

# Word about the Hood

Biannual newsletter of BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds Program

Edition 22 – Summer 2019



## UPDATE FROM THE BEACH-NESTING BIRDS TEAM

Dr Grainne Maguire, Coastal Birds Program Leader, BirdLife Australia

The start to this breeding season has certainly been a roller coaster of weather conditions, with unnaturally high temperatures, horrific bushfires and on the other extreme, gales and extreme cold temperatures. The birds in some regions have therefore had a rough start to the 2019/2020 breeding season, with high failure rates. In South Australia, however, we've had a high number of Hooded Plover fledglings to date, with 17 chicks already making it through the long five weeks before their flight feathers develop.

Our team has been embarking on expeditions into Corner Inlet each month, now ramping up to twice monthly trips, to track the breeding attempts of Pied Oystercatchers, Hooded Plovers, Red-capped Plovers and a range of tern species. This island system is truly remarkable,

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and in a given survey you might see over ten thousand godwits, 1,000 Red Knots, 1,000 Great Knots, thousands of Red-necked Stints, hundreds of Pied Oystercatchers, not to mention the number of nests to be located! Two of the key islands are fox free, while another two have foxes present. It creates a learning environment for us where we can better compare nesting success in the presence and absence of this key predator. We are using our observations, remote cameras and egg floating to obtain a thorough picture of how healthy an environment this is for breeding shorebirds and seabirds, identifying the main threats and success rates of the birds. You can see further below some of the amazing remote camera images captured so far!

Corner Inlet was also one of the places close to Clive Minton's heart, and tragically, Clive passed away in November. For those of you who don't know Clive, he was one of the most influential ambassadors for shorebirds in the world, establishing so many of the shorebird monitoring and conservation efforts that we continue with today. Clive was a true leader, connecting with people from around the world, from all walks of life. He was always so generous and giving, highly accessible, kind and his enthusiasm was contagious. There are so many people who love shorebirds and who have dedicated their lives to these birds, simply because Clive initiated that passion within them. We will miss you very much Clive.



The passing of Clive inspires us to try even harder to ensure we share our knowledge and love of beach-nesting birds with the broader community. Plover Appreciation Day this spring was a real success and every year, we continue to broaden participation from other plover lovers across the world. We were very lucky to work with the talented Laura Tan who created a powerful animation of the plight of the Hooded Plover, and her brother Daniel Tan, who composed the sound effects and music. What a talented team! If you haven't yet checked this animation out, please do (see link further below).

Another key project we've been busily working on, is the development of a new online hub for all of our project participants and partners. We have worked with a talented team of developers from Preflight, who have tailored our system so that we can give our participants better access to all the resources, training, notifications of events and other advice they might need to help beach-nesting birds. In January and February, we will be launching this new system and hope that it will improve your connection to our program!

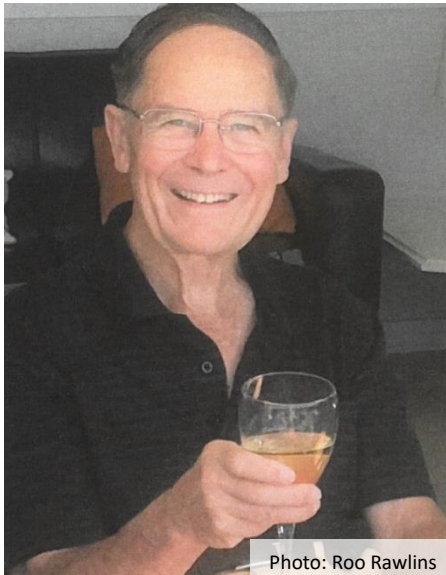
Our team continues to grow. Amy Adams who has worked on various coastal birds projects including Fairy Tern projects in Port Phillip Bay, joins us 2 days per week. Amy will be assisting with answering the many enquiries that come through our [beachnestingbirds@birdlife.org.au](mailto:beachnestingbirds@birdlife.org.au) email, the newsletter and other key projects, such as analysing data to guide management advice. She will also continue to support Fairy Tern project volunteers. Sonia Sanchez, who has been volunteering with us for a number of years now, is coming onboard for a few months over summer to assist with some field-based research as well as to run our social media. She will be helping fill the gap for Dan Lees, who is due to become a father for the first time and will be on leave for part of January and February.

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## TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

### JOHN RAWLINS, WE'LL MISS YOU

Dr Grainne Maguire, Coastal Birds Program Leader, BirdLife Australia



John Rawlins sadly passed away in July of this year. John will be greatly missed by the beach-nesting birds team. He was so lovely, helpful and generous with his time. He helped us significantly with establishing several funding applications and partnerships with foundations, which kept our project alive for a number of years. I will always picture John's smiling face and twinkling eyes. We miss you very much John.

We include an eulogy to John written by Diane Lewis (taken from the Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) newsletter:

"John was one of our first members; he joined the group in 2010 and then became a committee member two years later. John brought a wealth of knowledge to the group; his experience with running committees was invaluable. In late 2012, John agreed to take on the role of Secretary after Val Ford retired from the position. I felt very privileged to have another highly experienced person on the executive to help guide us through those

early years. In 2014, John initiated and successfully applied to the RACV at Cape Schanck for their 'good citizen grant' of \$5000. This grant provided FoHP with much needed signage plus the funds to de-sign and print the "Where can I walk my dog?" brochure. FoHP printed 3000 and the MP Shire printed another 4000. This was one of our first successful grant applications. It set the group up with good signage that was still being used on MPNP beaches last season. John was also an integral part of the FoHP Strategic Plan 2015. A sub committee was formed after the 2014 AGM (David Reid, John Rawlins, Mark Lethlean and Diane Lewis) to look at writing a Strategic Plan for the group. The plan was completed and implemented in 2015. It has guided the group ever since. John resigned from the committee in 2015. Health issues eventually prevented John from monitoring the beaches but he and Roo continued to support the group by volunteering at fundraisers and attending our AGM lunches and end of year debriefs. I always enjoyed these catch-ups and also to hear about their latest adventure. John was always only a phone call away. FoHP was incredibly lucky to have his expertise. I will miss his positive, friendly nature, quiet strength and big smile."





## **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT**

Mary-Ann van Trigt, volunteer from the Samphire Coast, South Australia

### **What made you want to volunteer on the Beach-nesting Birds Project and when did you start?**

In October 2014, I sighted a Red-capped Plover (RCP) on my local beach with a leg flag and thinking it was possibly important, I reported the details online. Grainne Maguire responded with the details of the bird and asked if I would be interested in assisting to monitor the local Red-capped Plover community. That's when my love of beach-nesting birds and shorebirds all began.

### **Where on the coast do you volunteer?**

Samphire Coast, South Australia, in particular between Semaphore and West Beach. I am also involved with the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary so when I am in the Sanctuary and see an RCP or hear their familiar call, I take note and more portal entries especially during the breeding season.



Mary-Ann (left) helping install an RCP sign. Photo: Jean Turner

### **What sort of activities do you undertake as a volunteer?**

I monitor the local RCP community at Semaphore South Beach, northern metropolitan Adelaide. These little guys can be quite transient and at the present time we have birds along three different sites spread over 15 kilometres. Come the breeding season, my car is loaded with equipment for erecting temporary fences and signs should a new nest be discovered.

When I head to the beach, my pockets are stuffed with brochures and stickers for when I speak with beach-goers to build awareness of the beach-nesting birds. I also assist the local BirdLife Australia team, Aleisa and Emma, with dog breakfasts and plover appreciation days when I can.

Our community of Red-caps can get up to over 30 birds at peak times. In recent years, we have been seeing more visiting Hooded Plovers, often just for a short period of time for several days. Although, we had one immature bird spend almost six months with our group last year, so I am becoming a Hoodie monitor also.

### **What has been one of your highlights whilst being a BirdLife Australia Friends of the Red-capped Plover volunteer?**

Having a successful fledgling is always one of the best moments when monitoring beach-nesting birds.

I have been fortunate to have followed a chick from egg to fledgling and beyond. This bird was raised solely by his father and is now a beautiful mature male and has recently been sighted with a girlfriend, so may soon have chicks of his own.

This little male, X7, has had quite an adventurous life and has been sighted welcoming visiting Hooded Plovers, Red-necked Stints and Double-banded Plovers to the shores of my local beach. Knowing this little bird's story is really special to me.



Photo: Mary-Ann van Trigt

Leonie Daws, Volunteer, Friends of Mallacoota Inc.

### **What made you want to volunteer on the Beach-nesting Birds Project and when did you start?**

I got my start with beach-nesting birds through local hero, Bob Semmens. Now in his eighties, Bob has been a tireless worker for the coast and the birds. When I first came here he was involved in putting up temporary fencing and signage on Mallacoota's main beach to protect a small breeding colony of Little Terns. I volunteered to help carry posts.

Not long after that we found a Hooded Plover nest at Betka Beach, a favourite beach for young families, so the Little Tern signs got modified to include Hooded Plovers. At this point, we made contact with Grainne and the Birdlife team and were able to get a grant to facilitate a workshop for local community members which led to the growth of an informal group of Hoodie supporters.



Photo: Rachel Mounsey

### **Where on the coast do you volunteer?**

Our area centres on Mallacoota, a remote coastal town in far East Gippsland. In addition to Seal Creek, which is a walk-in, there are eight beaches in the district accessible by road that are potential nesting sites - nine if you count the local airstrip where one pair insists on nesting, unsuccessfully. When it comes to the biennial count, that territory extends south to Wingan Inlet and north to the New South Wales border. The border section usually falls to Parks Victoria personnel to survey, but three intrepid members of our Hoodie group undertake a three-day hike to survey the coast between Wingan Inlet and Seal Creek.

### **What sort of activities do you undertake as a volunteer?**

As a group, we keep an eye out for nesting activity along the local coastline. My main role is to coordinate responses when a nest is located. The team swings into action, putting temporary fencing and signage in place. Between us, we can usually mount a monitoring program which has someone checking the nest(s) each day and reporting progress back to the group. I also maintain a presence for the Hoodies on the local social media sites and, when there is noteworthy news, in the weekly local paper.

Some of our beaches are located within Croajingolong National Park and are relatively inaccessible. Monitoring the beach at Seal Creek, for instance, means a 45 minute drive on a bush track that features some spectacular forest and even more spectacular potholes, followed by a 6km return walk.



Photo: Leonie Daws

In a past life I provided software training, which included some manual preparation. This experience equipped me to take on another form of volunteering from my remote location - assisting the Beach-nesting Birds Team with editing and updating the online manual for users of the MyBeachBird portal.

### **What has been one of your highlights whilst being a BirdLife Australia Friends of the Hooded Plover volunteer?**

Nest failures far outnumber successes here so it was a real highlight to watch the Betka pair raise a youngster to fledging last season. Betka Beach is a very popular family beach which means the Hoodies are frequently disturbed. Last season they nested next to the closed river entrance which left them susceptible to people

wading across from the car park. In response, we extended the fenced area into the water. This meant that when the chick hatched it was able to feed relatively undisturbed along the water's edge. It also learnt to use the shelters we had placed inside the fenced area. It was with a real sense of achievement that I and other group members watched the youngster head back to the fenced area and into a shelter whenever someone approached too close.

## PORTAL CORNER

### PORTAL UPDATE

Kasun Ekanayake, Beach-nesting Birds Program Coordinator, BirdLife Australia

At the end of every season, we collate the data that are entered into the MyBeachBird data portal and try and use every entry to compile nesting summaries for pairs that have been monitored consistently throughout the season. As emphasised in previous newsletters, the more consistent and clear the entries are, the easier it is for us to put together these little stories of our Hoodie, Red-cap and Pied Oyk pairs. It also helps to have a lot of people using the portal because we get a lot of feedback on how we can improve/refine certain aspects to make it more user-friendly for the users. To that end, we have made a couple of changes on the portal which some of you may have noticed already!

#### Differentiating between juveniles and chicks:

We have come across a few entries where Hooded Plover chicks (less than 35 days old) had been entered as juveniles in the '# Juveniles' field under the 'Location details' section on the Hooded Plover data entry page. Chicks that are less than 35 days old (pre-fledging) should be entered in the '# chicks' field under the 'Nest details' section. Birds are considered as juveniles only after they fledge which is when you see them fly confidently for at least 100m. Some chicks can fledge at 34 days old and some can take a little longer than 35 days, so it is important to check if they have fledged before entering them as juveniles in the portal. To make it easier, we have added a little description next to the '# Juveniles' field (see photo below) which should help in differentiating between juveniles and chicks.

The screenshot shows the 'Hooded Plover' data entry page. The 'Location details' tab is selected. The form includes fields for '1) Accompanying observer/s', '2) Date \*DD-MM-YYYY', and '# adult birds'. The '# Juveniles' field is highlighted with a red box, and a tooltip indicates that juveniles must be flying young and not chicks. A 'Cancel' button is visible in the top right corner of the form area.

#### Two new additions to the 'Bird Status' field:

Many of the beach-nesting shorebirds are known to reattempt nesting within a matter of days after nest failure (5-6 days sometimes) and if a site with a nest doesn't get visited frequently enough to detect failure as soon as it happens, you are likely to come across the pair trying to nest again with new scrapes on the ground. In most cases, what you are likely to see is that the old/previous nest had failed and that they have new fresh scrapes without any eggs on the same visit. In some cases, if you don't get to visit the site for a while you are likely to come across the failure of the old/previous nest as well as a new nest with eggs on the same visit. Previously,

you would have had to enter these observations in the portal as a *'Failed since last visit'* and *'Scrape (no eggs)'* or *'Nest (with eggs)'*. But now we have made it easier by adding two new status codes to the *'Bird Status'* field which are *'Failed plus NEW scrape (no eggs)'* and *'Failed plus NEW nest (with eggs)'* – see photo below.

The screenshot shows the 'Hooded Plover' data entry form. The 'Bird Status' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Birds sighted', 'Scrape (no eggs)', 'Suspect nest', 'Nest (with eggs)', 'Failed since last visit', 'Failed plus NEW scrape (no eggs)', 'Failed plus NEW nest (with eggs)', 'Suspect chicks', 'Chicks sighted', 'Fledged', 'Suspect chicks failed', and 'Flocking'. The last two options are highlighted with a red box. The form also includes fields for 'Nest habitat', 'Description of nest/chicks location', and 'Chick behaviour'.

### Adding *'Courting or mating'* behaviour to the Red-capped Plover form:

We were made aware very recently by users of the Red-capped Plover data entry form that the *'Courting or mating'* behaviour was not included as an *'Adult Behaviour'* under the *'Location details'* section of the form. It was bizarre because we essentially replicated what we used for the Hooded Plover data entry form so how it was omitted in the first place, is still a mystery! Courting or mating behaviour has been observed on numerous occasions given that some of the Red-capped Plover populations/colonies are monitored quite frequently by dedicated volunteers. So, we acted promptly to add this to the *'Adult Behaviour'* field (see photo below).

The screenshot shows the 'Red-capped Plover' data entry form. The 'Adult Behaviour' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Leading', 'Calling', 'Distraction displays', 'Incubating', 'Territorial or aggressive', 'Brooding', 'Foraging', 'Roosting', and 'Courting or mating'. The last option is highlighted with a red box. The form also includes fields for 'Accompanying observer/s', 'Date', 'State', 'Region', 'Site', 'Habitat', and 'Type of Form'.



## Setting up new sites for newly arrived pairs:

With new fledglings being recruited into the population every year, we are likely to see new pairs establishing new breeding territories sometimes in entirely new locations (e.g. Seacliff on the Fleurieu Peninsula) and sometimes very close to an already existing territory with a known breeding pair. As soon as nesting is discovered it is important that we set these new territories up as sites on the portal and start entering breeding and threat data for the new pair and site so that we can keep track of them throughout the season. On a few occasions where new pairs have established territories close to existing territories, we have seen breeding data relating to the new pair being entered under the existing territory. When this happens, it can be a bit confusing at the end of the season when we start compiling nesting summaries for the pairs. So, it is best to avoid this as we could easily help with setting up new sites on the portal. Please let us know when a new pair arrives and starts nesting and it is only when they start nesting that we set up a site for them on the portal.

## WHAT'S NEW..

### NEW MATERIALS

Red-capped Plover signs designed by Chrissie Cloete (funded by Coast Care for Friends of Hooded Plover Mornington Peninsula and Bellarine Bayside)



Protecting Beach-nesting Birds Joco mug designed by Anna Wilson at BirdLife Australia. Please get in contact if you would like to purchase one - \$18 plus postage for a small mug and \$22 plus postage for a large mug.



Red-capped Plover iron-on patches: cartoon circle patch designed by Chrissie Cloete; rectangle patch designed by Anna Wilson at BirdLife Australia. Limited stock available.



