

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP



VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP INC.

BULLETIN No 17

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December 1993

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SUMMARY OF VWSG ACTIVITIES IN 1992

1992 was a year of considerable progress and achievement. This was on a broad front right across the spectrum of the various facets of the VWSG's comprehensive long term study programme of waders and terns throughout Victoria.

A total of 5513 waders and 1587 terns was caught. In contrast to the previous year good numbers of Rednecked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers were caught during the 'summer' monitoring period at three of the main sites - Werribee Sewage Farm, Yallock Creek (NE corner of Westernport Bay) and Anderson's Inlet (Inverloch). However at Sand Island (part of Swan Island), Queenscliff, it was again not possible to make significant catches - the area is now much less extensively used as a wader roost by all species than formerly, due to increased disturbance and habitat changes.

The Highlights in the 'quality' end of the 1992 catches were:

(a) 180 Bar-tailed Godwits at Barry Beach on 24 March. These were largely adult birds in near full breeding plumage about to depart on the northward return journey to their arctic breeding grounds. The birds were exceptionally fat (average 480g males, 550g females). This is more than 50g heavier than the highest average departure weights recorded for each sex in NW Australia. They are in fact the heaviest weights ever recorded for Bar-tailed Godwits anywhere in the world. Calculations suggest that at least a quarter of the birds should have been able to fly the 8000km to Shanghai, China, non-stop.

(b) A Cox's Sandpiper at Inverloch in November. This is the first caught by VWSG (the Group was however involved in banding one near Newcastle, NSW during combined fieldwork in March 1981). Recent DNA work by the Museum of Victoria has demonstrated that Cox's Sandpiper is a hybrid between Curlew Sandpiper and (most probably) Pectoral Sandpiper. It is interesting that the Inverloch bird was caught in a flock predominately of Curlew Sandpipers.

(c) A Little Stint at Werribee S F in January. This the Group's second. It was picked out (by its small size) by a sharp-eyed team member (Dale Tonkinson) during 'processing' of 400 Red-necked Stints. It was much harder to identify than the previous bird (which had retained breeding plumage) because it was in full non-breeding plumage and therefore identical to Red-necked Stints. Little Stints breed in Siberia but most spend the non-breeding season in Africa and the Indian sub-continent.

(d) Another catch of Greenshank at Tooradin - 27 this time. This is the only area in which VWSG has ever been able to catch this species in significant numbers.

(e) The best-ever total of Oystercatchers (238). Of these, 85 were Sooty Oystercatchers - nearly doubling the previous total. As usual all were individually colour-banded.

(f) A large mid-winter catch of Red-necked Stints (539) and Curlew Sandpipers (53), at Barry Beach. The high numbers present reflected the successful 1991 arctic breeding season, as all birds caught were immature first year birds.

(g) 13 Japanese Snipe mist netted at Braeside. These are the first snipe to be banded by the Group for many years. VWSG member Malcolm Brown discovered the site - he works at the Metropolitan Park there.

In contrast to the above successes no Eastern Curlew or Sanderling were caught - in spite of several attempts - and only one Lesser Golden Plover. The Red Knot total of only 26 was also disappointing.

A total of 2554 birds was 'processed' (ie weighed and measured) during the year - 46% of the total wader catch. Inter alia this

(a) now gives a much better cover of the main moulting period (March-June) for Sooty Oystercatchers

(b) gave the best December Japanese Snipe sample so far (was 8, now 21)

(c) trebled the March Bar-tailed Godwit sample (85 to 235)

(d) nearly doubled the June Curlew Sandpiper sample (67 to 119)

(e) on a smaller scale, gave the first November sample of Mongolian Plover (15) and December sample of Red-necked Avocet (6).

All of the above was achieved in spite of the fact that no fieldwork was carried out in Victoria in the August-October period when the Group's equipment and many of its core personnel were away on the 1992 NW Australia Wader Expedition.

The period since the 1991 VWSG Bulletin has also been good for distant recoveries of banded birds, for many distant reports of orange leg-flagged birds and for local recaptures of long-lived birds. Six overseas recoveries of Curlew Sandpipers (5 in China) and four of Red-necked Stint (all in China) are a record. But even more remarkable was the huge crop of sightings of orange leg-flagged Red-necked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers in Hong Kong on northward migration in April/May (particularly in 1993).

This Bulletin contains a comprehensive list of all sightings of orange leg-flagged waders away from the Victorian banding areas. There are many highlights including:

(a) a Large Sandplover sighted in Hong Kong only six weeks after it had been banded in Corner Inlet (one of only three banded)

(b) several (probably at least five individual birds) Sanderling in Japan and one in Hong Kong - all emanating from the catch of 208 at Port Fairy on 2 March 1991.

(c) widespread sightings of Red Knot in New Zealand (as well as several captures)

(d) several sightings of Bar-tailed Godwits in New Zealand indicating, for the first time, a link with the Victorian population

(e) sightings of several species of waders in other states, particularly during southward migration in August/September in Queensland, NW Australia and the northern half of New South Wales. Quite what an orange leg-flagged Red-necked Stint was doing making a short stop-over in Albany, SW corner of Western Australia, in mid-September is not clear. One can only hope that it made it back successfully to Victoria after being temporarily blown off course!

The results to date clearly demonstrate the value of leg flagging in order to enhance significantly the rate of data generation on movements and migration routes. The orange leg-flagging of all the main species of waders banded in Victoria will be continued. In addition the scheme has now been expanded to include Queensland (green), NW Australia (yellow) and New Zealand (White). New South Wales will also be allocated colour flagging codes in the near future.

As the duration of the VWSG study grows it is pleasing that the Group is still recapturing individual birds banded in the first significant cannon net catches made in 1978-79. During the last year Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers, Red-capped Plovers and Pied Oystercatchers with durations between banding and recapture of 12-15 years have been caught. This is a surprising age for small waders, especially those which make a round trip migration of around 25,000km each year. The oldest of these have now flown more than 350,000km on migration alone - further than to the moon!

As mentioned earlier, tern studies are an integral part of the VWSG Fieldwork Programme. These continued successfully in 1992 (see separate report). Particularly pleasing is the growing crop of Little and Common Tern recoveries and colour-mark sightings up the east coast of Australia.

Analysis of VWSG data has continued during the last year. The greatest task in progress is the loading of the 60,000 capture and recapture records of Red-necked Stints onto the computer data base. This task, which has been contributed to by several people over the years, is being completed by Geoff Larmour of Charles Sturt University at Albury. When the compilation is complete and has been checked he will initially be undertaking a major analysis to determine survival/mortality rates.

Overall the Victorian Wader Study Group continues to flourish and achieve. In terms of the number of waders handled on average each year it is now the second largest wader study activity in the world (behind the Wash Wader Ringing Group in the UK). It is particularly fortunate that the current mammoth RAOU project on producing the six volume Handbook of Australian New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB) - the volumes containing the waders (2 & 3) are now in preparation - will have available to it much of the data generated over the last fifteen years and will also serve to highlight the many gaps still remaining in our knowledge of waders.

Acknowledgments

The results outlined above and detailed in the Bulletin have been achieved as a result of the huge input of a great many people - both in the field and 'at home'/'behind the scenes'. The core (corps?!) of dedicated members who participate in nearly every fieldwork activity are especially thanked - without their contributions nothing would be generated. Alan Clarke, the Equipment Officer, also made a considerable contribution with the renovation and replacement of much of the Group's hardware (cannons and projectiles). And Brenda and Mick Murlis put in countless hours making new and rebuilding old cages so that the captured waders could be accommodated in comfort while waiting to be banded, processed and released. Finally Malcolm Brown and Sarah Sarrailhe put in a great effort in manufacturing the orange leg flags, which have proved so successful.

The VWSG received several very significant and generous financial donations during 1992 which have enabled it to purchase four UHF field radios and to upgrade the cannon netting equipment. These contributions came from

The Potter Foundation
Open Space 2000 (Melbourne Water)
National Geographic
ICI Australia
Chemplex

Fieldwork success and safety have been greatly increased as a result of the major improvements facilitated by this kind financial support. Malcolm Brown, Hugo Phillips and Norman Wettenhall put in a great effort in preparing submissions for funding assistance and their efforts are gratefully appreciated.

The Group would also like to thank Mike Weston for undertaking on its behalf a consultancy at Werribee SF (weekly duck counts in defined areas). The VWSG benefited financially via a proportion of the fees paid.

Finally a renewal of thanks to the many landowners, government departments etc who allow access to wader study sites and who assist in so many other ways (especially by the provision of boat transport in Corner Inlet, to Mud Island and in the Lakes National Park). Without their kindness we could not operate.

