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## Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways

No 14: July 2009

### In this issue:

Coorong wetlands can be saved .....	1
WCS field report—Indonesia .....	2
NWA expedition .....	3
TNC workshop .....	4
Shorebirds 2020 .....	5
Turnstones in Taiwan.....	6
Australasian ornithological conference.....	6
Grant helps endangered Shore Plover .....	7
New material for flags/colour bands.....	7
Bohai Red Knots .....	8
Kamchatka migration counts.....	9
AWSG conference .....	10
New team at Broome.....	11
IWSG conference .....	12
BBO courses.....	12
Paperless <i>Tattler</i> .....	12

*Tattler* is the quarterly newsletter of the Australasian Wader Studies Group. Contributions are welcome and encouraged for all working with shorebirds and their habitats along the East Asian– Australasian Flyway. Please contact the editor for more information.

### Editorial

This time of year is about growing excitement and anticipation of what the coming season will bring in terms of flag sightings and interesting records. OK most of the waders are still in the northern hemisphere, but this is the time when northern observers send in reports of interesting flag sightings and counts from northward migration that gets me excited about the impending southward migration soon to commence and bringing with it interesting flag sightings and records of its own. And more so, because I don't have to leave the country to be a part of it! The birds will come to me! (well closer anyway)

As a warm up for the coming season I took a recent trip to the Cairns esplanade. This was just as much about catching up with other shorebird regulars as catching up with the birds. For something that is about personal achievement e.g. *my* bird list, which birds did I see etc, bird watching is quite a social activity.

Bird watching always throws up something interesting or unusual. This time it was a pair of Beach Stone-curlew, next time I will be looking for coloured flags from far-off places!

## Coorong wetlands can still be saved

Scientists have come up with some solutions on how to save the struggling Coorong wetlands after a three year study just wound up. The region has been struggling for a while with very high salt levels, which actually got worse during the study.

This means there's less fish and waterbird populations and plant species have declined. In fact, in some parts it's just as salty or if not more so than sea water.

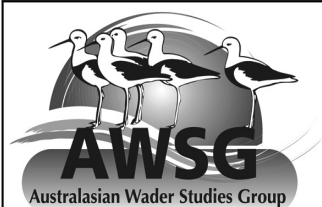
Scientists from the CSIRO, Adelaide University, Flinders University, SARDI and the SA government have been working together on the research. They looked at different climate forecasts and worked out how they're going to affect wetlands. Then they came up with different solutions to save them such as flooding seawater into the Coorong or diverting

water from drains scheme in the South East.

Research leader Justin Brookes says while the best thing would be a freshwater flood, but this is unlikely. They're recommending similar work get underway in the Lower Lakes.

Amy Spear  
Wednesday, 22/07/2009  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/sa/content/2009/07/s2633420.htm>

*Ed—The CSIRO report outlining different management options for the Coorong can be downloaded from <http://www.clw.csiro.au/publications/waterforahealthycountry/cllamm/CLLAMM-Final-Report-Ecosystem-Assessment.pdf>*



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[www.awsg.org.au](http://www.awsg.org.au)



## Field Report: Wildlife Conservation Society – Global Health Program, Sumatra, Indonesia (December 2008-April 2009)

The Wildlife Conservation Society's Global Health Program (GHP) field team returned to Cemara beach, Sumatra, Indonesia between December 2008–April 2009 for further research on Avian Influenza Virus. Cemara beach is located on the east coast of Sumatra, in the river village of Cemara, sub-district Sadu, District Tanjung Jabung Timur, province of Jambi. Habitat in this area is a tidal beach with mangroves and pine trees. This area is part of the East Asian-Australian flyway and an important area as a stop-over for migrant birds.

Similar to previous studies which started in 2007, the purpose of this field trip was the collection of samples from migratory shorebirds for testing for avian influenza virus, conducting migratory shorebird counts, and participating in migratory studies by placing leg flags and rings on birds.

Waders were captured at night using mist nets and stationary nets. Once caught, morphometric measurements were recorded (length of head, beak, tarsus, wing and body; diameter of tibia and tarsus, and body weight). After measurement, samples for avian influenza virus were taken from the oropharynx and cloaca. Leg flags (orange over black) were placed on the tibia, and rings on the tarsus.

The total number of waders caught was 1068 individuals consisting of 19 species (see Table). The Common Redshank, Terek Sandpiper and Lesser Sandplover were the most commonly caught species, while Marsh Sandpiper and Red Knot were captured for the first time at this location.

We are happy to report our second capture of an adult Nordmann's Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*) in March 2009. The first, a juvenile, was caught in February 2008.