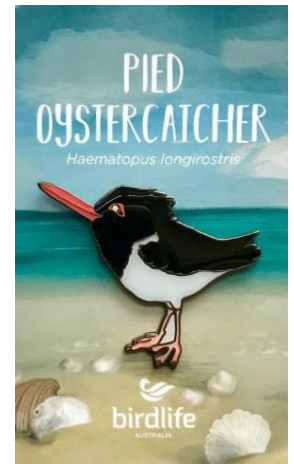
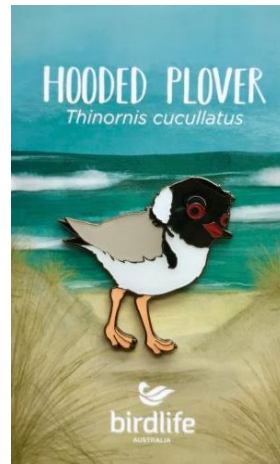


Hooded Plover and Pied Oystercatcher stickers designed by Chrissie Cloete. If you have an event coming up or a group or class you've worked with who you would like stickers for, please get in touch and we can send you some. Limited quantities available.



Hooded Plover and Pied Oystercatcher pin badges using images by Chrissie Cloete and backing cards designed by Anna Wilson at BirdLife Australia. These have been produced to fundraise for important beach-nesting birds projects that we have identified as priorities. Now available for \$9.95 through the BirdLife Australia's e-store:

<https://store.birdlife.org.au/product-category/bird-pins/>



Red-capped Plover hats (funded by BirdLife Australia). These were made for volunteers assisting with monitoring and protecting the Red-capped Plovers. Please contact us if you didn't get one! Very limited numbers available, but we can always apply for a small grant if they are popular.



Fairy Tern cartoons (as below) and sticker outlines designed by Chrissie Cloete (funded by a Biodiversity On-ground Action grant, DELWP). Contact us if you would like to use these.



## **WELCOMING OUR NEW HOODED PLOVER VOLUNTEER REGIONAL COORDINATORS!**

Back in 2009, the Beach-nesting Birds Program established Regional “Friends of the Hooded Plover” Groups to better support networks for the growing number of volunteer participants in the program. Regional Coordinators are volunteers who have taken on extra responsibility to assist in delivering the Beach-nesting Birds project, which includes coordinating and supporting volunteers at a local regional level, engaging with local land managers, education and awareness raising events and activities, coordination of data collection, and working closely with the BNB Team at BirdLife Australia.

We’re excited to welcome 3 new Regional Coordinators to the team!

### **SURF COAST**

**Meg Cullen, Beach-nesting Birds Project Coordinator, BirdLife Australia**

This is the first Hooded Plover breeding season with our new regional coordinator Janice Carpenter, who has taken over the reins from Sue Guinness, who dedicated many years to coordinating volunteers and the Hoodie program on the Surf Coast. Janice has thrown herself into this role, pictured here at the ANGAIR wildflower show in Anglesea in September this year. She has already been successful in recruiting numerous new volunteers into the program, coordinating beach walks and is really looking forward to having some chicks on the beach in the Surf Coast very soon! Welcome Janice!



### **FLEURIEU PENINSULA (ADELAIDE METRO)**

**Renee Mead, Beach-nesting Birds Project Coordinator, BirdLife Australia**

Not only do we have two brand new Regional Coordinators, we have a whole new Region!

With the Fleurieu Peninsula having such a large volunteer base, John Cobb and Ligita Blizgna very generously offered to coordinate the Adelaide Metro sites, which include Seacliff, Hallett Cove and the newly established West Beach. When we say metro, we mean it – West Beach is about a 10 minute drive from Adelaide Airport! With these sites so close to the city, we’ve managed to establish a large volunteer group for these three sites, and having John and Ligita share the Coordinator role, they will be able to manage such a big group – as well as media, management, and working closely with the land managers.

Welcome John and Ligita!



## **INTERESTING SIGHTINGS**

### UNUSUAL NESTS

Leo Berzins, NSW South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program and BirdLife Australia Beach-nesting Birds Project volunteer

In September and October 2019, I encountered some unusual nests while monitoring beach-nesting birds on the Far South Coast of NSW.

The first one was at Aragunnu, in Mimosa Rocks National Park. The beach at this location has one resident pair of Hooded Plovers and one resident pair of Pied Oystercatchers. On September 11, I found a hoodie nest in what looked like a Pied Oystercatcher scrape. There were two eggs. On my next visit (17 Sept), I found the Hoodies resting together a few hundred metres from the nest and one of the resident Pied Oystercatchers emerging from the fenced off nesting area. On closer inspection, I found that the hoodie nest was now a combined Hooded Plover/Pied Oystercatcher nest with two eggs from each, all being incubated by the Pied Oystercatchers. Two days later, the Hoodies had nested again a hundred metres away and had one egg, so the two hoodie eggs were removed from the Pied Oystercatcher nest and added to the new single egg hoodie nest. On my next visit five days later, I found that the Hoodies had five eggs in their nest. Unfortunately, the nest was predated the following week, probably by a Raven. The Pied Oystercatchers went on to hatch one of their eggs and are now raising a chick.

The second unusual nest was in October at Bithry Inlet, in Mimosa Rocks National Park. A new Pied Oystercatcher nest had, what at first glance appeared to be two eggs, one of which lacked the usual speckled pattern. On closer inspection, the plain grey coloured egg was revealed to be an egg-shaped piece of pumice. On checking the nest the following week, no further eggs had been added and the Pied Oystercatchers were incubating both their egg and the pumice.

The third nest belonged to a pair of Hooded Plovers at North Long Beach (also known as Haycock) in Ben Boyd National Park. When I first found the nest, it had a single egg and two pieces of dried kangaroo poo of similar size. The following week, when I returned to install a camera, there were two eggs and the kangaroo poo was no longer in the nest.

I don't normally photograph nests but I had to take quick phone pics with these three to share with other beach-nesting birds devotees.



### CORNER INLET PIED NEST CAMERA IMAGES

Dr Grainne Maguire, Coastal Birds Program Leader, BirdLife Australia

We have been fortunate to receive funding from the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority to monitor beach-nesting birds within the Corner Inlet Ramsar site. In order to accurately document the threats



facing beach-nesting birds within Corner Inlet, we need to use a combination of our observations (made in our 3 weekly trips) and remote cameras set on a sample of nests. This helps combat the low frequency of nest visits and provides extra information on what is happening to the nests in our absence.

Lyn Griffen has been helping us once again, going through tens of thousands of photos, searching each image to record whether a predator or disturbance event occurs and to record the outcome. One camera so far has been my absolute favourite to date, better than a movie! This was set on a Pied Oystercatcher nest out on one of the fox-free islands, and we subtly attached the camera to a fallen tree that was situated near the nest. The camera had an expansive view of the spit, and captured so many different shorebird and seabird species including flocks of Sanderling, Bar-tailed Godwit, stints, Little Terns, Hooded Plovers, and even a White-bellied Sea Eagle that perched on the fallen tree. What was most interesting though, was that it also captured



lots of behaviours of the nesting Pied Oystercatchers including a partner swap mid incubation! Thanks to the long-term banding program of the VWSG, the pair were identifiable by leg bands and flags, so we could detect that partnership swap in our camera images. Unfortunately, the nest was predated by a Forest Raven, which took one of the two eggs in the clutch. The nest site was eventually flooded also. The pair then began scraping a few metres from the original nest. All this in three weeks!



## THE JOURNEY OF KW: EAST TO WEST

Kasun Ekanayake, Beach-nesting Birds Program Coordinator, BirdLife Australia

KW was the only known chick from the last clutch of eggs for the 2018/19 breeding season belonging to its parents' XT (female) and JZ (male) at the Koonya West site. JZ, its father was a legend himself in that up until his disappearance at the end of the last season, was one of the oldest Hooded Plovers known to us. JZ was first banded as a juvenile on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1997 at Gunnamatta so he was at least 22 years old at the time of his disappearance!

KW was born around the 8<sup>th</sup> of January from a nest that survived the Christmas onslaught of visitors to the Mornington Peninsula. Volunteers Karen Wootton, Chris Willocks, Diane Lewis, Rosalba Catena, Graeme Millar, Joan McPhee, and Glenn Ehmke did a fantastic job in monitoring this site and great support was offered by Parks Victoria rangers Harry Bainbridge, Jessica McKenzie, and Holly Barker. The rangers helped with fencing the nest and installing signs both on the beach (flanking the nest site) and at the access point. KW as a chick was observed to be very active with Chris adding to one of her entries on the portal, "This is the most active chick I have ever seen. Running all over lower beach with JZ trying to supervise."

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February when KW was 36 days old (possibly already fledged at 35 days), it was decided that we should attempt to catch and attach a leg flag to it because birds can disperse very quickly after fledging. It was successfully caught and given the leg flag “KW”. The flag KW represented the site name ‘Koonya West’ and also ‘Karen Wootton’, the volunteer who put in a lot of effort in monitoring these birds. KW is amicably known to us as ‘Sweetpea’ which was the name given to it by Karen.



Photo: Brett Diehm

After fledging, it hung around with its parents for a bit and was last seen at the site on 27<sup>th</sup> of February. It was then seen heading west, sighted at Coppins Lookout beach on 5<sup>th</sup> March and then at Portsea Sphinx Rocks on the same day. It hung out with the flock at Portsea and was last seen there on 28<sup>th</sup> of March. The next sighting of KW came from a volunteer on the other side of the Port Phillip Bay at Collendina on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June. It was then seen earlier this season on 14<sup>th</sup> of October with JU (male) at the Collendina 5W site and it seems like they have partnered up, with KW being only 9 months old and still having ‘salt and pepper’ plumage on the head! We are waiting eagerly to hear the good news of them nesting. We only managed to track the journey of KW at a very young age from the east to west thanks to the flag and it shows what important information can be gathered from flagging Hoodies.

## COOPERATION OR TOLERANCE?

John Hargreaves, Friends of the Hooded Plover Far West Victoria

You might be forgiven for not liking Masked Lapwings. As Hooded Plover monitors, we constantly deal with what must be one of the most immutable, pervasive and pernicious cases of mistaken identity in the history of animal-human relations. Only last week, an otherwise sane and learned acquaintance exclaimed in near-hysterical tones; “You work with what? Oh, that stupid bird that nests on our lawn and attacks the dog.” Great Horus! How many times do I have to tell you people...

I have always liked Masked Lapwings. Their chicks are delightful to watch. Adults fearlessly defend them and they possess a noble grace foraging and breeding among garden gnomes and cricket grounds, stubbornly refusing to surrender productive habitat to the sterile order of human society. Their calls evoke childhood memories of summer holidays by the sea. One once earned my eternal respect (and gratitude) by attacking my feckless sibling, who despite advice, approached a nest and suffered bloody consequence and crest-fallen, teary retreat to Mummy. Oh, how I laughed; I’ve never been forgiven. And now there is even more cause to admire these feisty birds.

We have several rocky platforms along our coast that Hooded Plovers regularly choose as nest sites. All the sites present their own mix of threats and risks: exposure to high tide and storms; trampling and disturbance from fishers, snorkelers, shell collectors and shell grit gatherers; competition from other bird species for nesting territory or roosting room.

At one rocky site, whenever Masked Lapwings put in a scrape, we have come to expect the resident Hooded Plover pair not to settle with their own nest. From this experience, we assumed the two species did not tolerate



The Hoodie and Masked Lapwing nest sites.  
Photo: Renee Mead





Photo: Renee Mead

adjacent or overlapping territories, the larger, more aggressive Lapwings displacing the smaller, less aggressive Hooded Plover.

However, at another rocky site early this season, we were most surprised to find that this was not the case. A Masked Lapwing pair established their scrape in sand among dried kelp and shell litter on the rocky platform and laid four eggs. A fortnight later, only five metres away, the resident Hooded Plover pair also established a nest and laid eggs. Although one observer suggested the Hooded Plovers were sometimes cautious when approaching their nest, clearly the two species were tolerating each other's presence and sharing habitat. This has implied advantages for the Hooded Plovers in terms of defending territory, Masked Lapwings being able to take on bigger threats in an active manner, to which my sibling would attest, if only we were still speaking. Unfortunately, both nests failed.

At this same platform a decade ago, there was the strange case of oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers sharing the same nest and incubating each other's eggs. Even more intriguingly, the oystercatcher pair was mixed, a Pied mating with a Sooty. Alas, the nest failed before results could be seen. At yet another rocky site currently, there are three species nesting within a radius of 25 metres; Hooded Plover, Red-capped Plover and Sooty Oystercatcher. We even have a case of a Hooded Plover pair hatching an oystercatcher chick from an egg rolled out of a nearby Pied Oystercatcher nest.

I guess the moral of the story is not to over-generalise behaviours from limited observations and avoid going out into the field with set preconceptions. Shorebirds are intriguing creatures full of surprises.

## ANIMATING HOODIES

Laura Tan

Researching breeding Red-capped Plovers for a number of years, I've spent a large amount of time watching how they move, protect their nest, and lead their chicks around; from all of this I have a huge appreciation (and soft spot) for all plovers. Being invited by Birdlife to put together an animation of the Hoodie and its struggles during the breeding season was a really exciting opportunity for me. It's often hard to communicate all the obstacles these birds face trying to successfully rear their young, and animating these birds and their behaviours properly was something I'd wanted to do for a while but had never found the time. (I'm currently doing a PhD in conservation ecology, but have dabbled with art and animation since I was young and continue to do so.)

Our first step was working out the story we wanted to tell – did we want to portray other shorebirds? What information did we want to include? What was the main message we wanted to convey? Did we want to use a voiceover narrative or have captions explaining key points?

In the end, we settled on telling the story of the Hooded Plover from a purely visual narrative – showing failed nesting attempts, successful hatching that can be achieved with the help of volunteer intervention (fencing and education), and then the potential dangers that chicks face once they leave the nest. The total animation runs for 10,054 frames (30 frames per second) and there are over 380 separate objects – at least 70 of those were Hooded Plover chicks and adults and 20 of those were backgrounds.

Sound makes up an important part of the animation and really helps to tell the story. All of the music was composed and recorded by Dan Tan Music, and the majority of the sound effects were created by him too. Any time you see a Hoodie flying off, you're listening to the sound of a dish cloth being flapped around. All the Hooded Plover calls you hear throughout (both adult and chick) are actual Hoodie calls from real birds!

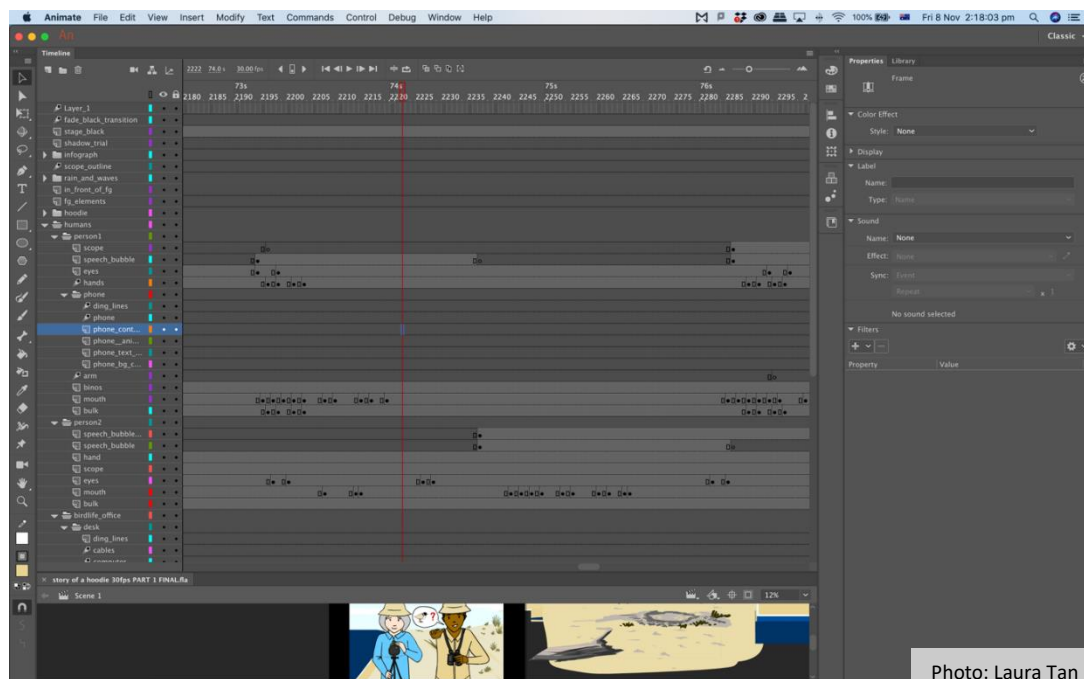
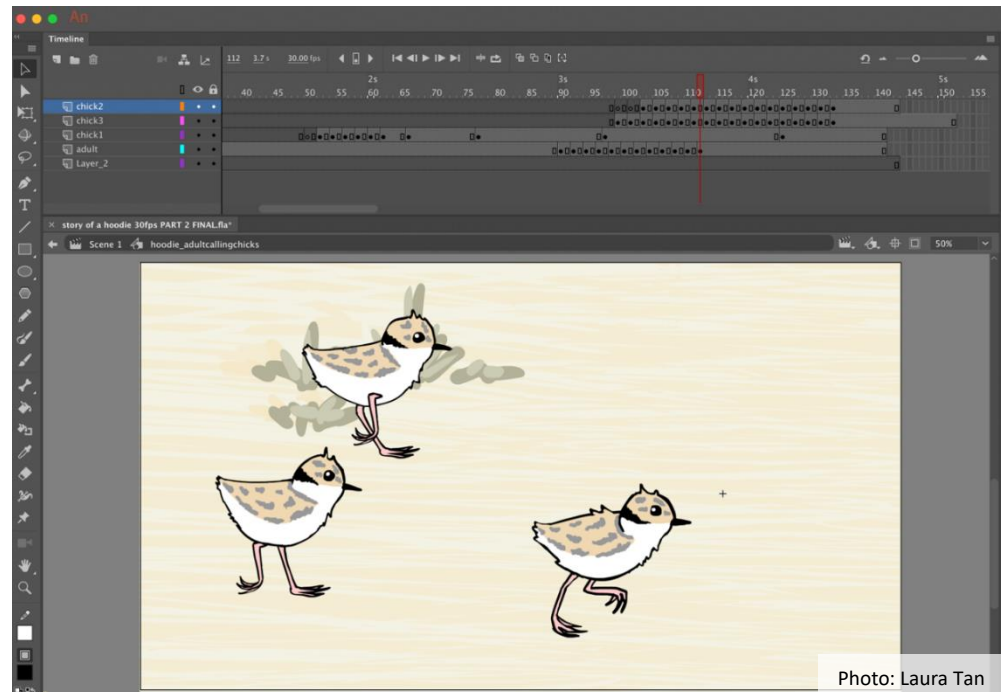


All up, this was a really rewarding project to work on, and I hope it is enjoyable and educational to those who watch it. Thanks to the BNB team and its volunteers for all the effort you put towards protecting these birds!

