



## Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways

No 12: January 2009

### In this issue:

Arctic breeding success .....	1
Ramsar CoP10.....	2
2009 Expedition .....	3
Darwin fieldwork report.....	4
Shorebird training workshops .....	5
Australia's reporting obligations for wetlands.....	6
Godwits.....	7
Summer shorebird counts.....	7
Call for papers for AWSG conference .....	8

*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

With the summer shorebird counts underway and mudflats brimming with our migratory species, we are only just beginning to see the effects that climatic and other environmental factors at the

breeding grounds and habitat loss along the flyway, especially in the Yellow Sea, can have on our wildlife spectacles. These impacts may be caused by humans or just part of the natural cycle of things. Either way they highlight the importance of obtaining baseline data, so that populations can be monitored and trends analysed, and international co-operation, in the form of meeting the obligations of international agreements and collaborating on projects so that skills and knowledge are shared.

All the knowledge and agreements in the world, however, will not stop governments and businesses intent on developing in internationally important and sensitive wetland areas. We have seen it with Saemangeum and now it is also occurring in Japan where a reclamation project backed by the local government threatens one of Japan's most important wetland areas—the Awase tidal flat in Okinawa. Sign the petition at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/save-awase-tidal-flat> to add your voice to those opposing further shorebird habitat loss.

Happy shorebird watching!

## Preliminary findings on 2008 shorebird Arctic breeding success

Data generated by "percentage juveniles" in catches caught during the NWA 2008 Expedition, and subsequently by the VWSG in Victoria, suggests that 2008 was a poor breeding season for most Northern Hemisphere waders. This is apparently in accord with Pavel Tomkovich's expectations based on the reports he has received so far from Siberia on weather conditions and lemming numbers.

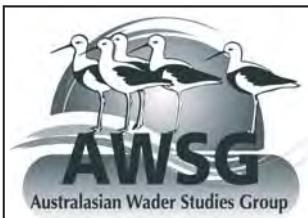
All the high Arctic breeding waders seem to have fared badly, with the percentage of juveniles being less than 10% and in some species less than 5%. However, those waders breeding further south in Siberia, seem to have fared better e.g. Terek Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler and Greater Sand Plover. Tattlers especially seem to have had a good

season with an average of 30% juveniles repeated in several different catches.

The Arctic breeding populations which have been sampled so far in Victoria seem to have had an equally poor breeding season, with one exception. Bar-tailed Godwits have been sampled twice to date and both catches had more than 25% juveniles. These Bar-tailed Godwits breed in Alaska (those found in north-western Australia breed in Siberia) and it's beginning to look as if they had a good breeding year, the second in succession.

Full results on the breeding success monitoring will be available in the next edition of *Tattler*.

Clive Minton



Compiled and published by the Australasian Wader Studies Group

A Special interest Group of Birds Australia

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



## 10th COP to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

### 28 October – 4 November 2008

The tenth meeting of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP 10), was held from 28 October - 4 November 2008 in Changwon City, Republic of Korea (ROK) under the theme "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People." More than 2000 participants (representing 158 contracting governments, international organisation partners of the Ramsar Convention, UN agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations) attended. COP 10 adopted 33 resolutions on wetlands, including those focused on climate change; biofuels; extractive industries; poverty eradication; human health and well-being; enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies; and promoting international cooperation on the conservation of waterbird flyways.

While most participants expressed satisfaction with the COP 10 outcomes, some issues required extensive compromise. One of the highlights was the public attention that the COP 10 received in the host country, the ROK (who provided excellent facilities and support for the Meeting). There were also several important pre-Ramsar Meetings as well as informative Side Events.

One of the most important pre-Ramsar Meetings was the East-Asian Coastal Wetlands Symposium, hosted by the ROK's Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs (the Korean ministry now most responsible for the conservation of coastal and intertidal wetlands), and organised by the successful collaboration of e.g. the Getbol (Tidal-flat) Forum Korea, BirdLife International and the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. There were a number of important contributions to this Symposium including the Report on the Saemangeum Shorebird Monitoring Program (SSMP) 2006-2008 (which can be downloaded from [www.birdskorea.org](http://www.birdskorea.org)) and the Monitoring Yellow Sea Migrants in Australia program, jointly presented by AWSG and Birds Korea.

