

VWSG King Island Trip 6-14 December 2018

Katherine Leung, Clive Minton, Robyn Atkinson and Rob Patrick

The VWSG has been visiting King Island once or twice per year since March 2007. The prime interest has been the Ruddy Turnstone population which spends its non-breeding season there. This is the 12th year and 21st visit of this long-term study. The team of ten members visited King Island on 6-14 December 2018 aiming to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) to carry out a population count of Ruddy Turnstone on the complete west coast of the island;
- 2) to evaluate the breeding success of Ruddy Turnstone in the 2018 Arctic breeding season by measuring the percentages of juveniles in catches;
- 3) to retrieve and deploy geolocators on Ruddy Turnstone;
- 4) to facilitate Deakin University's research project on sampling of birds for the presence of avian diseases.

This report presents detailed results of the Dec 2018 visit, summaries of key data from all previous visits and some analysis of the % juvenile and weight data so far accumulated.



(Photo by Mark Smith)

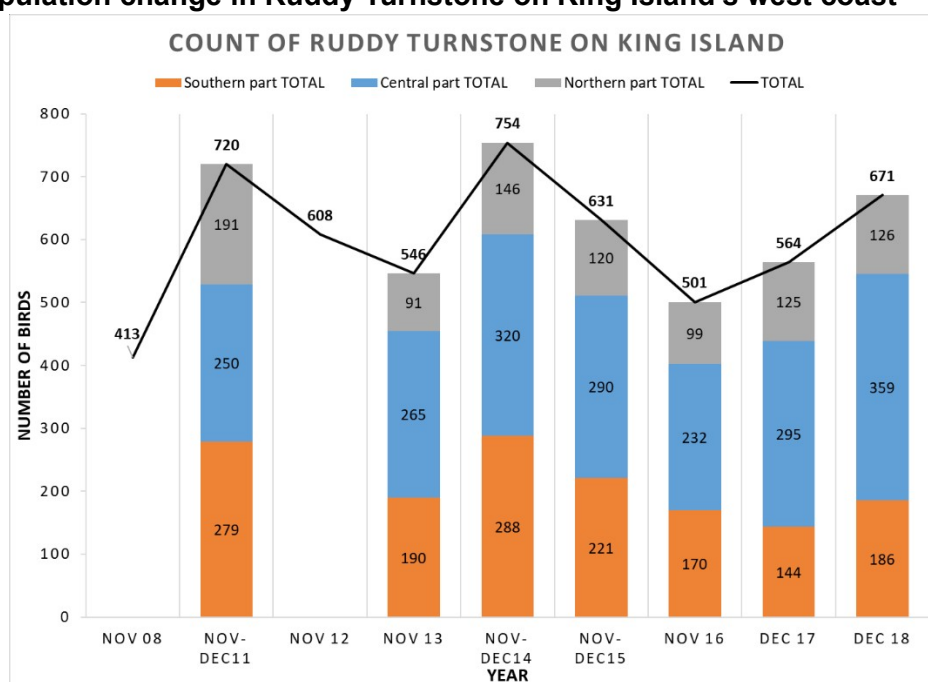
1) Population count

A population count was carried out on the first day (6 December) during high tide as soon as the team arrived. All known sites along the west coast of the island at which Ruddy Turnstone are regularly present were visited. The total count was 671 individuals. Detailed results of the counts since 2008 are shown in Table 1 and Fig 1.

The total number of birds this year has increased by 19% compared to 564 birds last December. Higher counts were recorded in the central and southern part, while the number of birds in the northern part remains similar to previous years. The count in the central part comprises over 50% of the total count.

It appears that the population has been recovering as a result of the very good Arctic breeding seasons in 2016 and 2018 (Fig 1).

Fig 1. Population change in Ruddy Turnstone on King Island's west coast



2) Catching

The visit was blessed with fine weather for most days, with 5 catches being made on 6 scheduled catching days during the trip. Catches were made at five locations across the central and southern part of the west coast of the island with catch sizes between 14 and 54 birds, and with an average catch size of 38 birds (Table 2a). The total number of birds caught was 193, including a record highest 191 Ruddy Turnstone caught in the November-December period, one Red-capped Plover and one Pied Oystercatcher (Table 2b). A detailed daily log of the fieldwork activities can be found in Appendix 1.

This visit brings the total number of Ruddy Turnstone caught on King Island since VWSG's first visit in 2007 to 3462 individuals (with 254 individuals of other species of wader caught) (Table 3). A total of 123 catches has been made with an average catch size of 30 birds.

Table 4 gives a breakdown of all catches made on King Island since the first visit in March 2007, in a total of 21 visits.