*Plight of the Hoodie: a little Aussie battler can be viewed by following this link:*

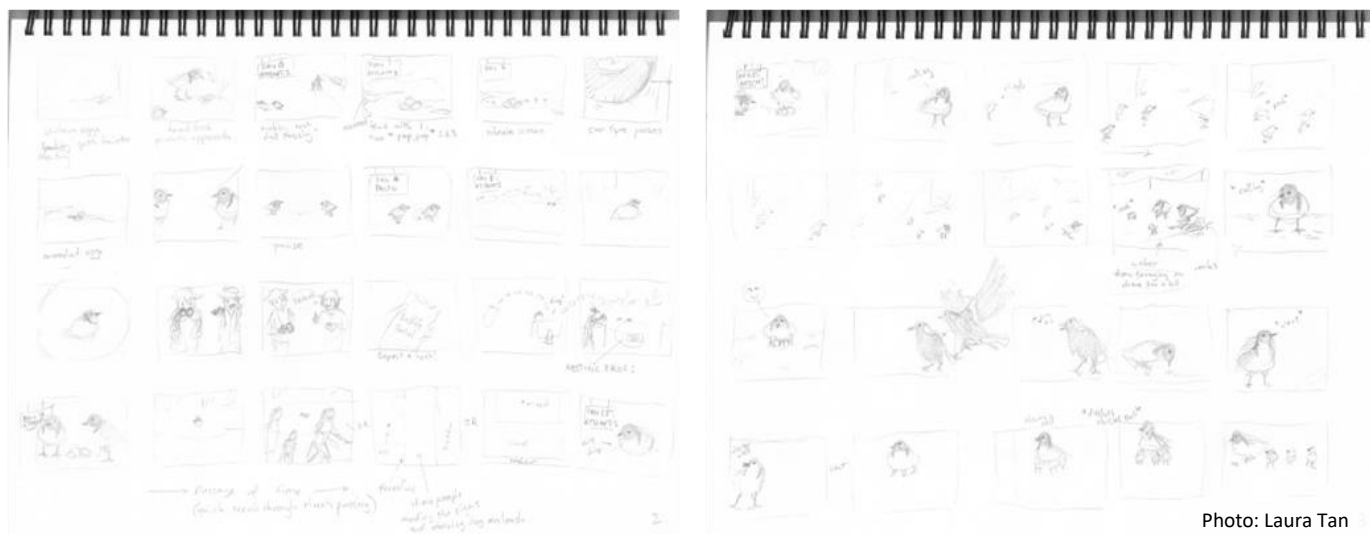
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L31yWS7NnVc>

*The number of frames in the top left corner demonstrate how many separate images are required to make a chick run across the screen.*



*Image with layers: It is easier to work with objects on different layers when creating an animation.*

*Rough storyboards for the animation. Most storyboards are a lot more detailed but I try and show the key points.*



## 5<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL PLOVER APPRECIATION DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Sonia Sánchez, Beach-nesting Birds Social Media volunteer

If you're reading this newsletter, you probably like birds and have a soft spot for plovers. Perhaps you are also one of the hundreds of people who got involved in the 5<sup>th</sup> International Plover Appreciation Day on 16<sup>th</sup> September - THANK YOU! And if you missed the day or don't know what Plover Appreciation Day is, don't worry! We'll tell you all about it here so you can spread the word!

In 2015, the BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds team decided that plovers deserved a day to be appreciated and celebrated. That's how International Plover Appreciation Day started and it has become a great way to raise awareness of the plight of ground-nesting plovers around the world. But, why is awareness and education so important for these birds? Habitats of many plover species are also some of the most popular areas for human recreation, meaning humans can have negative impacts on survival of eggs and chicks. Yet, in many cases, humans cause these major impacts without even knowing it, which is why awareness and education are key to the coexistence between plovers and people.

Our main aims for the 5<sup>th</sup> Plover Appreciation Day were to educate people about the threats plovers face and encourage people to follow plover friendly behaviours. Social media was an essential tool to deliver our message to as many people as possible. Think about how many people you see in the train, bus or tram checking their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms on their phones, and not just in Australia, but in the world! These are all potential individuals we could convince that saving plovers is worth it and educate them about how they could help. You might be wondering, did it work? We think it did! We were thrilled to see people from all around the world - Australia, Canada, France, Germany, South Africa, United States and more - using our campaign hashtags #PloverAppreciationDay and #PAD2019 to share their love for plovers on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Another successful hashtag was #KnowYourPlover, which we used to keep the conversation about tips and behaviours to help plovers flowing. This hashtag was enlightening and we also learned about other endangered species, such as Piping Plovers in Canada and the US, which were locally extinct in Ontario for 30 years and returned to breed in 2007 thanks to extraordinary conservation efforts in the US Great Lakes.

This year we had a special partner, Nature's Valley Trust from South Africa, to run a photo caption competition. In the lead-up to Plover Appreciation Day, we shared two photos, a Hooded Plover adult and a White-fronted Plover chick, and invited our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter audience to provide clever and funny captions. We received many entries from all around the world and it was so tough to decide the winners! But we did it, we sat, we ruminated and we picked the winner captions! The winners were Chris (South Africa) for the hoodie photo, with "Have kids they said. It will be fun they said", and Julie (NSW) for the White-fronted Plover photo, with "Guess they liked it cause they went and put a ring on it."



So far so good, right? Well, we still have something else to share! The HIGHLIGHT of the 5<sup>th</sup> Plover Appreciation Day! We launched *The plight of the hoodie: a little Aussie battler* on Plover Appreciation Day and, since then, thousands of people have watched the video, shared and liked it on social media. What a powerful and wonderful way to give our Hoodies and other plovers voice!

Yes! It was a busy Plover Appreciation Day on social media! But besides all the likes, retweets, comments and posts, there were also many people, institutions and organisations who ran community events and activities in Australia and all around the world. It would be impossible to name them all here, but a huge shout out and thank you to all of you! And THANK YOU SO MUCH once again to everyone who got involved in Plover Appreciation Day! We absolutely love to see how every year there are more and more people participating. We can't wait until next year!

## PARNDANA CAMPUS STUDENTS AND THE HOODIES IN THEIR HOOD

Shaheen Bradford, Teacher, Kangaroo Island Community Education

The topic for term 4 at Parndana Campus has been 'Biological Science' with a strong focus on how the growth and survival of living things are affected by the physical conditions of their environment. Students have therefore been acquainting themselves with their local Hoodies.

We are lucky enough to have Hooded Plovers call many beaches on Kangaroo Island home. To start with, we set about investigating how beach environments change. We looked into both natural and human-mediated change and how these changes can affect the survival of Hooded Plovers. This included two excursions to Snellings Beach on the north coast of Kangaroo Island.







Photo: Shaheen Bradford

During our first excursion, the highlight for many was the discovery of a pair of nesting birds. During this excursion, we also undertook a pitfall trapping activity designed by BirdLife's Beach-nesting Bird Team. The aim was for us to learn more about the Hoodies main food source; the invertebrates. Despite unfavourable weather conditions which filled our pitfall traps (plastic cups buried just above the high-tide mark) with sand, we were able to do some random sampling/sieving along the beach. The invertebrates were put into vials (clean urine sample jars!) and were sent off to one of our local entomologists Dr. Richard

Glatz, who identified approximately 30 of the invertebrates. We then used this data to see how important data collection is and how it can tell a story. During this first excursion we also learnt how fencing was erected to protect Hooded Plover nesting sites, as well as looking for and identifying threats. Caroline Paterson, a BirdLife Australia volunteer on Kangaroo Island, shared with us her extensive knowledge on both Hoodies and the beach ecology through a series of fun games and interesting facts.

The second excursion saw the Year 5s and 6s become the teachers by taking the Reception/Year 1 class to the same location and sharing with them the importance of invertebrates, keeping dogs on leashes, walking and or driving below the high-tide mark. Students created their own pamphlets to give their younger counterparts based on what they had learnt throughout the term. During both visits, students completed a mock Data Portal entry using the field notebook, their teacher then entered this data into the portal, demonstrating to the students the importance of citizen science.

Our second excursion ended with a walk to the end of the beach to see if we could spot some chicks as the eggs were due to hatch. However, there were visible signs of both car tracks and unleashed dogs in and around the nest, which led to the discovery and disappointment that the nest had failed. It was a real reminder that despite all the work that goes into protection of a species by volunteers, there are always more people to educate and make aware that our beaches are homes to many species. For each species to remain on this planet (humans included) and use the beach environment for their livelihood and recreation, we must be mindful of how our impact can potentially change the physical environment which could lead to species becoming vulnerable and hopefully not extinct.



Photo: Shaheen Bradford

# VICTORIA UPDATES

## REPORT FROM MALLACOOTA AND CROAJINGOLONG COASTLINE

Leonie Daws, Volunteer, Friends of Mallacoota Inc.



There's not a lot to report from Mallacoota at the moment. The most notable item is that MK, our only flagged Hoodie, has not returned to his regularly nesting site this year and there are no reported sightings of him. We miss him as he was a regular on Betka Beach and a feisty and relatively successful dad.

We have had two lots of chicks hatch, one lot at Betka Beach and one at a new site on the main beach, near Mallacoota Inlet entrance. Both made it through the first couple of weeks but then disappeared - probably taken by avian predators with a juvenile Pacific Gull having been observed hanging around the Inlet entrance. The Betka pair has since nested again but the eggs only lasted a day or so before disappearing. Again, we suspect avian predators as this beach has been a regular haunt for a couple of Magpies.



Photo: Leonie Daws

I've just returned from a hike to Seal Creek where chicks were raised successfully last year. The pair has been reported there again this season and were present on this trip, investigating scrapes but with no nest as yet (late Nov). The Airport pair has been seen on site but access is restricted, especially since there are bushfires not too far away and the airstrip is in demand for flights related to fire management.

The local Hoodie team has swung willingly into action again this season, putting up temporary fences and signage and undertaking daily monitoring when there are eggs or chicks on the beach. We are pleased to see interest and support continuing to grow within the local community. Also, encouraging has been the number of visitors who make a point of asking about the Hoodies and sharing their experiences of Hoodies on beaches elsewhere, including on Phillip Island and the Mornington Peninsula.

## NEST CAMERA OBSERVATIONS AT BALNARRING

Taken from the Friends of the Hooded Plover Mornington Peninsula Newsletter; Article by Mark Lethlean, President Friends of Hooded Plovers Mornington Peninsula Inc

A motion-sensing camera was set up at a Red-capped Plover nest at Balnarring at the beginning of September. Setup was at 12:50pm on 02.09.19 and dismantled on 07.09.19 at 11am. Ignore the time and date stamps on the images as the camera was playing up!

In summary:

- I was never able to positively ID a male bird. The night shots were too poor to be sure. The female is flagged PL – her last nest was at Point Leo
- All horses kept to their permitted area.
- There were two patrols on a gator (Balnarring Foreshore staff).
- Captured on images were 27 walkers, 9 dog walkers with 4 dogs on lead and 5 off lead.



KeepGuard

08-04-2019 17:25



- A raven was captured taking an egg. I am not sure if this is an Australian Raven or a Little Raven although it was definitely on its own and I suspect the former. It is seen searching the area over a few minutes and then flying off. I suspect we missed it taking the first egg. It returns about 3 minutes later, searches the area and then grabs the nest egg and flies away. Geoff Hall observed a single bird take eggs from a nest the week before.



Photo: Mark Lethlean



KeepGuard

08-04-2019 17:25:56

So there is a possibility that we have a single raven with a very effective feeding strategy that in the long term could wipe out this colony. Included is an image I took at Coolart of an Australian Raven that systematically stole many of the eggs from the Australian White Ibis colony.

So what do we do? We are currently exploring with the BNB team, options for a Conditioned Taste Aversion trial.

## MORNINGTON PENINSULA UPDATE: THE HOODED PLOVER BREEDING SEASON

Taken from the [Friends of the Hooded Plover Mornington Peninsula Newsletter](#); Article by Mark Lethlean, President Friends of Hooded Plovers Mornington Peninsula Inc

In the previous (2018/19) season, we had 6 Hooded Plover fledglings, historically a fairly average result, but when compared to the previous two seasons, we considered it as disappointing. As always, the story is of what could have been. We lost 7 chicks that were 20 days or older including the very healthy and active Miami chick that disappeared at 34 days – the day before it was due to fledge. Also, one of the Gunida pair that did fledge disappeared within a few days of taking its first flight.

Interestingly, the distribution of fledglings was fairly evenly spread across the ocean beaches. However, once again we have failed to see a chick fledge from Portsea or the supposed pristine beaches of Point Nepean.

We managed to capture and flag all 5 of those viable fledglings in a remarkable single day operation from Fingal near Cape Schanck all the way to Koonya near Sorrento. Our contribution was to locate the birds and then watch as a very efficient Kasun went to work. It was a very rewarding day for those involved.

Soon after banding we received reports of JE being sighted on Phillip Island and JL at Point Impossible on the Surf Coast. Both birds have recently been seen back at St Andrews. After banding, HB was sighted at Point Lonsdale.

Also of interest, MD, a fledgling from Miami last year, has paired up with an elderly lady HY at Point Lonsdale and has had his 1st fledgling. It is the 6th fledgling for HY with different partners.



## HOODIE STREET ART PROJECT FOR THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Karen Wootton, Friends of the Hooded Plover Mornington Peninsula

We don't have silos on the Mornington peninsula. No industrial sites with fabulous rustic walls ripe for art. No railway stations crying out for a tart up. We do however have a plan.....

We have a site, we have Parks Victoria onboard, we have a subject and, most importantly, we have Jimmy!

James 'Jimmy' Beattie is a renowned Melbourne aerosol artist whose work, under the moniker Dvate, adorns major sites including the much-visited Victorian silo art trail. He works in both the national and international street art scene and has a passion for conservation. Dvate's images draw attention to our precious native animals, and his respect and connection to nature are clearly represented in his stunning works.

Jimmy came to the attention of the Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) last year when he contacted our then president Diane Lewis about a work he was planning in Frankston as part of the inaugural 'Big Picture' street art festival. Jimmy wanted to create a piece that focused attention on a local threatened species, our precious Hoodies. Mark Lethlean generously made some of his glorious Hoodie photos available and the result is the magnificent image shown to the right.



Of course, we wanted more and, while we still have some paperwork issues to work through, Jimmy has agreed to adorn a space in the Mornington Peninsula National Park with one of his brilliant creations. We couldn't be more thrilled.

We'll keep the location under wraps at the moment, just until all the legal requirements are complete, but we believe that Jimmy's images will create a new talking point about Hooded Plovers and indeed, the issue of coastal conservation. It won't be a huge artwork but it will be in a highly visible location with a spectacular backdrop.

We're hoping to have the artwork progress shortly, with Jimmy and his family staying on the peninsula for the duration of the project. We aim to create a festive air around the process, to engage the community and draw attention to the positive impact we can all have when we respect and share the coastal environment.

We can't wait to share the next phase with everyone, and to unveil the end result. To say that we're a bit excited would be an understatement.

Stay tuned to welcome a new Hoodie (or two or three) to the peninsula. A huge thank you must go to Parks Victoria, and to Jimmy, for agreeing to be part of this wonderful initiative.