This was one of a number of presentations given by the SSMP team during the CoP 10, reporting that the reclamation of Saemangeum had caused substantial decreases in shorebird abundance at Saemangeum; that these had not been compensated for by increases in shorebird numbers in other Korean sites; and that the declines in Seemangeum have coincided closely with a decline in the numbers of migratory shorebirds reaching north-western Australian non-breeding grounds. These findings received a good deal of media attention within and outside of Korea.

Of the 33 resolutions adopted at the Ramsar CoP, three are of special note here:

1. Resolution 13 on the 'Status of Sites in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International

Importance';

2. Resolution 21 'Guidance on Responding to the Continued Spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1'; and
3. Resolution 22 'Promoting International Cooperation on Waterbird Flyways'.

The latter Resolution is particularly relevant to shorebird conservation as it strongly encourages parties and other governments to actively support and participate in relevant international plans and programmes for the conservation of shared migratory waterbirds and their habitats; urges parties to identify and designate as Ramsar sites all internationally important wetlands for waterbirds on migratory flyways; urges parties, other governments and relevant organizations urgently to enhance their efforts to address the root causes of the continuing decline in waterbird status; and urges the governing bodies of flyway initiatives to share knowledge and expertise on best practices in the development and implementation of flyway-scale waterbird conservation policies and practices.

Importantly, conclusions from the East Asian Coastal Wetlands Symposium were included in Resolution 22 as an Annex, adding an important argument for future communication between local communities and government to protect the precious tidal flat resources of the Yellow Sea. The Government of the ROK responded positively by giving important commitments relating to the future protection of intertidal wetlands.

These commitments were also supported in Resolution 13 where it states 'x) that the government of the Republic of Korea continue to provide the Secretary General with updated reports of monitoring concerning the ecological impact, especially in relation to population declines in internationally important migratory waterbird populations, of the Saemangeum land-claim; and advise the Secretariat of any significant change in ecological character in the Wetland Protection Areas and the Ecosystem Landscape Conservation Areas that are wetlands.'

In order to underscore the importance of the Yellow Sea as a critical region within the East Asian - Australasian Flyway, Wetlands International launched a wonderful book on the Yellow Sea by photographer Jan van de Kam and other authors titled 'Invisible Connections'. This book provides a visual celebration of the journey these marvelous birds make along this flyway and the critical need to preserve the tidal flat systems that support them; it can be downloaded for free (60MB) from <http://www.wetlands.org/NewsandEvents/NewsPressreleases/tabid/60/articleType/1>

[ArticleView/articleId/1570/Default.aspx](#). It was an important contribution to the Ramsar Meeting and will be a useful reference for the future.

While progress was made within the context of the Ramsar COP 10 for improved recognition of the importance of wetlands, in particular tidal flats, it also highlighted the extensive work remaining to be done in terms of education and awareness of communities and governments along flyways.

While the next Ramsar COP will be in Romania in 2011, another major opportunity to highlight the need for the conservation of the shorebirds and tidal-flats comes with the next Convention on Biological Diversity conference, to be held in Japan in 2010.

*Ken Gosbell and Danny Rogers (AWSG)*

*Nial Moores (Birds Korea)*

## North-west Australia Wader & Tern Expedition 2009

### 31st October to 21st November 2009

North-west Australia was discovered to be one of the prime locations in the world for wading birds during the first RAOU (Birds Australia) "Expedition" there in August/September 1981. It is now known to have a peak population of nearly 750,000 waders, with a huge variety of species (50, nearly a quarter of the 214 species of waders worldwide). It has also proved to be an ideal place for wader studies with a warm, sunny, dry climate for 10 months of the year (usually!). Furthermore there is easy accessibility to two of the principal wader areas of Roebuck bay, Broome (150,000 birds) and 80 Mile Beach (500,000 birds).

A series of special expeditions has taken place over the years to undertake comprehensive long-term studies of the waders and terns in N.W. Australia. A further major Expedition will take place from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2009.

A large number of people will be needed if a satisfactory team is to be available throughout this 3-week period. You are strongly encouraged to participate.

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

The specific objectives of this Expedition are:

1. Banding.

- a. To catch additional samples of species which are less frequently caught in NW Australia, e.g. Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Grey Plover, Greenshank, Oriental Plover, Eastern Curlew, Little Curlew, Oriental Pratincole.
- b. To continue the leg flag program (individually lettered/numbered yellow flags on all the main medium/large migratory wader species). This is to facilitate the collection and calculation of survival rate data in the future. The use of engraved flags has also been extended to some "freshwater" species of waders mist netted at Roebuck Plains.

