island, Wellington Point, Thorneside, Manly and Lytton (15 sites)

**GC/TH** – Gold Coast and Tweed Heads NSW (8 sites).

It should be noted that there are 14 sub sites within the Port of Brisbane complex but recorded as 1 site in the above explanation.



Given that 21 sites were not surveyed, it is difficult to compare with the 2021 winter count. However, there are some notable explanations that address the figures, such as the lack of Red-necked Avocet and the lower number for Pied Stilt and Black-fronted Dotterel. All of which are nomadic resident species. Interestingly, the 2020 winter count produced 29 species of waders (same as this year) for a total of 7,185 birds. In that count, the avocet count was zero and stilts and dotterels in low numbers.

In the table, 18 migratory (same as last year) and 11 resident species (2 more than last year) were recorded during the winter count. Migratory waders accounted for 44.6% (2,927) of the count. Of those migratory wader numbers, 26% were Bar-tailed Godwit, Red-necked Stint over 22% and Far Eastern Curlew just under 15%. Resident wader numbers were 55.4% (3,631) of the count with Pied Stilt accounting for 64% of the resident species followed by Pied Oystercatcher with 10%, Masked Lapwing and Red-capped Plover with just under 10%. Central Moreton Bay sites recorded nearly 36% of the total winter count, followed by North Moreton Bay at 27% and Great Sandy Strait with 15%.

We were saddened to hear that Peter Tierney passed away unexpectedly on 28 May this year. Since December 2020 Peter had been battling Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia along with some other health issues. Peter worked for Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service for 30 years and during his time as District Manager with the Maryborough office he was instrumental in getting QWSG to survey the waders of the Great Sandy Strait region. With Peter's help our group conducted the first survey in February 1995, and his knowledge, expertise and participation were generously offered to help us conduct many more surveys until his retirement in late 2011. After his retirement Peter continued to assist counters at Boonooroo and Maaroom from 2015 until late 2019. QWSG offers our deepest sympathy to his wife Trudi and her family.

It is time to give your scopes a good clean in readiness for the return of the waders. Far Eastern Curlew is one of the early arrivals on the southward migration with a couple of reports from counters on their return. A large count of 161 were recorded at Toorbul on 16.07.22 and 9 birds seen at Caloundra on 29.07.22. There were a few overwintering records of interest for this species from Port of Brisbane complex (156) on 01.05.22, Maaroom (145) on 28.05.22 and Lytton No.1 claypan (143) on 28.05.22.

Pied Stilt were recorded at 41 count sites during the last 3 months with reports of juvenile/ immature birds within the flocks at 11 of those sites. No doubt there were young birds at the other 30 sites but not all counters record juvenile/immature species within flocks on each count. The highest count during the last 3 months came from the Port of Brisbane complex with 735 birds recorded on 12.06.22. Other high counts came from Luggage Point (490) on 01.05.22, Toorbul north (404) on 16.07.22, Maaroom (325) on 16.07.22 and Redcliffe airport north side (315) on 28.05.22.

In the table below are records for juvenile/immature Pied Stilts recorded within flocks.

Site	Date	Pied Stilt flock size	Juvenile/immature in flock
Port of Brisbane complex (from 3 sites)	17.07.22	376	44
Oyster Point	16.07.22	44	10
Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve	16.07.22	14	6
Port of Brisbane complex (from 2 sites)	12.06.22	108	19
Toorbul north	29.05.22	135	25
Caboolture River mouth	27.05.22	5	5
Kakadu Beach Bribie Island	15.05.22	126	20
Kakadu Beach Bribie Island	01.05.22	87	23
Kedron Brook Wetlands	01.05.22	141	62
Toorbul	30.04.22	117	11
Toorbul sandspit	30.04.22	108	26
Toorbul north	30.04.22	27	8
Bell's Creek Caloundra	27.04.22	10	2
Queen's Esplanade Thornside	22.04.22	62	12

Red-necked Avocet sightings came from just 2 count sites, Port of Brisbane complex and Trute's Bay Tweed Heads NSW. The Port of Brisbane complex recorded (147) on 17.07.22, (112) on 12.06.22 and (22) on 01.05.22 while Trute's Bay Tweed Heads NSW had just one record of 5 birds on 08.07.22.