Again, many thanks to everyone. May 1993 be as productive as 1992.

Clive Minton

RECOVERIES OF BANDED BIRDS

PIED OYSTERCATCHER

✓ 100-8515	Juvenile Found dead	12.6.88 2.7.92	Long Island, Hastings Cowes 17 km s
✓ 100-96896	Adult Found dying	7.7.90 15.1.93	Fairhaven, French Island ditto (local)

These were the only two reports of dead birds. There were a number of recaptures of banded birds or sightings of individually colour banded birds showing movements of up to 250 km. along the coast of Victoria and across to northern Tasmania. These will be listed in a future report.

DOUBLE-BANDED PLOVER

041-61917	Adult Caught at nest	7.3.92 21.9.92	Stockyard Point Ahuriri River, NEW ZEALAND 2136km ESE
041-43910	Adult Caught at nest	29.5.88 21.9.92	Werribee S.F. Ahuriri River, NEW ZEALAND 2232km ESE
041-09850	Adult Caught at nest	5.5.84 20.10.92	Yallock Creek Tekapo River, NEW ZEALAND 2166KM ESE
041-18098	Adult Caught at nest	6.7.86 10.11.92	Point Cook, Altona Ohau River, NEW ZEALAND 2234KM ESE
041-00455	Juvenile Recaptured	15.6.80 10.11.92	Point Cook, Altona Ohau River, NEW ZEALAND 2232KM ese
041-10063	Adult Caught at nest	12.8.84 12.12.92	Yallock Creek Ahuriri River, NEW ZEALAND 2151 ese

The resumption of catching of breeding Double-banded Plovers in New Zealand has produced some interesting records of long-lived birds. 041-00455 was recovered 12 and a half years after banding and was aged 13 years (and still going strong!). There were also two birds recaptured 8 and a half years after banding (both minimum age 10 years).

EASTERN CURLEW

Correction to 1992 VWSG Bulletin No 16.

The recovery date of the Eastern Curlew on its breeding grounds in northern China was 4.5.89 (not 4.9.89).

RED KNOT

051-42655	Juvenile	12.1.91	Yallock Creek
	Recaptured	4.7.92	Firth of Thames, NEW ZEALAND 2617km E
051-42981	2nd year	11.8.91	Stockyard Point
	Recaptured	4.7.92	Firth of Thames, NEW ZEALAND 2610km E
051-53018	2nd year	11.8.91	Stockyard Point
	Recaptured	4.7.92	Firth of Thames, NEW ZEALAND 2610km E

Three more fascinating recoveries illustrating the strong links between the Victorian and New Zealand Red Knot populations. There have also been many more sightings of colour leg flagged birds making similar movements (see separate list).

The above three recoveries are especially interesting because:

- (a) they confirm that many Red Knot do not migrate back to their northern hemisphere breeding grounds even when they are two years old (i.e. such birds do not breed for the first time until they are at least three years old).
- (b) they provide further examples of birds which were in Australia when immature but were present in New Zealand when older.

GREAT KNOT

061-43122	Adult	1.10.88	Queenscliff
	Killed	10. 4.92	Hangzhou Bay, CHINA 8045km NNW

Another recovery from the well-known Great Knot migratory stop-over area around Shanghai.

REDNECKED STINT

033-66642	Adult Killed	31.12.88 -. 3.92	Werribee S.F. Shanghai, CHINA	8068km NNW
033-69442	Juvenile Killed	28. 1.89 -. 5.92	Corner Inlet Laizhou Bay, CHINA	8899KM NNW
032-45885	Adult Found injured	15.11.81 2. 1.83	Inverloch ditto	 (Local)
034-56206	Adult Killed	17. 1.93 -. 5.93	Queencliff Tianzin City, CHINA	9017km NNW
033-70391	Juvenile Killed	6. 5.89 -. 5.93	Inverloch Tianzin City, CHINA	9093km NNW

Four nice recoveries on northward migration through China. The bird recovered at Inverloch over 11 years after banding (minimum age 12 and a half years) is the oldest reported through the Banding Scheme office. However VWSG has had recaptures of its own birds over 14 years old.

CURLEW SANDPIPER

041-18982	Adult Recaptured	27.12.86 4.12.88	Yallock Creek Newcastle, NSW	823km NE
040-95316	Adult Killed	10. 3.79 -. 5.92	Werribee S.F. Liazhou Bay, CHINA	8764km NNW
041-15629	Adult Killed	19.10.85 -. 5.92	Queenscliff Tianzin, CHINA	9010km NNW
041-58325	Adult Killed	20.12.89 -. 5.92	Werribee SF Liazhou Bay, CHINA	8764km NNW
041-60099	Adult Killed	12. 1.91 -. 5.92	Yallock Creek Liazhou Bay, CHINA	8807km NNW

041-60308	Adult	12. 1.91	Yallock Creek	
	Killed	~. 5.92	Tianzin, CHINA	9033km NNW
040-99816	Juvenile	15.10.82	Newcastle, NSW	
	Recaptured	3. 1.93	Stockyard Point	813km SW
Taiwan	Adult	2. 5.92	Hsin Chu, TAIWAN	
C-07558	Recaptured	3. 1.93	Stockyard Point	7477km SSE

This is an unprecedented crop of overseas recoveries. Five were at various sites on the Chinese coast on northward migration. Note that 040-95316 was over 13 years since banding and would have been at least 15 years old. There have been a number of local recaptures of VWSG birds of similar age but this is by far the oldest reported through the Banding Office.

The capture of a Taiwanese-banded bird was VWSG's first from that country.

There have been a number of records over the years of Curlew Sandpipers moving between the Hunter estuary at Newcastle and Victoria. Clearly the Kooragang Island area there is an important stop-over site for those birds which travel to/from Victoria via the east coast of Australia.

SILVER GULL

082-10613	Adult	3. 5.90	Dapto, Wollongong, NSW	
	Recaptured	30. 1.93	Spermwhale Head, Lakes National Park	537KM SW
082-14311	Fullgrown	25.10.89	Winters Swamp, Ballarat	
	Recaptured	1. 2.93	Locksport	337km E

Two birds controlled by VWSG on the same weekend but banded at widely different locations. The movement from Dapto is the longest recorded so far by VWSG.

CASPIAN TERN

091-26391	Nestling	21.12.91	off Mann's Beach, Corner Inlet	
	Found dead	13.10.92	Lakes Entrance	132km NE

COMMON TERN

051-29985	Adult	13. 1.90	Spermwhale Head, Lakes National Park
	Found dead	-. 5.92	Golden Beach 41km SW
Recognised by BO colour bands	Fullgrown or Seen	31. 1.89 4-5.3.89 16. 1.93	Spermwhale Head Kurnell, Botany Bay, NSW 535km NE

Another useful sighting of a colour marked bird (see 1992 Bulletin). It had apparently not returned to its previous 'summer' location.

LITTLE TERN

041-47419	Adult	5. 3.89	Spermwhale Head, Lakes National Park
	Recaptured	27. 2.93	Forster/Tuncurry, NSW 774km NE

This is the furthest movement so far of a Little Tern from Victoria. It was either migrating northward earlier than usual in 1993 or it may have changed its previous 'summer' location.

CRESTED TERNRecoveries of chicks banded off Mann's Beach, Corner Inlet.

	<u>Banded</u>		<u>Recovered</u>	
071-83423	10. 1.88	Found dead	17. 5.92	Dentre Casteaux Channel, Tasmania 516km S
071-96948	24.12.88	Killed	3. 8.92	Apollo Bay 273km W
072-23431	21.12.91	Found dead	20. 6.92	15km SW of Lakes Entrance 138km SSE
072-23400	"	Exhausted	7.10.92	Port Albert 15km WSW
072-23390	"	Found injured	7. 2.93	Stockton, NSW 782km NE

The Apollo Bay recovery shows an unusual westerley movement. The recovery in Tasmania is further south than any previous recovery of a Crested Tern chick banded by VWSG.