Table 1: Counts of Ruddy Turnstone on the west coast of King Island: Nov-Dec only

<u>West Coast</u>	1985*	Nov-08	Nov-Dec11	Nov-12	Nov-13	Nov-Dec14	Nov-Dec15	Nov-16	Dec-17	Dec-18
The Springs	-	-	61	-	55	3	25	28	45	45
Whistler Point	106	-	0	-	36	112	95	71**	80	0
Duck Bay, Green Island Point, South Whistler	260	-	130	-						81
Northern part TOTAL	366	-	191	-	91	146	120	99	125	126
Unlucky Bay	20	-	60	-	11	20	13	0	60	50
South Porky	28	-	0	-	37	20	0	5	8	50
Manuka – North (Whalebone)	-	-	5	-	88	145	127	35	27	59
Manuka - Central	67	-	60	-				50	25	30
Manuka - South	-	-	0	-				13	25	60
Currie Harbour	-	-	0	-	n.c.	n.c.	n.c.	0	0	0
Currie Golf Course (Burgess Bay)	330	-	35	-	69	80	90	69	80	50
Dripping Wells	-	-	90	-	60	55	60	60	70	60
Central part TOTAL	445	-	250	-	265	320	290	232	295	359
Seal Bay, Black Point	-	-	200	-	n.c.	n.c.	150	27	18	32
Surprise Bay (including Denby Beach)	-	-	12	-	125	182	1	113	55	130
Stokes Point to Surprise Bay	-	-	67	-	32	32	10	0	6	0
Stokes Point	-	-	0	-	33	74	60	30	65	24
Southern part TOTAL	0	-	279	-	190	288	221	170	144	186
TOTAL	811	413***	720	608***	546	754	631	501	564	671

* Count data by D.B. Whitchurch

**+ 48 at Bungaroo

***No details available

Table 2a: VWSG Catch Details: King Island Visit 6-14 December 2018

Date	Location	Species	New	Retrap	Total	(Juv)	%Juv
8 Dec 18	Burgess Bay (2 geos retrieved)	Ruddy Turnstone	14	13	27	10	37.0
9 Dec 18	Central Manuka (3 geos retrieved)	Ruddy Turnstone	6	8	14	3	21.4
9 Dec 18	North Manuka (2 geos retrieved)	Ruddy Turnstone	40	10	50	31	62.0
10 Dec 18	Surprise Bay	Ruddy Turnstone	46	8	54	21	38.9
12 Dec 18	Porky Beach (2 geos retrieved)	Ruddy Turnstone	18	28	46	13	28.3
		Red-capped Plover	1	0	1	0	-
		Pied Oystercatcher	1	0	1	0	-
		TOTAL	20	28	48		

Table 2b: Catch Totals for King Island 6-14 December 2018

Species	New	Retrap	Total	(Juv)	%Juv	5 catches
Ruddy Turnstone	124	67	191	78	40.8	9 (old) geolocators retrieved
Red-capped Plover	0	1	1	0	-	
Pied Oystercatcher	1	0	1	0	-	
TOTAL	125	68	193			

Note: All geolocators retrieved were replaced with new geolocators

Table 3: Catches on King Island 2007-2018

Date of visit	Catches	Total Turnstone caught	Total birds caught
March 2007	7	241	307
March 2008	8	419	434
March-April 2009	6	223	223
March 2010	8	211	217
November 2010	3	71	71
April 2011	8	197	211
November-December 2011	3	115	117
April 2012	7	118	118
November 2012	5	132	132
March-April 2013	10	255	285
November 2013	2	54	55
March 2014	6	173	181
November-December 2014	6*	147	151
February 2015	5*	119	154
November-December 2015	5	120	158
February 2016	4	74	78
November 2016	4	112	114
March-April 2017	7	218	229
December 2017	5	123	128
March 2018	9	149	160
December 2018	5	191	193
12 years (21 visits)	123	3462	3716
Average individual catch size:		28	30
Average catch total per visit:		165	176

*Excludes 2 catches of Silver Gulls.