Red-capped Plover appeared at 29 sites during the last few months with the highest count being recorded at Port of Brisbane complex (189) on 01.05.22, followed by Garnet's Lagoon 1 Susan River (98) on 30.04.22, Kinka Beach Yeppoon (65) on 30.04.22, Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve (61) on 28.05.22 and O'Regan's Creek westside Hervey Bay (50) on 01.05.22.



Double-banded Plover were recorded at 14 sites from late April through to early August. In the table to the right are the highest counts recorded at those sites. The species were recorded at 10 sites during the July count with reports of many birds in extensive breeding plumage. The August count is likely to be the last time to view these birds before they head off across the Tasman to their home in time for their breeding season.

Site	Date	Qty
East Geoff Skinner Reserve	04.08.22	37
Wave Break sand island Gold Coast	15.07.22	35
Amity Point sandbank	18.07.22	2
Day's Gutter Moreton Island	18.07.22	174
Deception Bay claypan	16.07.22	3
Boonooroo section 1	15.07.22	2
Port of Brisbane complex	12.06.22	20
East Geoff Skinner Reserve	11.06.22	110
King Street Mudflat Thornlands	29.05.22	18
Redcliffe airport north side	28.05.22	7
Kinka Beach Yeppoon	28.05.22	1
Kakadu Beach Bribie Island	15.05.22	7
Maroochy River north shore	02.05.22	10
Maroochy River sand bar	02.05.22	3
Shellgrit Creek entrance Mackay	26.04.22	17

Although not a wader, Judith Coles found another cross Tasman resident when conducting her count at Wickham Point on 13.07.22, a seal resting on the rocks. Sunshine Coast Underwater World identified it as a New Zealand Fur Seal.



New Zealand Fur Seal - Photograph Judith Coles

Black-fronted Dotterel were recorded at 15 sites (mostly in single digits) but 45 were counted at Deception Bay claypan on 28.05.22. Other double-digit counts came from: King Street Mudflat Thornlands (16) on 29.05.22, Port of Brisbane complex (10) on 12.06.22 and Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon (10) on 30.04.22.

Comb-crested Jacana records only come from a few sites within the count programme, and sightings are not always common at those sites, so it was nice to see a few records reported on counts. Garnet's Lagoon 2 Susan River (12) on 30.04.22 and both 1 and 2 lagoons combined (9) on 16.07.21. At Bishop's Marsh Toorbul, only the 5th record for this species at the site with (7) on 29.05.22 and (1) on 16.07.22. Luggage Point recorded (1 – first record for site) on 12.06.22.

A few interesting sightings extracted from the last 3 months of counts appear below. Additional extracts (migratory and resident) can be found in the "Interesting wader sightings" section of the newsletter. Order as per IOC species list July 2021.

Pied Oystercatcher:	Manly Harbour (190) on 30.04.22
Masked Lapwing:	Deception Bay claypan (75) on 16.07.22
Grey Plover:	Day's Gutter Moreton Island (5) on 18.07.22
Eurasian Whimbrel:	Port of Brisbane complex (60) on 12.06.22
Bar-tailed Godwit:	Manly Harbour (257) on 30.04.22 and Port of Brisbane complex (231) on 17.07.22
Black-tailed Godwit:	Luggage Point (3) on 01.05.22
Ruddy Turnstone:	East Geoff Skinner Reserve (18) on 11.06.22, Manly Harbour (13) on 28.05.22
Great Knot:	Maaroom (252) on 16.07.22
Red Knot:	Maaroom (5) on 16.07.22
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper:	Manly Harbour (17) on 28.05.22
Curlew Sandpiper:	Port of Brisbane complex (150) on 17.07.22
Red-necked Stint:	Port of Brisbane complex (835) on 12.06.22
Sanderling:	Day's Gutter Moreton Island (5) on 18.07.22
Terek Sandpiper:	Maaroom (16) on 30.04.22, Lytton claypan No.1 (2) – (1st record for site) on 16.07.22
Grey-tailed Tattler:	Manly Harbour (143) on 28.05.22
Marsh Sandpiper:	Garnet's Lagoon 1 Susan River (1) on 30.04.22
Common Greenshank:	Port of Brisbane complex (1) on 12.06.22 and 17.07.22