Nordmann's Greenshank  
(*Tringa guttifer*)

Additional samples (blood and feathers) were collected for DNA analysis. The global population of Nordmann's Greenshank is currently declining and estimated to total 500-1000 (Birdlife). The Nordmann's Greenshank breeds in eastern Russia

along the south-western and northern coasts of the Sea of Okhotsk and on Sakhalin Island. Although its wintering range is not fully understood, it has been recorded in North Korea, South Korea, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines and Indonesia. Throughout December-April, we spotted small numbers of Nordmann's Greenshank on Cemara beach. The largest group (21 including juveniles) was seen in January 2009: 2 - 4 % of the estimated global population.



Back (left-right): Agus Satriono, Fransisca Noni, Iwan Londo, Drh. Lia Nugraha, Putri Wulansari.

Front (left-right): R. Agus Hadi, Dwijo Leksono.

Environmental education is also provided to the children of Cemara village near our research camp. This activity aims to instill care for the environment of Cemara beach where birds come to eat and rest. Environmental education activities were undertaken once every month, during which children planted mangroves, participated in shorebird monitoring, and cleaned up trash from the beach.

This work was made possible thanks to generous financial support from Cargill Inc, and USAID. We would like to thank our supervisor Joost Philippa D.V.M Ph.D, Dr. Mikhail Markovets, our field team, Drh. Lia Nugraha, R. Agus Hadi, Herman (local guide), Sapari, Putri Wulansari, Agus Satriono, Dwidjo Leksono and the community of Cemara village.

*Fransisca Noni Tirtaningtyas*  
Field team assistant, Wildlife Conservation Society -  
Global Health Program

*Iwan Londo Febrianto*  
Field team leader, Wildlife Conservation Society -  
Global Health Program

Scientific name	Common name	New	Retrap	Total	IUCN Red List Status
<i>Gallinago stenura</i>	Pintail Snipe	3	1	4	LC
<i>Gallinago megala</i>	Swinhoe's Snipe	0	1	1	LC
<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Bar-tailed Godwit	16	1	17	LC
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Whimbrel	10	0	10	LC
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Common Redshank	260	12	272	LC
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Marsh Sandpiper	1	0	1	LC
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Common Greenshank	14	2	16	LC
<i>Tringa guttifer</i>	Nordmann's Greenshank	1	0	1	EN
<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	Terek Sandpiper	191	18	209	LC
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper	23	1	24	LC
<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>	Asian Dowitcher	30	0	30	NT
<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	Great Knot	14	0	14	LC
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Red Knot	4	0	4	LC
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper	17	0	17	LC
<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Pacific Golden Plover	8	0	8	LC
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Grey Plover	7	0	7	LC
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Kentish Plover	2	0	2	LC
<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	Lesser Sand Plover	313	37	350	LC
<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Greater Sand Plover	81	0	81	LC
<b>Total</b>		<b>995</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1068</b>	

## *North-west Australia Wader & Tern Expedition 2009*

### *31st October to 21st November 2009*

The next wader and tern banding expedition to north-west Australia will take place from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2009. Please register your interest NOW.

North-west Australia was discovered to be one of the prime locations in the world for wading birds with a peak population of nearly 750,000 waders and a huge variety of species (50, nearly a quarter of the 214 species of waders worldwide).

The fieldwork program will, as usual, consist of regular banding and appropriate counting of waders and terns at two locations (Broome and 80-Mile Beach) over the three week period.

A large number of people will be needed and you are invited and strongly encouraged to join the

expedition team—we welcome overseas participants with usually half the team coming from abroad.

Previous wader banding or expedition experience is not essential. What is important is the readiness to work hard (when required) and be a contributor to the team (lazy/loners won't fit in!). It is a wonderful opportunity to mix with, and learn from, others with different backgrounds and experience. Although not obligatory, as this is an AWSG activity we would welcome you becoming a member.

Please contact Clive ([mintons@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mintons@ozemail.com.au)) or Roz ([moonbird@waterfront.net.au](mailto:moonbird@waterfront.net.au)) for further information.

*Clive Minton, Roz Jessop, Chris Hassell and Maureen Christie*





## TNC Eastern China Wetland Migratory Bird Reserve Network Workshop – June 2009

I was one of several representatives from Australia invited to a Workshop at Chongming Dao, China, sponsored by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), China Program. Other invitees were Doug Watkins (WI and AWSG), Danny Rogers (AWSG), Bianca Priest and David Andrew (DEWHA).

The objectives for the workshop included the following:

- To better understand the current situation and needs for bird conservation networks in China with particular reference to the Yellow Sea region.
- To exchange experiences and methods for bird conservation collaboration.
- To discuss collaboration mechanisms for bird conservation in this part of the flyway.
- To develop guidelines to enable the development of an action plan to promote networks and collaboration in the future.



