

WA South Coast Shorebird Network newsletter

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Issue 3– January 2012

Introduction

Welcome to the third newsletter linking people within the Natural Resource Management (NRM) sector to shorebird conservation issues.

This newsletter reports on an exciting range of events and projects coming up this year.

This newsletter focuses on initiatives across the South Coast NRM region.

This newsletter forms part of a shorebird project supported by Green Skills, Albany Bird Group and BirdLife Australia, with funding from Lotterywest, Coastwest and South Coast NRM (through the Australian Government's CFOC program).

For the Australian Shorebird 2020 newsletter see www.shorebirds.org.au

The South Coast Shorebird 2012 program is supported by:

Green Skills shorebird program is also supported by Coastwest, South Coast Management Group, Denmark Arts, Southern Edge Arts, the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Program, South Coast NRM, Lotterywest, South Coast Management Group, Birds Australia and Albany Birds Group and CAN (WA). The Community Arts Network (WA) which manages the Catalyst Community Arts fund on behalf of the State of Western Australia through the Department of Culture and the Arts.

Inside this issue:

Introduction	1
Upcoming South Coast Shorebird Events: January—March 2012	2-3
Recent Bird Identification Course	4
Successful Breeding for Fairy Terns near Denmark	4
Regional South Coast Shorebird Count	5
Ravensthorpe Coast Shorebird Survey	5-6
Nornalup Inlet Bird Survey	6
Rushy Point Bird Survey	7
Flyers for Forthcoming Events	8-9
Resources	10



Department of Culture and the Arts



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Department of Environment and Conservation
 Our environment, our future



Hooded Plover Workshops: Bird Life Australia events



Learn more about the Hooded Plover

The Hooded Plover is a charismatic little bird that lives and nests on the shore of salt lakes and beaches. Nesting on the ground and raising chicks in habitats so heavily favoured by people for recreation is fraught with danger!

Managing 'hoodies' and other shore/

beach-nesting birds offers challenges when it comes to balancing human use of these areas and the birds needs. If you would like to hear all about the quirky behaviours of beach-nesting birds and what is being done to help them, come along to your local workshop. All are welcome to these free events.

Esperance: 14th January
8:30am-12:30pm followed by lunch (provided), includes 1 hour field visit in morning. Meet at Esperance Natural Resource Management Centre, 113 Dempster St, Esperance

Albany: 18th January 2:30-4:30pm at South Coast NRM Conference Room, 39 Mercer Rd, Albany

Margaret River: 23rd January
4-6pm at Margaret River Community Centre

Preston Beach: 25th January
9:30am-12pm at Preston Beach Community Centre,

followed by optional afternoon field visit to Yalgorup NP

The workshops will cover local and national conservation issues and strategies for hoodies and other beach nesting birds and include discussions and question time.

For workshops that include a field visit, please bring along sun protection, and binoculars if you have them.

Tea/coffee/juice and light refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to assist with catering.

****Special note for Esperance RSVP: if staying for lunch let us know of any dietary requirements****

For further information and to RSVP, contact Grainne Maguire: g.maguire@birdsaustralia.com.au
Ph: 0400910761

This project is being run by Bird Life Australia and supported by South Coast NRM through its Coastal Community Engagement program and funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative.

South Coast Shorebird Events

You are invited to register and participate in the following interesting South Coast Shorebird events. For further information and to register for these events please contact Basil Schur at Green Skills Denmark on 98483310 0429481019 or bschur@greenskills.org.au
See www.greenskills.org.au for more details.

Regional Shorebird Survey

A regional community volunteer based shorebird survey of key coastal sites from Walpole to Bremer Bay in the South Coast Region (and including the Esperance coastline) in early February 2012. This will be followed by data analysis and report in conjunction with local groups.



Above: Red-necked Stints at Rushy Point, Albany. Photo Geoff Taylor.