Jon Fallaw, Shani Blyth, Mitch Burrows, Rachael Ferguson – Phillip Island Nature Parks

For the second year, local volunteers headed off the island to try to locate where Phillip Island Hoodies are flocking during the winter. On the 17/08/19, volunteers recorded 43 Hoodies between Shallow Inlet and Darby River near the Prom. Unfortunately, none of the birds had Phillip Island flags and seemed to be already pairing up. What was interesting was eight Hoodies flying up Shallow Inlet, circling and then landing on the Sandy Point side before disappearing north. They were quite agitated, calling as if heading back to territories. It would have been nice to get some flag details - we will have to survey a bit earlier next year.

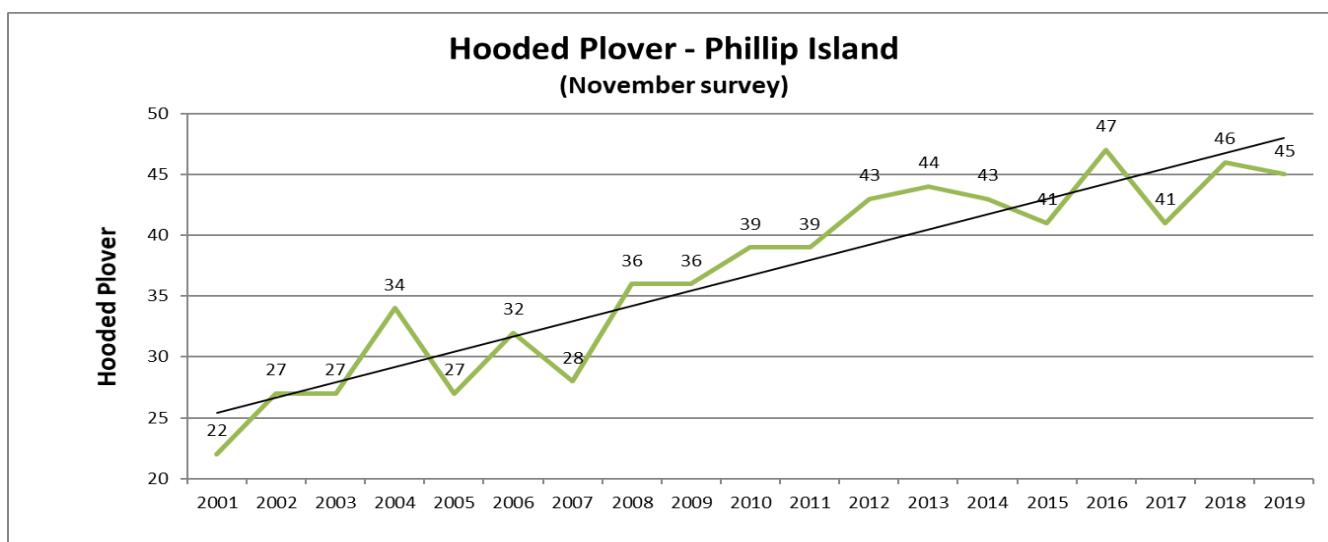
Yellow 42 the next adventure....shacked up on Snake Island: The story so far; Y42 a male from Woolamai SLSC west, was banded on the 24/03/2017. Nature Parks ranger Andy Dallinger found the chick in a footprint near the SLSC and returned it to the nearby refuge with its parents. The chick left Phillip Island soon after fledging, then in November 2018 Joris Driessen saw Y42 at 3 Mile Beach on the north-east side of the Prom while he was doing the biennial survey (see photos in WATH Dec 2018). Since then, Y42 has continued east crossing the Singapore deep to Snake Island where it was seen by Grainne, and an unbanded bird accompanying it (presumably its partner) was caught, banded and flagged on a subsequent visit.

On 19<sup>th</sup> July, the new Penguin Parade building was opened to the public. As part of the redevelopment the old visitor centre was removed and the site rehabilitated for penguins. The works yard and offices were relocated to the Koala Reserve which is where all the hoodie gear is now housed. Winter activities have been the usual tidying of the hoodie gear, ordering of new signage and mending of broken equipment. The Nature Parks also purchased three new telescopes and a Nikon P1000 24-3000mm camera to hopefully increase flag sightings.



Photo: Roz Jessop

An island wide hoodie count is conducted four times per year. There were 33 birds seen during the July survey (30/07/19) and the November survey (12/11/19) of 45 Hoodies continues the trend of an increasing population (see graph). It was a difficult survey with winds of up to 60km/h WSW and a number of birds were found bunched up on sheltered beaches with 9 birds seen by new volunteer Viviana Halley between Red Rocks and Anderson Boat Ramp. This contrasts with no Hoodies recorded on some of the exposed south coast beaches (i.e. Thorny and Hutchison Beach).



## Season summary to December



To the start of December, there were 14 nests, 36 eggs and 4 chicks. Two nests produced chicks; Anchorage produced one chick and there were three chicks at Berrys Beach west. The weather has been mild with a warm spell in October and a scorcher on the 21/11/19 when temperatures were mid- to high-thirties and not far away at the Prom the temperature reached 38°C and was the highest November total ever recorded for that location.

The first nest for Phillip Island was found at Anchorage Rd beach with 2 eggs on the 26/09/19. The eggs were found abandoned the day after following a beach party fire that was right in front

of the nest refuge. A third egg was found on the 10/09/19 that was thought to be another nesting attempt until a chick was seen on the 28/10/19. The chick was seen regularly until it disappeared on the 05/10/19. Their second nest (23/11/19) was much better hidden deep within the spinifex.

Nest number five for Phillip Island was at Berrys Beach west (pair Orange CD and unbanded) located on the 03/11/19. This nest had been there for a while as chicks were seen on the 16/11/19. Unfortunately, one of the chicks was found injured at the water's edge with a parent sheltering. The chick did not survive, and two chicks were seen on the 17/11/19. The adults were highly aggressive towards Silver Gulls at the mouth of the creek on the 18/11/19 when only one chick was sighted. Other predators, ravens and magpies, are also usually recorded at this site and the last chick disappeared by the 21/11/19.

## New off-leash dog areas for Phillip Island

From December 2019, two new off-leash dog beaches will come into effect at Cape Woolamai and Cowes West where seasonal restrictions will apply. There has also been a time extension at Graydens Rd to 'off-leash anytime all year round'. The Bass Coast Shire Council made the decision at its meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> October following community consultation earlier in the year. There was a lot of support for more off-leash areas, however local support to protect beach-nesting birds was reflected in the final beach choices (two proposed areas at Newhaven were dropped due to concerns for Hoodies) and there are additional requirements. To allow for the protection of Hooded Plover nesting in an off-leash area, dog owners must be able to bring their dog under 'effective control' within 50 metres of a signed threatened species wildlife refuge. Over the next 12 months, the shire will do more community consultation to identify potential off-leash beach areas in Cowes East and Rhyll.

The fox trapping and baiting program to buffer Phillip Island against reinvasion by foxes has continued on the Anderson Peninsula, and the number of fox scats around San Remo is markedly down this year according to Craig Bester who runs the scat detection dogs for the Nature Parks. Although Phillip Island remains fox-free during the 2018-19 financial year, 197 feral cats were removed from Phillip Island Nature Parks reserves and 33 more to December this financial year.

The main points of contact for Hooded Plover management on Phillip Island for the 2019-20 breeding season for the Nature Parks are: Jon Fallaw, Shani Blyth, Mitch Burrows: [hoodie@penguins.org.au](mailto:hoodie@penguins.org.au) and Rachael Ferguson: [volunteers@penguins.org.au](mailto:volunteers@penguins.org.au). For the Bass Coast Shire beaches, contact Dave Martin.



## 'ESCAPE FROM THE CITY' MEETS HOODIES

Jennie Turner, BirdLife Australia's Friends of the Hooded Plover, Breamlea

An opportunity to publicise the plight of the Hooded Plover came to Birdlife Australia in August 2018 in the form of a TV series - '*Escape from the City*', produced by the British production company Fremantle Media, who also operate in Australia. This series is based on the British version, '*Escape to the Country*' and was screened in Australia in 2019 on the ABC.

In this particular episode, single mum, Denise, with assistance from her daughter, Amanda, would be seeking to escape from the Melbourne suburb of Altona to a suitable property along the Surf Coast, where she had spent her holidays as a young girl. Denise also expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer with animals, and as part of the series' formula they included a segment which profiles opportunities for lifestyle change to the participants appearing on the program.

After being contacted by Fremantle Media, Meg Cullen discussed this with Sue Guinness, then regional coordinator of the Friends of the Hooded Plover Surf Coast, but she was unable to be involved, so they persuaded me to step in. Although hesitant, I felt my human resources and training background would manage to get me through!



I had a call from Alarnnah Cannon, Shooter Producer, to run through some logistics over the phone. I then met up with the two lovely women, Denise and Amanda, along with the young British film crew and their very experienced Australian sound operator at Point Roadknight on the cold and windy morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> August. The crew had so much energy and goodwill that they made us feel comfortable straight away. This was the first day of filming, after which they would head to Lorne to meet presenter, Simon Marnie, then the next day inspect the first property at Aireys Inlet.

Three hours of filming included a *very slow* walk along beautiful Point Roadknight beach chatting about the Beach-nesting Birds Project, the Hoodies and volunteering (wired up, no script) – not slow enough though, so we had re-take after re-take for around an hour. I then headed off with the cameraman to find the hoodie pair with fingers crossed they'd be in their usual spot at 95W Tip. To our relief, they were foraging along the shoreline. The cameraman had a wonderful opportunity to be up close and personal. We were then joined by the whole team where Denise and Amanda showed genuine delight at seeing the birds through the binoculars. Our 'prop' – the chick shelter – seemed to please the film crew as an 'action shot'. After three hours of shooting, most of the footage would eventually end up on the 'cutting room floor' of course!!

Watching each episode from the start of this year, it wasn't until an hour before on the night of 12<sup>th</sup> August that I realised the 'Aireys Inlet' episode was being aired. I quickly let some of the Beach-nesting Birds team know and sat with bated breath, hoping I hadn't caused too much embarrassment to Birdlife!

The immediate response from friends and volunteers mostly by SMS was very positive. To quote one comment from fellow volunteer buddy, Margot Busch, who encapsulated the sentiment



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*“That’s so great getting the issue into a mainstream program”.* I’ve even had a message from my friend, Liz in the UK, so the program has also left our shores.

I really enjoyed the experience and have had a good laugh when friends have asked if I’d had any other offers. It puts me in mind of the famous Andy Warhol comment *“In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes”*. In my case, make that 3 minutes! After all, the real stars of the show were the Point Roadknight Hoodies, BL and RP.

## BREAMLEA UPDATE

Julie Riley and Jennie Turner, BirdLife Australia’s Friends of the Hooded Plover, Breamlea

### **Distinctive Areas and Landscape (DAL) for Surf Coast (includes Breamlea)**

To protect the distinctive Surf Coast environment, landscape and lifestyle, an area of the Surf Coast and parts of the City of Greater Geelong were declared a ‘Distinctive Area and Landscape’ on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 under the State Planning and Environment Act (1987).

Following the declaration, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) summary stated that *“the Surf Coast is renowned for its excellent beaches, coastal biodiversity and a wealth of recreation and tourism opportunities. It is the gateway to the Great Ocean Road, a national heritage site. The region has experienced increasing urban development pressure, particularly in Torquay-Jan Juc. To ensure the region’s long-term sustainability, the Victorian Government must effectively balance growth while ensuring the retention of unique features and characteristics.”*

It would appear that the decision for inclusion of Breamlea in the Surf Coast DAL (as opposed to the Bellarine DAL which has also been declared), is based on key distinctive features of the Breamlea landscape, stated in the Victorian Government Gazette to be of ‘*Outstanding Environmental Significance*’, including *“...Point Impossible, Karaaf Wetlands, Breamlea Flora and Fauna Reserve, Thompson Creek...These areas provide important habitats to a variety of flora and fauna including endangered and threatened species like the Hooded Plover, Bellarine Yellow Gum and the critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot”*. This landscape comes under the Surf Coast Shire, but the township of Breamlea itself is part of the City of Greater Geelong.

After the initial public consultation and declaration, work on the Statement of Planning Policy has begun with further input from residents. The purpose of a Statement of Planning Policy is to guide the future use and development of land in the declared area, making sure the distinctive attributes of the declared area are protected.

### **An expanded Team Breamlea**

We are delighted to have new volunteers on board this season. Shane Foyster, Alex Page-walker and Claire Stephenson have all undertaken training this year and will be checking the pairs along Breamlea/Bancoora/Black Rock beaches. We also welcome Aleisja Henry who commenced last season and is keen to be involved at Point Impossible/Thompsons Creek estuary.

It’s shaping up to be an unusual season so far. Some strange goings on indeed in our ‘Summer Bay’. Has there been a land grab at Black Rock? The two pairs have been eyeing each other off for several seasons now. Standby for more news on this front.

There’s plenty of intrigue at the estuary, too – on both sides of Thompsons Creek. Jan Lierich has reported that after a busy Winter and Spring, the nudist pair JM and EJ were back together again and had their first nest with

one egg, sighted on the 28<sup>th</sup> November. Unfortunately, due to the high tide that night the nest was inundated and consequently failed.

Prior to this, EJ - incognito as our 'mystery bird' with the faded band - had been visiting 'Old Bloke' at Breamlea, whilst JM entertained several unbanded birds at the Nude/Whites Beach. At least we assume that it's our 'Old Bloke' and not some unbanded newbie. Julie speculates that it's one of JM/EJ's offspring and mum was just checking up that it was getting set up in the new place! Thanks to Ian McConchie who outed EJ with some great photos, we have now discovered that the letters on her band are unreadable with binoculars.



Photo: Andrea Dennett

At Bancoora 44W-46W, the whole area is taking a hammering from dogs off-leash (seasonal on-leash regulations) and incursions along the foredunes by recreational users over the weekends (and the holidays haven't even started). Poor CP and unbanded will have their work cut out to raise a family here. They've even tried moving further west between 48W-49W and we suspect a nest failed there.

More than enough action to pique the interest of volunteers that's for sure!

## ABEF HOODIE BOOGIE

Meg Cullen, Beach-nesting Birds Project Officer, BirdLife Australia

The Surf Coast has been grooving it up with the Hoodie Boogie! Jacqui Dreessens, from Wild Moves, has been very busy over the last couple of months, with support from BirdLife Australia's Australian Bird Environmental Foundation, she has been working to spread the word about Hoodies using a fun technique the project hasn't used before – through movement and dance! Visitors to the Cowrie Market in Torquay, the Vegan Lifestyle Festival and Humans in Geelong, just to name a few, may have been lucky enough to feel the rhythm of the Hoodie Boogie and learn about how they can help these birds on the beaches. Jacqui will also be working with two local schools to build the connection between students and Hooded Plovers through movement.



Photo: Jacqui Dreessens

## FAR WEST VIC UPDATE

Toni Ryan and Robyn Bush, Friends of the Hooded Plover Far West Victoria

Far West Hoodies and volunteers have been busy and have been active early in the season. Unfortunately though, mother nature has presented us with some very difficult weather and powerful seas for much of the season to date.

A few of our beach birds have been able to scout out successful nesting sites on some scattered beaches across the region, but the majority of the Far West hoodie pairs have already lost multiple nests or have struggled to nest at traditional nesting sites. The high tides and large swells has also made it difficult for our intrepid volunteers to access some of our usual or more remote sites.



Currently, we have several nests being incubated on the very long Logan's Beach at Warrnambool East and much to our surprise we still have chicks surviving the elements and traffic on the busy South Beach at Port Fairy. Sadly, our early chicks at Mills Reef East of Port Fairy were lost in some of the big tides that are belting some beaches.

Belfast Coastal Reserve is our prime HP nesting area in the Far West, and is also taking a battering, with breeding habitat in short supply! The Hoodies were out on the beach squabbling over territories early, with the first nests found in September. Unfortunately, the combination of prevailing storms and high tides, predators, weeds, off-lead dogs and uneducated beach users have taken their toll and we go into summer behind the eight ball. Despite this gloomy prospect, the birds continue to fight hard, and we have been heartened to see the birds trying to adapt and nest in new spots. As we all know too well they are tenacious battlers! Fingers crossed that the weather settles, the summer is kind and we have better news at the end of the season.

Despite the challenges faced by the Hoodies and other beach-nesting birds, we are in awe of the diversity of life found daily on our shores and wetlands. Migratory species have been helping to keep spirits high, with a vibrant flock of Bar-tailed Godwits feeding in swathes of kelp and seaweed, and hiding amongst them, a trio of knots! Special mentions include Magpie Geese, gannets, soaring Shy Albatross, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderling and stints.



Photo: Carly Watson

## LESSONS FROM 1 ½ SEASONS OF MONITORING DISCOVERY BAY

Daniel Lees, Beach-nesting Birds Project Officer, BirdLife Australia

In February 2018, the Glenelg River Estuary, Discovery Bay and Lower Glenelg National Park were designated as a Ramsar Site (Wetland of International Importance). With funding from the National Landcare Program, the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority contracted BirdLife Australia to monitor shorebirds within the Glenelg River Estuary and across Discovery Bay focusing on beach-nesting bird abundance/breeding and the migratory shorebird population.