Opening of the Workshop (L to R):  
Zhang Sheang Director China Programs, TNC; Cai Youming Deputy Director, Shanghai Forestry Bureau, Deng Kan Director, Protection and Management Centre of SFA, Guo Qiaoyu, Yangtze Project Manager, TNC

The meeting arose from the work that TNC had done on the Conservation Action Plan of Chongming Dongtan (Dongtan CAP). Of the six conservation targets identified in the CAP, four were avian related and included shorebird, ducks and geese, Hooded Crane (*Grus monacha*) and Black-faced Spoonbill (*Platalea minor*). Because all of the avian targets are migratory, the CAP process identified, as a key strategy, the development of a network of conservation areas in order to protect a larger portion of the life-cycle range of these birds. It followed that this meeting was planned as the first step in promoting the collaboration among conservation decision-makers and practitioners across much of the East Asian-Australasian flyway. The ultimate goal of TNC is to help facilitate

coordinated research, monitoring and management plans among the network sites as well as to provide a mechanism to promote communication and collaboration among sites. On this basis 19 reserves were invited to this meeting, from Inner-Mongolia, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Anhui, Fujian, Jiangxi, Shandong, Hunan, Guangdong and Hainan. In total some 50 people attended the Workshop which was held at Chongmoing Dao, the island in the Yangtze River just north of Shanghai.

The Workshop had presentations from invited experts including Prof Wang Tianhou (East China Normal University), Xu Qiang (WI) and the Australian representatives mentioned above. We presented information on the impact of tidal flat reclamation on shorebird populations, the work of the AWSG and Birds Australia both in Australia and examples of collaboration in the flyway, the role of the Australian government in promoting flyway conservation and the potential value of the Flyway Partnership in coordinating strategies for sustainable development within the Flyway. Presentations were then made by a number of the representatives of Nature Reserves outlining the value of these areas and some of the problems they face in terms of potential habitat change and development pressures. One of the values of this forum was the ability to share information and learn from the experiences of others.

The opportunity was also provided for a visit to the Chongming Dongtan National Nature Reserve and banding station with its extensive tidal flats. This is an important stopover location for birds on both northward and southward migration and where a number of birds banded in Australia are regularly recorded.

Although the Workshop was limited in time, it did provide an opportunity to learn from each other. We came away with a better understanding of the problems faced by the nature reserves in coastal China and their immediate needs. We also learnt something of TNC, a large and effective conservation organization that is already engaged in network building and coordination in China. The outcome of the Workshop was a statement recognizing the urgent need for a coordinated approach to the understanding and conservation actions needed to address the extensive problems in the Yellow Sea. TNC undertook to further examine its role in working with other organisations to address these issues. The AWSG has offered to provide ongoing advice and practical assistance to the extent of our limited resources.

As a footnote, it was interesting to learn that TNC has initiated some research on climate change with



Walkway to tidal flats, Chongming Dongtan

Fudan University. There are two projects; one is about the climate change impacts on migratory birds of the Shanghai Area including bird species, distribution ranges and seasonal movements by linking with trends different climate elements since 1980s. The other is a synthesis research to analyse the impacts of sea level rise and extreme weather events to an estuarine ecosystem, particular the habitats for birds by using modelling techniques. They are expected to be finished by the end of this December and June respectively.

We would like to acknowledge the assistance TNC provided to enable our attendance at this Workshop and we look forward to continued communication.

Ken Gosbell

## Shorebirds 2020

It's been an extremely busy and exciting time for the Shorebirds 2020 program. Earlier this year we wrapped up the 08/09 summer count season. Due to the outstanding effort by shorebird counters, around 150 sites were surveyed this year, which is more than double the number of sites surveyed last summer. Thank you very much all the shorebird counters for helping to achieve this fantastic result! The winter 2009 count has also recently been completed and we are currently collating the data.

### Data entry website for shorebird counts

The new count data entry website for the Shorebirds 2020 program is now up and running and will allow any shorebird counter to enter their data online instead of mailing in paper forms – which will save us an enormous amount of time in the office! The website address is <http://data.shorebirds.org.au>.

What you can do on the site:

1. Enter and edit recent data that was entered using the website
2. View Historic records (can't edit these)
3. Download all your visible records on the website into an Excel sheet

We are working to create a national shorebird database, which will be shared between major data contributors. Essentially, when you add data to this site, your shorebird area co-ordinator will also have the option to suggest how the data is shared, sold etc. So get to know your shorebird count co-ordinator or organisation if you want to have input on how your data is used. All data will be used to detect national shorebird population trends, but other uses will be determined by each shorebird area co-ordinator.

If you are a current counter you should have received your username and password already. If you haven't received yours, or if you would like to register as a new counter to enter your shorebird count data online, please contact Rob Clemens at

[r.clemens@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:r.clemens@birdsaustralia.com.au).