21 visits - 12 in February-April, 9 in November-December

Table 4: Individual catch totals, by species, King Island, March 2007 – December 2018

Date	Number of catches	Species	New	Retrap	TOTAL	Juv.	%Juv
18-25 Mar 2007	7	Ruddy Turnstone	230	11	241	0	0
18-25 Mar 2007	-	Red-necked Stint	58	2	60	17	28.3
18-25 Mar 2007	-	Double-banded Plover	5	0	5	1	20
18-25 Mar 2007	-	Red-capped Plover	1	0	1	0	0
7-15 Mar 2008	8	Ruddy Turnstone	355	64	419	74	17.7
7-15 Mar 2008	-	Double-banded Plover	7	0	7	0	0
7-15 Mar 2008	-	Pied Oystercatcher	0	2	2	0	0
7-15 Mar 2008	-	Oystercatcher (not banded)			6		
26 Mar-2 Apr 2009	6	Ruddy Turnstone	124	99	223	0	0
16-23 Mar 2010	8	Ruddy Turnstone	123	88	211	30	14.2
16-23 Mar 2010	-	Double-banded Plover	5	0	5	4	80
16-23 Mar 2010	-	Sooty Oystercatcher	1	0	1	1	100
26 Nov-2 Dec 2010	3	Ruddy Turnstone	47	24	71	13	18.3
4-12 Apr 2011	8	Ruddy Turnstone	122	75	197	29	14.7
4-12 Apr 2011	-	Double-banded Plover	8	0	8	3	37.5
4-12 Apr 2011	-	Red-necked Stint	2	0	2	0	0
4-12 Apr 2011	-	Hooded Plover	2	0	2	0	0
4-12 Apr 2011	-	Red-capped Plover	2	0	2	0	0
27 Nov-2 Dec 2011	3	Ruddy Turnstone	49	66	115	11	9.6
27 Nov-2 Dec 2011	-	Other waders			2		
6-14 Apr 2012	7	Ruddy Turnstone	65	53	118	18	15.3
14-22 Nov 2012	5	Ruddy Turnstone	62	70	132	3	2.3
27 Mar-4 Apr 2013	10	Ruddy Turnstone	125	130	255	3	1.2
27 Mar-4 Apr 2013	-	Double-banded Plover	17	1	18	3	16.7
27 Mar-4 Apr 2013	-	Red-necked Stint	6	0	6	3	50
27 Mar-4 Apr 2013	-	Pied Oystercatcher	3	0	3	3	100
27 Mar-4 Apr 2013	-	Red-capped Plover	2	0	2	0	0
27 Mar-4 Apr 2013	-	Sooty Oystercatcher	1	0	1	0	0
18-24 Nov 2013	2	Ruddy Turnstone	31	23	54	23	42.6
18-24 Nov 2013	-	Other waders			1		
17-25 Mar 2014	6	Ruddy Turnstone	81	92	173	53	30.6
17-25 Mar 2014	-	Other waders			8		
23 Nov-1 Dec 2014	6	Ruddy Turnstone	76	71	147	26	17.7
23 Nov-1 Dec 2014	-	Pied Oystercatcher	3	0	3	0	0
23 Nov-1 Dec 2014	-	Red-capped Plover	1	0	1	0	0
7-16 Feb 2015	5	Ruddy Turnstone	56	63	119	17	13.4
7-16 Feb 2015	-	Red-necked Stint			31	7	22.6
7-16 Feb 2015	-	Pied Oystercatcher			4	0	0
26 Nov-3 Dec 2015	5	Ruddy Turnstone	53	67	120	2	1.7
26 Nov-3 Dec 2015	-	Red-necked Stint	14	3	17	2	11.8
26 Nov-3 Dec 2015	-	Pied Oystercatcher	15	2	17	0	0
26 Nov-3 Dec 2015	-	Sooty Oystercatcher	2	0	2	0	0
26 Nov-3 Dec 2015	-	Pacific Golden Plover	2	0	2	0	0
10-17 Feb 2016	4	Ruddy Turnstone	27	47	74	1	1.4
10-17 Feb 2016	-	Red-necked Stint	2	1	3	0	0
10-17 Feb 2016	-	Red-capped Plover	1	0	1	0	0
15-24 Nov 2016	4	Ruddy Turnstone	45	67	112	23	20.5
15-24 Nov 2016	-	Pied Oystercatcher			1		
28 Mar-6 Apr 2017	7	Ruddy Turnstone	125	93	218	68	31.2
28 Mar-6 Apr 2017	-	Hooded Plover	8	0	8	1	12.5
28 Mar-6 Apr 2017	-	Pied Oystercatcher	2	0	2	0	0
28 Mar-6 Apr 2017	-	Sooty Oystercatcher	1	0	1	0	0
4-13 Dec 2017	5	Ruddy Turnstone	61	62	123	7	5.7

4-13 Dec 2017	-	Pied Oystercatcher	5	0	5	0	0
17-26 Mar 2018	9	Ruddy Turnstone	86	63	149	4	2.7
17-26 Mar 2018	-	Double-banded Plover	8	1	9	0	0
17-26 Mar 2018	-	Red-capped Plover	1	0	1	1	100
17-26 Mar 2018	-	Sooty Oystercatcher	1	0	1	1	100
6-14 Dec 2018	5	Ruddy Turnstone	124	67	191	78	40.8
6-14 Dec 2018	-	Pied Oystercatcher	1	0	1	0	0
6-14 Dec 2018	-	Red-capped Plover	1	0	1	0	0

3) Percentage Juveniles

An exceptionally high number of juveniles was recorded in the catches in this visit. There were 78 juveniles among the total of 191 Turnstones caught (40.8%) indicating a very good breeding season for Ruddy Turnstone in the Arctic summer in 2018. This is especially encouraging after the low number of juveniles recorded in the previous year (5.7%).