When: 3rd-12th February 2012

Where: South Coast region from Walpole to Bremer Bay

Details: To volunteer for this shorebird survey please contact the Albany Bird Group:

Anne Bondin: 9844 1793 or at albanypenguins@hotmail.com,

Brad Kneebone 9845 2233 or

Basil Schur at Green Skills 98483310, 0429481019 or at bschur@greenskills.org.au

Benthic Invertebrate survey of Wilson Inlet

Survey of mudflat and sandy shore invertebrates to monitor changes to the range, abundance and size. Surveys to take place in February and March 2012.

When: February & March 2012

Where: Denmark

Details: If you would like to volunteer or for further information please contact Kym Phillips at the Denmark Environment Centre on 9848 1644.

Community Shorebird Education Projects

Join in a series of participatory kite making and flying events celebrating the South Coast's amazing shorebirds. These events, run by Green Skills and held in Denmark in February and Albany in March. will raise awareness about our amazing migratory shorebirds. See next page for details.

South Coast Shorebird Events (continued from previous page)

Kite Art and Migratory Shorebird Awareness days, Denmark and Albany

Workshop with renowned artist Michael Alvarez – decorate your own kite. Adults, families and children welcome. \$8 per person or \$15 per family.

Denmark

10am - 2pm Saturday 25th Feb 2012
Centre for Sustainable Living, 972 South Coast Hwy,
Denmark

Albany

10am - 2pm Saturday 24th March 2012
Albany Museum, Albany

Kite Art and Shorebird Beach Fiestas, Denmark and Albany

Kite flying fiestas with artist Michael Alvarez (see www.kitekinetics.com.au) and local environmentalists. Families, children and adults all welcome. Free.



Above: Michael Alvarez

Denmark

10am - 4pm
Sunday 26th
February
2012

Ocean Beach,
Denmark

Albany

10am - 4pm
Sunday 25th
March 2012

Anzac Park,
Albany Fore-
shore

To Register for the Kite workshop and fiesta, please ring Green Skills Denmark office at the CSL: 98483310. For Further information contact Basil Schur: 98483310 or 0429481019

Additional info will be on the Green Skills and CSL's websites www.greenskills.org.au and www.denmarkcsl.com.au

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Scientific Shorebird Forum and Panel

Panel of presenters including Bill Rutherford, Adrian Pinder (DEC Senior Research Scientist) and Albany Senior High School Science Students

When: 12.00-3.00pm Friday 9th March 2012

Where: Probably at UWA Albany at the Old Post Office

Details: Free. Refreshments and lunch provided

Talk – Migratory Shorebird Conservation – The International Perspective along the East Asian/Australasian Flyway

Presented by Bill Rutherford

When: 7.30-9.00pm Friday 9th March 2012

Where: Centre for Sustainable Living, Denmark

Details: Free refreshments provided

Shorebird Conservation Workshop

Learn all about our amazing shorebirds, how to identify them. Includes visits to prime shorebirds sites at Morley Beach, Wilson Inlet & Princess Royal Harbour, Albany.

With dynamic bird expert Bill Rutherford. Supported by colleagues from Birdlife Australia and the Albany Bird Group.

When: 8.30am-4.30pm 10th & 11th March 2012

Where: Centre for Sustainable Living, South Coast Hwy,
Denmark

Details: Cost involved – concessions available. TBA

Participants are encouraged to stay at the Centre for Sustainable Living in Denmark for this exciting week-end.

For more info: www.denmarkcsl.com.au

Shorebird Photographic and Art Exhibition

Works by local photographer Geoff Taylor and others.

When: late February and early March 2012.

Where: Centre for Sustainable Living, 972 South Coast Hwy, Denmark



Left: Banded Stilt, Wilson Inlet. Right: Bar-tailed Godwit, Wilson Inlet. Photos Geoff Taylor

Birdwatching tours and workshops

When: late February and March 2012.

