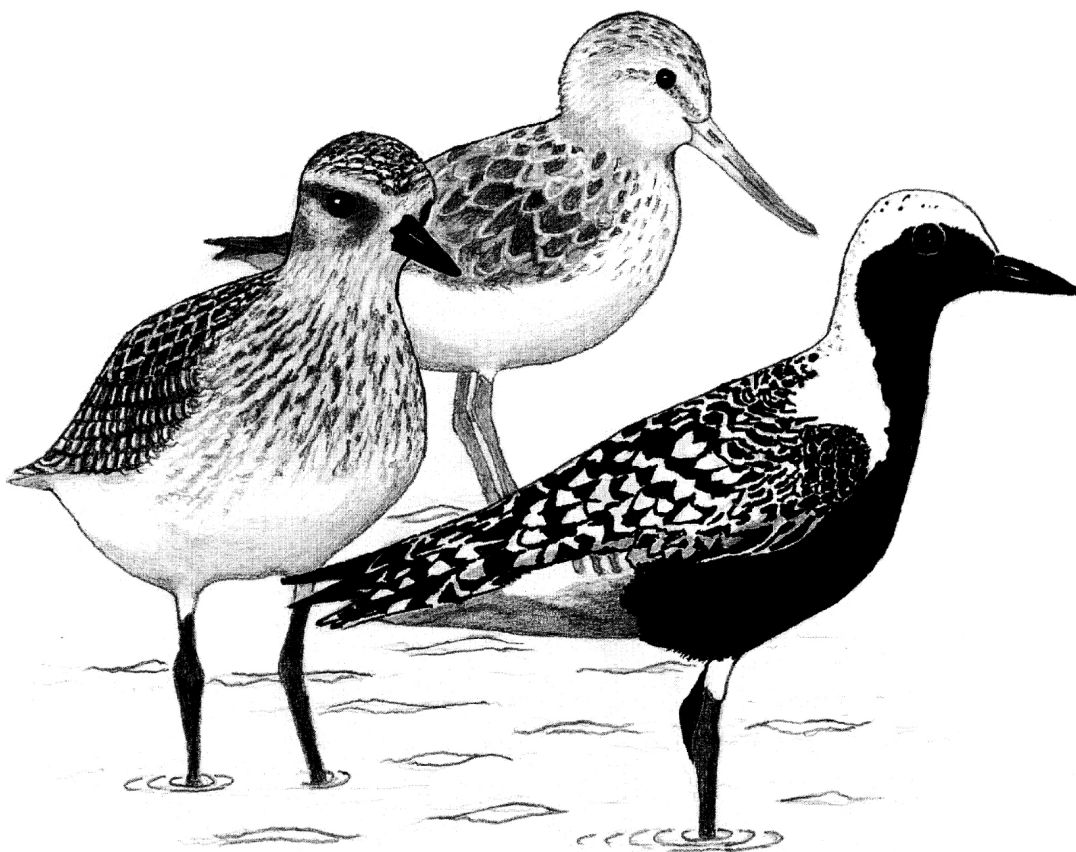


Stilt

The Journal of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway



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MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the future of waders and their habitats in Australia through research and conservation programmes and to encourage and assist similar programmes in the rest of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

OBJECTIVES

- Monitor wader populations through a programme of counting and banding in order to collect data on changes on a local, national and international basis. Study the migrations of waders through a programme of counting, banding, colour flagging, collection of biometric data and use of appropriate scientific instruments.
- Instigate and encourage other scientific studies of waders such as feeding and breeding studies. Communicate the results of these studies to a wide audience through its journal *Stilt* and membership newsletter the *Tattler*, other journals, the internet, the media, conferences and lectures.
- Formulate and promote policies for the conservation of waders and their habitat, and to make available information to local and national governmental conservation bodies and other organisations to encourage and assist them in pursuing this objective.
- Actively participate in flyway wide and international forums to promote sound conservation policies for waders.
- Encourage and promote the involvement of a large band of amateurs, as well as professionals, to achieve these objectives.

OFFICE BEARERS

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Birdlife Australia Representative: Lindall Kidd

Committee Members: Grace Magilo, Roz Jessop (VIC), David Edwards (QLD), Adrian Riegen (NZ), Nerida Liddle/Katrina Doody (NT), Andrea Griffin/Judith Little (NSW), Tegan Douglas, (WA), Doug Watkins.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUSTRALASIAN WADER STUDIES GROUP

Membership of the AWSG is open to anyone interested in the conservation and research of waders (shorebirds) in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway. Members receive the annual bulletin *Stilt*, and the quarterly newsletter *Tattler*.

Please direct all membership enquiries to the Membership Manager at BirdLife Australia, Suite 2- 05, 60 Leicester St, Carlton Vic 3053, AUSTRALIA. Ph: 1300 730 075, fax: (03) 9347 9323
Email: membership@birdlife.org.au
Annual Subscriptions: Australia & New Zealand A\$40.00 Overseas A\$40.00
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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

I am delighted to have this opportunity to write my first letter for *Stilt* as AWSG Chair. *Stilt* has experienced a few rough years with editor turnover and challenges trying to support the journal. So it is with great pleasure that I welcome Dr Penn Lloyd as the new *Stilt* editor. The AWSG is immensely grateful to Penn for taking on the *Stilt* editor role and very quickly, Penn has pulled together this issue. Penn is supported by Adrian Riegen, who is managing the production and Professor Rich Fuller, who is providing science editorial support.