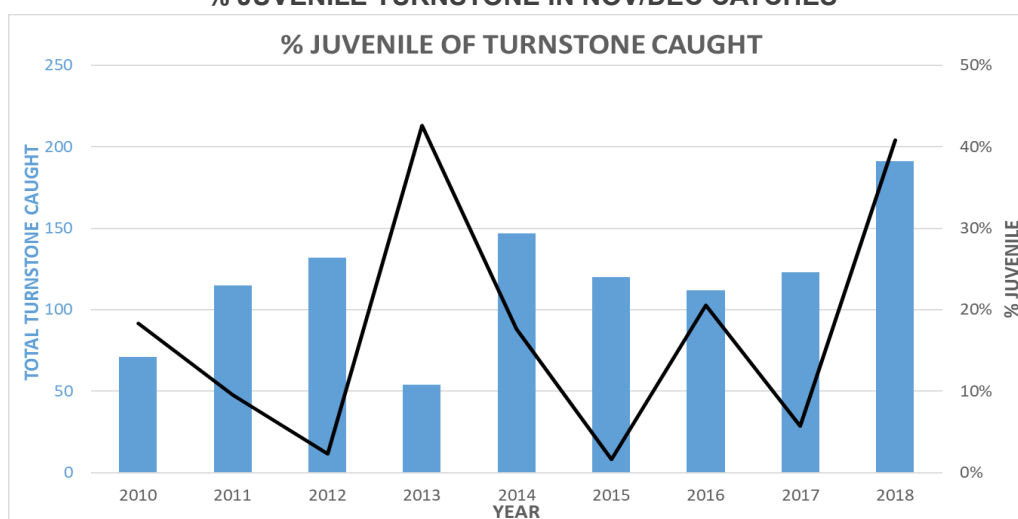
Table 5a gives the percentage of juveniles over the past 9 years. Only data from the November-December visits are included. The average juvenile percentage for November-December period was 17.7%.

Table 5a: Juvenile proportions in Turnstone catches on King Island in Nov-Dec period each year 2010 to 2018

Year	New	Retrap	Total	Juv	% Juv
2010	47	24	71	13	18.3%
2011	49	66	115	11	9.6%
2012	62	70	132	3	2.3%
2013	31	23	54	23	42.6%
2014	76	71	147	26	17.7%
2015	53	67	120	2	1.7%
2016	45	67	112	23	20.5%
2017	61	62	123	7	5.7%
2018	124	67	191	78	40.8%
TOTAL	548	517	1065	186	17.7%
Note: Only includes Nov-Dec catches, not Feb-Apr catches. Poor Arctic breeding years were 2012, 2015 and 2017 Very good Arctic breeding years were 2013, 2016 and 2018					

This year's result continues to show that Ruddy Turnstone is a species subject to wide fluctuations in breeding success (Fig. 2). Based on November-December catches only, this is the second-best breeding season in the Arctic for Turnstones, being exceeded only in 2013. This extreme variation in breeding success may be related to the Ruddy Turnstone breeding in the *higher* arctic regions of northern Siberia. Geolocator data has shown that the New Siberian Islands are the centre of the breeding area of the Turnstones which spend the non-breeding season in south-east Australia.

Figure 2: Percentage of juveniles in Turnstone catches in Nov-Dec period 2010 to 2018
% JUVENILE TURNSTONE IN NOV/DEC CATCHES



There seems to be some variation between the percentage juveniles recorded when comparing data in the November-December period to the February-April period in the same season (Table 5b). Generally, the November-December percentages are slightly higher than the February-April figures. This could be explained partly by the fact that there are still a small number of juvenile birds on migration through King Island in November-December, on their way to other Tasmanian and New Zealand non-breeding areas.