### New 'Shorebird Conservation in Australia' publication

The "Shorebird Conservation in Australia" supplement to Wingspan (2002) has been revised and updated as a Birds Australia Conservation Statement (No. 14) to include all the shorebird conservation activities that have occurred here and throughout the flyway since that time. If you would like a copy of the new "Shorebird Conservation in Australia" statement, please contact us at [shorebirds@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:shorebirds@birdsaustralia.com.au) or call (03) 9347 0757.

### Shorebird workshops

As part of our grant from the Australian Government's Caring For Our Country we will be holding around 30 shorebird identification and counting workshops around the country over the next two years. Recent workshops in Merimbula, Adelaide and Cairns were extremely well attended and highlighted the tremendous amount of interest in shorebirds. See the "Noticeboard" section for details of upcoming workshops, or contact us at [shorebirds@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:shorebirds@birdsaustralia.com.au).

### Other resources

We have printed a new Shorebirds 2020 brochure and produced a Shorebirds 2020 CD full of resources such as information about the Shorebirds 2020 program, identification and counting resources, a list of shorebird sites and maps for these sites, PowerPoint presentations from the Shorebirds 2020 workshops, reports and newsletters. Contact us if you would like either a copy of the CD or the brochure. We have also revamped the Shorebirds 2020 Shorebird Conservation website [www.shorebirds.org.au](http://www.shorebirds.org.au), with a new look and updated content, including a site contacts list and schedule of upcoming shorebird workshops. We have also revised the list of 150 priority shorebird sites and maps for these sites are available on the website.

Jo Oldland





## *Ruddy Turnstone sightings in Taiwan*

The final details are now known of the most successful flag searching carried out in Taiwan on Ruddy Turnstones during the recent northward migration. Turnstone migration through Taiwan finished at the end of May (less than 10 birds present on 30th).

Altogether 53 sightings were made, between 6th April and 26th May, of Ruddy Turnstones carrying plain or engraved leg flags. At least 23 different individual Turnstones were seen. Some individually identifiable birds were seen on several occasions and these give an indication of the length of time which Turnstones may spend in Taiwan to replenish their fat reserves before the next (and probably final) stage of their migration.

One bird from King Island was seen on 8 occasions over a 24-day period. The longest stays were of 53 days for a bird from King Island and 45 days for a bird from Korea. In addition to the birds listed 3 birds with engraved leg flags were seen twice and a further 5 individuals just once (1 from South Australia, the remainder from King Island). In

addition 5 birds from King Island, 2 from South Australia and 2 from Victoria were seen, but their engraved flags could not be read.

One of the Ruddy Turnstones to which a geolocator was attached at Flinders on 21st April was seen and photographed by one of ChungYu's team in Taiwan on 11th May. By coincidence it was the same bird (9Y) that was photographed in the hand by Ken Gosbell and others at Flinders before it was released. So at least we know exactly where this bird was on 11th May. It would be great to check this against the geolocator record if we can catch this same bird next summer and remove its geolocator.

This is a wonderful collection of migration stopover information for just a single species at one particularly important location. We are extremely grateful to ChungYu Chiang and the team of helpers from the Taiwan Wader Study Group who spent so much of their time in the field in April and May to further this study.

*Clive Minton*

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## *5th Australasian Ornithological Conference*

### *29 November—4 December*

Birds Australia members will be interested in the Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC) to be held in Armidale, New South Wales from 29 November to 4 December 2009. The conference is jointly hosted by Birds Australia and the Ornithological Society of New Zealand and is to be held in the auditorium of the Ex-Services Memorial Club in Armidale, a thriving regional and educational centre between Sydney and Brisbane on the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales.

This AOC will be the fifth and will consist of a brief opening ceremony and delegate registration on the afternoon of 29 November followed by four days of spoken and poster presentations. A lay day on the Wednesday will allow delegates to enjoy bus tours to sample the birdlife of the Armidale district.

The special conference guest and main plenary speaker will be Professor Jeremy Greenwood, long time director of the British Trust for Ornithology who will tell us about his career as head of that important British bird organization. The BTO has successfully involved birdwatchers in the collection of data on birds, and this theme will be developed with talks on analyses from Birds Australia's atlas (which many Birds Australia members will have contributed to) and a new BA project on shorebirds.

Other conference themes will be the birds of eucalypt woodlands and the reasons for their decline, introduced by leading academic researcher David Watson; the birds of Australia's northern

savannas featuring Darwin-based Stephen Garnett and Gabriel Crowley as the introductory speakers; and threats to island birds with a strong focus on seabirds with a plenary lecture by Peter Dann on his long-term studies on penguins carried out (with lots of assistance from volunteers) at Phillip Island, Victoria.

One of the over-riding aims of the conference is to allow post-graduate students in ornithology to showcase their work so, in addition to the major themes, delegates will be treated to a smorgasbord of presentations on the most up-to-date ornithological research.