### Breeding records:

**Pied Stilt:** Many of juvenile/ immature birds within the flocks at sites (see table earlier in this article). However, these juvenile and immature birds are probably not breeding records from those sites, but rather part of breeding success in inland Australia after good seasonal rain and then moved towards the coast with adult birds.

**Masked Lapwing:** Noosa River mouth sandbanks (possibly breeding) on 18.07.22 and Manley Harbour (1 juvenile) on 30.04.22

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

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

Snail mail: 40 Thompson Road, Bellmere. Qld 4510 Phone: 5495 2758 Mobile: 0490 080 340

A reminder that Leg flag sightings must not be entered online during count entry. Please note that you can now enter flagged and banded sightings on the new website. If you prefer, you can email sightings to Jon Coleman (email address [legflags@waders.org.au](mailto:legflags@waders.org.au)). You can also contact Jon, Phil or I for the Leg Flag Observation Report Form.

Happy counting.  
Linda Cross.

**NOTE:** I looked at a few August counts entered on the website before I sent this article to the newsletter editor. I was surprised to see entries for Black-tailed Godwit and Red Knot which required a chat with counters to confirm. Although, I am aware that Far Eastern Curlew return in August, the return of these 2 species is earlier than expected, and it will be interesting to see if any other species do the same.

### Interesting resident wader sightings – as per IOC species list July 2021

**Bush Stone-curlew:** Seaforth Beach town and gardens area north of Mackay (42) on 29.04.22

**Beach Stone-curlew:** Maroochy River Goat Island (3) on 27.07.22, Kakadu Beach Bribie Island, Noosa River sandbanks, Buckley's Hole sandbar Bribie Island, Gable's Point Rocks Hervey Bay all recorded (2) between May and July while Kinka Beach Yeppoon and Sandbank No. 1 Caloundra both recorded (1) in May and July respectively

**Sooty Oystercatcher:** Wickham Point (4) on 13.07.22, Tweed River entrance NSW (3) on 08.07.22, Pioneer River Mackay (2) on 26.04.22 and a single bird recorded at St. Helena Island North, Day's Gutter Moreton Island, Kakadu Beach Bribie Island and Scarborough to Clontarf from 30.04.22 to 01.08.22

**Red-kneed Dotterel:** Garnet's Lagoon 1 and 2 combined Susan River (8) on 30.04.22, Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (2) on 27.02.22 and (1 each) at Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon on 30.04.22, Kedron Brook Wetlands on 01.05.22 and Luggage Point on 01.05.22