Where: Centre for Sustainable Living, South Coast Hwy and Wetlands Education Centre, Atkinson Rd, Denmark

More details will be forthcoming. To enquire contact Basil Schur at Green Skills 98483310, 0429481019 or at bschur@greenskills.org.au

Recent Bird Identification Course held by Bird Life Australia

Seventeen keen bird watchers braved windy and overcast conditions to attend a course on how to identify shore-birds held in Albany on Friday 6th January 2012. The day included a field trip to Rushy Point, on Albany's Princess Royal Harbour.

While few birds were observed due to the strong south-westerly breeze, those seen included Bar-tailed Godwits, Greenshanks, Fairy Terns and Grey Plovers. Pacific Golden Plovers were a particularly striking sight in the morning sun.

This shorebird identification day formed part of a 3 day bird identification course held by Birds Australia and the Albany Bird Group. Principal tutors for the shorebird component were Ray Garstone, Wayne Zadow, Anne Bondin and Brad Kneebone.

Photos by Brad Kneebone



Successful Breeding for Fairy Terns near Denmark

Fairy Terns were observed exhibiting courting behavior near the mouth of Wilson Inlet in late spring, and a nesting colony was subsequently established in the area. On ground action was taken November 2011 by local bird watchers Brad Kneebone and Geoff Taylor to protect their colony. These birds are a Threatened Species and a protective fence was installed to keep intruders out.

Last year their nesting colony on Madfish Island in William Bay National Park was destroyed by a tidal surge and this is the first successful breeding for several years to local knowledge. As of late December the Fairy Terns appear to have completed their breeding season. At least six fledged chicks were observed nearby and it is likely more have fledged and departed.

- Brad Kneebone



Above: A courting pair of Fairy Terns, the male is offering a fish he has caught to the female. Below: Fairy Tern chicks in their nest, note the chick at right is newly hatched and still wet. Below left: The colony on a sand island, note the adult birds in flight over the island. Photos by Geoff Taylor.



Regional South Coast Shorebird Count 4– 12 Feb 2012

The vital annual summer south coast regional count is fast approaching. This February shorebird count will be vital for monitoring local and regional trends in shorebird numbers across estuaries, beaches and wetland shores, to assist with conservation planning and capacity building. This year, the south coast data will be collated and reported on by Peter Taylor based on his 2011 report (see <http://www.greenskills.org.au/pub/sb/sb.html>).

To align with the National Shorebird Count, the target count date is the weekend of 4th-5th February, though where this is not possible, dates extending to the 12th February are possible. Basil Schur at Green Skills Denmark will provide co-ordination support for volunteers for the count and can be contacted at 98483310, 0429481019 or at bschur@greenskills.org.au

Key birdwatching partner groups and their contacts for the survey include :

- Birds Australia/Albany Bird Group: Anne Bondin 9844 1793 or albanybirds@hotmail.com; Brad Kneebone 98452233 or frogpond@westnet.com.au
- Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park Association - Bremer Bay: Anne Gadsby 9837 4063 anngad@wn.com.au
- Dept of Environment and Conservation- Walpole: Shannon Armstrong 98400410 or shannon.armstrong@dec.wa.gov.au
- Dept of Environment and Conservation- Esperance
- Esperance Bird Observers Group: 0427198437 naranda8@bigpond.com or Mike Gibbs djohn@bigpond.com

Thanks to support from South Coast NRM, through the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Program, WA State Government through Coastwest, and through the South Coast Management Group, there is financial support available to assist volunteers across the region with costs associated with participating in this regional survey. This will be provided through Green Skills – contact Basil Schur on 0429481019 or bschur@greenskills.org.au



Photos—images from the 2011 February survey

Ravensthorpe Coast Shorebird Survey by John Tucker

The survey from Culham Inlet, Hopetoun, to Oldfield River Estuary, Munglinup Beach, was carried out 12-16th December 2011, during and following some unseasonal wet summer weather. Water levels were high in the inlets and most wetlands were at least half full.