The social side of AOC will not be neglected: the Sunday opening will be a relaxed introduction to the week, delegates will be able to mix and meet during the Wednesday field trips, and there will be a conference dinner on the Thursday night at which those of a mind will be able to sample the output of the emerging New England wine region.

There will be plenty in this AOC to interest bird people of every stripe. We look forward to welcoming Birds Australia members to Armidale in December.

For more information and registration details look at the Birds Australia website [www.birdsaustralia.com.au](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au).

*Andrew Ley for the AOC2009 organising committee.*

## BirdLife grant helps Endangered shorebird

A grant from the BirdLife International Community Conservation Fund is helping establish a new population of Endangered Shore Plover *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* on Mana Island, off the west coast of Wellington, New Zealand.

The project is showing early signs of success. A pair from among 41 juveniles introduced to the island in 2007 hatched and fledged a chick during 2008, and five more young Shore Plovers have fledged in 2009.

The first chick was born to one-year-old parents. Shore Plovers normally breed from two years.

The sole natural breeding population of Shore Plover is on Rangatira (South East) Island in the Chatham Islands. The species was once widespread around the coast of New Zealand's South Island, but had been extirpated by the 1870s. Their global population is estimated to be less than 250 birds, with a total range of just 4 km<sup>2</sup>.

The Mana Island translocation is the latest in a series of releases of Shore Plover. Ten pairs are held in captivity, mainly at the Pukaha Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre in northern Wairarapa. Young birds produced by the captive flock are released on to predator-free islands as soon as they are old enough to fly.

A local community NGO, the Friends of Mana Island (FOMI), is funding and providing volunteers for the five-year translocation project, which includes intensive monitoring of the newly introduced birds. The BLICCF grant, together with local support and the proceeds of an art auction held in London last year by the New Zealand Society and New Zealand's Department of Conservation, has provided FOMI with sufficient funding to complete the project.

"It's great for visitors to see one of the world's rarest shorebirds as soon as they get off the boat," said Colin Ryder - FOMI President and Forest & Bird (BirdLife in New Zealand) regional committee member. "It's hard to believe that they are only 30 to 40 minutes from downtown Wellington."

FOMI was set up to assist the Department of Conservation in implementing the restoration plan for Mana Island. Mice have been eradicated from the island, which is now predator-free, over half a million native trees have been planted, a wetland restored, and threatened reptiles and invertebrates reintroduced. Forest & Bird has also been heavily involved in the island's restoration, most importantly having initiated and resourced the mouse eradication project.

The island is a scientific reserve, and Shore Plover joins other successful introductions of New Zealand's endemic bird species that are rare on the mainland, including two more Endangered species - Takahe *Porphyrio hochstetteri* and Brown Teal *Anas chlorotis*.

"The BirdLife grants are supporting the recovery of a number of Globally Threatened bird species in New Zealand and elsewhere in the South Pacific", said Mr Ryder. "FOMI is extremely grateful that our project on Mana Island was selected for funding and I can assure the donors that their contribution has made a real difference."

*Birdlife International News*  
16-06-2009

[http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2009/06/shore\\_plover.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2009/06/shore_plover.html)

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## PVC Sheet for Flags/Colour Bands

As you may already aware, Darvic sheet, used for flags/colour bands for many years, ceased to be manufactured a couple of years ago. Since then I've been working with others around the world to investigate suitable alternative materials. It seems that we have now got to the situation where a potentially suitable replacement material is available.

For the last year or so another company in the UK has been making PVC sheet which is claimed to be virtually identical to Darvic. Various people, including myself, have trialled this material and so far it has performed satisfactorily. The manufacturer has come to arrangements with the BTO and with Porzana Ltd for the supply of this material for bird ringing/banding/flagging operations.

Single colour 0.5mm thick PVC sheet, called Salbex,

is now stocked by the British Trust for Ornithology Ringing Office in the UK. Virtually the full range of colours previously available in Darvic is covered. It is also available as bi-coloured sheet - Salgrave. Unfortunately it is only available at present at 1.5mm thick. Initial contact on supplies should be made with Jez Blackburn: [jez.blackburn@bto.org](mailto:jez.blackburn@bto.org).

A range of sheets in different colours are now stocked by Porzana Ltd [porzana@cfs-broadband.co.uk](mailto:porzana@cfs-broadband.co.uk). They are also prepared to make engraved blanks in this material if required, leaving the bander to form them into bands or flags. This material may be more of interest to those marking wildfowl and large gulls than to shorebird banders. The new PVC sheet can be satisfactorily 'glued' with the usual PVC solvent cement.

*Clive Minton*





## Bohai Red knots

From May 9 to 29 we visited the 3 study sites of PhD student Miss Yang Hong-yan near Nan Pu Development City situated on the edge of Bohai Bay, 190 km south east of Beijing, China. The main aim of our visit was to find colour banded and flagged birds with attention particularly focused on Red Knots.