Stilt performs an incredibly important function not only as a scientific communication tool for the AWSG but for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway more broadly. It is the only scientific journal for the flyway and furthermore, provides one of very few avenues for amateur shorebird scientist contributions. It also helps professional scientists share important findings, often in collaboration with their citizen science peers, that other journals do not wish to publish. Therefore, *Stilt* plays a unique role in the dissemination of shorebird science nationally and internationally.

I took over the Chair role from Robert Bush in 2025. I would like to thank Robert for the contribution he made in a relatively short time. Robert brought to the role his depth of experience in people and project management, his decades of experience as a professor in medical science, and his knowledge of shorebirds and shorebird volunteering. Robert put a lot of effort into trying to address operational gaps in the AWSG and solidify its role as an expert body within BirdLife Australia. I am endeavouring to continue his efforts. We were sad that he had to step down from the role.

His predecessor, Alison Russell-French, spent 13 years at the wheel of the AWSG after leaving her previous role as the Chair of Birds Australia. Alison was central to positioning the AWSG within the Flyway Partnership as a founding INGO partner. Her knowledge and skills in leadership, diplomatic processes, international relations, communications and engagement have served the AWSG well and we will miss her contribution.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Prue Wright for her many years of leadership of the North West Australia Wader and Tern Expedition. This contribution has included her sensible management grounded in her years of experience in the health sector, and her generosity in providing critical resources to support the expedition. The expedition is the AWSG's foundational field work program and has provided extraordinary, long-term outcomes for science, conservation, training and

engagement. It has hosted participants from across the world for over 40 years and continues to provide practical field experience and science collaboration opportunities.

We are very excited that the Hunter Bird Observer's Club in partnership with the University of Newcastle and the AWSG will host the Australasian Shorebird Conference from September 19-20 in Newcastle. This will be the first in-person conference since 2018, which was organised by Dr Eric Woehler and hosted at the University of Tasmania in Hobart. ASC 2026 promises to provide a jam-packed program of science, networking and field trips. We are also pleased to be offering the Mark Barter Award again for an Asian participant to attend and present their research. The Mark Barter Award is made possible this year thanks to a generous donation from the Overwintering Project.

The AWSG committee was renewed this year. A focus of this renewal has been strengthening our science expertise and expansion of the membership to include greater state and territory representation. We welcome Nerida Liddle and Katrina Doody from Northern Territory, Judith Little and Associate Professor Andrea Griffin from New South Wales, and Professor Rich Fuller from Queensland. Chris Hassell takes over as the Secretary and Dr Danny Rogers continues in his role as Science Chair, both supporting me with executive functions. The committee still lacks a Treasurer, which means we have no formal financial reporting. In lieu of formal reporting, I provide here a brief summary of the AWSG financial position in the 2026 year to date (as of June):

- Income of \$3,310, which was mostly subscriptions
- Expenses of \$13,087, which were comprised largely of a contribution toward the conference (\$10,000) and the previous Mark Barter Award (\$2,912)
- Total balance of funds available \$76,103.

The AWSG continues to make an important contribution to the EAAF Partnership. Dr Lindall Kidd, who is the BirdLife Australia liaison to the AWSG committee and the Chair of the CEPA Working Group, attended the 12th Meetings of Partners in the Philippines (November 2025) on behalf of the AWSG. Chris Hassell continues his role as the AWSG representative on the Shorebird Working Group. I commenced as a member of the EAAFP Technical Advisory Group (previously the Technical Sub-Committee) early in 2026. We look forward to continuing to contribute to the Partnership at future MOPs.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Alison's previous words and recognise the tremendous contribution by all the volunteers and supporters who engage in the

monitoring and counting of shorebirds and the major contribution they make to the knowledge and understanding about shorebirds.

Associate Professor Birgita Hansen

Chair, Australasian Wader Studies Group

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 2026 edition of *Stilt*. As all our contributors, editors, reviewers and production team are volunteers, it can be difficult to pull articles together into a volume. Due to the delays experienced previously, the decision has been made to publish articles online as soon as they have been accepted and edited for publication. All articles published during 2026 will make up the 78th edition of *Stilt*.

I wish to thank the outgoing editor Inka Veltheim for her contributions to the journal from 2023 to 2025, which required her to take on the role of production editor as well as serving as editor. We are now very fortunate to have Adrian Riegen take up the production editing role, which is a great help to me as the incoming editor. Thanks also to Judith Little for her updates to the website to facilitate the new approach to publishing *Stilt* articles, and of course to the members of the editorial board for their ongoing contributions to the peer review process.

By way of background, I started my career as a researcher at the University of Cape Town, focused on bird life history evolution and conservation ecology. Since moving with my family to Australia in 2009, I have worked as principal ecologist at Biodiversity Assessment and Management, an ecological consultancy based in Brisbane, Australia. My interest in shorebirds began with an 8-year hobby study of the population ecology of White-fronted Plovers (*Charadrius marginatus*) nesting on my doorstep of the sandy beaches of the Cape Peninsula. As a consultant in Australia, I now do less research, but a fair chunk of my work involves migratory shorebird assessment, monitoring and management projects. I am grateful to the late David Milton who introduced me to the

Queensland Wader Study Group that I am now an active member of.

I am looking forward to working with the AWSG community to refresh the journal as an online-only publication serving all those interested in improving our knowledge and conservation of waders (shorebirds) throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway region. We welcome manuscripts from both amateurs and professionals, including research papers, short communications and reports on any matter relating to shorebirds from any part of the region.

Dr Penn Lloyd

Editor