Birds were scarce on beaches with few seen in the strong east wind and rain. Inland lakes provided a refuge from the inclement weather for local and migratory shorebirds. The most abundant shorebirds seen were Red-necked Stints, Red-capped Plovers and Sanderlings. Happily, breeding success was also noted for Pied Oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers.

The survey forms part of the Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network (RAIN) managed project "Hooded Plover Signage for the Ravensthorpe Coast – Protecting secretive shorebirds", funded through South Coast NRM through its Southern Shores grant program.

Ravensthorpe Coast Shorebird Survey (continued from previous page)

The survey will be repeated near the end of the beach-nesting birds' breeding season to coincide with the regional shorebird survey in February 2012. To volunteer for this shorebird survey in the Hope-toun to Munglinup area, please contact Rodger Walker at RAIN on 9838 1018.



- John Tucker

Photos:

Left: Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Lake Shaster, 16/12/11

Right: Culham Inlet from East Mt. Barren, 27/12/11

Nornalup Inlet Bird Survey by Shannon Armstrong

On Friday 30th September 2011 we embarked on the Marine Park boat 'Osprey' to the mouth of the Nornalup Inlet to see if any of the migratory shorebirds had arrived yet. Our team of keen birders were present Jeanne and Collin Steele and Mavis Sowry and two DEC employees Shannon Armstrong (Marine Park Coordinator) and Chris Goodsell (Ranger). We soon recorded our usual resident species being Sooty and Pied Oyster Catchers, Crested and Caspian Terns and Red Capped Plovers. After some time we were ready to leave, slightly disappointed that we hadn't observed any migratory species. Then a cry from the boat gave us a glimmer of hope "look over there", and sure enough there were 5 migratory shorebirds, the first arrivals of the season to our knowledge. We spent sometime debating the species so we took some photographs that we could send away for identification. Brad Kneebone was able to give us confirmation that the 5 birds were indeed Great Knots (thanks to Brad). We look forward to heading out to the site during the peak of the season to see what other species we observe. In October Mavis Sowry and Chris Goodsell also undertook 'start of season' surveys at the Irwin Inlet mouth at Peaceful Bay and at Parrys Inlet mouth however no migratory shorebird species were present. We look forward to returning to all of our sites again soon to see if any of the migratory species are present. We are always looking for additional birders so if anyone is keen to accompany us on our surveys please feel free to contact Shannon Armstrong at DEC Walpole on 98400400.

-Shannon Armstrong, Marine Park Coordinator, Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park, DEC



Above: One of the birders onboard the marine park boat 'Osprey'- photo Chris Goodsell/DEC. Below: Great Knots- photo Collin Steele.



To help our small team of enthusiastic birders be more organised in planning our surveys we have developed a small shorebird monitoring plan. The plan includes maps of our three survey locations (Nornalup Inlet Mouth, Irwin Inlet and Peaceful Bay and Parrys Inlet mouth) and a calendar that highlights the dates that we should be surveying. The plan also includes example count forms and explains the 2020 Birds Australia shorebird monitoring methods. It is a small step toward improving our monitoring program but the team feel that it has helped to formalise our approach and it'll be a useful reminder of when we need to undertake our counts. If anyone would like a copy of the plan please feel free to contact Shannon Armstrong at DEC Walpole on 98400400.

Rushy Point Bird Survey by Brendan Foster

During 2011 while completing a Diploma of Conservation Land Management I had the pleasure of conducting my first bird survey at the beautiful Rushy Point Reserve, Albany. It was here that I discovered why this small but very active habitat was such an important place for local and migratory bird species of the south west.