## Interesting Sightings

Not waders but of interest anyway – as per IOC species list July 2021

**Magpie Goose:** Gold Links Road Wetland Mackay (111) on 01.05.22 and Luggage Point (75) on 01.05.22  
**Black Swan:** Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon (167) on 30.04.22 and 115 at Port of Brisbane complex on 17.07.22  
**Pacific Black Duck:** Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (166) on 27.07.22  
**Grey Teal:** Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (206) on 27.07.22  
**Chestnut Teal:** Port of Brisbane complex (587) on 12.06.22  
**Hardhead:** Port of Brisbane complex (64) on 17.07.22  
**Australian Bustard:** Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (3) on 10.07.22  
**Buff-banded Rail:** Bishop's Marsh (1) on 16.07.22 (only 3rd record for site)  
**Spotless Crake:** Luggage Point (2) on 17.07.22, Nathan Road Redcliffe (1) on 28.05.22  
**Brolga:** Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon (10) on 30.04.22, Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (7) on 27.07.22 and Nathan Road Redcliffe (2) on 15.07.22  
**Australasian Grebe:** Port of Brisbane complex (44) on 17.07.22, Kedron Brook Wetlands (39) on 01.05.22, Manly Harbour (10 – includes 4 juvenile) on 28.05.22 (unusual at site – first record on site 12.04.22 with species still on site in July 2022)  
**Greater Crested Tern:** Maroochy River sand bar (690) on 20.07.22 and Scarborough to Clontarf (412) on 15.07.22  
**Lesser Crested Tern:** Amity Point sandbank (24) on 18.07.22 and Gable's Point Rocks Hervey Bay (12) on 13.06.22  
**Whiskered Tern:** Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (7) on 27.07.22  
**Black-necked Stork:** Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (6) on 10.07.  
**Australasian Gannet:** Goat Island Moreton Bay (2 adults) on 18.07.22 and Wickham Point (1 juvenile) on 13.07.22  
**Australian Darter:** Garnet's Lagoon 1 and 2 combined Susan River (25) on 30.04.22  
**Australian White Ibis:** Redcliffe airport north side (120) on 28.05.22  
**Straw-necked Ibis:** Garnet's Lagoon 1 and 2 combined Susan River (c500) on 28.05.22  
**Glossy Ibis:** Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (46) on 27.07.22, Nathan Road Redcliffe (28) on 15.07.22, Redcliffe airport north side (22) on 28.05.22, Kedron Brook Wetlands (15) on 01.05.22  
**Royal Spoonbill:** Port of Brisbane complex (106) on 17.07.22  
**White-necked Heron:** Kinka Wetland Yeppoon (3) on 28.05.22, Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve (1) on 28.05.22  
**Intermediate Egret:** Bishop's Marsh Toorbul (20) on 30.04.22  
**White-faced Heron:** Redcliffe airport north side (56) on 15.07.22 and Port of Brisbane complex (40) on 17.07.22  
**Wedge-tailed Eagle:** Pine Rivers Wetland Reserve (1) on 16.07.22  
**Swamp Harrier:** Wunjunga wetlands Burdekin region (2) on 10.07.22, Kinka Wetlands Yeppoon (1) on 16.07.22 and Redcliffe airport north side (1) on 15.07.22  
**Black Kite:** Luggage Point (1) on 01.05.22  
**Brahminy Kite:** Port of Brisbane complex (an incredible count of 16 – which included 9 immature) on 17.07.22  
**White-bellied Sea Eagle:** Kedron Brook Wetlands (1 on a nest) on 19.07.22  
**Peregrine Falcon:** Toorbul (1) on 16.07.22 and Scarborough Marina (1) on 29.05.22  
**Little Corella:** Kakadu Beach Bribie Island (96) on 12.06.22 (feeding on grey mangrove marine seeds and chasing away terns).

## Wader Watch by Jon Coleman

Hi everyone, welcome to Wader Watch covering the period May to July 2022, traditionally one of our quietest periods for leg flag records with the majority of birds overseas. This report includes a few late migrating and potentially early returning birds with green leg flags as well as some belated records missed from earlier reports.

Please remember if your submitting sightings there a Leg Flag Observation Report Form is available for capturing ad hoc sightings which will help ensure you provide all the correct information and you can email these to Legflags@waders.org.au. However, we really prefer it if you use our web site and enter your records there as we can process them online, they're easy to enter and far easier to manage through that way.

The web site is [www.waders.org.au](http://www.waders.org.au) and click on the Report a Banded/ Leg Flagged Bird link on the home page.

When completing a report only record what you see and don't assume anything in terms of which leg the flag is on, or any other details, we'll work with what you provide.



From May to July 2022 the following records were received.