Discovery Bay's remote location, difficulty of access and sandy beaches make it look like a paradise for Hooded Plovers and Hooded Plover breeding success. However, a season and a half of monitoring show a drastically different picture. Thus far, after six surveys of the entire 55kms only three Hooded Plover nests have been found with no indication that any of these nests have successfully hatched or fledged chicks. Although the Hooded Plover population along Discovery Bay is sparsely distributed



Photo: Dan Lees

(with an average of 26 Hoodies sighted per survey over the 2018/19 season), we are unsure of the reasons behind the high breeding failure rate. I suspect low food availability (a lack of offshore reefs providing little wrack for beach invertebrates), high fox abundance (fox prints were detected at 68% of shorebird observations) and steep dune faces that intersect the high tide line or a combination of all three of these factors cause the observed lack of success.

Although Hooded Plovers seem to be having a hard time along Discovery Bay, things seem different for the Pied Oystercatchers with an average of 69 individuals detected per survey (across 2018/19) and multiple detections of nests detected per survey and even several instances of being observed. I can only speculate on the reasons behind the disparity in the success of Pied Oystercatchers when compared to Hooded Plovers but the abundant supply of pipis and willingness of Pied Oystercatchers to nest on what rocky cliffs there are along Discovery Bay may partly hold the answer.

Other notable highlights of the surveys thus far include:

- Flock of 1000+ Sanderling (likely the same flock recorded on multiple surveys)
- Numerous sightings of up to 500 Red-necked Stint
- Observations of flocks of up to 12 Fairy Tern
- A flock of 24 Bar-tailed Godwit
- Small flocks of up to 6 Red Knot

We would like to thank Gavin Prentice at GHCM, as well as Parks Victoria's David Pitts and Marcel Hoog Antink for all their assistance and support with the project.



Photo: Dan Lees

## **South Australia Updates**

### **HOODIES ON KANGAROO ISLAND**

Renee Mead, Beach-nesting Birds Project Coordinator, BirdLife Australia

The Beach-nesting Birds Team have been working hard with Kangaroo Island volunteers and land managers to finalise a "Hooded Plover Response Plan" which will be active from 2019 – 2021 and reviewed after 2021. This collaborative document has been created through extensive consultation between the Kangaroo Island Council, the Department of Environment and Water, National Parks and Wildlife Kangaroo Island, the volunteers and BirdLife Australia, to outline the agreement between all parties about the management response at Hooded Plover sites. It includes the nominated contacts for each organisation/group listed, so all participants know who to contact should a nest site need protection, and the roles of all participants. So, for the first time, volunteers are able to erect fencing at high threat sites without delay, as approval for management has been granted island-wide for this to be implemented. So, if you go to Kangaroo Island, you'll start to see some of those high threat sites being protected with fences and signage! This has been a great win for Kangaroo Island and a great step forward for the Hoodies.



Photo: Renee Mead

In October, via support from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, I was able to head over to Kangaroo Island to try and recruit some new volunteers, and do management training, so that the fences and signage were being put up according to best practice guidelines. We held two workshops in Parndana and Penneshaw as well as management training in both locations. It gave volunteers the opportunity to learn how to best place a fence, where signage goes, and for some tricky sites, like Hog Bay, how on earth to protect the chicks that were using the entire 600m of beach which has at least 13 access points! We were also able to



provide monitoring advice to new volunteers and had about 20 people attend in total, which is great for Kangaroo Island – especially considering the highly coveted Twitchathon was on the same weekend!

We have been able to erect fencing at several sites, and thanks to The Letcombe Foundation and the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, had a whole suite of signage printed for volunteers to place in areas where Hoodies need a helping hand from the crowds.

And it's even more good news, with two chicks fledging from Hog Bay – yes, the ones that were difficult to manage – so well done to all involved in helping get those chicks through to fledge! Fingers crossed the rest of the island can produce some fledglings as well and the management helps them get there!



Photo: Renee Mead

## HALLETT COVE TO WEST BEACH

John Cobb, Volunteer, Friends of the Hooded Plover Fleurieu Peninsula

The 2018-2019 season was disastrous for the birds at Hallett Cove with eight eggs laid in three clutches which were all lost to predation or storms and one of our breeding pair (UV) disappeared, presumed lost. The remaining bird quickly established a new partnership, but unlike previous seasons, the birds were rarely seen at the site over the winter months.

On 3 September 2019, Birdlife Australia staff and volunteers visited the site with a view to band birds and a nest with three eggs was found north of Field River in the same area as previous attempts. One bird was successfully banded MR in recognition of our youngest volunteer Miles Ramm who assisted with the process. City of Marion staff responded quickly and erected signs and fencing the next day. Six days later, the eggs disappeared with dog prints, but no debris, at the nest site. One egg, not positively identified as a Hooded Plover, was later found by a member of the public further up the coast on top of fresh weed. Monitoring of the site continued with evidence of scrapes within the fenced area, several sightings of the birds foraging, combined with periods of absence, and the last sighting of the birds was made on 9 October.

Twenty kilometres away to the north and only ten kilometres from Adelaide CBD, a member of the public reported a possible sighting of a Hooded Plover at the River Torrens

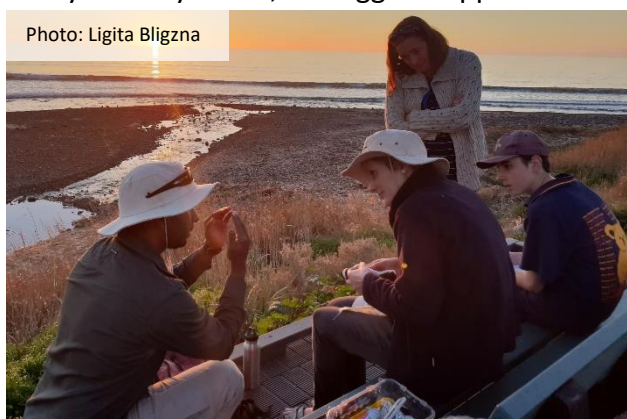


Photo: Ligita Bligzna



Outlet, West Beach. On 18 October, MR and partner plus a nest with two eggs was located at the base of the dunes south of the outlet. Gary Griffiths from the City of Charles Sturt, who has extensive experience of site management with Red-capped Plovers, and Matthew Endacott, NRM Coastal Conservation Officer, joined volunteers to erect signs and fencing at the site which is located in a relatively safe area apart from people and dogs accessing the beach through the dunes instead of using designated footpaths. It is also interesting to note the very high level of non-compliance with council by-laws relating to the leashing of dogs as compared with Seacliff with four breeding seasons of experience managing the birds, interactions with the public and extensive PR activities including Facebook posts.

Regular observations of the birds, very much enhanced by the recruitment of two new volunteers – Alice Jones and Rachel Butler – led to the discovery of two neighbouring breeding pairs of Red-capped Plovers, which are now being managed collectively. On 19 November, two Hooded Plover chicks hatched and confirmed West Beach as the most northerly metropolitan breeding site in South Australia. Unfortunately, on 25 November, one chick was observed killed by a Silver Gull, tragically whilst adult Hooded and Red-capped Plovers squabbled over territory; the second chick disappeared around 2 December, probably to the same group of predators. The adults were last sighted on 3 December and a week later they were observed back at Hallett Cove feeding amongst the rocks along the shore. Whilst it's too soon to know where the birds will nest next time, it's surprising that they should abandon West Beach so quickly after losing their chicks in favour of Hallett Cove, where they have been so unsuccessful in the past. Maybe the abundance of food is the main driver?



Photo: Matthew Endacott

## SEACLIFF UPDATE – NOTHING STAYS THE SAME

Ligita Bligzna, Volunteer, Friends of the Hooded Plover Fleurieu Peninsula

2019-2020 is now the fourth breeding season for a pair of Hooded Plovers at Seacliff, a very busy Adelaide Metropolitan beach. The City of Holdfast Bay continues to provide considerable support and along with new initiatives, their actions have contributed to the ongoing success at this site. One of the actions was to bring forward the annual sand pumping replenishment at Seacliff from August to July so that it would not interfere with the Hoodie's breeding. Some of the other initiatives by the City of Holdfast Bay are covered in another article by Emma Stephens.

We received reports of sightings from interested members of the public of the resident birds XS and partner and were alerted to the fact that the pair were over-wintering approximately 1.5 kilometres to the south of Seacliff feeding on the inter-tidal rocky platform at Marino. They had been known to frequent this area but it appears that this is the first winter that they have remained in that area consistently. From mid July, they were starting to be seen feeding in the Young Street drain at Seacliff but then returning to Marino. From early August I searched the area south of the drain where they had nested over the last three seasons to no avail and even extended my searches further south. It was not until 23 August after observing where XS went after foraging in the drain, that a nest with three eggs was discovered – this time several hundred metres to the north of the Young Street drain. Also, for the first time with this pair, the nest was in the dune – a safe site, well above the high tide and storm surge line.



Photo: Matthew Endacott

This new nesting site meant that the usual walkways that needed to be blocked and the rope enclosure area was different to previous years – very confusing for the public who seemed to think that this meant there was an additional pair of Hooded Plovers in the area. XS was also seen foraging at Marino in between incubation duties.

Following sightings of unleashed dogs in the dunes, the nest was inspected and one egg was found to be cracked. This egg was subsequently noted to have been removed from the nest but following a severe storm on 6 September and no birds sighted, the nest was found to have failed one week before expected hatching. Because of the strong winds blowing sand, it is not clear what happened but it had been noted that a pair of Nankeen Kestrels had been consistently flying along the dunes for a few weeks. Again, the Hooded Plover pair were seen foraging at Marino.

By 24 September, XS and partner had a new nest with three eggs, this time at the base of the fore dune to the north of their previous nest and within four metres of the existing rope enclosure which was judged too close to where beach users were walking. Again, City of Holdfast Bay staff responded quickly and installed a second rope fence approximately five metres towards the sea and judged to be above the high tide line. Weekly storms and resulting storm surge tides inundated the area and came close to one metre from the nest on one occasion.

Three chicks hatched on 16 October and it was hoped that the adults would move the chicks either to the Young Street drain to the south which they had done in previous seasons or to the Edward Street drain to the north which was closer. But, again things were different this season. With weekly storm surges bringing fresh seaweed into the enclosure or just outside, the family has mainly remained within the enclosure with occasional visits to both of the drains and to the shore. One chick did not appear to be keeping up with the family on day three and was not sighted on day four. The rope enclosure was extended to the south but not as far as the Young Street drain as the family were often seen in the area. The final enclosure area was approximately 200 metres long.

A very close encounter with an unleashed dog chasing the adult birds and then chick into the water at the Edwards Street drain three days prior to expected fledging came close to losing one of the chicks and while the chick took some time to recover from the ordeal, all was well with short flights being observed. The dog-owner was very shocked at the behaviour of his dog which he did not think chased birds and was very apologetic.

This is the first season that we have seen extensive use of the chick shelters by the chicks especially on very windy days, but also at other times. The adults have often been foraging or resting up to 80 metres away from the chicks in the shelter. Also noted this year has been extensive foraging, hiding and resting by the chicks in the Spinifex along the fore dune.

The family has become very accustomed to beach users and only retreating or hiding when very close, especially with runners with large leashed dogs. Beach users have had a wonderful opportunity to view the chicks and adults up close and lots of photos and video has been taken and posted on various Facebook sites. With the chicks and adults very visible this has increased the awareness and knowledge of Hooded Plovers by the general public and beach users are often seen pointing out the birds to other beach goers.



Photo: Matthew Endacott

The City of Holdfast Bay has also increased the number of patrols by Community Safety Officers who have played an important role in educating the public. This increased visibility has resulted in nearly 100% compliance of dogs on leads in the peak time before 10:00 am between the signs management signs when patrols are on duty. This education phase is in preparation for the introduction of a new bylaw requiring dogs to be leashed at all times within 100 metres of a Hooded Plover breeding site in mid-December 2019.

In previous seasons, with the movement of the birds from a nesting area to a chick feeding area, the opening and closing of different walkways and erecting and dismantling of rope enclosures has been a regular occurrence. This year though, because the adults and family stayed around the nesting area there has been no need to change the blocked walkways. As a consequence, after three months the temporary mesh bunting was getting a little tired and untidy and the City of Holdfast Bay investigated alternatives. The blocked walkways have now been blocked with the standard three wire set-up that is in place along the Esplanade with appropriate signs attached which will all be easily removed when required.

At the time of writing this article (28 November) we are calling it – two successful fledgings from the one clutch which is a first time for this site. On the 10<sup>th</sup> December, BirdLife staff Emma and Aleisa successfully banded the two juveniles – CV and JR. This achievement would not have been possible without the increased support from City of Holdfast Bay with resources allocated for the presence of Community Safety Officers on the beach to educate the public. The Officers have been very personable and enthusiastic when talking with the public and have helped us significantly in monitoring of the birds. A great start to a new season.

## ONKAPARINGA REGION, NORTHERN FLEURIEU PENINSULA

Sue and Ash Read, Volunteer Regional Coordinators Northern beaches, Fleurieu Peninsula

The Hooded Plover nesting season here got off to an early start with the first nest recorded at the usual early site of Ochre Cove. The first nest was discovered with 3 eggs on 7<sup>th</sup> August, about 10-14 days earlier than usual. Several other sites produced nests in the next few weeks, making it a very busy start to the season. However, it did not get off to a great start, with several pairs losing their nests to either fox predation or storm-driven tides washing their eggs away. By the 18<sup>th</sup> September, the pair at Ochre Cove started their 3<sup>rd</sup> nest of the season having lost their first two nests. It was a case of 3<sup>rd</sup> time lucky as this nest managed to fledge 2 chicks, the first time we have had a multiple fledging from the one nest in the Onkaparinga region since the 2011-12 season.



We gained an additional pair this season which nested at Moana Beach, a site where vehicles can legally use the beach. Vehicles pose additional

problems for the birds, especially when they have chicks. This beach last had a Hooded Plover pair nest in 2010 and had not been used since. Their first nest was predated by a fox, but their second nest hatched 3 chicks successfully. Within 2 days, the parents had moved their chicks nearly a kilometre north to where a creek reaches the beach, but still within the vehicle zone. The move coincided with a storm and the next day only a single chick could be sighted. The area was roped off by the Council to prevent vehicles disturbing the birds. While the creek provided good foraging opportunities for the chick, it was also popular with Silver Gulls and the occasional Pacific Gull. It was interesting to witness the different defensive strategies adopted by the parents to the different gull species – they flew directly at the Silver Gulls, but used broken wing displays to lure the Pacific Gulls out of the vicinity, before both Hoodies attacked the gull at the same time. This had some success, but after 3 days at the creek the chick disappeared and the gulls seem to be the most likely culprit for its demise. They have now started their third nest of the season.

Increasing disturbance has caused two of our pairs to move from their usual sites to different locations. The pair at Aldinga Beach (a vehicle use beach) moved further south to Sellicks Beach (also vehicle legal). They have



nested high on a shingle bank which makes for an interesting nest location, but it is safe from vehicles. This is the first time the beach has been used by Hoodies for nesting since we began monitoring 10 seasons ago. The nest hatched 2 chicks but they failed to survive for more than a few days. The other pair (JT and partner) found it necessary to move locations after two unsuccessful nesting attempts this season at their usual site at Snapper Point. They moved to the southern end of the adjacent beach at Port Willunga. There is already a long established pair at Port Willunga, DP and HV, who normally nest on the northern end of the beach which is about 1 km away from where JT and partner have settled in. DP and HV also have occasionally nested at the southern end, however without success. It will be interesting to see how JT and partner manage the busy crowds on this section of the beach. A headland projects onto the beach and this prevents visual contact between the nesting pairs so hopefully there will not be any conflict between the pairs.

Photo: Sue and Ash Read



We have been busy with events including a workshop at Maslin Beach on the 21<sup>st</sup> September organised by our local Birdlife staff, which was attended by about 20 people, mostly locals. A trip to Maslin Beach to observe an active nest completed the day. This was followed about 2 weeks later by a Walk and Talk at Snapper Point which also had an active hoodie nest as well as giving people the opportunity to see Red-capped Plovers, Red-necked Stints, Sooty Oystercatchers, Crested and Caspian Terns etc. With 2 pairs now nesting at Port Willunga a Dog's Breakfast was held there on 16<sup>th</sup> November, to raise awareness of both nesting pairs. This was 2 days after DP and HV's chicks hatched.

Unfortunately, the chicks did not survive their first day, but at least we were still able to show beachgoers JT and partner at their nest. The Onkaparinga Council Nature Conservation staff have been promoting our Hoodies through their various Facebook sites and with articles in both the local and Adelaide newspapers. We also invited the Mayor to visit one of our hoodie pairs and to meet some of our volunteers after she featured the birds on her Facebook page. The meeting took place at Maslin Beach where the pair had hatched chicks the previous day. Unfortunately, the chicks disappeared soon after hatching but we were still able to show her the adults and she was pleased to see them and talk to our dedicated volunteers. It was decided to feature the pair (DP and HV) at Port Willunga for a publicity campaign as they have been together for at least eight seasons, the longest of any of our pairs. To raise the profile of the Hoodies, the council ran a public naming competition for them in conjunction with the *Adelaide Advertiser* newspaper, which resulted in the popular vote for the female name of Daphne (DP) and Harvey (HV) for the male.