2. Counting.

The annual MYSMA (Monitoring Yellow Sea Migrants in Australia) population monitoring counts will take place at 80 Mile Beach and Roebuck Bay just before the main expedition. A small number of additional counters will be welcome (contact Chris Hassell direct on [turnstone@wn.com.au](mailto:turnstone@wn.com.au)).

A proposed itinerary for the 3-week period of fieldwork is summarised as:

- Broome/Roebuck Bay and plains - 10 days
- 80 Mile Beach/Anna Plains - 7 days
- Travel between locations- 2 days
- Rest days- 1 day

Broome is easily reached by air (direct from Perth, Darwin, Melbourne or Sydney or via Alice Springs). Connections from Queensland (Brisbane or Cairns) usually go via Darwin. Buses also run from Perth and Darwin.

People are strongly encouraged to come for the whole period of three weeks. This maximises efficiency with everyone becoming fully integrated into the team. It maximises enjoyment and benefits, and enables everyone to contribute as well as to learn. It also leads to a more effective team if changes in personnel are minimal. A team of 25-28 people is considered the optimum. Usually half the expedition participants are from outside Australia.

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 AMSG activity and we would welcome you becoming a member.

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

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





## Report on fieldwork in the Darwin area (Northern Territory) 26<sup>th</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2008

The visit was a joint project between the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS), the Northern Territory Environment Department and the AWSG. This was the first wader banding visit to Darwin since 1996, and, for the first time the Northern Territory Flag Combination was used (yellow flag above blue flag on right tibia).

There were two principal objectives:

1. To catch a variety of migratory waders and "resident" waterbirds for AQIS to take faecal and blood samples to test for avian borne diseases, particularly avian influenza.
2. To band, flag and collect moult / biometric data on a variety of migratory waders to continue the process of gathering information (started with a visit in 1995) on the migration routes and destinations of wader populations which occur in the Northern Territory.

Three modest sized catches, mainly of Greater and Lesser Sand Plover and Red-necked Stint, were made at Lee Point. A bonus was the capture of a Japanese-banded Red-necked Stint. The team then intended to catch extensively at Five Mile Beach, just to the north of Finnis River. Unfortunately the number of waders using this area has greatly reduced since the previous visit 13 years ago, with less than 2000 now present compared with 10-20,000 previously. One reasonable catch of 136, including 40 Great Knot, was made.

Attention was then turned to Magpie Geese. Fifty-seven were caught on the bank of a billabong at Finnis River Station. The team returned to Darwin later that day and made a final successful catch at Lee Point of 160 waders.

The overall total of waders caught was 482, of 10 species (see Table). Red-necked Stint topped the list with 246, followed by Greater Sand Plover with 163 and Great Knot with 40. It was disappointing not to catch more Great Knot. Unfortunately the whole flock at Lee Point came and landed right beside the net just as we were about to catch Sand Plover / Stints. They saw what happened and were intelligent enough to avoid the net area when we tried to catch them later in the week!

It was interesting that of the Sand Plovers caught at Lee Point some 16% were Lesser Sand Plover. However there were no Lesser Sand Plover at all with the 52 Greater Sand Plover caught at Finnis River mouth.

Another interesting feature of the catches relates to the variation in the proportion of juveniles in samples. There were around 10% juveniles in the Greater Sand Plover but none in the Lesser Sand Plover. There was also no juvenile Great Knot

Species	New	Retrap	Total	(Juveniles)
Red-necked Stint	235	11	246	(30)
Greater Sand Plover	161	2	163	(14)
Great Knot	40	-	40	-
Lesser Sand Plover	19	2	21	-
Broad-billed Sandpiper	3	-	3	(2)
Terek Sandpiper	3	-	3	(1)
Ruddy Turnstone	2	-	2	-
Curlew Sandpiper	2	-	2	(1)
Red-capped Plover	1	-	1	(1)
Sanderling	1	-	1	-
<b>TOTAL Waders</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>482</b>	-
Little Tern	3	-	3	-
Magpie Goose	57	-	57	(?)
<b>TOTAL – All birds</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>542</b>	

caught. This may be a reflection of the Saemangeum reclamation in South Korea negatively affecting their breeding success. Red-necked Stint appear to have had only modest breeding success with 12% juveniles. However not all juveniles may have arrived from the breeding grounds as quite a lot of birds caught had extremely low weights (22g) indicating very newly arrived birds (most adults weigh 25-27g in northern Australia).