Table 5b: Comparison of juvenile proportions in Turnstone catches on King Island in Nov-Dec period to Feb-Apr period

Year	Nov-Dec period		Feb-Apr period	
	Total	% Juv	Total	% Juv
2006-07	-	-	241	0%
2007-08	-	-	419	17.7%
2008-09	-	-	223	0%
2009-10	-	-	211	14.2%
2010-11	71	18.3%	197	14.7%
2011-12	115	9.6%	118	15.3%
2012-13	132	2.3%	255	1.2%
2013-14	54	42.6%	173	30.6%
2014-15	147	17.7%	119	14.3%
2015-16	120	1.7%	74	1.4%
2016-17	112	20.5%	218	31.2%
2017-18	123	5.7%	149	2.7%
2018-19	191	40.8%	-	-
TOTAL	1065	17.7%	2397	11.9%

Based on Feb/Apr data Poor Arctic breeding years were 2006, 2008, 2012, 2015 and 2017.
Very good Arctic breeding years were 2013, 2016 and 2018.

6) Body Weight

A slightly higher mean body weight was recorded in juvenile Turnstones ($109.2 \pm 1.3\text{g}$, ranged from 77-137g) than adult Turnstones ($101.1 \pm 0.6\text{g}$, ranged from 87-116g) in this visit. A wider distribution of body weight can be observed among juvenile Turnstones (Fig 3).

In November-December, adult birds are at a constant low fat-free weight – as most waders are when they are carrying out their wing moult. Juvenile birds have a slightly higher body weight because a proportion of the juvenile population are still on southward migration and are therefore carrying fat reserves.

In the February-April period, the pre-migratory weight gain process in adult birds starts from the end of February and continues until birds have departed in mid-April. In contrast, juvenile birds do not put on any significant fat in the March-April period as they are not going to migrate in their first year (Fig 4).

The typical fat-free weight of Turnstones is in the range 95-100g. The maximum mean body weight of a sample of adults recorded was 172g. This is around a 70% addition of fat to the fat-free weight. The maximum individual weight of a Turnstone recorded on King Island was 191g. The average rate of weight increase of an adult Turnstone during the fattening period is about 1g per day. This is equivalent to a 1% addition to the fat free weight per day.

Figure 3: Body weight of adult and juvenile Turnstones caught in December 2018

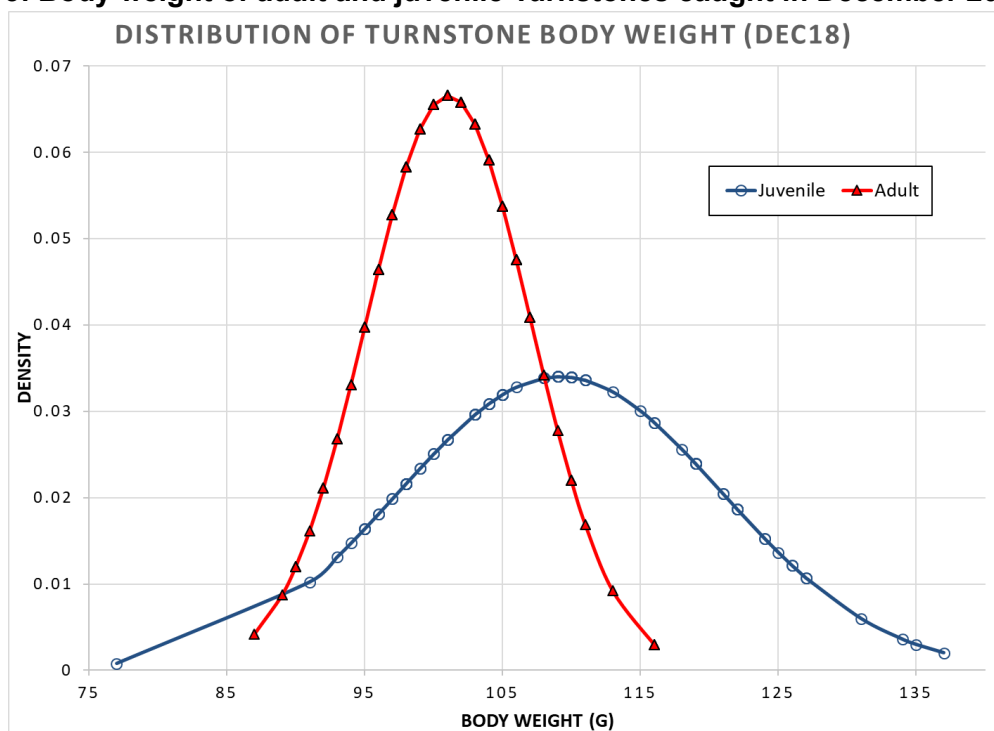
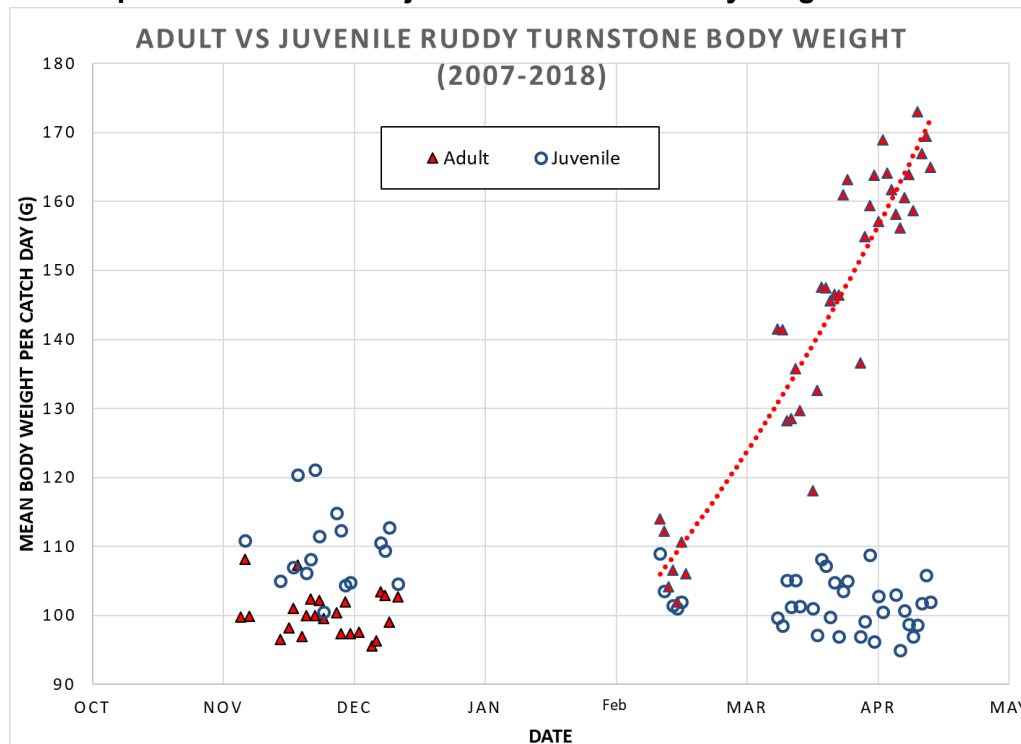