### **Green Leg Flag sightings seen in QLD**

#### Bar-tailed Godwit

BWD, CDS, FBY

#### Great Knot

HFX

### **Green Leg Flag Sightings seen Interstate**

#### Pied Oystercatcher

A6 – 14/05/2022, Iluka, NSW: ABBBS

### **Green Leg Flag Sightings seen Overseas**

#### Bar-tailed Godwit

AKY – 17/05/2022, Higashiyoka higata, Saga prefecture, JAPAN: Shota Sawamoto

BVJ – 04/06/2022, Clark's Bay, Manukau Harbour, South Auckland, NEW ZEALAND: Tony Habraken

#### Ruddy Turnstone

CCN – 06/05/2022, Fomesu-kaigan, Itoman-shi, Okinawa, JAPAN: Ex Shorebird Facebook Page

#### Grey-tailed Tattler

DKB – 15/05/2022, Banzu Tidal Flat, Chiba, JAPAN: Toshifumi Moriya

DJN – 21/05/2022, Katori City, Chiba Pref, JAPAN: Shota Sawamoto

CKZ – 07/05/2022, Sanbanze Tidal Flat Funabashi Chiba, JAPAN: Shota Sawamoto

#### Lesser Sandplover

DNB- 25/07/2022, Nakajima, Kisarazu City, Chiba Pref, JAPAN: Shota Sawamoto

#### Terek Sandpiper

CFA – 22/07/2022, Namhae gangjin vay, SOUTH KOREA: Ex Shorebird Facebook Page

### **Yellow (WA) leg Flag sightings in QLD**

Nil

### **Orange (Vic) Leg Flag sightings seen in QLD**

#### Caspian Tern

E6 – 01/05/2022, Buckley's Hole, Bribie Island: Dez Wells

1H – 06/06/2022, Urangan Boat Harbour: Jack Worchester

3H – 12/06/2022, Lytoon Claypan: Arthur & Sheryl Keates

3H – 16/07/2022, Lytoon Claypan: Arthur Keates

#### Great Knot

Plain – 15/01/2022, Lota: Tony Cotter

Plain – 22/01/2022, Lota: Tony Cotter

Plain – 23/01/2022, Lota: Tony Cotter

Plain – 29/01/2022, Lota: Tony Cotter

Plain – 12/02/2022, Thorneside Esplanade: Tony Cotter

### **Overseas Flagged Birds seen in QLD**

#### **White over blue (Taiwan) leg flag sightings**

Black over white or white over black (Shanghai, China) leg flag sightings

#### Great Knot

AA1 – 25/12/2021, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 09/01/2022, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 23/01/2022, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

AA1 – 12/02/2022, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

L75 – 23/01/2022, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

#### **Blue over White and Blue (Japan) leg flag sightings**

#### Bar-tailed Godwit

C2 – 25/12/2021, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

#### Grey-tailed Tattler

Plain – 23/01/2022, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

Plain – 02/02/2022, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

H06 – 23/01/2022, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

568 – 06/02/2022, Wynnum Esplanade: Tony Cotter

The following people and organisations contributed data used in this report with apologies for any inadvertent omissions.

Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme, Jon Coleman, Tony Cotter, Tony Habraken, Arthur Keates, Sheryl Keates, John Lowry, Nelle Mawson, Toshifumi Moriya, Roloand Odsey, Shota Sawamoto, Dez Wells, Jack Worcester

Every record received is incredibly valuable so thank you to everyone who contributed their sightings.

## **Wader ID Days**

### **Shorebird ID Days - Manly Boat Harbour**

**Saturday 17 September - meeting time 14:15**

**Sunday 16 October - meeting time 13:30**

**Sunday 13 November - meeting time 12:30**

Meeting place: At the end of Davenport Dr, on the southern boundary of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron Clubhouse.

To register for an outing, please send a text message to the leaders. Participants will be required to sign the attendance register acknowledging they have read, and agree to comply with, the COVID-19 safe practices outlined in BQ's website: <http://www.birdsqueensland.org.au/covid-19.php>

In addition to the COVID-19 safety practices applicable at the time, under the conditions of the access agreement for the roost, participants must wear enclosed footwear and will be required to sign a form acknowledging responsibility for their own health and safety, including:

- wearing protective clothing at all times (eg. hat, enclosed footwear, sunglasses) and using sunscreen
- drinking water to avoid dehydration
- using insect repellent if necessary
- telling a leader about any health issues that may affect taking part in the field trip
- if feeling unwell, or concerned about someone else being unwell, immediately telling a group leader or another participant
- immediately telling a group leader or another participant about any injury suffered (including a slip, trip, fall and snake bite) or hazard that may cause injury to someone.