Recoveries of chicks banded at Mud Island, Port Phillip Bay

<u>Banded</u>			<u>Recovered</u>		
071-76161	13.12.87	Found dead	16. 1.93	Rye Back Beach	18km SSE
072-04089	16.12.89	Found dead	21. 7.92	Point Wilson	21km NW
072-15576	15.12.90	Died	17. 7.91	Cape Woolamai	62km SE
072-14951	"	Found dead	- . 5.92	St Kilda	48km NNE
072-15136	"	Recaptured	3. 5.92	Werribee SF	29km NW
072-14948	"	Found dead	15. 6.92	Eden NSW	474km ENE
072-14887	"	"	21. 7.92	Point Wilson	21km NW
072-14858	"	Died	18. 8.92	Bournda, NSW	478km ENE
072-14499	"	Found dead	9. 9.93	Port Stephens, NSW	909km NE
072-16266	14.12.91	"	9. 7.93	Ocean Grove	20km W
072-22731	"	Died	9. 5.92	Port Melbourne	49km NNE
072-15843	"	Found dead	1. 6.92	Werribee South	35km N
072-16078	"	Alive	9.6.92	Bemm River	285km E
072-16436	"	Found dead	13. 6.92	Mornington	27km ENE
072-16389	"	Killed by car	4. 7.92	Frankston	35km ENE
072-23214	"	Found dead	22. 7.92	Cape Conran	35km E
072-16258	"	"	30. 7.92	Golden Beach	231km E
072-23047	"	"	11. 8.92	Tathra Beach, NSW	495km ENE
072-16471	"	Alive	11. 8.92	Port Macquarie NSW	1059km NE
072-22862	"	Found dead	1. 9.92	Castle Cove	129km WSW
072-22862	"	"	1. 9.92	Apollo Bay	108km WSW
072-15917	"	"	18. 9.92	Grafton, NSW	1213km NE
072-16072	"	Died	28. 8.92	Altona	45km N
072-16356	"	Found dead	8. 1.93	Black Rock	41km NE
072-15940	"	"	10. 1.93	Pelican Is. Westernport	59km E
072-15846	"	"	12. 4.93	Sorrento	7km S
072-23918	19.12.92	Exhausted	1. 2.93	Venus Bay	95km ESE
072-23566	"	Died	11. 2.93	Nobbies, Phillip Island	43km SE
072-26966	"	Found dead	20. 2.93	Sandringham	41km NNE
072-26875	"	"	17. 3.93	Beaumaris	39km NE
072-24167	"	"	2. 4.93	Sandringham	41km NNE
072-24123	"	"	9. 4.93	Flinders	26km SE
072-23941	"	"	- . 6.93	San Remo	63km ESE
072-26925	"	"	3. 6.93	Iluka, NSW	1264km NE
072-27265	"	Alive	27. 7.93	Stockton, NSW	882km NE

These recoveries largely reinforce the pattern of movements described in the 1992 VWSG Bulletin. The recovery in Queensland is only the fifth from Victoria. It is useful, for survival rate calculations, that we are now getting a few recoveries of birds after their second year. The

recovery/mortality rate seems to drop markedly at this time after being particularly high in the first year or two of life.

Other recoveries/controls relating to VWSG

071-16197	Nestling	28.12.70	Coorong, SA	
	Recaptured	3. 5.92	Werribee SF	505kmESE
071-07182	Nestling	14.12.68	Coorong, SA	
	Recaptured	6. 6.92	Barry Beach	681km ESE
071-94971	Nestling	18.12.88	Eicheno, Tasmania	
	Recaptured	30. 1.93	Spermwhale Head Lakes National Park	438km N
072-01249	Nestling	9.12.89	Frederick Henry Bay, Tasmania	
	Recaptured	1. 2.93	Locksport	537km N
072-39261	Juvenile	28.12.92	Edithburgh, SA	
	Alive	18. 2.93	Beaumaris	717km ESE
072-29151	2nd year	31. 1.93	Locksport	
	Found dead	21. 4.93	Cape Conran	109km ENE

Note the great age of the first two birds - 21 and a half years and 23 and a half years old.

WADER BANDING TOTALS - VICTORIA - 1992

	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL
Pied Oystercatcher	121	32	153
Sooty Oystercatcher	76	9	85
Grey Plover	1	-	1
Lesser Golden Plover	1	-	1
Mongolian Plover	14	2	16
Double-banded Plover	50	26	76
Red-capped Plover	25	1	26
Black-winged Stilt	5	-	5
Ruddy Turnstone	33	14	47
Greenshank	18	9	27
Terek Sandpiper	2	-	2
Japanese Snipe	13	-	13
Bar-tailed Godwit	186	-	186
Red Knot	26	-	26
Cox's Sandpiper	1	-	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	108	6	114
Little Stint	1	-	1
Red-necked Stint	2706	648	3354
Curlew Sandpiper	1265	114	1379
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	4652	861	5513

ANNUAL WADER BANDING TOTALS BY VWSG IN VICTORIA

CALENDAR YEAR	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL
1975	9	-	-
1976	616	4	620
1977	482	12	494
1978	1296	42	1338
1979	7436	486	7922
1980	6121	1206	7327
1981	4561	869	5430
1982	3774	796	4570
1983	2875	628	3503
1984	4272	1045	5317
1985	4073	1051	5124
1986	7144	2057	9201
1987	5350	1559	6909
1988	8019	2697	10716
1989	5437	1584	7021
1990	4094	1950	6044
1991	3224	850	4074
1992	4652	861	5513
Total catches in: Victoria to end 1992	73435	17697	91132

Average annual total for 1979 to 1992 period of 6334.

LOCATION OF WADERS CAUGHT IN VICTORIA

	To Dec 1991	1992	TOTAL
Werribee	36234	1465	37699
Westernport	19750	1243	20993
Queenscliff/Pt Lonsdale	16547	198	16745
Anderson Inlet (Inverloch)	6157	990	7147
Corner Inlet	5256	1599	6855
Altona	937	-	937
Killarney Beach	409	-	409
Bendigo (Sewage Farm)	143	-	143
Seaford Swamp	98	-	98
Mud Island	35	-	35
Geelong (Point Henry)	25	-	25
Seaspray (Lake Reeve)	18	-	18
Braeside/Croydon	-	18	18
Toowong	10	-	10
	85619	5513	91132

Totals include 73,435 newly banded birds and 17,697 retraps of 32 species.

VICTORIAN WADER CATCHES

1975 TO 31 DECEMBER 1992

	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL
Pied Oystercatcher	845	302	1147
Sooty Oystercatcher	184	18	202
Masked Lapwing	127	3	130
Grey Plover	73	6	79
Lesser Golden Plover	190	21	211
Red-kneed Dotterel	133	11	144
Hooded Plover	15	1	16
Mongolian Plover	80	6	86
Double-banded Plover	2953	953	3906
Large Sand Plover	16	1	17
Red-capped Plover	514	174	688
Black-fronted Plover	52	4	56
Black-winged Stilt	18	-	18
Red-necked Avocet	174	1	175
Ruddy Turnstone	500	133	633
Eastern Curlew	311	8	319
Whimbrel	1	-	1
Grey-tailed Tattler	33	1	34
Greenshank	127	34	161
Terek Sandpiper	26	1	27
Latham's Snipe	67	-	67
Bar-tailed Godwit	1128	63	1191
Red Knot	1548	127	1675
Great Knot	310	32	342
Cox's Sandpiper	1	-	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	4165	148	4313
Little Stint	2	-	2
Red-necked Stint	45089	12827	57916
Long-toed Stint	1	-	1
Curlew Sandpiper	14523	2822	17340
Sanderling	228	-	228
Broad-billed Sandpiper	1	-	1
32 Species	73435	17697	91132

In addition, the Group has been involved in handling a further 35,184 waders during joint operations with local groups in other States. If these are included, the VWSG has now been involved in the catching of 120,803 waders.

NUMBERS OF WADERS "PROCESSED BY VWSG IN VICTORIA IN EACH MONTH TO DECEMBER 1992

"Processing" includes measuring wing length, bill length and/or total head length (as appropriate) and weight; also recording full details of primary feather moult (if any). Additional wing moult has been gathered on some birds which were not fully processed. The table below is used to plan fieldwork, with the object of obtaining useable (preferably on at least 50 birds) data for each month of the year for all the main wader species.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	TOTAL
Pied Oystercatcher	68	78	154	201	183	230	126	45	10	15	9	20	1139
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	-	40	27	50	25	43	14	-	1	-	-	202
Masked Lapwing	4	3	77	-	-	13	-	-	-	3	18	11	129
Grey Plover	1	14	4	3	-	2	-	-	2	35	17	-	78
Lesser Golden Plover	21	27	30	1	-	-	-	-	-	28	47	39	193
Red-kneed Dotterel	-	10	-	20	-	44	11	16	12	8	22	-	143
Hooded Plover	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Mongolian Plover	46	1	6	7	3	2	2	-	-	-	15	-	82
Double-banded Plover	-	1	144	257	755	795	913	898	1	-	-	-	3764
Large Sand Plover	14	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	17
Red-capped Plover	18	75	48	113	203	79	65	14	8	11	11	5	650
Black-fronted Plover	-	7	-	-	11	16	6	9	2	-	4	7	62
Black-winged Stilt	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	6	18
Red-necked Avocet	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	2	41	46	36	174
Ruddy Turnstone	17	1	118	27	1	7	-	1	12	7	402	40	633
Eastern Curlew	16	-	1	-	22	15	-	43	85	73	59	5	319
Whimbrel	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Grey-tailed Tattler	28	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
Greenshank	1	-	104	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	21	162
Terek Sandpiper	11	1	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	1	1	10	28
Latham's Snipe	29	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	21	99
Bar-tailed Godwit	134	8	265	14	-	157	-	-	64	79	197	267	1185
Red Knot	192	67	157	34	2	44	88	81	76	435	263	174	1613
Great Knot	96	1	3	-	-	4	-	-	16	54	40	129	343
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1062	603	93	2	-	-	-	9	519	332	271	1155	4046
Cox's Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Little Stint	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Red-necked Stint	1403	828	4139	1871	507	432	461	324	463	1225	2431	2580	16664
Long-toed Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Curlew Sandpiper	492	877	1105	144	222	119	215	408	178	927	563	858	6008
Sanderling	11	-	207	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	2	227
Broad-billed Sandpiper	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
													38033