## WORD ABOUT THE HOODIES

Wendy White, Volunteer Regional Coordinator, Central beaches, Fleurieu Peninsula

### Fleurieu Hooded Plover Events

It was great to catch up at the beginning of the season with all of the Fleurieu volunteers at the Sellicks Beach Community Hall workshop. There was an update from the national office on the previous season and on plans and priorities for the 2019/20 season. Also, a brief rundown on highlights from the Beach-nesting Birds conference held in Inverloch in May 2019. Kasun presented a session on management training (fencing/signs) – a refresher and new information for those who are already experienced and an opportunity for training for new volunteers and staff.

Training days were held at Victor Harbor and Maslins Beach, with nearly 50 people attending and we were pleased to obtain quite a few new volunteers for the Fleurieu. These training days had a different format this year, starting with an overview of the project, then a visit to a local beach with the scopes. After lunch those who were still interested in joining the program were taken through the induction process. These were followed up a couple of weeks later by Hoodie Walks 'n Talks held at Victor Harbor and Snapper Point where people could again look at Hooded Plovers through telescopes and binoculars, meet BirdLife Australia staff and mingle with experienced volunteers.



We recently held 3 Hooded Plover info sessions on the beach, the first at Port Willunga, the following day at Oliver's Reef, Victor Harbor and lastly at Carrickalinga. It is always nice to be able to talk to dog owners, most of them are already aware of the plight of the Hooded Plover, but it is important to share local HP information with them.

### Myponga to Land's End



Our Hoodies decided to start the season slowly with only 2 locations, Normanville South and Shelley Beach, producing nests by the end of August. As the weather warmed up so did their enthusiasm and volunteers were soon very busy checking on nests. Myponga Beach was the first nest to hatch a couple of chicks and as I write this there is still one around, which is growing rapidly. At the end of October, the Normanville pair produced 2 chicks, but they did not even last a day! No more luck at the Carrickalinga site where they hatched a chick at the beginning of November, but it only lasted a couple of days - there are so many ravens around this site that it is going to be extremely difficult for them to be successful.

In September, we set up a Hooded Plover display at the annual Festival of Nature Expo and also had a table for kids to colour in the HP calico bags. In October, we had another display at the Yankalilla Show which was right next door to the snake display so there was a lot of interest.

I know the local community have a growing interest in the fate of the Hooded Plovers, so I put regular updates in the Yankalilla news as well as a display in the Normanville Natural Resource window giving updates on nests and chicks. One very helpful person thought it was too hot on the beach so put a chair over the nest at Normanville - a bit more education needed!!

### South Coast Beaches – Sue and David Thorn, Roslyn Shirlaw and Friends of the Hooded Plover Fleurieu Peninsula

We started our 2019-20 breeding season with a lot of activity both from nesting Hooded Plovers and engaging with the public. The mating season commenced early, prompting our dedicated volunteer team into action with 5 nests fenced by 27<sup>th</sup> August. Wendy White and Emma Stephens organised a training day on the 15<sup>th</sup> September resulting in 7 new volunteers joining the team. We also arranged ongoing local radio interviews, with the first broadcast occurring on the 17<sup>th</sup> September. In October, we set up a stand at the Port Elliot show and during the day we spoke to 155 people, at length, while their children made hoodie badges.



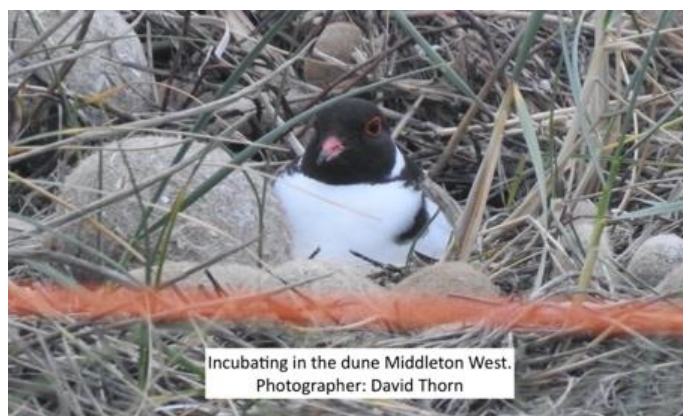
During October, our Middleton West hoodie pair raised this season's first very fat and happy fledgling, making its debut flight on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November. This was a welcome achievement after the four other initial sites had failed by the 25<sup>th</sup> September due to foxes, cats and ravens. These predators are a major problem on our remote and urban beaches.

Emma Stephens installed a motion camera at the Watson's Gap site in September and we were able to verify that foxes took 3 chicks within 36 hours of hatching. On our remote beaches, for example Tunkalilla, Waitpinga, Parsons and Sheepies have all had scrapes and eggs this season, but the fox problem is so horrendous that every nest has failed. At present, Sheepies Beach has a 3-egg nest which is being monitored. A new property owner on Tunkalilla Beach has embarked on a fox baiting program. Hopefully other property owners will follow suit. Further, we have obtained access to Ballquidda Station's two beaches where we observed scrapes, but no nesting yet. The station manager, who is sympathetic to conservation, is promising a fox baiting program in the future. Fox control is non-existent at Newland Head Conservation Park, hence the adjoining Waitpinga East Beach has had several unsuccessful nests so far this year and we have not fledged chicks here since 2016.

Prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, nineteen nests have failed and 3 sites are on their third nest, two of which have already failed. Three chicks hatched at Victor Harbor's Yilki Beach on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. The remaining chick, at the time of writing, is 25 days old and still wanting to be brooded. In addition, two chicks are 23 days old at Bashams Beach and we attribute this outcome to the Alexandrina Council conducting extensive fox den fumigation in the linear park behind the beach. Also, there appears to be a lot of local dog walkers at Bashams who have taken ownership of this hoodie family and are very proud of the fledgling that flew off this beach last season.

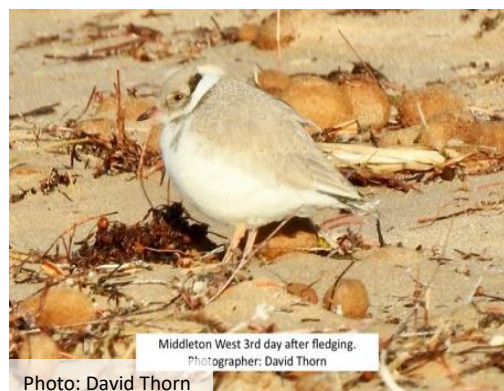
Our 2019-20 stats as of 9/11/2019:

Variable	Number
Nests	26
Eggs	62
Nest failed at eggs	14
Nest failed at chick	3
Nests incubating	4
Nest success (fledged)	1
Chicks predated	12



The year has also brought its challenges from organised events and public works. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, 1,300 people participated in a charity run along our beaches from Parsons Beach carpark to Goolwa in which they passed four nest sites. After notifying organisers about Hoodies and their nests we had no issues. However, infrastructure works on the beach in front of Victor Harbor Bowling club has destroyed one of our hoodie pair's feeding and breeding areas for this season.

This season we have 23 portal sites surveyed by 22 active volunteers. They do a fantastic amount of work.





Emma Stephens, Sharing our Shores with Coastal Wildlife, BirdLife Australia

Since 2009, the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management (AMLR NRM) Board has supported BirdLife Australia in the production of annual breeding success reports for the Fleurieu Peninsula (available on both the AMLR NRM and BirdLife Australia websites). These reports also include an analysis of the threats across sites and season. However, we decided to do things a little bit differently for 2018/19. In addition to the usual overall report, individual council-specific reports were produced by BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds team. These reports summarised the population trajectory, breeding success, management response, and threat trajectories for each council area. Threat trajectories focused on dogs, vehicles, foxes, cats, horses and events. The reports also included recommended actions. Statistics behind the trajectories, and how councils are tracking for each of these, are also provided in the reports. The information is based on the data that the wonderful Friends of the Hooded Plover Fleurieu Peninsula volunteers and staff enter into the MyHoodie Beach Bird data portal. Each season, around 2,500 records are entered for this region, so we are fortunate to have plenty of data to analyse and guide management actions. These reports have proven to be extremely useful at the local level.

These reports were not produced to just get dusty on the shelf! Myself and Wendy White met with the councils early this season to go through the reports. We met with not just the environment staff but also compliance staff. We discussed the recommendations, and jointly came up with lots of great actions. And now we have an even bigger task of implementing them all!!

Here are just a few of the great outcomes from these meetings:

- Many of the councils have already introduced changes to their by-law so that dogs must be on leads around Hooded Plover nests and chicks. We reviewed statistics of dogs on and off leash at different sites and which sites need focus.
- Compliance staff now also receive the weekly updates from Wendy on nest/chick locations etc so staff have the opportunity to make compliance visits where possible.
- Local knowledge about ideas for engaging with local dog park clubs were provided, particularly by the City of Victor Harbor. The reports also mention which sites could do with additional off-leash dog parks to reduce pressure on the beaches.
- Council permits for events – introducing a check for beach-nesting birds on the event permit form. Should a nest or chicks be within the vicinity of the proposed event, even up to on the day of the event, the event may need to be moved 100 to 200m away.
- Updating council websites with relevant information and social media opportunities.
- City of Onkaparinga went into action mode, in particular for the pair nesting at Moana (a vehicle beach). Extending the fence, putting up new signage which asks people to not drive for 200m past the nesting area. The council have also, since the meeting, designed and printed new signs stipulating that dogs must be on leash.
- City of Holdfast Bay have instigated and funded an amazing initiative to have a beach-specific compliance officer, with a key focus to be on the Hooded Plover pair at Seacliff. The council's new by-law (requiring dogs to be on leash near hoodie nests and chicks) comes into effect mid-December 2019. We met with the new wonderful officer Mel Coonan, and provided information on the Hoodies and teed Mel up with volunteers. In addition, the council also engages a contractor to undertake patrols on weekends. As a result, the hoodie pair at Seacliff are getting nearly daily compliance visits, often for periods of more than one



Moana signage. Photo: Kerri Bartley

hour at a go. Volunteers have done an excellent job getting the contractor, Daniel, up to speed on Hoodies. Statistics are collected by Mel and Daniel on each visit – they're both really keen and love the Hoodies!

- City of Victor Harbor and Alexandrina Council both suggested 'dob in a den' Facebook programs to assist with fox control across the sites. NRM and Alexandrina council are actively working at one site in particular at Port Elliot to control a problem fox!
- District Council of Yankalilla compliance officer Derrick makes daily visits along the Lady Bay, Normanville, and Carrickalinga beaches – also focusing on hoodie nests and chicks. An excellent and consistent presence on the beach for the Hoodies!
- We are yet to meet with City of Marion, however they have recently amended the by-law at the Hallett Cove site so that dogs must be on leash – there are a suite of bird species that benefit from this. The hoodie pair were banded early in September at Hallett Cove, and since their nest failed, have packed up and left home for busier shores (out of the frying pan into the fire!) at West Beach just south of the Torrens outlet, 10 km directly west of Adelaide! City of Charles Sturt is now the new, seventh, council we are working with! And they have welcomed the Hoodies with open arms! Council have assisted with fencing and signage, and beach education officer Tracey attended the Dog's Breakfast workshop. The council are posting on Facebook about the Hoodies and are receiving a lot of positive attention. They have likewise posted on their Pets of Charles Sturt Facebook page. What a great idea to have a dog-specific council Facebook page!
- National parks rangers continue to undertake compliance visits and issue fines as dogs are not allowed in Newland Head Conservation Park (Waitpinga and Parsons beaches).
- Resources have been provided to each council staff (pamphlets, dog leads, stickers etc).
- Other council staff have been offered information presentations.
- We also discussed the best methods for collating a summary of council's compliance over the season including any expiations issued. This is to ensure we report on council's fantastic efforts. If anyone has any information or suggestions on what works well elsewhere, we'd love to hear!

We hope to do this again at the end of the 2019/20 season, which will be a great opportunity to review the statistics, particularly of dogs on and off lead, and continue to build further relationships with councils and working together on key actions. We very much appreciate the excellent support from Metro and Fleurieu councils – a lot of this great work wouldn't be possible without them!



Seacliff esplanade sign. Photo: Mel Coonan



Sellicks Beach sign. Photo: Kerri Bartley



Compliance Officer Derrick at Myponga Beach. Photo: Corey Jackson



## THE FIRST FLEDGLING OF THE SEASON AWARD GOES TO... YORKE PENINSULA

Friends of the Hooded Plover Yorke Peninsula and Kasun Ekanayake, Beach-nesting Birds Program Coordinator, BirdLife Australia

This season, it was a tight race to 'the first fledgling of the season' award! There were chicks on the Fleurieu Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula and Yorke Peninsula that hatched within days of each other. The last remaining chick of a brood of 3 chicks at the Moonta Bay – Gulfview site in northern Yorke Peninsula fledged in the early hours of 1<sup>st</sup> of November and it beat the other chicks to the award by only a few hours!

Going back a couple of months, volunteers Stephen and Rosina Jantke found the nest from which this chick fledged, at Gulfview in early September, located high up on the beach. It was a safe spot, quite a distance away from the high tide mark but this beach being so close to the townships of Moonta Bay and Port Hughes attracted a lot of dog walkers and other visitors. At the start of season catch-up on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, we decided to fence the nest site and erect signs on the beach (see photo). Getting the fence posts in was hard work as it was quite rocky underneath a thin layer of sand and in some cases we had to secure the posts using rocks. As both of the adult Hoodies of the pair were unbanded, we decided to return a few days later to trap and band one of the birds. When we came back on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, we saw something very encouraging! A couple of dog walkers walked up to the sign, read it, and proceeded to walk along the water's edge with their dog on leash. Some people aren't aware of our lovely Hoodies nesting on their local beaches and just having a simple sign can raise awareness and encourage them to do the right thing!



Photo: Kasun Ekanayake



Photo: Janet Moore

We trapped one of the adult birds and gave it the white flag TJ (see photo). We are not sure whether TJ is a male or a female yet (hopefully we'll know soon) but both TJ and partner did a good job in getting chicks to hatch and then raising a chick through to fledging. The young juvenile was still hanging around with its parents in mid-November. Usually when a pair produces a fledgling this early in the season they attempt to nest again, and they try and push the juvenile out of their territory before they lay the next clutch. Another chick belonging to a different pair from the next site south of Gulfview fledged a week later and hopefully both of these juveniles can get

together and wander off in search of territory when time comes!

## YORKE PENINSULA WORKSHOPS

Dr Grainne Maguire, Coastal Birds Program Leader, BirdLife Australia

Kasun from BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds team paid a visit to the Yorke Peninsula this September to meet with volunteers to launch the start of the Hooded Plover breeding season and to deliver two community training workshops. Ten people attended the Moonta workshop, where the group headed out to Moonta Bay for a shorebird survey and discovered a Hooded Plover nest! This vulnerable location was fenced to increase the chances of hatching. One adult Hooded Plover was caught and flagged as TJ at a beach just north of Simms



Cove in Moonta Bay. Another workshop was held in Yorketown with a visit to Port Moorowie to put learning into practice!

Kasun also joined Indigenous rangers Lyle and Ian to carry out shorebird surveys along the beaches of the Point Pearce Indigenous Protected Area. A lot of ground was covered during the trip, surveying and catching up with our terrific local volunteers at Kemp Bay, Point Turton, Hardwicke Bay, Balgowan, Port Victoria, Chinaman Wells, and Port Hughes.

This project is supported by BirdLife Australia and Natural Resources Northern and Yorke, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



## EYRE PENINSULA

Rachael Kannussaar, Coastal Management Officer, Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula

The Hooded Plovers across Eyre Peninsula had us up and running pretty early this season, with our first nest confirmed on 1/8/19, most likely on the ground mid-July. Nest checks by NRM staff and BirdLife volunteers commenced, with a focus on priority sites identified for monitoring last season for the Australian Government's National Landcare BirdLife project (BirdLife NLP), and recently for the National Landcare Program STAR (Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery) project (STAR NLP).



Sandy's is one remote beach, on southern Eyre Peninsula, that we are regularly monitoring for the BirdLife NLP project. Only accessible by 4WD or on foot, Sandy's is rarely visited by the public unless the 'sand banks are good' for surfers. This beach was suspected as a Hooded Plover nesting territory when five Hooded Plovers were seen during the 2014 biennial count, and territorial behaviour was witnessed. Until regular monitoring started, we had no idea whether nesting on this beach was occurring. The beach is quite steep and backed by a steep faced dune, limiting potential space for successful nesting. We observed flagged SY

with an unbanded partners' first nest (a three egg nest) on 4/9/19. On the next visit, one egg was discovered rolled out of the nest! On advice, the rolled egg was left alone and interestingly was still there following hatching. Only one of the remaining two eggs hatched and the protective parents successfully raised this chick to fledge. During our last visit to Sandy's, we discovered flagged adult SY, unbanded partner and juvenile had been joined by another pair of adult Hooded Plovers, occupying opposite ends of the beach. It will be interesting to see if the new pair take over this territory, or whether SY and unbanded partner retain their status and resume nesting again.