Anyone who does not comply with these conditions will not be allowed to enter the site or asked to leave. The gate will be locked after we enter the site and late arrivals will not be able to enter.

Participation in this field trip is strictly limited to those whose registration with the leaders is confirmed by the leaders.

PLEASE NOTE: As the outings are subject to any restrictions applying in relation to COVID-19, please confirm attendance with the leaders the day before the outing.

Leaders: Arthur and Sheryl Keates 0490 951 661.

### **Shorebird ID days – Kakadu Beach Bribie Island**

**Thursday 24 November at Kakadu Beach roost Bribie Island**

High tide at 09:40am of 2.53m Meeting time 08:30am

We are hoping that the king tide will help produce a variety of birds onto this roost as the large tide may push the waders off other roosts.

Take the Bruce Highway north from Brisbane and take the Bribie Island exit. Continue on this road to Bribie Island and follow the signs to Banksia Beach. When you arrive at the T-junction at Banksia Beach turn left and after a short distance turn right into the car park for the roost. A bird hide is positioned at both ends of the roost.

To register for the outing, please send a text message to the leaders. Participants will be required to sign the attendance register acknowledging they have read, and agree to comply with, the COVID-19 safe practices outlined in BQ's website:

<http://www.birdsqueensland.org.au/covid-19.php>

PLEASE NOTE: As the outings are subject to any restrictions applying in relation to COVID-19, please confirm attendance with the leaders the day before the outing.

Bring morning tea and a chair. It is a good idea to have a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent. Most importantly bring your binoculars or telescopes. Hopefully we can provide the answers to all your questions.

Please contact Linda and Phil Cross 0490 080 340 (or leave a message on 5495 2758) if you have any questions.

## Portugal – Save, Don't Sabotage Nature

Birdlife 30 June 2022

Portugal plans the destruction of critical coastal wetlands and their fragile biodiversity while hosting a global oceans conference. Birdlife International asks, "How do you spell hypocrisy?"

Just as the world gathers at the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon to protect and reverse the destruction of our oceans and their nature, the Portuguese government confirms rapid-track plans to build, not one but TWO new airports in the Tejo/Tagus estuary, a critical site for nature including over 200,000 migratory birds, not to mention its profound climate mitigation importance. With air travel among the most climate destructive ways to travel, Portuguese haste to over-rule the science and ram the project forward is a scandal.

The paving over of these precious Portuguese wetlands is not just a local affair. The affected populations of just the migratory shorebird species, let alone other migratory waterbirds that depend on the Tagus, are shared by 30 countries, from Africa to northern Europe, 342 Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas, 310 Natura 2000 sites and 4 Natural World Heritage sites.

Portuguese UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said it best. "In my generation, those that were politically responsible - that is my case - we were slow or sometimes unwilling to recognize that things were getting worse and worse in these three dimensions: ocean, climate and biodiversity. And that even today, we are moving too slowly in relation to the need to reverse the threat, of rehabilitating the oceans, rescuing biodiversity and stopping climate change. We are still moving in the wrong direction."



Flocks of 80,000 black-tailed godwits (NEAR THREATENED SPECIES), coming from Iceland, the Netherlands and other northern European countries, use the Tagus to feed and rest during their annual migrations.

Even Portuguese President Rebelo de Sousa, and ironically co-chair of the UN Ocean Conference, says "We must recover the time we have lost and give hope a chance, once again, before it is too late."