The majority of the birds caught when the VWSG visited other States were also processed including 1327 birds caught in Tasmania (Nov 1979), 820 birds caught in South Australia (Feb 1980), 921 birds in New South Wales (Mar 1981), and 5216 birds in Western Australia (Aug/Sept 1981, Aug/Sept/Nov 1982, Oct/Nov 1983, Mar/Apr 1985, Aug/Sept 1986, Mar/Apr 1988, Mar/Apr 1990 and Aug/Oct 1992).

YELLOW WIRE
Hugo Phillipps

As you walk along the tideline of a wild Victorian beach
You may rummage through the tidewrack at your leisure,
For every beach patroller is a beachcomber at heart
And any stranded item might be treasure;

The desiccated carcass of a rare or vagrant petrel,
Or driftwood for a billy-boiling fire,
But what might bring some surprise to the watchful walker's eyes
Is lots of little bits of yellow wire.

It is quite essential stuff when the situation's rough,
And you're trying to beat a swiftly rising tide;
Because, if you have got it, you can plait it, you can knot it,
You can patch a net or build a hide.

*Oh, that helpful yellow wire! Ah, that handy yellow wire!
It will sew up rotten sackcloth to keep your body drier;
It will halt a slipping trouser; it will hold your hemline higher;
It is functional and comforting, that Useful Yellow Wire.*

It is not extremely strong, and the pieces are not long,
But you can wind them round your finger in a band;
You will certainly regret it if you happen to forget it:
Don't leave those bits of wire on the sand.

Those who study waders on the long Victorian coast
Must labour in the driving winter rain;
You rush around in summer, and you blister, sweat and roast,
As you move the nets again and yet again;

And there will come a moment, a sudden crisis when your
Dilemma is both delicate and dire,
With those around you going manic and all crying out in panic:
'Oh, we wish we had some bits of yellow wire!'

*Oh, that wondrous yellow wire! That exciting yellow wire!
Glowing through the darkness as a beacon or a fire;
With wavering wader-banders, our spirits we inspire.
As we revel in the rapture of that Useful Yellow Wire.*

You have crouched in hessian hides with cramped and aching joints
Waiting for the birds that never come.
You have sat in soaking sand with someone standing on your hand,
Staring solemnly at someone else's bum.

You have stumbled through the swamps with a net-bag on your back,
Sinking deeper with each step into the ooze,
Emerging aromatic to remarks witty and graphic,
Having lost your sense of humour and your shoes.

You have crawled a bare-kneed twinkle over thorns and grit and shingle;
You have struggled with equipment through the mire,
And left the steaming mud all streaked with human blood,
And lots of little bits of yellow wire.

*Oh, that vital yellow wire! That amazing yellow wire!
It strengthens our resolve with every breath that we respire;
It cheers us in our torment and sustains us when we tire;
Our lifeline through this agony is made of yellow wire.*

And long beyond the holocaust that makes our cities dust,
 Barbaric tribes will roam the broken Earth,
 Scavenging and sifting through the rot and wrecks and rust
 For relics and for remnants of some worth;

And the tribe that rules the shoreline and hunts along the strand
 Where the curlews come predictably each spring,
 Will mine the yellow wire to trade throughout the land,
 And of all the tribes will be the king.

The witch-doctors and warlocks will want wire for their work,
 To invoke the mighty spirits of the ocean.
 For it's magical and mystical; it's quasi-metaphysical;
 It's useful when you stir a magic potion.

*Oh, ethereal yellow wire! Transcendental yellow wire!
 Descended to this earthly realm from a plane much higher.
 Let us build an altar, or a sacrificial pyre,
 To praise the powers providing us with Useful Yellow Wire.*

You can twist it into amulets against the Evil Eye;
 You can use it as a symbol in your art;
 With it wound around your head, you can summon up the dead;
 You can save a sinful soul; you can mend a broken heart.

It is found upon the beaches of Australia's south-east,
 And along the silty margins of its bays,
 Which those avian invaders, the migratory waders,
 Like to loaf on through the sultry summer days.

Where they leave their young to winter with the gulls and oystercatchers
 And the Double-banded Plovers; where the crud,
 The effluent of cities, empties, settles, oxidises,
 Feeding micro-organisms in the mud.

*Oh, that perplexing yellow wire! Enigmatic yellow wire!
 It's an icon of the mystery beyond the heart's desire;
 For the highest human destiny to which we can aspire
 Is to ponder the significance of Useful Yellow Wire.*

Far future archaeologists must then hypothesize,
 And make models to examine and compare;
 Trace an association with waste elimination,
 And the feathered things that flutter through the air.

They will dig to find the seam with the glorious golden gleam
 Following the shorelines of the past,
 And acting as the markers of municipal cloacas,
 Where they dropped their loads of nutrients at last.

Until one fateful morn when Revelation will be born,
 And Truth will scatter previous delusion:
 If you study wading birds on the farms that process turds,
 You need wire - that's the logical conclusion.

*Oh, that yellow wire! Quintessential yellow wire!
 The commodity for which there'll always be a buyer;
 Pick it up and hoard it for the day that you retire;
 Our universal currency is Useful Yellow Wire.*

WHITHER THE WADERS?

Jeff Campbell

In 1986 a paper in The Australian Bird Watcher catalogued 14 wader species occurring at Cherry Lake, Altona, in an annotated list (Humphreys 1986). In the last four years however only three species have been recorded there during the summer and winter Population Monitoring Counts.

Cherry Lake (37° 52'S 144° 50'E) is a freshwater lake located to the west of Millers Road, Altona and is approximately 1 km from Port Phillip Bay. The lake is sited between a number of large petrochemical complexes and a residential area. The lake surrounds are heavily used as a recreational area and are therefore highly disturbed.

The 1986 report on the regular surveys of the lake, conducted over a three year period (Humphreys 1986), lists the following 14 species as occurring there during the survey period: Masked Lapwing, Banded Lapwing, Red-kneed Dotterel, Red-capped Plover, Black-fronted Plover, Black-winged Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Wood Sandpiper, Greenshank, Latham's Snipe, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint and Curlew Sandpiper. Another six species are known to have been recorded at the lake. They are, Painted Snipe (Drummond n.d.), Double-banded Plover (Robinson 1982), Black-tailed Godwit (Robinson 1981), Long-toed Stint (Smith 1962b), Cox's Sandpiper (Robinson 1982) and Buff-breasted Sandpiper (Smith 1962a).

In more recent times the biannual Population Monitoring Counts (summer and winter) have produced a total of just three species in the years 1990 to 1993; Masked Lapwing, Black-winged Stilt and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and three others in the preceding years 1988- 1989; Black-fronted Plover, Greenshank and Curlew Sandpiper.

In addition to the decline in the range of wader species there has also been a concurrent diminution in numbers of birds of those species still found at the lake. For example Humphreys (1986) found groups of 20-50 Masked Lapwing whereas the Population Monitoring Counts 1988-1993 found a maximum of two. Similarly with Black-winged Stilt 50-100 (PMC max.25), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 100 or more (PMC max.13), Curlew Sandpiper up to 100 (PMC max.1).

The question that must be asked is why is this so? What has caused such a dramatic decline in both species composition and individual numbers? Unfortunately it is not possible for me to give a definite answer to these questions, I may however speculate as to the possible cause or causes.

It is certainly probable that there is more than one reason however the major cause would appear to be the encroachment of vegetation onto the shoreline of the lake leaving very little

bare mud suitable as wader habitat. It is presumed that the increase in vegetation is due to eutrophication of the water from nutrient rich run-off.