Figure 4: Comparison of adult and juvenile Turnstone body weight in 2007-2018



(Points on graph are means of weights of individual catches)

7) Geolocators

Nine old geolocators (5 on yellow flags and 4 on white flags) were retrieved during this visit. Different flag colours for the geolocators are used each year. Of the 9 geolocators, 5 could be downloaded but unfortunately 4 were either damaged or the battery had expired; these will be sent to the UK for obtaining the data. Of the 5 downloaded, preliminary results of the data are as follows:

- VRN and WEU: 1 year data
- WSV: 2 years data (2016 and 2017 breeding years)
- XPV: 2 years data (2017 and 2018 breeding years)
- YWY: 2 years data (2017 and 2018 breeding years). Probable south migration through Japan and Papua New Guinea both years.

None of these birds have had a geo previously. More detailed results will be circulated in a separate report.

A total of 385 geolocators have now been deployed on Turnstone on King Island, with 166 retrieved (43%).

8) Flag sightings

Two hundred and thirty-three flag sightings were made during the visit, mainly via the persistent and widespread scanning efforts of Katherine Leung and Marcel Klaassen. These sightings were recorded during the recce visits, in between catches and during rainy periods when no catch can be made. Sightings involved 129 Ruddy Turnstone, 1 Hooded Plover and 13 Pied Oystercatcher. Four of the Pied Oystercatchers had originally been marked in Victoria – in Corner Inlet and Stockyard Point in Westernport. Ninety-seven of these Ruddy Turnstone individuals were not caught in any of the 5 catches and 24 of them are still carrying “old” geolocators (9 yellow and 15 white).

9) Deakin University Studies on Avian Pathogens

As per other visits in the past years, Deakin University collected faecal swabs and blood for the presence of avian diseases (or the antibodies from previous infections). Cross analyses have been made with the geolocator data, with a number of papers already published.

Photo 1: Collecting samples from Turnstones (by Mark Smith)



10) Crested Terns

The Crested Tern breeding colony in Burgess Bay was again larger than normal – estimated at 1800 pairs. This is slightly smaller than in 2017 (2000 pairs) but still well above other recent years (800-1000 pairs). 101 banded adults were retrapped and all had been previously banded as chicks in Victoria. 13 had also been previously recorded breeding at the Phillip Island colony (The Nobbies) and 3 at the Mud Islands colony. None of the 53 birds caught with bands in December 2017 were recaptured this year.