Like much of the Yellow Sea coast, the area we were working in is under a lot of pressure from development, with large areas of mudflats destroyed and covered in industry and much more planned. Enormous mud flat areas have been claimed very close-by the study sites and 2 ports and a new highway are being developed. This is of concern as from our work there we have found it to be of great importance to many species.



Chris and Adrian in action

However the tidal flats that do remain in the area support huge numbers of birds with our colleagues Miss Yang Hong-Yan and Mr. Chen Bin counting up to 50,000 Red Knot at the three study sites during the peak time. Other outstanding records are tens of thousands of Curlew Sandpipers, a feeding flock of 450 Asian Dowitchers and a roost of 5,000 Broad-billed Sandpipers. The reason for the huge numbers of birds here may be due to the destruction of nearby mudflats. The importance of this site in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway is not in doubt. It meets Ramsar status on many levels. Its central role in the flyway is also highlighted by the number of country's birds represented here. We saw flags from 12 banding locations in the EAAF;

New Zealand, Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, north west Australia, Northern Territory, Sumatra Thailand, Chongming Dongtan, Kamchatka, Chukotka and the Relict Gulls which we have yet to receive any information about.

We saw 74 individually colour-banded Red Knot, from a marked population of 312. That is 23.72% and is quite remarkable; remember we didn't mark them here! We marked them in Roebuck Bay 6,500km to the south. I haven't yet worked out the number of 1st year birds that are still be in Roebuck Bay so the percentage we have seen of migrating birds is even higher. We saw one bird that was banded in Roebuck Bay and then moved to New Zealand (5,500km) before recording it in Bohai Bay some 10,100km from its non-breeding area in NZ.

It would seem from our resighting work that all of the non-breeding population of Red Knot from north west Australia (predominately the *piersmai* sub-species) and most of the New Zealand and south east Australian non-breeding populations (predominately the *rogersi* sub-species), use this small area as a critical stop over site on northward spring migration.

Interestingly the birds currently seem to be doing well, with the abdominal profiles (fat deposits) of birds being at 4 and 5 (on a scale of 1-5), but we are sure they are down to the minimum area such large numbers of birds would need for successful fuelling. After speaking with our hosts Yang Hong-yan and Chen Bin it seems that almost zero Red Knots use this area on southward migration so it is a mystery where they stop on their journey south.

Our total of plain flag, engraved flag and colour-band sightings are shown in the table below. These are not necessarily 865 individuals, of course, as with the plain flags we can't say for sure if we see the same ones day in day out. Although due to the number of new colour band birds we were seeing up to our last field visit we are almost certainly seeing new plain flags each day.

*Chris Hassell*  
Global Flyway Network and Australian Wader Studies Group

*Adrian Boyle*  
Australian Wader Studies Group

FLAGGED AT AND TYPE OF MARK	NUMBER OF SIGHTINGS	KNOWN INDIVIDUAL BIRDS
BROOME COLOUR BAND	139	74
BROOME ELF*	51	14
CHONGMING DONTANG ELF	12	1
CHONGMING DONTANG PLAIN	49	



CHUKOTKA	1	
DANNY NWA	22	3
KAMCHATKA	2	
KING ISLAND ELF	1	1
NORTHERN TERRITORY	2	
NWA PLAIN	216	
NZ COLOUR BAND	36	26
NZ ELF	55	22
NZ PLAIN	45	
QLD PLAIN	1	
RELICT GULL ELF	6	4
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	13	
SUMARTRA	4	
THAILAND	23	
UNKNOWN	1	
VICTORIA	186	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>145</b>

\* Engraved Leg Flag

## *Observation of the visible northward migration of shorebirds on south-west Kamchatka in May 2009*

Also as well as last year the count of the waterfowl and shorebirds flying past northward along the coast the Sea of Okhotsk was conducted in the place near mouth of Bolshaya River (southwest Kamchatka Peninsula; 52°30'N; 156°18'E) from April 20 to May 25. The periods of daily observation were from 4 to 17 hours, and the total period of direct observation was 470 hours. Migration of shorebirds took place from May 3 until the end of our study period.

In total we counted 33,780 shorebirds of 14 species. The most numerous were Dunlin - 18,286 and Red-necked Stints - 14,828. Also we counted 310 Whimbrels, 102 Eastern Curlew, 94 Bar-tailed Godwits, 65 Great Knots, 38 Ruddy Turnstones, 33 Mongolian Plovers and a few Pacific Golden Plovers, Red-necked Phalarope, Wood Sandpipers, Greenshanks, Temminck's Stints and Black-tailed Godwits.