In addition to the above an extension of the lake at Cherrys Creek outlet, intended to improve the water quality of the lake (Schulz et al. 1991), has destroyed the habitat previously used by many waders, particularly Red-kneed Dotterel and Latham's Snipe. Increased disturbance around the lake has also undoubtedly contributed to the decline. Recommendations made by Schulz et al. (1991) to limit the effects of disturbance have unfortunately not been executed.

It is likely that the rehabilitation of Cherry Lake to its previous state, where it would once again be attractive to a large range and number of waders, is now out of practicable reach. Although it may be technically possible to achieve this aim it would take a great deal of effort and considerable cost to do so. It would be more realistic to concentrate our limited resources on conserving sites which are still of importance to waders at this time.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Angela Jessop who carried out most of the Population Monitoring Counts quoted in this note.

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MIGRATORY DEPARTURE DATES FOR THE EASTERN CURLEW

Regular counts of Eastern Curlew were made in late February and March 1993 at several sites in Victoria (and at Broome in N.W. Australia) in order to determine the departure dates of birds commencing their northward migration back to the breeding grounds.

This project was stimulated by the arts/environment outdoor theatrical event "Waterbirds, the Odyssey of the Wetlands - The Flight of the Eastern Curlew" which was performed in Auckland, Melbourne, Broome and Kushiro (Japan) in February/June 1993.

Regular counts (every 2-5 days) of the numbers of Eastern Curlew were made at three of the most important sites for this species in Victoria. Of the main habitats only the relatively inaccessible/impractical location of the Corner Inlet complex was not covered fully.

The sites were:-

- (a) Westernport Bay - The Gurdies/Blackneys Road/Stockyard Point/Blue Gum Point (Clive Minton, Brenda and Mick Murlis, Peter Hermans)
- (b) Westernport Bay - Long Island, Hastings (Jon and Becky Fallaw), Clive Minton)
- (c) Inverloch - Andersons Inlet, including Point Smythe (Os and Eulie Brewster)
- (d) Corner Inlet - only the area near McLoughlin's Beach entrance was covered (N.E. end of Dream Island) (VWSG)

The counts on the north shore of Roebuck Bay, Broome, were undertaken by Vaughan and Martina Pattison, the wardens of Broome Bird Observatory.

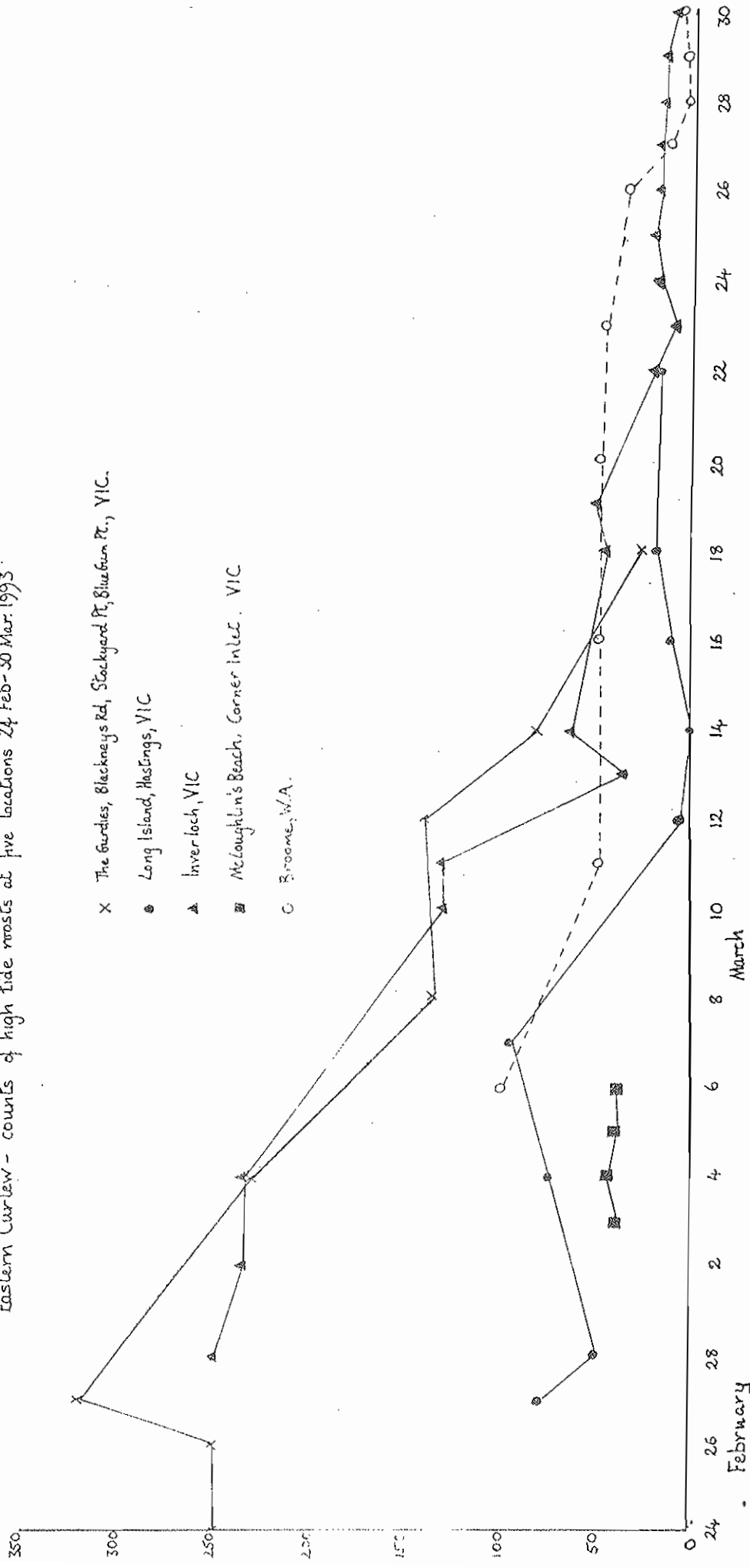
Counts were generally made at high tide or as birds flew from their feeding grounds to the high tide roosts. In each case all adjacent areas in which each local population of birds is known to roost or visit on occasions were also checked. It is thus considered that the counts are as accurate a representation as possible of the population in a defined and relatively discrete area. However some of the variation in numbers will be due to factors such as tide height (neap tides are more difficult to count) and weather conditions (particularly wind).

The results are plotted on the accompanying graph.

The main broad conclusions which can be drawn from the data are:

- (a) Few departures seemed to occur at any location in the period up until at least March 4th
- (b) Significant departures (around 50% of the population) took place from all locations between 7th and 12th March. It is probable that most of

Eastern Curlew - counts of high tide roosts at five locations 24 Feb-30 Mar 1993.



these actually occurred around 7th March and that the population was then relatively stable for the next few days.

- (c) Another major departure took place from Victorian locations around 12th March, though the final main emigration from Inverloch was not until around 20th March. After then the population was down to its "winter" level of around 10% of the summer numbers - these being immature (probably 1-3 year old) birds not yet mature enough to migrate back to the breeding grounds.
- (d) The second main wave of departures from Broome took place later than in Victoria, between 23rd and 28th March.

In summary, this study has shown that in 1993 the main departures of Eastern Curlew from Victoria at the start of the return migration to their northern hemisphere breeding grounds took place in the second and third weeks of March. The initial wave left Broome at the same time as the first birds from Victoria but the final departures from there did not occur until the last week in March.

Similar counts in future years will be necessary to determine whether the timing and pattern of departures is the same each year. The wader study expedition to N.W. Australia in March/April 1994 will provide an additional opportunity at Broome and it is hoped that monitoring arrangements can be made at some of the Victorian locations at the same time.

Many thanks to those who put in so much time and effort to do the counts in 1993.

Clive Minton

Longevity Records for Waders in Australia

Listed below are details, supplied by the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme office (at 27.10.93), of the longest elapsed time between banding and recovery for all species of waders in Australia where the elapsed time was greater than four years. Those birds banded by VWSG and AWSG are indicated.