11) Acknowledgements

The VWSG thanks the following people and parties for their contribution towards another successful visit (not in particular order):

- Members of the field team for making themselves available for the visit and their financial contribution to cover their airfare, car hire, accommodation and daily living expenses;
- Jenny Marshall for kindly making her house available as headquarters for the team;
- Graeme and Margaret Batey for providing accommodation for 2 of the team members at their house;
- Margaret Bennett for providing space at her house for field equipment storage;
- King Island Airlines for transporting us and our equipment to and from King Island with great flexibility.
- Roger Minton for arranging essential equipment to be sent from Melbourne mid-way through our visit

11) Future

It is hoped that a similar arrangement of two visits each year, one in February-April and one in the November-December period, will be continued to build up long-term valuable data and knowledge on the King Island Ruddy Turnstone population. Such long-term data will be increasingly important at a time of population change associated with habitat changes in the Flyway and climate change.

The next visit is scheduled for 22-31 March, 2019.

The King Island December 2018 Team:

Clive Minton, Robyn Atkinson, Rob Patrick, Mark and Mem Smith, Prue Wright, Tessa Lamin, Marcel Klaassen, Michelle Willie and Katherine Leung, local King Island participants, including Graeme and Margaret Batey, Margaret Bennett and Liz.

Appendix 1: Daily log of fieldwork activities

Day 1: 6-Dec-18 (count)

The team arrived on King Island before 9am and headed out for a full survey. The team split into 4 groups to cover all sites along the west coast over the middle of the day high tide period. A total of 571 Ruddy Turnstone was counted and a number of engraved leg-flags were recorded on Turnstone and Oystercatcher.

Dinner menu: Barbecue sausages and burger, green and potato salads, chocolate cake

Photo 2: Ruddy Turnstone WAT with white geolocator deployed in Mar-18 (by Katherine Leung)



Day 2: 7-Dec-18

Based on the recce from the previous day the team decided to catch at Burgess Bay because there were at least six birds present with geolocators. Two nets were set in 2 separate areas in the bay where birds were observed feeding the day before. It wasn't too long a wait before 14 birds came back to one of the beaches with a net set. Unfortunately, they didn't come close enough to make a catch and eventually all left the beaches to roost on the outlying rocks.

To make good use of time, part of the team headed to Dripping Wells and Manuka for further recces while some stayed behind to guard the net. Although small numbers of birds came back to the beaches and were even catchable on two occasions, no geolocator was spotted among them and hence the nets were left for another attempt in the morning.

Dinner menu: Quiche, banana chocolate cake

Photo 3: Net setting at Burgess Bay, a beach often visited by Turnstones and kelpers (by Katherine Leung)



Day3: 8-Dec-18

Despite finding a problem on the cable first thing in the morning and some short showers, the team soon discovered a good flock of Turnstone feeding in front of the net at Burgess Bay. Soon after confirming there were geolocators among the flock, the net was fired and 27 Turnstones were caught with 2 geolocators. All birds were brought back to the house for processing because of the inclement weather.

Following the success in the morning, the team swiftly set up nets again at Central and North Manuka. It was a long wait until 12 Turnstones were spotted near the North Manuka net and eventually developed into a flock of 30 feeding at the centre of the net with at least 4 geolocators among them. While the team were connecting the cable and firing box, all birds lifted and it was surprising to discover there were >60 Turnstones in that flock! By this time the tide has become very low and the Turnstones then preferred to feed among the exposed rocks and were reluctant to come back to the beach.

The team decided to save the good chance to the next day. Both nets were left on the beaches.

Dinner menu: Chicken and vegetables pasta, yogurt ice-cream and fruit cake

Day 4: 9-Dec-18

A successful day! Turnstones were soon interested to feed in front of the nets after a short wait. Both nets at Central and North Manuka fired beautifully (see [video of the net fired](#), taken by Michelle) before noon to produce catches of 14 and 50 Turnstones with 5 geolocators retrieved in total! So, the team was rewarded with a relaxing afternoon.

Dinner menu: Pork curry, baked pumpkin, sago ginger pudding

Photo 4: Building the “cannon rock fortress” for maximum propelling power (by Katherine Leung)



Day 5: 10-Dec-18

The team got a “holiday” to catch at the southern part of the island (Surprise Bay) where 90 Turnstones were recorded a few days ago. The net was positioned perfectly and as the birds left the roosting rocks, they consistently entered the catching area. A good catch of 54 birds and the team spent some time to practice on moulting and ageing the birds.