The first Mongolian Plover was recorded on May 3. Migration of Eastern Curlew started on May 8; Greenshank - on May 9; Dunlin - on May 10; Wood Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint - on May 11; Bar-tailed Godwit and Whimbrel - on May 15; Ruddy Turnstone - on May 18; and Red-necked Phalarope, Black-tailed Godwit and Great Knot - on May 21.

The peak migration of Eastern Curlew was May 15-17, Mongolian Plover - on May 17, Ruddy Turnstone - on May 22. 95.2% of all counted Dunlins and 99.7% Red-necked Stints migrated on May 21.

Apart from shorebird we also counted more than 720 thousand ducks and hundreds of thousands other water birds.

*Yuri Gerasimov, Rimma Bukhalova and Yulia Zavgarova*





# AWSG Conference

## Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

### 4 – 6 September 2009

#### **Conference theme**

The theme of the 7th Australasian Shorebird Conference is "Resident and Migratory Shorebirds – Managing Their Future". This will encompass several inter-related themes including:

- Future prospects for shorebirds in the East-Asian Australasian Flyway,
- Knowledge gaps in regard to Resident shorebirds,
- Beach nesting birds and sea level rise, and
- Conservation status and threats to shorebirds.

We have received 24 offers for oral presentations, including the two keynotes. We can accommodate a total of 28 talks, so if you are interested in making an oral presentation, please advise us as soon as possible. We have had just three offers of poster presentations, so there is still plenty of room for posters.

If you are interested in presenting an oral or poster at the Conference, please email the organisers at [awsq2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsq2009@gmail.com) with a title, author(s) and affiliation(s), and an abstract of no more than 150 words. Please indicate whether the abstract is for an oral or poster presentation.

#### **Registration**

The registration cost for delegates will be AUD\$240 per person (approximately USD\$160), while registration for students will be AUD\$200 (approximately USD\$130).

The registration fees include all conference costs, comprising a copy of the abstracts volume, morning, afternoon teas and lunches on both days, and tickets to the Conference dinner and Icebreaker on the Friday evening. Additional tickets for the dinner are available.

#### **Social functions, dietary requirements and partners**

We will be having an Icebreaker on the evening of Friday 4 September associated with early Registration, and there will be a Conference dinner on the Saturday evening. If you have specific dietary requirements, please advise the organisers as we will cater for your dietary needs at the Saturday and Sunday lunches, Icebreaker and the Conference dinner.

If you wish to bring a partner to the Icebreaker or Conference Dinner, please advise the organisers to assist with catering. The Icebreaker will be free and open to partners, but extra tickets for the Conference dinner are available by the Registration

Form.

#### **Mailing list**

We now have approximately 100 emails on the Conference mailing list. If you wish to receive future newsletters and emails, or if you wish to attend the Conference, please email the Conference organisers at [awsq2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsq2009@gmail.com). Please circulate this email to others who may be interested.

#### **Visas**

Some delegates have indicated that they require a letter of invitation for an Australian visa to be issued. If you require such a letter, please contact the organisers and an invitation on Conference letterhead will be sent to you. This should be sufficient for the visa to be issued.

#### **Conference accommodation and trips**

We request that Conference attendees organise their travel to Tasmania, accommodation in Hobart, and pre- or post-Conference trips with Tonia Cochrane at [inala@inalabruny.com.au](mailto:inala@inalabruny.com.au). Tonia has negotiated special prices for the Conference, so please email her to discuss your travel and accommodation needs.

Visits have been arranged to local shorebird sites in southeast Tasmania for Conference attendees; trips to other shorebird sites in the state may also be organised if sufficient interest is shown. If you are interested in joining these trips, please contact Tonia as soon as you can to ensure that the trips will be offered.

Please contact Tonia directly for all accommodation and trip enquiries, and for bookings and payments. Do not send payments for accommodation or trips to the organisers.

#### **Other queries?**

If you have any queries or if we can assist you in any way, please contact the organisers at [awsq2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsq2009@gmail.com) and we will be happy to help you.

Please circulate this newsletter and call for papers as widely as you can to colleagues, associates and students. If you wish to be placed on the email list for further information, please email the organisers at [awsq2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsq2009@gmail.com)

On behalf of the Local Organising Committee, I look forward to seeing you in Hobart later this year.

*Dr Eric J Woehler*

*Convenor, 7th Australasian Shorebird Conference*

*23 May 2009*

## Team changes at the Broome Bird Observatory

The Broome Bird Observatory (BBO) Committee would like to announce that our Wardens for 2008/9, Jon and Anne King, left the BBO on 30 April 2009. We would like to thank Jon and Anne for their contribution over the past 12 months, and wish them both the very best.