At another Hooded Plover territory south of Tumby Bay on southern Eyre Peninsula, we have joined forces with local coastal landholders to improve the chances of Hooded Plovers successfully nesting on beaches adjacent to their property. After one nest loss (unmanaged nest), the decision was made to install signage on the approach to this pair's second nest. A remote sensing camera was also installed with BirdLife's Kasun Ekanayake's help. This pair successfully hatched their 1 remaining egg, and this chick successfully fledged.

Across all monitored sites on Eyre Peninsula, 35 nesting attempts have been recorded across 20 nesting territories so far this season. At some of these territories, pairs are incubating their third nest. Four of these territories have successfully fledged five young so far, with chicks at another three of these territories at varying stages.



A highlight for NRM staff and volunteers was a visit from BirdLife's Kasun Ekanayake visiting southern Eyre Peninsula in September, thanks to the support from the Australian Government's National Landcare program BirdLife project. During Kasun's visit, we held a start of season meeting with territory monitoring volunteers to discuss plans for the upcoming season. We also had the chance to visit the local Port Neill Hooded Plover pairs, with one pair nesting less than 50m from our meeting venue! A community workshop was also held at Redcliffs Camp, and has resulted in six more Hooded Plover territories being regularly monitored by new volunteers. Site visits to numerous territories across southern Eyre Peninsula (some sites new to Kasun), enabled us to also capture and flag four new adult birds, JJ, DR, BK and SY.



Site visit following the Redcliff workshop. Photo: Rachael Kannussaar

Members of the Port Neill community were thrilled to celebrate the completion of the Hooded Plover mosaic interactive game, which now complements the recently completed beach-nesting birds mosaic seat. A launch was organized by the Port Neill Progress Association to celebrate this project with the wider community which saw the Port Neill Area School, Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Board, Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula Staff, Tumby Bay District Council, Karen Carr from Squashed Cocky (Artist), and Kasun from BirdLife all in attendance.

As a region, we look forward to continuing to monitor territories across the Peninsula. Our knowledge continues to increase, particularly of the key pressures Hooded Plovers are facing at each location and where we can best focus our attention to help this threatened species.

## POPULATION MONITORING OF OYSTERCATCHERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Keith Jones, Research Coordinator, Team Oystercatcher

Despite detailed population monitoring of both Australian Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers at key sites in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania for more than 20 years, such information is not available for South Australia. To develop a cost-effective method to monitor these conspicuous resident shorebirds, since 2011 a group of trained volunteers, known as “Team Oystercatcher”, have been monitoring on a monthly basis, the numbers of Oystercatchers in three regions of South Australia. Also, with the increasing recreational use of some coastal areas around SA, it is important to know whether these birds are vulnerable to increasing disturbance at their nesting and foraging times. The three regions chosen have contrasting habitat and levels of human activity and surveys are undertaken at least twice monthly at fixed sites.

### South-East Fleurieu Coast

Over the 8 years of surveys across 10 sites, average abundances for both oystercatcher species peaked in March – April. For POCs, highest numbers occurred at roosting and foraging sites within the Murray Estuary, whereas peak abundances for the Sooty Oystercatchers (SOCs) occurred at foraging sites along the ocean beaches. Since 2011, there has been a contraction in the distribution of POCs along the ocean beaches, with relatively few now observed along the western ocean beach at Middleton. Interestingly, the inter-annual fluctuations in numbers of both species have been very similar with lowest numbers occurring in 2013/14 and highest numbers in 2016/17, suggesting a common environmental determinant.

### NE Bays of Kangaroo Island

Pied Oystercatchers have been observed at all surveyed sites, with highest numbers consistently seen at the high tidal roosting site at Reeves Point on the southern edge of the Bay of Shoals. Comprehensive weekly surveys during the 2018 breeding season at Island Beach by two of our Team Oystercatcher members, Dave Potter and Jean Turner, have gathered valuable information on the sizes of POC territories, clutch sizes, hatching and fledging rates. A total of 11 pairs of breeding birds were observed between September and December 2018, with 2 nest failures. Five nesting pairs each produced 2 eggs per clutch and a total of 6 chicks (hatching rate 60%). Eight of the nine chicks reared by 6 nesting adult pairs went on to fledge, suggesting that the hatching/chick stage is the more vulnerable than the fledged stage.

One interesting aspect of the behaviour of Pied Oystercatchers on KI was that, at times of very high tides, often accompanied by wet windy weather, flocks of POCs moved to grassed areas, adjacent to their roosting sites to forage for worms and other invertebrates. Generally, SOCs were less common at all sites than POCs.



## The Gulf St. Vincent “Samphire” Coast

Since the beginning of consistent surveys in 2016/17, POCs have been commonly observed throughout the Samphire Coast, with similar abundances in both southern and northern areas. Highest numbers occurred in summer and autumn, when relatively low day-time tides provided optimal foraging periods. Highest abundances for both species occurred in 2016/17 and have since declined and for POCs in the southern Samphire region, this decline was significant in 2018/19. The reason for the decline remains unknown; however, a decline in available food (cockles and worms) may have contributed to the drop in POC numbers.

### Important conclusions

- At times in all three regions, population sizes of both species attain the level of international importance (designated by Ramsar, in having more than 1% of their global populations).
- Flagged POCs have been observed in all three regions, indicating some recruitment of birds from as far away as Corner Inlet, Victoria. Additional flagging programs within the areas will greatly assist in delineating and managing these and other populations.
- We are only just beginning to understand whether current reproductive rates of POCs will sustain population numbers on KI. Other important breeding sites need to be located so that similar monitoring programs in those respective areas can be developed.
- On the SE Fleurieu and the southern Samphire coasts, we have seen a recent contraction in spatial distribution of POC, possibly due to fluctuations in levels of their food (Pipis and worms) availability.

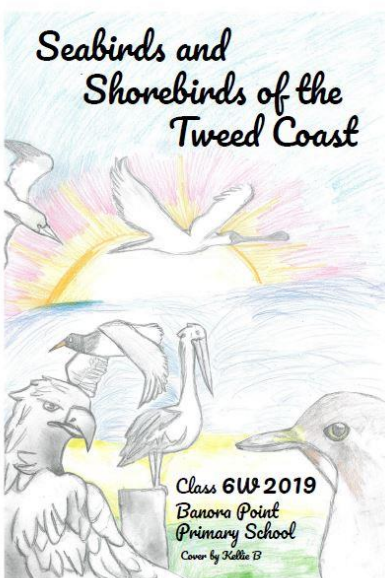


Those interested in obtaining a copy of the full 2019 Team Oystercatcher Report can contact me by email: [docjones@bigpond.net.au](mailto:docjones@bigpond.net.au).

## New South Wales Updates

### SEABIRDS AND SHOREBIRDS OF THE TWEED COAST BOOK LAUNCH

Indianna and Bailey, Students, Banora Point Public School



Recently, the Year 6W class of Banora Point Public School, Tweed Heads, NSW created a book on how we can help protect endangered beach-nesting birds. Late last semester we started reading articles and books on shorebirds and beach-nesting birds of the Tweed Coast. The articles we read were by Tweed Shire Council, Birdlife Australia, and Tweed Valley Weekly. We also watched a video on endangered beach-nesting birds. BirdLife shared their posters, brochures, and workbooks with us too.

Not long after we started our project, we went on an excursion to Hastings Point and met with the convenor of Birdlife Northern Rivers Linda Brannian and Pamela Grey the Program Leader of Wildlife, Protection Tweed Shire Council. While we were on the excursion we saw Pied Oystercatchers, Little Terns, an osprey and a spoonbill.

After the excursion, we had to pick a certain bird to study and compile a book about. We had five different topics to research and write about which were

Description/Appearance, Food, Habitat/Nesting, Breeding/Behaviour and Distribution/Conservation status. We had to summarise our information from a variety of sources and write multiple drafts and then apply feedback to improve our work. The photos we have used in the book were taken by local residents: Bruce MacGregor, Graham Donaldson, Yvonne Gardiner and Mr Wilkinson.

A couple of weeks ago we heard that we have received a grant for \$1,400 from the ITV Tweed Community Initiative fund to put our book into schools and community Libraries in the Tweed Coast. The book was launched to parents and friends on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November and our next printing will be shared with schools and libraries along the Tweed Coast. We will also send one to the BNB team at BirdLife Australia. Any profits from the sales of our book will be donated to the BirdLife's Beach-nesting Bird program.



Photo: Monique Kirkby

## SHOREBIRDS AT THE BIRD HAVEN FESTIVAL

Daniel Lees, Beach-nesting Birds Project Officer, BirdLife Australia

Between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of October, I was fortunate enough to be invited to run two shorebird workshops as part of the Bird Haven Festival at Shoalhaven Heads in NSW, funded by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The festival was split over the weekend with a Friday night dinner headlined by BirdLife Australia's Sean Dooley, a day of presentations on the Saturday with an impressive line-up of speakers headlined by the author of *'Where Song Began'* Tim Low, and a community market with additional presentations on the Sunday.

The packed schedule of activities and presenters on both Saturday and Sunday meant my shorebird workshops (a one hour talk and a one hour field trip) were scheduled for 7:30am on both Saturday and Sunday mornings. Despite the early hour, both workshops were impressively fully booked. What really made the workshops so successful however were the number and diversity of shorebirds we were able to view during the field component, allowing participants to put the ID skills they had learnt in the talk into practice. Good numbers of Red-capped Plover, a flock of Red-necked Stint with a lone Sanderling, approximately 50 Bar-tailed Godwit and 60 Eastern Curlew (the most I've ever seen) were among the highlights that participants were able to observe.



Photo: Dan Lees



I would like to finish by thanking the festival organisers Perrie Croshaw, Cathy Law and Jessica Sharp for their assistance and congratulate them on the organisation of a wonderful event.



Photo: Cathy Law

## FIRST PIED OYSTERCATCHER TO FLEDGE ON A PUBLIC SYDNEY BEACH

Julie Keating, Volunteer

Last season on Deeban Spit, Port Hacking, we successfully fledged the first Pied Oystercatcher chick on a public Sydney beach in 25 years. This was after 4 years of them trying here.



Photo: Julie Keating

The 2019 season started early on the 31<sup>st</sup> August. That should have been a good thing, but the chosen nest site was horrendous. I was surprised at the chosen site. I thought they would go to, or near, where they had successfully nested last year. What I didn't know was this pair was not our usual resident pair. They showed their lack of experience by choosing a site where 40+ juvenile ravens were still hanging out, near the creek and only half a metre above the high water tide mark, where the nipper pumpers would disturb them off their nest, any spring tide would have washed the nest out and/or if there was extra swell, this would also have taken the nest out. Subsequently, the nest only lasted 2 days.

Two weeks later, the resident pair set up a nest about 100m from where they successfully nested the previous year. However, strong winds at the last minute blew the nest out and they decided to move. Neither pair was doing the volunteers any favours as they both laid on a Friday so their protective fence, provided by Sutherland Shire Council plus Bushcare staff, couldn't arrive until at least the Monday. It was a huge challenge for volunteers to manage a nest site for a busy weekend with the nest being able to be accessed from any point on a 360 degree angle, with no fence and no signs. But we did it. We are in the middle of an horrendous drought, but on the following Monday it started raining with strong winds. That meant no fence or signage until it stopped raining the following Thursday.

Devastatingly, 10 days shy of the eggs hatching, a fox family visited. They took out the oystercatcher nest plus the Masked Lapwing nest that was only 1 week away from hatching. All up we had 4 oystercatcher nests (2 pairs instead of 1 pair) and 2 Masked Lapwing nests destroyed by foxes. I am hoping that through the National Parks Association we can get Council and



Photo: Julie Keating



National Parks working together next year to do fox control ahead of the nesting season to give our birds a better chance.

Our volunteers do a remarkable job helping people successfully navigate around the nest site without disturbing the nesting birds. The one-on-one chats with beach users are the most useful tool we have to help our BNBs. Each year we are seeing more and more people visiting just to see how the birds are doing and where they are up to in terms of nesting. The word has spread throughout the community and one of our local pre-school teachers has offered to help us develop a “presentation” for the local school to engage the children about our resident BNB and migratory shorebirds. Something that will keep us occupied next winter.

All 4 oystercatchers are now best pals and happily feeding and roosting together, rather than constantly fighting over nesting space. A video of the Deeban Spit, Port Hacking Pied Oystercatcher laying an egg can be found through the private YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/yIIFA42g-Nc>

## **TASMANIA UPDATES**

### **INTRODUCING TASMANIA’S DEFENDERS OF THE ‘HOOD’**

Monique Case, Biodiversity Co-ordinator, NRM North

*Defending the ‘Hood’: reducing threats to Hooded Plover breeding success in northern Tasmania* is a project supported by NRM North and Parks and Wildlife Services Tasmania, through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program.

The northern Tasmanian natural resource management region provides habitat for more than 20% of the eastern population of Hooded Plover. *Defending the Hood* seeks to improve suitable nesting habitat and breeding success within the focal landscape on the east coast of Tasmania between Cape Naturaliste and Ironhouse Point and Flinders Island.

Key project activities include: population surveys, targeted weed control, community engagement, social attitude surveys, breeding season monitoring, and installation of signage and temporary nest fencing to reduce human disturbance, increase available nesting habitat and improve fledgling success.

Community members are at the heart of this project, with Hooded Plover wardens growing to seven team members in this, our second season. Our committed wardens undertake weekly monitoring, and nest protection activities. The project is also fortunate to have the benefit of local ornithological expert Dr. Liz Znidarsic’s technical input.



Photo: NRM North

We are now halfway through our second season and are pleased to report our Hooded Plover wardens are busy monitoring four beaches on the east coast of Tasmania, all of which have nest fencing and signage in place. The first of the season's chicks are out and about, with our wardens admiring the feisty parenting skills of the Hoodies in keeping the gulls at bay.

Over 80 kilometres of Tasmania’s east coast and Flinders Island has been walked by NRM North’s *Defending the Hood* project team for population surveys. One curious observation on the east coast survey was of a Hooded

Plover paired up with a Ruddy Turnstone on a relatively remote and small beach, patrolling the wave line together – a case of mistaken identity perhaps, though no doubt four eyes are always better than two?

The surveys provide a snapshot that will be repeated in coming years, to align with BirdLife Australia's biennial count timing and methodology. These surveys will assist in identifying local population trends, threats and prioritise future actions. We look forward to sharing the compiled results from our recent efforts in the June 2020 newsletter.

*Defending the Hood* is keen to hear from people who would like to share their Hooded Plover observations or want to know more about the project and how to participate. You can reach the team through NRM North on 036333 7777 or [admin@nrmnorth.org.au](mailto:admin@nrmnorth.org.au).

## **WESTERN AUSTRALIA UPDATES**

### AMAZING RESILIENCE OF THE HOODED PLOVER

Marcus Singor, Coordinator, Hooded Plover Program Western Australia.



Down in the south-western corner of Western Australia you will find the Cape to Cape region. This is a rugged coastline that consists of limestone cliffs, granite boulders and sandy bays. In the middle of this stretch of coastline between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin the Margaret River empties into the Indian Ocean. The northern side of the river is generally isolated during winter and spring due to water levels and forms a quiet beach area where Hooded Plover like to breed. As the flow of the river stops, a sandbank forms across the exit and allows people to cross over to the northern side. This area is a known Hooded Plover breeding site and is monitored closely.

Whenever a nest is discovered, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions installs fencing and signage to protect it. The location is subject to a high level of disturbance as it is a popular surfing spot, attracts many beachgoers, joggers and even tour buses drop people off to explore the beaches.

In 2019, we witnessed an amazing breeding effort by a pair of Hooded Plovers at the mouth of the Margaret River which is testimony to their resilience. We are aware that Hooded Plover will lay replacement clutches, sometimes a second clutch and more rarely a third clutch but we have never experienced them laying a fourth clutch before let alone a fifth clutch.

The story starts on the 28 August when the first clutch of 2 eggs was discovered. Already, the Hooded Plover pair had to contest with strong winds that were sand blasting them and the nest followed by heavy rains. Yet they persisted. At this stage the river was easy to cross and water levels reached knee high. On 31 August, we noticed that the nest was gone and goanna tracks (likely of a Gould's Monitor, *Varanus gouldii*) were seen around the nest site.



On 12 September, 2 Hooded Plovers were present near the previous nest site appearing very relaxed. Not deterred, a second clutch of 2 eggs was laid on 27 September. Distraction display and false brooding was observed after which the Hooded Plover returned to sit on the nest. The nest was 7 meters from the base of the dunes and there were a lot of walkers around. The pair were still sitting on the nest on 7 October. On 15 October, the eggs were gone. The nest was likely predated again, based on the tracks around the nest, by possibly the same goanna. At this time, false brooding was observed by both birds in what seemed like new

scrapes. The pair were chasing each other a meter or so and there were a couple of Australian Ravens and Silver Gulls around.



Photo: Kirrily Hastings

A third clutch was discovered on 27 October with 3 eggs. The nest was located on the Point again, north of the river mouth, 20 meters from the base of the dunes. Two people were flying a kite nearby and one of the Hooded Plovers was foraging at the river mouth whilst the other was sitting. A check on 5 November found no trace of the nest. There were heaps of tracks from birds and sand crabs around the site.