Marco Lambertini, Director General of WWF International, added his voice to this call. "We welcome today's decision by the Prime Minister to revoke the acceleration of the government's plan to build two airports in the critical and very sensitive Lisbon's Tagus estuary. We hope, rather, that this area is declared permanently off-limits to airport and impacting development. The proposed plan is at odds with need to restore rather than further worsen the ocean's health, and the commitments made just a few days ago by the Prime Minister at the opening of the UN Ocean Conference to protect ocean and coastal ecosystems."

We hope the government's just-announced decision to favour consensus will enable the government to focus more sharply on the wrong-headedness of these proposed airports.

## Chairperson Note re: AGM and New Committee Members

It is coming up to that time of year for the AGM and leading up to this period the Committee is looking to find out who wishes to stay or leave. As ever we are hoping to get new blood on to the Committee.

I sound as if I am continually repeating myself but, we are finding that we are an ever-aging group and have a concern about the future running of our group. It is not just the Committee that is giving us concern but the running of the various events that the group arranges is in jeopardy.

There are three major arms to the QWSG 1) Counts 2) Education and 3) Banding. At the moment counts and banding are very strong while the education section needs more drive. However, the position of Count Coordinator NEEDS to be filled / covered. Linda has done an amazing job over many years and needs to stand down. If this were to happen with no one to take over one of the core elements of QWSG would cease to exist!!!

Please consider joining us either on the committee or as a helper with counts, ID Days, educational talks, write articles for the Newsletter or even attend meetings as a QWSG Rep.

It might seem to be a daunting prospect to join a group of people who have been working together for a long time. We would really like to see some new faces with new ideas and experiences. You are not expected to be thrown in at the deep end but can learn on the job.

If you are interested, please contact one of the Committee to see what is involved in being part of the Committee. All are welcome.

In anticipation David Edwards, Chairperson QWSG

## Notice of the QWSG's AGM for 2022

The 2022 QWSG AGM will be held on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022 at 8:00am at Swan Lake Parking Area at the Port of Brisbane, on Lucinda Way.

If the weather is bad, we will make arrangements for another time or a Zoom meeting

Please email the chairperson if you are coming along, plus let me know if you require a nomination form for a committee position. [chairperson@waders.org.au](mailto:chairperson@waders.org.au) or [secretary@waders.org.au](mailto:secretary@waders.org.au)

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### NOMINATION FOR POSITION ON QWSG MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Name of Nominee: .....

Position: .....

Name of Proposer: .....

Name of Seconder: .....

(Note: Nominees, proposers and seconders must have current QWSG membership).

I accept the nomination for the position on the management committee of the Queensland Wader Study Group as indicated.

## 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, Andrew Thelander [president@birdsqueensland.org.au](mailto:president@birdsqueensland.org.au)  
 Secretary, Janette Thurley [secretary@birdsqueensland.org.au](mailto:secretary@birdsqueensland.org.au)  
 Treasurer, Wayne Lock [treasurer@birdsqueensland.org.au](mailto:treasurer@birdsqueensland.org.au)

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## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have joined recently:

Megan Adams and Chays Ogston, Rebecca Bennett, Aaron Brown,  
 Michael Clancy, Cecily Dean and Rick Thomason, Zen Dinesen,  
 Roy Durre, Sean Fritsch, Lara Keller, Ian Leyton, Mervyn Mason,  
 Pete Mitchell, Daniel Phillips, Harry Rosnell, Eileen and Jennifer Short,  
 David Watkins, Anne Webster

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

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

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**PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR RENEWAL IS DUE!**

## QWSG CONTACTS

### QUEENSLAND WADER

The Official Quarterly Publication of Queensland Wader Study Group

Website [www.waders.org.au](http://www.waders.org.au)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/QueenslandWaderStudyGroup/>