All waders and the three Japanese-plumaged Little Terns were given a yellow flag above a blue flag on the right leg – both flags on the right tibia of the waders and on the right tarsus of the Little Terns. Hopefully there will be many sightings of this flag combination in the future. AQIS also took faecal and/or blood samples from almost all birds handled.

AQIS have indicated a wish to carry out further sampling of waders and waterbirds in the NT in the future and the AWSG would be eager to assist.

Many people contributed to the success and enjoyment of the visit. Fundamental was the financial support of AQIS and the ground work carried out by Ray Chatto, NT Environment Department. And finally a great thank you to Arthur and Sheryl Keates who had been carrying out background recceing on wader numbers and roosting locations for many months prior to the visit. Unfortunately they had to return to Brisbane just before the visit took place. Finally thanks to everyone who participated in any way in the field work activities.

*Clive Minton and Roz Jessop  
November 2008*

## Shorebird surveys and training workshops in north-western Australia, December 2009

Shorebird counts are an essential part of the armoury of shorebird biologists and conservationists. We need count data to identify those sites that are most important to shorebirds and therefore need the highest levels of protection; we need to monitor shorebird numbers through counts if we are to identify their greatest threats, the effects of habitat loss, and (hopefully) the success of conservation measures. However, carrying out accurate shorebird counts is not easy, especially at bewildering sites where tens of thousands of shorebirds may need to be counted in a short period at high tide. The lack of counters with the experience and skills to cope with this kind of situation limits the amount of monitoring work that can be carried out, especially in the Yellow Sea and in northern Australia.

The AWSG has been carrying out shorebird surveys at selected sites in north-western Australia for many years. Survey effort there has increased since the launch of the MYSMA (Monitoring Yellow Sea Migrants in Australia) project in 2004, with shorebird counts being carried out by an experienced team twice each austral summer, and once each austral winter, at Roebuck Bay, Bush Point and a sixty km stretch of Eighty-mile Beach. This large count area includes the biggest shorebird strongholds known in NW Australia, but it is very far from being a complete survey of the north-west.

In December 2009, a large band of shorebird counters – of varying levels of experience – assembled at Broome Bird Observatory to take steps to address these problems. We had funds to carry out a workshop on shorebird surveying, with six participants from Korea and China (co-ordinated by the AWSG and Birds Korea) and seven regional count organisers from Australia (co-ordinated by the Shorebirds 2020 project). With this squad, plus regular participants from MYSMA surveys and the Shorebirds 2020 staff, we had the team to carry out very extensive surveys – provided we had top-up funds. These were generously provided by the Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation and Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

We started with the workshops – two days of lectures by Chris Hassell and Danny Rogers on shorebird identification, counting tactics and techniques, interspersed by practical sessions at freshwater lakes near Broome, and at wader roosts on the shores of Roebuck Bay. Then the fieldwork (led by Chris Hassell) began in earnest, with seven teams dispersing in 4WD vehicles (or quad bikes, for the most remote areas) to their allotted sections of Eighty-mile Beach. Each team had a combination of very experienced and not-so-experienced members, and so many birds to count that sitting

back and leaving it to the most experienced members was not an option for the volunteers – we believe that the best way to learn to count shorebirds is to go out and do shorebird counts!

After the 220 km of Eighty-mile Beach was counted, we headed north. After some aerial reconnaissance we were ready to do the first ground-counts of the most promising shorebird habitat on the stretch of coastline between Eighty-mile Beach and Roebuck Bay. Finally we surveyed the “traditional” sites of Bush Point and Roebuck Bay, and a series of ‘new’ sites around Broome, and on the south-west coast of the Dampier Peninsula.

We are most grateful to the participants – completing such an ambitious survey was hard work, especially in the final few days of fieldwork when temperatures soared well over 40 degrees. It was fun nevertheless, with some wonderful shorebird spectacles. Moreover, everyone learned a great deal about counting shorebirds – not only from the workshops and surveys, but from the opportunity to mingle with other shorebird counters.

Analysis of the count data is still underway, so only a brief summary is given here. Overall we counted 436,895 shorebirds, 22,831 gulls and terns, and 1,783 other waterbirds. The 42 shorebird species included such highlights as what was probably Australia’s first Eurasian Curlew (on Eighty-mile Beach, 30km S of where it was first seen last year) and probably over half of the world’s population of some other shorebirds, including Great Knot, Oriental Plover, and the Bar-tailed Godwit subspecies *menzbieri*.