Species	Elapsed Time	Bander	Banding Location	Date
Turnstone	7yrs 8mths	AWSG	80 Mile Beach	22.08.82
Pied Oystercatcher	12yrs 3mths	VWSG	Rhyll	19.12.79
Sooty Oystercatcher	8yrs 5mths	VWSG	Phillip Island	04.01.80
Lesser Golden Plover	6yrs 2mths	(recovered)		

Mongolian Plover	10yrs 10mths			
Doublebanded Plover	12yrs 4 mths	VWSG	Pt Cook, Altona	15.06.80
Redcapped Plover	6yrs 5mths			
Rednecked Avocet	7yrs 3mths	VWSG	Werribee, S.F.	28.11.81
Bartailed Godwit	6yrs 7mths	AWSG	Broome	02.09.81
Greytailed Tattler	7yrs 9mths			
Terek Sandpiper	14yrs 11mths			
Curlew Sandpiper	10yrs 7mths	VWSG	Werribee S.F.	25.11.78
Rednecked Stint	11yrs 1 mth	VWSG	Inverloch	15.11.81
Sharptailed Sandpiper	5yrs 9mths			
Red Knot	9yrs 4mths			
Great Knot	10yrs0mths	AWSG	Broome	30.03.82

It is likely that some of these records will be markedly increased when VWSG and AWSG recaptures in recent years are put through the computer analysis system (EG VWSG already have 14year elapsed time records for Rednecked Stint and Curlew Sandpiper).

Based on European experience it is probable that over the next few years longevity records, mainly from retraps, for most species will increase and exceed 12 years , with the largest waders (eg Eastern Curlew and Pied Oystercatchers) exceeding 20 years.

It should be noted that these extremely long-lived individuals are not typical of the population as a whole. There is insufficient data yet to work out the normal life expectancy of most species but the average lifespan is likely to be in the 3-6 years range.

Clive Minton

LEG FLAG SIGHTINGS IN VICTORIA FROM ELSEWHERE

The colour leg-flagging of waders to assist in the generation of movements data is undertaken in New Zealand (white), Queensland (green), north-west Australia (yellow), New South Wales (white, different species to NZ) and Victoria (orange).

The following sightings in Victoria of birds leg-flagged elsewhere have been reported.

Red Knot

30/09/93 Altona, Port Phillip Bay Rohan Clarke
(white flag on right tibia, metal band on left tarsus)

This bird was banded in the Auckland area, NEW ZEALAND, during the last two years. It is the first record of a New Zealand banded knot in Victoria; there have been many movements in the opposite direction.

Curlew Sandpiper

22/11/92 Stockyard Point, Western Port Bay Jeff Campbell
(yellow flag on right tibia)

15-16/03/93 Sandy Point, Shallow inlet Joan McDowell
(yellow flag on right tibia)

Both these birds would have been banded in the Broome/Eighty Mile Beach/Port Hedland area of north-west Australia in August-October 1992. They are further support for previous data indicating that a proportion of the Curlew Sandpipers coming to Victoria enter via north-west Australia.

Clive Minton

SIGHTINGS OF WADERS LEG-FLAGGED IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA
(reported up to October 1993)

Clive Minton

The addition of an orange leg-flag to migratory waders caught in Victoria commenced in January 1990, with the prime objective of increasing knowledge of the migration routes and key staging posts of birds on their way to and from their breeding grounds.

The flag was generally placed on the right tibia, although it was put on the right tarsus in some earlier experiments (and latterly on the tarsus also on some Sanderling and Ruddy Turnstone, for greater visibility).

Experience has shown a high (greater than 90%) retention rate and little colour fading over a 3-4 year period. Some field observers were occasionally unsure of the colour, with quite a few records suggesting a red, or occasionally a yellow (before this was used in north-west Australia recently), colour. Most, but not all, observers correctly identified the leg (note the occasional bird is genuinely, but incorrectly, flagged on the left leg!). Eastern Curlew - a special study species - have had a leg flag put on both tibia for maximum visibility.

The metal band position is not part of the code and, although most frequently on the right tarsus, the position is not changed if a bird is retrapped with the metal band on the left tarsus.

The approximate numbers of birds of each species orange leg-flagged in Victoria between January 1990 and the end of June 1993 is given in the table below (11,151 birds).

Red-necked Stint <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	6299
Curlew Sandpiper <i>C. ferruginea</i>	2960
Red Knot <i>C. canutus</i>	450
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper <i>C. acuminata</i>	414
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	361
Sanderling <i>C. alba</i>	243
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	229
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	65
Eastern Curlew <i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	35
Pacific Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	26
Latham's Snipe <i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	22
Mongolian Plover <i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	20
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	16
Great Knot <i>C. tenuirostris</i>	5
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>	4
Large Sand Plover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	3
Grey Plover <i>P. squatarola</i>	1

Birds have been leg-flagged at the following locations (only):

Port Phillip Bay	-	Werribee Sewage Farm
	-	Queenscliff/Swan Island/Swan Bay
Westernport	-	Yallock Creek
	-	Stockyard Point
	-	The Gurdies
	-	Tooradin
Anderson Inlet	-	Inverloch
Corner Inlet	-	Barry Beach
	-	off Manns, Robertsons and McLaughlins Beaches
Western Victoria	-	Killarney Beach, Port Fairy (Sanderling and Turnstone only)

All sightings of orange leg-flagged birds away from the above areas are reported in the lists which follow.

There has been an unexpectedly large number of sightings already reported and some of the knowledge gained from these is given below the data on each species. As well as the hoped for sightings of birds on migration through Asia, there has been a widespread series of sightings from within Australia illustrating dispersal and migration routes within the continent. Of the 238 records listed, 116 were from overseas and 122 were within Australia. This is more than 5 times the number of recoveries of banded waders reported via the Banding Scheme to the Victorian Wader Study Group over the same three and a half year period and emphasises the considerable value of leg-flagging in relation to generating data on migration routes and stopover sites.

The flagging scheme within Victoria will continue for a number of years in order to extend the data and, hopefully, enable a greater quantification of migration patterns. Please continue to send in sightings to Mark Barter, the Australian Bird Banding Scheme or myself.

Acknowledgements

The efforts of all those field observers whose records are included (and attributed) in this note are greatly appreciated. So too are those people and organisations who in many cases facilitated the transfer of the original records to the Victorian Wader Study Group.

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER

11/09/91 Tuggerah Lakes, Ourimbah, New South Wales Alan Morris

This is further evidence to support the count/previous recoveries indication that Pacific Golden Plover use a north east route into and out of Victoria. This bird would have been flagged at either Werribee Sewage Farm or Yallock Creek between 21/10/90 and 12/01/91.

LARGE SAND PLOVER

25/04/93 Mai Po, HONG KONG Fox Wong

This was one of three birds banded off Mann's Beach, Corner Inlet, on 7 March 1993. It is the first overseas recovery of a Large Sand Plover banded in Victoria.

RUDDY TURNSTONE

15/03/93 Georgetown, Tasmania Ralph Cooper

This is the first sighting of a leg-flagged Turnstone away from the flagging areas

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

28/04/92 Arao, Ariake Sea, Kumamoto Pref., JAPAN Jeremy Thompson
(32°59' N, 130°26' E)

19/07/92 Karaka, South Manukau, NZ Tony Habraken
(37°07' S, 174°54' E)

22/09/92 Miranda, Firth of Thames, NZ Pam and Des Agnew
(37°10' S, 175°19' E)

13/09/93 " Keith Woodley

28/08/92 Mangere Sewage Ponds, Auckland, NZ Alan Tennyson/Graeme Taylor

24/06/93 Farewell Spit, NZ Willie Cook
(40 30' S, 172 50' E)

08/08/93 Puhinui Creek, Manukau Harbour, NZ Tony Habracken *et al*
(37 01' S, 174 51' E)

The bird at Arao in Japan was with other colour-flagged individuals from Queensland and New Zealand (as well as three banded but unflagged birds). It is interesting that populations from widely different non-breeding areas should be sharing the same migratory "stopover" site. Prior to the above sightings in New Zealand, there were no

recorded movements of Bar-tailed Godwits between Victoria and New Zealand.