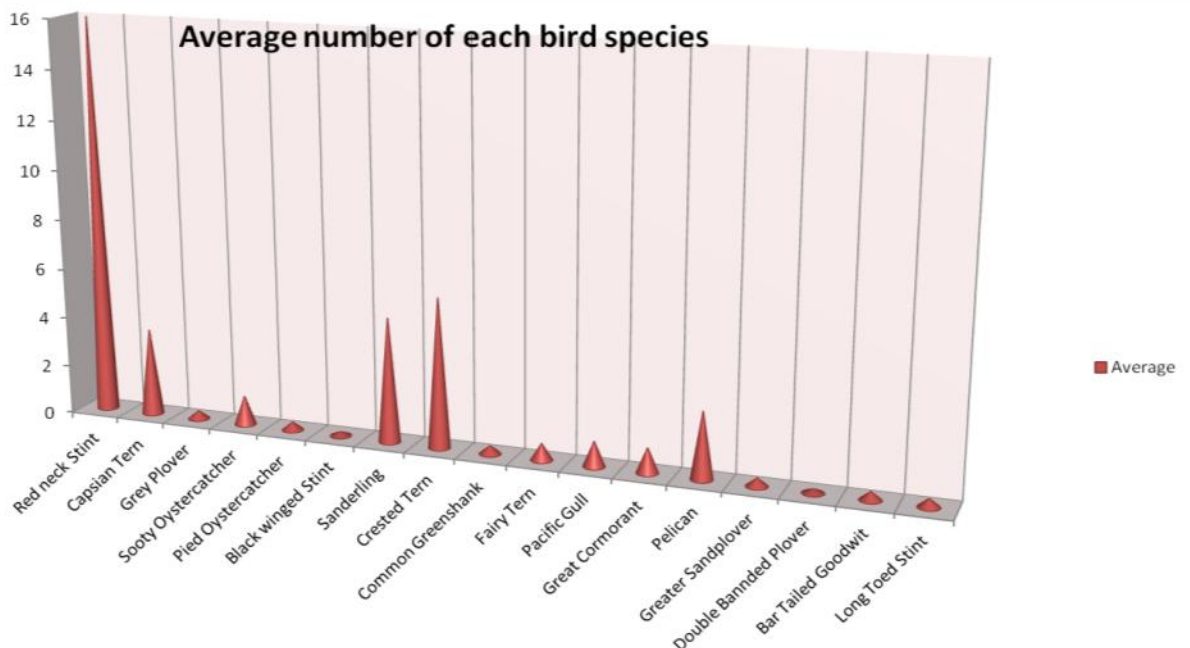
During spring I set out with my camera, shorebird ID sheet, binoculars and some basic knowledge of the local bird species. I soon discovered that the ornithological world of Albany was a lot more interesting and active than I could have imagined.

My survey took place in spring and consisted of six days' work conducted throughout September and October. Each day I surveyed the reserve for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. I recorded species, numbers and weather conditions. The end result was 12 hours of data which was compiled into my first report. This is a brief summary of my findings

In total I recorded 236 individual birds of 19 species. Of these 9 species were migratory and the others local. By far the most common species was the Red-necked Stint, a migratory species that has been recorded here in large numbers in the past. The least common was the Double-banded Plover, another migratory species that is certainly less common in these parts in recent years. I only had one sighting of this bird. Most species I recorded were in groups between four to ten individuals and most were using sand flats and estuarine habitat to feed or rest.

The chart below is an average of bird numbers over the surveying period.

Article and photos by Brendan Foster. Top: one of the survey sites at Rushy Point. Centre: roosting Australian Pelicans, Great Cormorants and Silver Gulls. Bottom: Grey Plover



Learn more about the Hooded Plover

The Hooded Plover is a charismatic little bird that lives and nests on the beaches & wetlands near Esperance.

Raising young on a shoreline is filled with danger for these birds but they are very determined!

If you would like to hear all about the life and quirky behaviors of this bird and what is being done to help it, come along to the site visit and workshop.

All welcome!



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



Esperance
Site Visit and Workshop
14th January 2012
8.30am - 12.30pm

For further information and to RSVP, contact Grainne Maguire
Email: g.maguire@birdsaustralia.com.au
Ph: 080010761



Albany Workshop

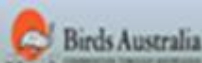
Date: Wednesday 18th January 2012
Time: 2:30 - 4:30pm
Location: South Coast NRM Conference Room
39 Mercer Rd, Albany

Agenda:

There will be presentations, followed by question time and afternoon tea.