### **MEMBERS of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE of the QWSG**

<u>CHAIRPERSON:</u>	David Edwards	(07) 3262 2017	<a href="mailto:chairperson@waders.org.au">chairperson@waders.org.au</a>
<u>TREASURER</u>	Judith Giles	0428 545 801	<a href="mailto:treasurer@waders.org.au">treasurer@waders.org.au</a>
<u>SECRETARY:</u>	Peter Rothlisberg	(07) 3822 3759	<a href="mailto:secretary@waders.org.au">secretary@waders.org.au</a>
<u>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</u>	Brenda Smith		<a href="mailto:membership@waders.org.au">membership@waders.org.au</a>
<u>NEWSLETTER EDITOR:</u>	David Edwards	(07) 3262 2017	<a href="mailto:gouldian6@bigpond.com">gouldian6@bigpond.com</a>

### QWSG COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Robert Bush	0404 805 558	Dierdre Chrzescijanski	0439749149
Jon Coleman	(07) 3299 2780	Peter Driscoll	0418 212 627
Paul Finn	0480 177 792	Andy Jensen	0404 348638
Ross McMillan		Brad Woodworth	0439 577 551

<u>COUNT COORDINATOR:</u>	Linda Cross	07 5495 2758	Email	<a href="mailto:counts@waders.org.au">counts@waders.org.au</a>
<u>LEG FLAG COORDINATOR</u>	Phil Cross	07 5495 2758	Email	<a href="mailto:legflags@waders.org.au">legflags@waders.org.au</a>

BQ PRESIDENT Andrew Thelander Email [president@birdsqueensland.org.au](mailto:president@birdsqueensland.org.au)

CORRESPONDENCE All correspondence to:  
The QWSG Secretary,  
PO Box 3138,  
SOUTH BRISBANE,  
QLD 4101.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS Please notify the Membership Secretary as soon as possible of any change of address so that your Newsletter can be dispatched correctly.

SUBSCRIPTIONS Annual subscription rates:  
Single: \$15:00  
Student/Pensioner: \$10:00  
Family: \$25:00  
A receipt will be forwarded if required.

Forward application to:  
Membership Secretary or QWSG Treasurer,  
PO Box 3138,  
SOUTH BRISBANE,  
QLD 4101.

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

Copy Deadline for the next issue of Queensland Wader is **November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

Contributions should be addressed to:

David Edwards, the QWSG Editor, 54 Elliott Street, Clayfield, Qld 4011  
or E-mail to: [gouldian6@bigpond.com](mailto:gouldian6@bigpond.com)

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

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## Count Activities – 2022

### QWSG High Tide – Monthly Count Program 2022

Sat 10 Sep 2.03m at 09:24 8  
 Sat 8 Oct 2.07m at 08:21  
 Sat 5 Nov 2.06m at 07:15  
 Sat 10 Dec 2.41m at 10:46

Counters Rockhampton and north – please select a date as close as possible to the count programme Sat day with suitable tides to enable you to complete your counts.

### Port of Brisbane Count Dates 2022

Sun 11 Sep	2.11m at 10:06	Meet 08:45
Sun 9 Oct	2.18m at 09:03	Meet 07:40
Sun 6 Nov	2.20m at 08:00	Meet 06:40
Sun 11 Dec	2.36m at 11:21	Meet 10:00

Because of the ever-present worry of Covid please check to see what Government restrictions apply

### MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

**A reminder to members:** please check to see if your renewal is due and please let the Treasurer know if you change your contact details.

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

Title:..... First name: ..... Surname: .....

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

..... Postcode:..... Donation: \$.....

Payment enclosed: \$.....

Do you require a receipt? Yes / No

Phone: (Home) ..... (Work) ..... (Mobile).....

Email .....

How did you hear about QWSG?.....

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

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

WADER COUNTS, FIELD TRIPS, SCIENTIFIC DATA COLLECTION, SURVEYS, CLERICAL,

OTHER (specify :.....)

You will receive your newsletter (colour version) by E-mail.....

Signature ..... Date:.....

**Please email this form to:** membership@waders.org.au

Direct funds transfer to:  
 Qld Wader Study Group  
 BSB: 313 140 (Bank Australia)  
 Account number: 08305297

**OR Please post this form to:** QWSG Membership Secretary  
 PO Box 3138,  
 SOUTH BRISBANE,  
 QLD 4101.

**PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR RENEWAL IS DUE!**