On 7 November, both Hooded Plovers were near scrapes about 15 meters from the last nest site, in the middle of the Point. The following day, both adults were sitting in substantial scrapes eight meters apart from each other. Later

they were seen foraging along the river shoreline. On 9 November, one adult was sitting in a scrape and the other adult was nearby. A fourth nesting attempt was made when on 14 November a nest with one egg was found. The bird put on a broken wing display, showed leading behaviour and was falling over. Human footprints were observed near to the nest. A Hooded Plover was observed still incubating on 19 November and had two eggs by 22 November. A further check made on 3 December revealed that the nest was gone and some tracks were noted but not identified.

Just when we thought this incredible feat could not be surpassed, the local Hoodie pair had other ideas and on 14 December, a clutch of two eggs was located nearby the previous breeding sites. The latest fifth breeding attempt seemed perilous low down the beach and we were concerned that a high tide or big swell could threaten the nest.



Photo: Kirrily Hastings

It is quite amazing that the female Hooded Plover was able to lay 11 eggs over the short breeding season. This would have placed a huge strain on her reserves. If the average weight of a Hooded Plover is 90-100 grams and the weight of a fresh egg is 13 grams the number of eggs laid would exceed the bird's body weight. All five breeding attempts were confined to an area no larger than 10 meters by 20 meters showing what a strong attachment some Hooded Plovers have to their breeding locations. One concern for this pair is that the goanna had learnt to associate this beach with food.

Last year the Hooded Plovers raised three chicks after an initial breeding failure so we are currently hoping for the best. The beach guardians who monitored and looked after this pair need to be acknowledged for their dedication and commitment: Natalie Bell, Christine Taylor, Andrew Green, Janet Jones and Kirrily Hastings as well as the nest protection team from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions who ensure fencing and signage is put in place which is co-ordinated by Rebecca Kay.

## WA SHOREBIRD FORUM AND CAPE TO CAPE TRIP

Lindall Kidd, Migratory Shorebird Project Officer, BirdLife Australia

September 7<sup>th</sup>—National Threatened Species Day—is held on the date that the last of the Tasmanian Tigers died in 1936. While the day places the spotlight on extinction events, it also offers the chance to focus on



conservation successes, and the tireless efforts of volunteers. This September 7<sup>th</sup>, shorebirders involved in BirdLife Australia's National Monitoring Program (Shorebirds 2020) came together from across Western Australia (from Esperance to Exmouth) and converged at Bold Park for the WA Shorebird Forum. The forum, supported by the Swan River Trust, celebrated the work of volunteers involved in the monitoring program, celebrating successes and sharing information.

Over the day, we heard from shorebird count coordinators from across WA, learnt about shorebird population trends based on long-term data, heard about recent shorebird research, and were given an overview of BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds Program.



Plaxy Barratt opened and set the context for the day. WA is critically important for shorebirds, consisting of an impressive amount of shorebird habitat which includes sites of international significance. I followed on from Plaxy, giving an update on the National Migratory Shorebird Program, its history and conservation successes to date.

Dr. Mike Bamford presented a summary of waterbird monitoring on the estuary of Derbarl Yerrigan (the Swan River), from a superb long-term data set of almost 40 years (1981 – 2019). Dr. Mike Craig followed with a historical overview of shorebird data from Lake

McLarty in the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar site, focusing on threats to the lake system and broader management implications. Similarly, Brad Kneebone gave a summary of the shorebirds of Denmark's Wilson Inlet, and how human disturbance and dog walking pose a threat to birds near the inlet opening with Ocean Beach, and the subsequent proposal for a bird sanctuary.

While these talks highlighted areas of concern and threats to shorebirds, we also heard encouraging talks about opportunities. Sue Mather's presentation on Rottnest Island provided a welcome summary showing how shorebird habitat can be maintained through appropriate on-ground management. Sue Kalab gave an inspiring presentation combining art and science, From Awe to Art, coordinating S2020 in Bunbury Leschenault Waters. Jane Taylor presented on some of the projects run at the Broome Bird Observatory, with a focus on their epic migration watches which made everyone want to go there.

In the afternoon, Claudia Magana gave a summary of the extraordinary survey efforts of the expansive Esperance shorebird area. John Graff summarized a shorebird disturbance project on the Peel-Harvey Estuary, and Grant Griffin took us further North and spoke about Exmouth shorebird counts. The day concluded with a presentation from Dr. Grainne Maguire about BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds Program which provided a useful summary of the project efforts and some interesting case studies.

A few themes emerged through the day, including: issues across multiple sites with managing human disturbance (and the resulting disturbance from off-leash dogs), a lack of resourcing for regularly surveying expansive shorebird areas (which makes our counters' efforts all the more impressive!), and much discussion around how to recruit new participants into the program.

After the WA Shorebird Forum, Grainne and I headed south to Margaret River to run two beach-nesting birds' workshops and see some WA Hooded Plovers.

Thirty people attended a community workshop about shorebirds of the Cape to Cape region, which provides critical habitat for both migratory and beach nesting shorebirds. Attendees heard from local experts including Christine Taylor from DBCA and Birdlife WA's Christine Wilder.

Over the next two days, Grainne and I were in the field to see nesting WA Hooded Plovers, which are noticeably different in their plumage, with black that extends midway down their back. Not only that, the birds seemed to have darker eggs as well as to sit tight on the nest when approached, more similar to red-capped plovers, although that might just have been an odd pair! Following this, Grainne held a workshop with Christine Taylor for DBCA staff and land managers from the region to share techniques about how to conserve beach nesting birds, including fencing nests and the My Beach Bird Online Data Portal.



Photo: Grainne Maquire



Photo: Grainne Maquire



Photo: Grainne Maquire

Each event was a great success, and Birdlife staff give special thanks to all those who came along to share their knowledge.

## **QUEENSLAND UPDATES**

### **INDIGENOUS COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT OF THREATENED COASTAL BIRDS PROJECT**

Sally Sheldon, Consultant



BirdLife Australia (Northern Queensland) is partnering with local Indigenous ranger and native title holder groups, scientists and a team of volunteers to deliver a new conservation management project focusing on threatened coastal shorebirds in the Cairns region.

Funded by the Queensland Government's Community Sustainability Action grant program, the project will survey target beaches and inshore islands in the Trinity Inlet and Yarrabah regions, across a study area potentially extending from Russell Heads in the south to Mowbray River in the north. The surveys will provide comprehensive data on knowledge gaps for threatened shorebirds – in particular, the resident, beach-nesting Beach Stone-curlew, and endangered East Asian Australasian Flyway migratory shorebirds that breed in the Northern hemisphere and use the study area's tidal flats to feed and roost during their southern summer migration.

BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds experts will collaborate with local scientists, community volunteers, the Gunggandji, Mandingalbay Yidinji and Yirrganydji Indigenous ranger teams, and the Gunggandji Mandingalbay Yidinji native title holders, to undertake the surveys and increase local capacity to carry out ongoing monitoring work. Data gathered will be shared with all collaborators and added to BirdLife Australia's Birdata database, while being used to inform effective conservation and management actions for the threatened coastal shorebird species.



Photo: Bruce MacGregor

The project builds upon previous survey work that has been completed in the study area over several decades. Project researcher, Paul Fisk, has been involved with numerous studies that have collected baseline data on migratory wader distribution and abundance in the Trinity Inlet area since the mid-2000s. Much of this work has, however, focused on assessing impacts of local development along the Cairns Esplanade, leaving gaps in our understanding of the significance of nearby habitat in Trinity Inlet and Yarrabah's Mission Bay. Similarly, in 2018, BirdLife North Queensland conducted a survey of 38 sites within the region to gather evidence of Beach Stone-curlew breeding activity. This survey was designed to complement the efforts of project researcher, Amanda Freeman, who had coordinated volunteers in a similar baseline survey in 2000. The 2018 survey identified 37 Beach Stone-curlews at 18 locations, including multiple pairs of birds and evidence of several episodes of successful breeding activity. However, neither the 2000 nor 2018 surveys were able to access key potential Beach Stone-curlew habitat in the Yarrabah area. By involving local native title holders and Indigenous ranger teams, this new project will allow researchers to access these previously unsurveyed locations for the first time, to gather evidence of coastal shorebird activity and to assess the significance of these areas to shorebirds in the region.

## **FAIRY TERNS**

### **FALSE STARTS, COLONY FAILURE AND A NEW FAIRY TERN LONGEVITY RECORD FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Claire Greenwell, Convenor Western Australia Fairy Tern Network.

Each year in spring, around 1,500 Fairy Terns descend on the greater Perth metropolitan region. Their return signifies the commencement of the breeding season; an exciting but anxious wait, not knowing where the birds will 'tern' up and establish their colonies.

It's curious that these vulnerable coastal seabirds would choose to nest in such a built-up area of the West Australian coastline, but it's for good reason. The mouths of the highly productive Swan-Canning (Perth), Peel-Harvey (Mandurah) and Leschanault (Bunbury) Estuary systems are critically important foraging grounds for Fairy Terns, who feed, largely, on small bait fishes such as sprats, pilchards and anchovies that thrive in these environments.



Claire Greenwell

Photo: Claire Greenwell

Small terns don't necessarily nest in the same location each year, with colony site selection driven by various environmental and social factors, such as site stability, prey availability and past reproductive success at a particular site.



Unpredictable weather and food resources during the early breeding season can lead to colony failure and false-starts and the 2019/20 season has been no different. During early October large flocks of fairies were seen on the Peel-Harvey and Leschanault Estuaries, engaged in their ever-entertaining courtship displays. By the end of October, a small colony of around 30 pairs had established nests at Point McKenna, a sandy beach site situated within a secure area of the Bunbury harbour. Despite the colony forming well above the spring tide mark, all eggs were buried during a storm that hit the region in early November.

Egg burial and inundation of nests during storm events is a common driver of nest failure among beach-nesting birds. However, the early-season loss meant there would be an opportunity to try again. And they did. Within 7 days, a second attempt was underway and by late-November 180 nests had been recorded. The colony will be monitored throughout the season and all going well, we could expect to start to see chicks from early December.

Fairy Tern numbers on Garden Island (an A-class nature reserve and military base) have been increasing over the past two months, with up to several hundred birds coming into roost at night. Each morning at first light, the birds leave en masse, dispersing to various sites across the Perth region to feed, find mates and identify suitable breeding locations.

Small colonies have formed on Garden Island, and Carnac Island, which has resulted in a beach-closure of this A-Class Nature Reserve. Numbers on Carnac Island peaked at around 120 nests during the 2018/19 breeding season and it is possible we will see similar numbers this season.

In Perth's urban centre, two important breeding sites (Point Walter and Rous Head) have been gaining much attention from Fairy Terns, with early-morning prospecting activities recorded at both sites. Point Walter is a prominent sandbar within the Swan River system, and an important aggregation, feeding and breeding site for Fairy Terns. It is also a popular and much-loved water playground during the summer months, making management interventions challenging at times. In recent years, changes in site management during spring/summer, including the installation of temporary fencing and signage, and community education have facilitated successful nesting attempts by Fairy Terns and other shore-nesting birds such as Red-capped Plovers and Pied Oystercatchers.



Photo: Claire Greenwell

On 14<sup>th</sup> November, the first Fairy Tern egg was located, and colony formation was well underway, with nest-scraping, territorial disputes, aerial courtship displays and fish presentation behaviours observed. The first birds to lay selected an alternate colony site location to where they have nested previously, so it is possible that we'll see large numbers of birds nesting at Point Walter this season, with other birds prospecting the former site. As of the end of November, there are ~65 nests and other pairs are courting and prospecting, so there will likely be an increase in the number of nests in the first two weeks of December.

The formation of other colonies in the metropolitan area is also expected in early December, including at the Rous Head sanctuary, which has become a significant nesting site over the past six years, supporting 220 pairs last year. Monitoring and community education programs will remain at the forefront of our work throughout the season and it is hoped that proactive management activities (e.g. predator control and habitat management) during the non-breeding season will help make the 2019/20 a productive season for the terns.

On 10<sup>th</sup> November, an injured Fairy Tern carrying a leg band, was picked up on a beach at Garden Island. It 'terns' out the bird was originally banded as a runner by Dr Nic Dunlop at Tern Island, Shoalwater in January 1997. At nearly 23 years (22 y, 9 m, 24 d), this recapture is a new longevity record for the species. Unfortunately,

due to the nature of its injuries, and despite the hard work of many people involved, the bird was not able to be rehabilitated. While this is a sad story, this bird has provided valuable new information for its species and highlights the importance of long-term conservation efforts to protect these long-lived seabirds.

## FAIRY TERN MONITORING PROJECT, BIRD ISLAND, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Aleisa Lamanna and Emma Stephens, Sharing our Shores with Coastal Wildlife Project, BirdLife Australia

BirdLife Australia and Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (NRAMLRL) are partnering for a second season of Fairy Tern monitoring on Bird Island, Outer Harbour. Bird Island is one of 19 Fairy Tern breeding locations in South Australia and has in recent years seen single colonies of up to 60 nests. Last season was our first year monitoring this site intensely with trained volunteers. We recorded 74 nests across the island, 130 eggs and 71 chicks. Unfortunately, we were not able to confirm any fledglings.



Photo: Mary-Ann van Tright

This season the Fairy Terns are back and have started breeding much earlier than last year: November instead of January. We've had two nesting colonies observed so far but we fear one may have been predated on by a fox. Motion-sensor cameras have been installed to capture information about threats to the colonies such as foxes and raptors.

On a recent monitoring trip, we were lucky to observe, only a few meters from where we were walking, two Fairy Terns courting and then eventually mating with the male giving his fish to the female after mating. We know that females are supplementary-fed by their mates before laying and it's believed that Fairy Terns are monogamous breeders who form long-lasting pair bonds. The moment was captured with some great photos, below is one of them.

## GIPPSLAND LAKES LITTLE AND FAIRY TERN UPDATE

Deb Sullivan, Project Officer, BirdLife Australia

Like last year's breeding season, the first small terns (Fairy) made an appearance in the Gippsland Lakes in mid-August and shortly after our weekly monitoring started with the assistance of John Hutchison, Sue Grima and Peter 'Skipper' Johnstone.

As the flock grew, interest in securing a nesting location began. Lake Tyers was the first of the sites and approximately 30 pairs were seen fish wiping, scrape making and chattering loudly. These were predominately breeding adult Fairy Terns with the company of a small number of non-breeding birds.

Another flock appeared at Albifrons and Crescent Island. Again, this was dominated by Fairy Terns. A significant number of non-breeding birds also accompanied the breeding adults. Little Terns did not make a showing at this site until a couple of weeks later.

Unfortunately, many of the birds at Lake Tyers departed the colony before egg laying and just 10 pairs remained. During this time, numbers increased at Crescent Island and Albifrons. It is unclear if these were the birds from the Lake Tyers colony.

Additionally, 9 Little Tern pairs set up a small colony on Rigby Island in late November while another 20 small terns have been observed at Marlo.

Our first chicks of the 2019 season were sighted on 25 November – Fairy Terns. Another 30 nesting Fairy Terns were observed. Only 4 pairs of Little Terns have been observed on nests to date.

To date some of our observational differences between last season and the current include:

- A noticeable lack of Silver Gulls compared to last year where numbers were noted to be excessively high across the Gippsland Lakes in general and were recorded harassing small terns incessantly.
- More unstable weather patterns. Stronger winds and colder temperatures which threatened colonies due to water inundation. Days of extreme temperatures interspersed with harsh windy, cold conditions.
- Larger number of non-breeding birds.
- Less Little Tern numbers to date.



Our previously successful Pelican Island has been abandoned by the birds this season which we suspect is due to vegetation growth overwhelming the location. Management of vegetation will take place prior to the birds arriving next year.

## **AND LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST....**

Every two years we survey as much as we can possibly achieve of the eastern Hooded Plover's mainland range, i.e. thousands of kilometres, all within the space of a week or two! How do we do this? With the help of our long term, amazing regional count coordinators plus an army of awesome volunteers and a determined national count coordinator!!

The results of the last two counts, in November 2016 and 2018, are now available. The trajectory is looking good, with Victorian numbers having increased tremendously. Everyone's hard work is truly helping this species!

This project is supported by BirdLife Australia, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Both reports can be found at <http://www.birdlife.org.au/.../beach-n.../biennial-count-reports>

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FUNDERS OF THE BEACH-NESTING BIRDS PROGRAM**

Our BirdLife Australia Program is funded by a diverse range of funding sources and each year we apply for new grants and opportunities to develop new resources, educational materials or to provide support to volunteers and key regions.

Donors, grants and philanthropists make the program possible and we often leverage smaller amounts of funding to go for bigger grants to achieve special projects.

Currently, our major funding sources include the Victorian Government's Icon Species fund, the Australian Government's National Landcare Program via the Glenelg Hopkins CMA, Yorke Peninsula NRM, and Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM. Several targeted projects were funded by Coastcare grants and works on Kangaroo Island by the Letcombe Foundation.