RED KNOT

31/03/92	Miranda, Firth of Thames, NZ (37°10' S, 175°19' E)	(2 birds)	Stella Rowe <i>et al</i>
27/04/92	"	(2 birds)	Bev Woolley
05/09/92	"		Pam and Des Agnew
30/09/92	"		"
31/10/92	"		Betty Seddon
02/01/93	"		Stella and John Rowe
03/01/93	"		Betty Seddon
13/09/93	"		Keith Woodley
27/09/93	"		"
26/10/91	Manawatu Estuary, NZ (40°28' S, 175°13' E)		J.L. Moore and S.E. Creswell
27/10/91	"		Roger Slack <i>et al</i>
25/11/91	"		W. Chelley
26/11/91	"		D. Medway
01/02/92	"		R. Guest
06/05/92	Seagrove, Manukau Harbour, NZ (37°07' S, 174°54' E)		Tony Habraken
20/06/92	Karaka, Manukau Harbour, NZ	(3 birds)	Tony Habraken
02/08/92	"		"
09/01/93	"		Tony Habraken <i>et al</i>
03/03/93	"		"
09/05/93	"		"
07/06/93	"		"
03/10/93	"		Pam Agnew <i>et al</i>
02/08/92	Gordon's Road, Manukau Harbour, NZ		"
25/10/91	Mangere Sewage Ponds, NZ (36°57' S, 174°46' E)		Ray Clough
01/01/93	"		Ray Clough
30/10/91	Port Whangarei, NZ (35°46' S, 174°20' E)		Ray Pierce
23/12/91	"		per NZ Banding Office
02/11/92	Mangauhai, NZ (36°08' S, 174°34' E)		Richard Parrish
22/11/92	Ruakaka, NZ (35°54' S, 174°26' E)		Richard Parrish

02/08/92	Waiuku, NZ (37 15' S, 174 44' E)	Tony Habraken
28/11/92	Yarrs Flat, Lake Ellesmere, NZ (43°42' S, 172°30' E)	Colin Hill
21/10/93	Waitu Estuary, Northland, NZ	Ray Pierce
20/10/92	Darling Point, Moreton Bay, QLD	Marjorie Andrews
25/10/92	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay, QLD	Margery Plymire and Peter Driscoll

This excellent series of sightings in New Zealand adds to the existing band recovery evidence of a considerable interchange between the Red Knot populations in Victoria and New Zealand. Given that the majority of Red Knot flagged in Victoria have been immatures and/or caught during the April-to-August "over-wintering" season, it is likely that these sightings in New Zealand do not refer only to birds marked whilst on migration through Victoria. Note that several of the sightings may refer to the same individual. Many thanks to New Zealand ornithologists for so assiduously recording and reporting leg-flagged birds.

The sightings from Queensland are the first indication of a link with Victorian Red Knot. Note the continuing absence of sightings (or recoveries) in north-west Australia.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER

24/04/92	Tanjung Pecinan, Situbondo, INDONESIA (7°04' S, 114°02' E)	A.P. Setiadi and I. Setiwan
05/04/92	Luggage Point, Brisbane River, QLD	David Stewart
20/09/92	Raby Bay, Brisbane, QLD	Don Gaydon
06-28/09/92	Seven Mile Lagoon, 60km W of Brisbane, QLD	Rod Hobson
28/09/92	" (different bird to above)	"
03/05/93	Mouth of Daly River, Northern Territory	Ray Shadow

This is the first report of a Victorian-banded Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Indonesia. The sightings in Queensland provide further evidence that this is the principal route taken by birds on their way to and from Victoria.

RED-NECKED STINT

12/05/92	Sungai Bera Estuary, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM (4°37' N, 114°21' E)	Jennifer Elkin (2 birds)
16/05/91	Mai Po Marshes, HONG KONG (22°29' N, 114°02' E)	Wendy Young
05/05/92	"	Sue Earle

Sightings at Mai Po Marshes, HONG KONG, in 1993

13/04/93		Geoff Carey
14/04/93	(1, 2? birds)	Lew Young and Peter van Scheepen
15/04/93		Paul Leader
24/04/93		"
25/04/93		Fox Wong
26/04/93		DCC
27/04/93		Steve McChesney
28/04/93	(2, 3? birds)	Geoff Carey and Verity Picken
30/04/93	(3, 4? birds)	Richard Lewthwaite
01/05/93	(2, 3? birds)	Simba Chan and Paul Leader
04/05/93	(2 birds)	Geoff Carey
08/05/93	(1, 3? birds)	Verity Picken, Paul Leader and Peter Kennerley
09/05/93	(1, 2? birds)	Geoff Carey and Peter Kennerley
12/05/93		Geoff Carey
15/05/93		Peter Kennerley
22/05/93	(1, 3? birds)	Geoff Carey, Paul Leader and Peter Kennerley

It is not possible to be certain how many individuals were involved. On the basis of the expected turnover rate during migration, coupled with noted plumage differences and specific locations, it is possible that these 21-30 records refer to some 10-20 different birds at Mai Po Marshes, Hong Kong.

On the basis of the above dates, and the similar long series of sightings of Curlew Sandpipers, it appears that the passage of Victorian Red-necked Stints through Hong Kong is, on average, only about one week later than that of Curlew Sandpipers. This is in spite of the fact that Curlew Sandpipers tend to leave Victoria on northward migration some 2-4 weeks earlier than Red-necked Stints:

27/05/93	Ku Pae E Te Ban, THAILAND (6 45' N, 101 20' E)	Nukul Rattānadakul
27/08/93	Pantai Sang, Indramayu, INDONESIA	Phil Whittington
05/08/92	Okori Machi, Futtsu-Shi, Chiba, JAPAN (35 20' N, 139 52' E)	Per Yamashina Institute
19/09/92	Tama Estuary, Honhaneda, Ohta-Ku, JAPAN (35 33' N, 139 45' E)	"

22/12/90	Lake Ellesmere, Christchurch, NZ (43°42' S, 172°28' E)	Kathleen Harrison
18/4/91	"	Kathleen Harrison and Sheila Petch
26/10/92	"	Colin Hill
29/10/92	"	Sheila Petch
29/12/92	" (2 birds)	"
28/09/92	Seven Mile Lagoon, 60km W of Brisbane, QLD	Rod Hobson
29/09/92	Cooktown, QLD	John McLean
30/03/91	Tullakool Treatment Works, New South Wales	Phil Maher
06/09/92	Botany Bay, New South Wales	Graham Fry
17/10/92	"	Graham Fry
26/09/93	"	David Stewart
15/04/91	Eyre Bird Observatory, Western Australia	G w e n a n d Graham Goodreid
22/04/92	"	"
12/08/92	Roebuck Bay, Broome, Western Australia	per Broome Bird Observatory
04/09/93	"	"
06/09/93	"	"
10/09/93	"	"
(at least two birds were involved at Broome as sighting on 6/9 was some km from those on 4/9 and 10/9)		
23/09/92	Albany, Western Australia	Vic Smith
11/05/93	Adele Island, off Broome, Western Australia	Frank O'Connor
02/04/91	Gantheaume National Park, Kangaroo Island, SA	Chris Lester
26/05/91	Lake Eyre South, SA	John Read
10/03/91	Dry Creek Saltfields, Adelaide, SA	John Cox
23/02/92	"	"
06/04/92	"	"
10/02/93	"	David Close
07/03/93	"	John Cox
08/03/93	" (2 birds)	"
20/03/93	" (3 birds)	John Cox and W. Syson
08/04/93	"	John Cox
19/04/93	"	"

24/04/93	Dry Creek Saltfields, Adelaide, SA	John Cox
03/05/93	"	"
05/09/93	"	"
14/11/92	Price Saltfields, Gulf St Vincent, SA	John Cox
07/03/93	"	"
12/04/93	" (3 birds)	"
14/04/93	"	"
18/09/93	"	"
17/10/93	"	"
24/08/91	Orielton Lagoon, Hobart, Tasmania	Alan Fletcher
13/10/91 (and throughout 91/92 summer)	" (2 birds)	"
04/01- 06/02/93	Cape Portland, Tasmania	Ralph Cooper
15/03/91	Lake Murdeduke, Victoria (2 birds)	George Appleby
22/03/91	Cundare Pool, Victoria	"
04/04/92	Lake Tutchewop, Victoria	Chris Doughty
17/04/92	Glenelg River, Victoria	Martin Schulz
27/05/93	Nr Mount Hamilton, Streatham, Victoria	George Appleby

There have also been sightings in Victoria at other locations (Barwon Heads, Point Cook/Altona, Sandy Point) away from the flagging locations. Most probably refer to movements of birds marked in their first year, as retraps suggest that adults are strongly site-faithful.

This is a most valuable collection of records. Special thanks are due to ornithologists in Hong Kong, who put in such a huge effort to see flagged birds in 1993, and to Steve McChesney who collected together all the sightings.

The sightings in New Zealand, of at least two individuals, are the first indications of movements through Australia of Red-necked Stints on their way to and/or from New Zealand. The report from Brunei is also a first, although there has been an earlier recovery from nearby Sabah.

The wide spread of sightings within Australia is especially interesting. Some, if not all, of the March/May reports concern the wanderings of first-year birds, but some were showing signs of breeding plumage. This is surprising, given the pre-departure weight increases observed in adults in Victoria. They would not be expected to land again in southern Australia once they had taken off.

The Queensland records are again "firsts" but, given the number of Red-necked Stints

flagged, would not necessarily suggest that the east coast is a major migration route for this species.