- Why are beach-nesting birds important?
- The challenges of nesting on the ground and on beaches
- Local efforts for protecting nesting Fairy Terns and Hooded Plovers
- National efforts for conservation of beach-nesting birds
- Ideas for engaging communities and schools

Please RSVP so we have an idea of numbers for afternoon tea: g.maguire@birdsaustralia.com.au



Help conserve our Amazing Shorebirds !

**Forum, Talk and Free Weekend Workshop - 9—11 March 2012
Denmark and Albany, Western Australia**

You are invited to the following events to be held mainly at the Centre for Sustainable Living (CSL) in Denmark (Western Australia)

- Scientific Shorebird Forum— 12 –3pm Albany Fri 9 March
- Talk— International Status of our Shorebirds
- Practical Shorebird Conservation Workshop



Informative ! Great chance for networking ! FREE !



**Scientific Shorebird Forum— 12 –3pm
Albany Fri 9 March 2012**

A range of speakers, local, Australia and international, will address the crisis facing migratory shorebirds that each year visit Australia. The seminar will cover Ramsar wetlands, conservation studies and what's needed.

**Talk - Migratory Shorebird Conservation in WA
7.30pm to 9pm Friday 9th March 2012 at CSL Denmark**

**Shorebird Conservation Workshop 8.30 to 4.30pm
Saturday and Sunday Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th March 2012**

Learn from experts from Birds Australia (Bill Rutherford and 8 others) practical knowledge about shore birds, their biology, conservation and monitoring. Workshop A provides the introduction to biology, identification and conservation (with field trips) and Workshop B build on this to focus on shorebird conservation, further identification and monitoring. Participants are able to join for both days



For more information or to obtain a registration form, please see www.greenskills.org.au or contact
**Green Skills on (08) 9848 3310 or
bschur@greenskills.org.au**

Resources

For those interested in communicating information about shorebirds to the local WA shorebird community network, consider signing up to the WA Shorebird Yahoo Group: http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/Shorebirds_WA/. This group can be used to post unusual sightings, to coordinate shorebird outings and events and discuss ideas related to shorebirds and their conservation. Postings can be made at any time by members of the WA shorebirding community who sign up to the group. The group is facilitated by Kim Onton, Shorebirds 2020 WA coordinator.

Kim has suggested the following articles for those who would like some additional, up-to-date information about shorebirds and their conservation. Some of the suggested articles are available online and a web link is provided; a copy of other articles can be emailed to you, please contact Basil Schur at bschur@greenskills.org.au.

- Shorebirds 2020 Spring Newsletter (Note: pages 16-17 have a summary of recent WA happenings that might be of particular interest) www.shorebirds.org.au/Shorebirds_WORDPRESS/3%20News%20&%20Updates/S2020%20Newsletters/S2020-news-Oct11.pdf
- Minutes to Midnight – Wingspan magazine article about threats faced by our shorebirds.
- Word about the Hood Dec 2011 Newsletter www.birdsaustralia.com.au/images/stories/current-projects/bnb/WordAboutHood6-Dec11.pdf
- Article from Rob Clemens about shorebird declines in Moreton Bay identified through volunteer shorebird monitoring data.
- Article from Rob Clemens summarising the shorebird presentations at the recent Australasian Ornithological Conference in Cairns in September/October.

Further information and resources are available at www.shorebirds.org.au

Please let us know if you can suggest further resources or would like to contribute to the next issue of this newsletter. Contact Basil Schur at Green Skills Denmark: 98483310 or bschur@greenskills.org.au.

Newsletter Acknowledgements. This newsletter was put together by Xanthe Bourne and Basil Schur. Thanks to authors and Geoff Taylor for contributing photos. Thanks to Anne Bondin, Brad Kneebone, Sheryn Prior and many others for their valuable input into this south coast shorebird project.