In preparation for next morning, the team then travelled to Dripping Wells to set a net based on recce information from the morning. A thorough discussion was carried out about where to set the net as the birds were not seen feeding at one of the “traditional” locations and the area was very soggy for placing nets and cannons. Nevertheless, the team got the job done swiftly and crossed their fingers for a good catch on the next morning.

Dinner menu: Morocco chicken, chocolate cookies

Photo 5: Setting a net among smelly seaweed swamp at Dripping Wells (by Katherine Leung)



Photo 6: Graeme and Margaret Batey joining our processing (by Mark Smith)



Day 6: 11-Dec-18

A long day in the field with limited success. The team started at Dripping Wells with a long wait and an occasional small flock of Turnstones coming in and out of the catching area, but the geolocators were not among them. A similar situation happened a couple more times until the catch was abandoned in the late afternoon when the birds decided to feed at another part of the beach.

During the long wait, half of the team was deployed to try their luck at South Manuka. A net was set and birds were located among the outer rocks. Regardless of the effort put in, birds were reluctant to be twinkled to the catching area. So, both nets were left for another attempt the day after.

Dinner menu: Sweet sour slow cook pork, zucchini, mango sago

Photo 7: View overlooking catching area at Dripping Wells (by Katherine Leung)



Day 7: 12-Dec-18

The beaches on King Island are full of interesting wildlife. The day started with a strange Brush-tailed Possum feeding on dry seaweed while half of the team were moving and resetting the net at Dripping Wells after not much success in the morning. The Possum was not seen again after the team came back from helping with processing the catch at Porky Beach.

On the other hand, a Pied Oystercatcher successfully helped twinkle Turnstones into the catching area at Porky Beach after the net had been moved from South Manuka. The Oystercatcher was rewarded with a band and engraved leg-flag together with 46 Turnstones and a Red-capped Plover. Two old geolocators were retrieved.

The team then moved on to catch (by hand) banded breeding Crested Terns nesting at a colony on an island in Burgess Bay. One hundred and three birds were sampled including an individual first banded in 1991! All had been banded as unfledged chicks in Victoria. It appears that for the second consecutive year a significant number (1000 pairs+) of Crested Terns which normally breed at The Nobbies, on Phillip Island, have instead moved across Bass Strait to King Island to nest. This makes it difficult to determine what the normal proportion of banded Crested Terns from Victoria is present in the King Island breeding population.

Dinner menu: Shepard pie, cabbage, baked pumpkin, chocolate

Photo 8: Brush-tailed Possum on the beach (by Mark Smith)



Photo 9: Crested Tern breeding colony at Burgess Bay (by Michelle Wille)

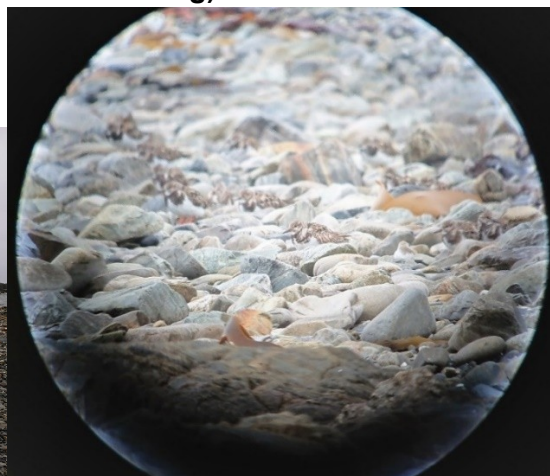


Day 8: 13-Dec-18

Due to the wet and windy weather forecast, no catching was planned for the day. But the team was still fully occupied in flag resighting, data and equipment sorting, geolocator mounting and accommodation options investigation for the next visit.

Dinner menu: Steak and kidney pie, date pudding

Photo 10: Marcel's trying to read the flag of Turnstone crouching among rocks in the strong wind (at least 14 birds in photo!) (by Katherine Leung)



Day 9: 14-Dec-18

Typical King Island weather finally hit the team on the last day of the visit. It was very windy with showers. Two members taking the morning flight to Melbourne were delayed for 2 hours by the bad weather. The rest of the team cleaned the house and packed up the equipment before meeting Margaret and Graeme for a nice chat over morning tea. Two dozen more flag sightings were made before the team finally departed the island at 5pm.

Photo 13: Cheerful team before departing the island in strong winds (by Katherine Leung)



Photo 14: Turnstone set free after processing (by Mark Smith)



Photo 15: View over the Central part of King Island west coast (by Katherine Leung)