A number of sites were ground-counted for the first time, and several of these proved to be nationally important to shorebirds. At sites that had been surveyed before, counts were generally consistent with previous surveys, though we broke the record for a few species such as Common Greenshank. Worryingly, some species had declined. Great Knot numbers had dropped to about 75% of their previous levels – pretty much what we expected following the loss of a crucial staging area at Saemangeum in South Korea. Bar-tailed Godwits had declined even more (perhaps as a result of a series of years of low breeding success?), and at this stage we do not have an explanation for the unexpected but substantial decline in numbers of Greater Sand Plovers.

A full report on these surveys will be completed later this year, and we are investigating the possibility of repeating the fieldwork in October–December 2009.

*Danny Rogers, Chris Hassell, Jo Oldland and Rob Clemens*





## Aust fails to act on wetland obligations

Australia has snubbed the Ramsar Convention, an international agreement — to which it is the No. 1 signatory — by refusing to provide information on the neglected state of our most endangered wetlands.

Now wetlands experts have joined a chorus of criticism of state and federal governments for failing Australia's obligations under the convention by not reporting wetlands damage caused by drought, pollution and irrigation.

Some of those wetlands are so degraded the experts believe they may no longer meet the standards to be classified as internationally significant.

Australia was the first of five founding nations to sign the Ramsar Convention in 1971 and now lists 65 "wetlands of international importance", including 11 in Victoria.

Ramsar (named after the Iranian town where the convention was signed) has 158 member countries and 1825 sites listed to ensure their "conservation and wise use", with special consideration for waterbirds.

Article 3.2 of the Ramsar Convention commits countries to investigate potential changes to the ecological character of listed sites and "report these to the Ramsar secretariat without delay".

In 1990 Australia opposed the introduction of an additional voluntary reporting system, known as the Montreux Record, which publicly identifies wetlands undergoing ecological change, and has refused to name any adversely affected sites.

However, 30 other Ramsar signatories have identified 55 such endangered wetlands, including the US with the Florida Everglades, and numerous sites in Britain, Germany, Austria, Greece, India, Egypt, Denmark and others.

Although Australia was quick to sign the treaty, some of our Ramsar-listed wetlands are now so degraded they barely meet the criteria of international significance, according to Stephen Garnett, an environmental scientist at Charles Darwin University and chairman of Birds Australia's threatened species committee.

Professor Garnett said wetlands of the Riverina in south-western NSW and the Swan Plain lakes in Western Australia would now barely qualify for Ramsar listing.

"It's the wetlands in the south-east and south-west of Australia that are most badly affected ... the worst being the string of freshwater wetlands being eaten up by the expansion of Perth and Fremantle," he said.

In Victoria "there's a triage process going on along the Murray systems ... to decide which ones are worth trying to save and which ones have to be abandoned."

A government spokesman said last week's decision to create new national parks along the Murray to save red gums "sets up a framework to prioritise water use".

But Max Finlayson, of the Institute for Land Water and Society at Charles Sturt University, believes state and federal governments are indulging in "circular bureaucratic arguments" and ignoring their ethical and global obligations under the treaty.

"Australia has 55 sites and, astonishingly, 47 sites have no information on them on the (Ramsar) website," said Professor Finlayson, also a member of the convention's scientific and technical panel.

"When a Ramsar site undergoes adverse change we are obligated to inform the convention about that."

"There are a large number of those 55 sites in Australia where that has occurred but we don't seem to be able to inform the convention."

"For various reasons we baulk with being honest to the international community."

"Or even, more importantly, honest with ourselves about the condition of those sites and therefore what we need to do."

Professor Finlayson said he believed the Gippsland Lakes are among the Australian sites that should be listed for their adversely changing ecology.

He also nominated areas within the Murray-Darling Basin, including South Australia's devastated Coorong region.

Former Ramsar deputy secretary-general Bill Phillips agrees Australia is morally bound to inform fellow signatories of the true state of our wetlands.

"Australia should do the right thing," said Dr Phillips, a freelance environmental consultant and former federal bureaucrat.

"It is almost like snubbing your nose at the convention."

"It seems we agreed to set this up for every other country but we don't think it applies to us."

*Carmel Egan and John Elder*

*Queensland Country Life*

*5/01/2009 10:39:00 PM*

## Godwits going strong with sightings galore!

Dear Godwit watchers

My last note started with the statement "this is the final update", well I should have known better!