The BBO Committee is delighted to welcome the new team for 2009/10:

### Nik Ward, Warden

Nik was born in the UK and has been seconded to the BBO for 12 months from Natural England in Exeter, Devon. After a successful 16 year career in financial services with Lloyds Bank, Nik decided to change direction and attended the University of Plymouth, obtaining an honours degree in 1999 in Rural Resource Management. Nik joined Natural England in 2000, and until a month ago was leading a team delivering on the outcomes of the organisation around landscape, biodiversity, marine, access and public enjoyment of the countryside. Nik is a licensed bird ringer through the British Trust of Ornithology and has volunteered at the North Ronaldsay Bird Observatory on the Orkney Islands and the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust on Shetland Island. He has travelled extensively through India, Nepal, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand and Canada and in 2007 attended the AWSG International Wading Expedition in Broome and Eighty Mile Beach. Nik is currently developing his cooking skills on the Aussie BBQ!



**Matt Slaymaker, Assistant Warden**

Matt has had an interest in wildlife and the outdoors for as long as he can remember although this general interest was directed towards birds at the age of 8 when he received a board game as a gift. Since the days of subjecting family members to nightly rounds of 'Bill Oddie's Great Bird Race Game' Matt has come a long way. Born in the UK he is now an experienced birder having travelled extensively in Britain as well as Europe, North and Central

America and Australia. He completed a Foundation Degree in Applied Ornithology in 2005 and has worked or volunteered on various conservation and research projects in the UK, Spain and Canada. Matt is a licensed bander in the UK and is looking forward to getting his hands on some Aussie birds.

### Eduardo Gallo-Cajiao, Assistant Warden



Eduardo has had a lifetime passion for birds and biodiversity conservation. He was born in Colombia, where he completed an undergraduate degree in biological sciences at Universidad del Valle. Afterwards, he worked for National Parks Colombia and the United Nations Development Program to create a system of protected areas in the Southern Andes of Colombia. Three years ago he moved to Australia, becoming involved with bird research and conservation in Australia through the Australian Museum and Macquarie University. Eduardo is currently getting familiar with the waders and teaching some Spanish phrases to Matt.



*BBO Committee*





## International Wader Study Group Annual Conference Texel, Netherlands 18-21 September 2009

The 2009 annual conference and workshops of the IWSG will take place on the island of Texel, off the North Sea coast of the Netherlands 18-21 September 2009.

The conference will include three sessions of talks and a series of parallel workshops on connection conservation and research, specific problems in the world's flyways, "stopover hotspots" and their

conservation. Species-specific papers include the present status on the Slender-billed Curlew and Common Redshank. Options include mid-conference excursions.

Further details and registration can be found on the IWSG website <http://www.waderstudygroup.org/conf/registration.php>.

### Birds of the Broome Region

Due to popular demand, the BBO has introduced two more Short courses to discover the Birds of the Broome Region. Broome is one of the most exciting places in Australia to go birding and so why not join us for a short getaway to discover the amazing diversity and abundance of birds that are found in the Broome region.

During your stay we will visit a variety of habitats to see as many species as possible, including the shores and mangroves of Roebuck Bay; lakes, bush and plains of Roebuck Plains Stations east of the Observatory, and creeks and mangroves of the lower Dampier Peninsula north of Broome. You will

have the opportunity to observe a wide range of species, including bush birds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and birds of prey. The courses coincide with direct flights from Melbourne and Sydney but are of course open to all!

Dates for the courses are:

20 – 23 September 2009

3 – 6 October 2009

Contact the BBO for more information on [bbo@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:bbo@birdsaustralia.com.au).

### A paperless Tattler

Receive Tattler via the internet and save trees and money!

Tattler is available on the AWSG website and is freely available for all to read/download (see [www.awsg.org.au/tattler.html](http://www.awsg.org.au/tattler.html)). If any members would like to receive a news alert when each issue is placed on the webpage (usually before the printed copy is out) they can do so by sending a note to: [philip.straw@aws.org.au](mailto:philip.straw@aws.org.au).

If you want us to save paper and the cost of printing and postage please include that in your note and you will be taken off the mailing list (but still receive Stilt). Stilt is also available on the AWSG website, except for the more current issues that are only available to members in paper copy.

Phil Straw



### Australasian Wader Studies Group

Membership of the Australasian Wader Studies Group is open to anyone interested in the conservation and research of waders (shorebirds) in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Members receive the twice yearly journal *Stilt*, and a quarterly newsletter, *Tattler*. Visit [www.awsg.org.au](http://www.awsg.org.au) for more information.

Please direct all membership enquiries to:  
Membership Manager  
Birds Australia  
Suite 2-05, 60 Leicester St  
Carlton, VIC 3053, Australia.  
Ph: 1300 730 075  
E: [membership@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:membership@birdsaustralia.com.au)

#### Annual subscriptions:

Australia	A\$35.00
New Zealand	A\$35.00
Overseas	A\$40.00
Institutions	A\$45.00