Two things of note have happened.

During the AWSG NWA 2008 Wader and Tern Banding Expedition we caught A7. This was particularly pleasing as she is the bird that had her transmitter batteries fail while she was still on the New Siberian Islands on July 18th 2008. She was skinny but not particularly light (272g) when we caught her. It was interesting that she had not done a single feather of body moult or started her primary moult. I clipped the aerial off the transmitter close to her body and the satellite transmitter will stay in her body cavity. She flew strongly on release.

The surprising bit of news concerns H0, one of the three birds that stayed in Roebuck Bay and did not migrate. Although her battery was losing power and not reporting every duty cycle she was still sporadically giving some good strong signals and therefore reliable locations. She reported from Roebuck Bay on September 27th and then when she next reported on November 11th she was at Exmouth Gulf. Then on the 13th she was 50km south on 80 Mile Beach and back in Roebuck Bay when a report came through on November 20th. This was a round trip exploration of about 1950km. No problem for a godwit!

A brief summary of the birds that have been resighted since they were banded in February 2008.

A3 not resighted before departure and died on breeding grounds

A7 not resighted but recaptured 28/11/08.

A9 sighted once before she left and once when she came back.

C0 sighted only twice during the Broome 'dry season' even though she didn't leave and was giving signals from Roebuck Bay during that time.

C2 sighted once in March.

C3 sighted twice since her return.

C6 sighted once before northward migration and twice since her return.

C7 sighted twice since her return, the latest on December 14 at Bush Point.

H0 11 resightings, another bird that did not migrate.

H2 sighted twice in March but not since despite her staying in Roebuck Bay and not migrating.

H3 sighted once in Yalu Jiang May 11th

H7 sighted five times before departure but died on the breeding grounds.

H8 sighted once in late October.

H9 sighted 4 times before migration to the north and twice since her return.

*Chris Hassell*

*Global Flyway Network*

Please remember when reading the information below that this is not the 'final story', these are the initial findings and may change when the final analysis is done. We also 'join the dots' between each signal, however the birds are so skilled at navigating that this is most likely the route they travel. The speculation on what the birds have or have not done is mine the final analysis may have different results.

## National summer shorebird surveys are on now!

The Shorebirds 2020 team issued a challenge to shorebird counters around the nation this summer to count as many sites as possible of a priority list of 150 sites. It looks like we will easily surpass last years total of 70 sites, in particular picking up sites in the Gulf St Vincent region of South Australia, and areas in far north Queensland that have not been counted for a number of years.

The official national count date is anytime in the first two weeks of February. However, additional counts and counts at certain sites are scheduled throughout January - March. To get involved in a count in your local area, look up the list of sites,

dates and site contact details in the national count schedule at [www.shorebirds.au](http://www.shorebirds.au) or contact Jo Oldland, Shorebirds 2020 Program Manager, (03) 9347 0757; [j.oldland@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:j.oldland@birdsaustralia.com.au).

A big thank you to the hundreds of people who make the project possible, and for the incredible increases in the number of areas that are being monitored. This will contribute greatly to our ability to analyse national shorebird population trends.

*Jo Oldland*

*Shorebirds 2020*





## 7th Australasian Shorebird Conference Hobart, 4-6 September 2009 First call for papers

The theme of the 7<sup>th</sup> Australasian Shorebird Conference will be "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
- Conservation status and threats to shorebirds

If you are interested in presenting an oral or poster at the Conference, please email the organisers at [awsg2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsg2009@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.

If you would like to be placed on the mailing list for the Conference and receive future newsletters and emails, or if you wish to attend the Conference, please email the Conference organisers at [awsg2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsg2009@gmail.com)

There will be an ice-breaker on the evening of Friday 4 September, and 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, ice breaker and the Conference dinner.

If you wish to bring a partner to the Icebreaker or Conference Dinner, please advise the organisers. The Icebreaker will be free and open to partners, but extra tickets for the Conference dinner will be on sale.

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.

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

Depending on interest, visits may be organised to local shorebird sites in south-east Tasmania; trips to other shorebird sites in the state may also be organised if sufficient interest is shown.

If you have any queries or if we can assist you in any way, please contact the organisers at [awsg2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsg2009@gmail.com) and we will be happy to help you.

Please circulate this news 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 [awsg2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsg2009@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, 7<sup>th</sup> Australasian Shorebird Conference*



### 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  
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