CURLEW SANDPIPER

09/04/90	Mai Po Marshes, HONG KONG (22°29' N, 114°02' S)	at least	per	David	Melville
13/04/90	"	two		"	
16/04/90	"	individuals		"	
17/04/90	"	involved		"	
06/05/92	"			Paul	Leader

Sightings at Mai Po Marshes, HONG KONG, in 1993

04/04/93		Martin Williams
11/04/93		Peter Kennerley
12/04/93		Peter van Scheepen
13/04/93		Geoff Carey
14/04/93	(3 birds)	"
22/04/93	(2 birds)	"
24/04/93		Paul Leader
25/04/93		Peter Kennerley
26/04/93		DCC
28/04/93		Geoff Carey
01/05/93	(1, 2? birds)	Paul Leader and Simba Chan
04/05/93	(3 birds)	Geoff Carey
06/05/93	(2 birds)	"
08/05/93	(2, 3? birds)	Paul Leader and Peter Kennerley
15/05/93		Paul Leader

It is not possible to be certain how many different individuals were involved. On the basis of the expected turnover rate during migration, coupled with noted plumage differences and specific locations, it is probable that these 22-24 records refer to some 10-15 different birds at Mai Po Marshes, Hong Kong.

25/04/92	Tainan, TAIWAN (22°50' N, 120°20' E)	Per	Taiwan	Banding
			Centre	
16/09/92	Cairns, QLD		Danny	Rogers
02/10/92	"		John	Crowhurst
20/10/92	Nudgee Beach, Brisbane, QLD		Margery	Plymire
			and	Peter Driscoll
14/03/93	Godwin Beach, Deception Bay, QLD		Bob	James
04/04/93	"		"	

18/09/93	Nudgee Beach, Moreton Bay, QLD	Greg Nye
02/10/93	" (2 birds)	Andrew Gearing and Ivell Whyte
21/09/91	North Botany Bay, New South Wales	Trevor Quedsted
18/08/93	Botany Bay, New South Wales	Margaret Piefke
22/02/92	Tullakool Evaporation Ponds, New South Wales	Tom Wheller
21/22/08/93	Lake Conjola, nr Ulladulla, New South Wales	Robert Puttock
05/09/93	Arncliffe, nr Sydney Airport, New South Wales	Keith Egan
06/09/93	Broome, Western Australia	Thomas Putt and Vaughan Pattinson
28/02/93	Muloorina, Maree, SA	John Read
19/02/92	Dry Creek Saltfields, SA	John Cox
15/11/92	"	"
10/01/93	"	"
14/03/93	"	W. Syson
20/03/93	"	John Cox
08/04/93	"	"
11/04/93	" (2 birds)	"
21/08/93	"	"
16/10/93	"	"
23/10/93	"	"
14/11/92	Price Saltfields, Gulf St Vincent, SA	John Cox
17/10/93	"	"
13/10/91	Orielton Lagoon, Hobart, Tasmania	Alan Fletcher
24&29/10/91	Georgetown, Tasmania	Ralph Cooper
07/01/92	"	Alan Fletcher
19/07/92	Ocean Beach, Strahan, Tasmania	Tim Reid
26/08/92	Cape Portland, N.E. Tasmania	Ralph Cooper
06/07/91	Lough Calvert, Victoria	Mark Barter
04/04/92	Mystic Park, Kerang, Victoria	Chris Doughty
05/04/92	Lake Tutchewop, Victoria	"

15/05/92	Streatham, Victoria	George Appleby
22/11/92	Lake Goldsmith, Beaufort, Victoria	BOCA Ballarat

A nice range of sightings, especially the huge series from Hong Kong. The evidence of a strong passage on northward migration through the "China region" is compatible with previous banding recoveries.

There was no previous evidence for any passage via Queensland to Victoria on southward migration. On the other hand there was evidence of a link with Tasmania, though the number of sightings there is more than might have been expected, considering few passage birds have been flagged. There is also a long series of sightings in South Australia from John Cox.

The inland sightings in Victoria and New South Wales are likely to be largely a dispersal of immature birds.

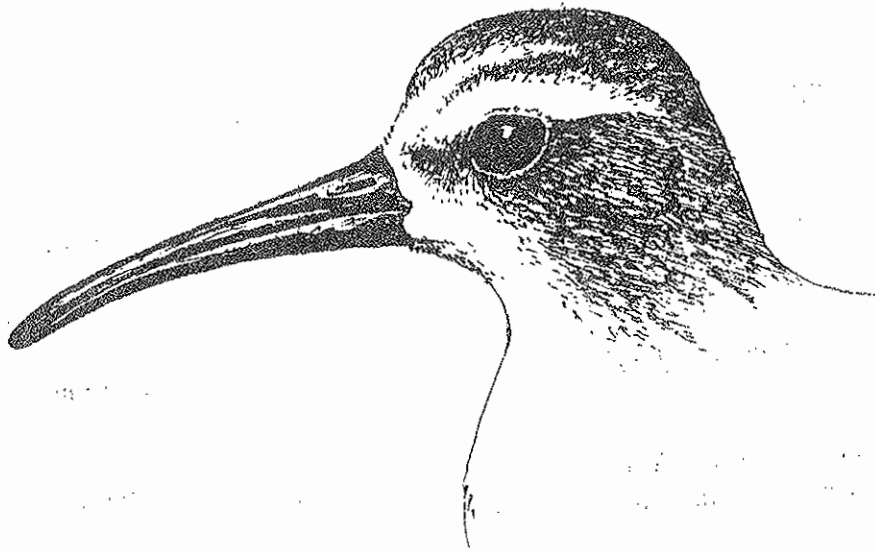
SANDERLING

01/09/91	Yotugonyu Beach, Maki, Niigata Pref., JAPAN (37°51' N, 138°53' E)	per Yamashina Institute and
29/09/91	Torinonmi Beach, Watari, Miyagi Pref., JAPAN (38°02' N, 140°55' S)	Jeremy Thompson
14/08/92	Yatou, Narashino, Chiba Pref., JAPAN	Per Yamashina
16/08/92	(35°41' N, 140°00' E)	Institute
25/08/92	(4 records in same area probably refer to same bird)	"
29/08/92	"	"
22/08/92	Yotugonyu Beach, Maki, Niigata Pref., JAPAN (37°51' N, 138°53' E)	"
16/05/93	Mai Po, HONG KONG	Richard Lewthwaite
30/12/91	Port MacDonnell, SA	David Robertson <i>et al</i>
02/10/93	nr Canunda National Park, SA (3 in 250 birds)	Ren de Garis
06/10/93	" (6 birds)	"
02/12/92	Snapper Point, Portland, Victoria (at least 6 individuals in flocks totalling 525)	Rob Farnes
19/05/91	Discovery Bay, Victoria	Martin Schulz
16/04/93	15 km E. of Nelson, Victoria (6 birds in flock of 130)	Rob Farnes
18/02/92	Sandy Point, Victoria	John Simpson
05/04/93	"	Joan McDowell

A fabulous collection of sightings from one catch of Sanderlings! All were banded and leg-flagged at Killarney beach, near Port Fairy, on 2 March 1991. This is the only significant catch (208 birds) of Sanderling yet made in Australia. These are also the first "recoveries" for this species. Japan seems to be a major stopover area on migration. Most of the individuals seen there were also photographed. The occurrence at other locations on the Victorian and South Australian coast is also interesting and may indicate a less strong attachment to non-breeding site than in some other migratory waders.

Please continue to report further sightings of orange leg-flagged waders to the Australian Bird Banding Scheme, Mark Barter or myself.

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Sightings of Little Terns colour-marked at Lakes National Park

Below is a comprehensive list of movements derived from sightings of colour-marked Little Terns banded at Point Wilson, Spermwhale Head, Lakes National Park since cannon netting commenced there in January 1989. Because birds were banded/leg-flagged with individual colour combinations it has been possible to identify specific birds.

Colour Code	Band Number	Banding Date	Resighting Location	Date	Movement	Observer
W/OB(bands)	041-47340	05, 03, 89	Boat Harbour Kurnell, NSW	16, 09, 89	539km NE	Joy Pagler
W/BM(bands)	041-47341	04, 03, 89	Botany Bay NSW	23, 11, 90 (nesting)	544km NE	Keith Egan
W/OB(bands)	041-47332	04, 03, 89	"	05, 02, 91	544km NE	"
W/OGR(flags)	041-61551	25, 01, 92	"	14, 11, 92	544km NE	Graham Fry
W/OB	?	25-27, 01, 92	Botany Bay NSW	12, 10, 93	544km NE	Keith Egan
W/OW(flags)	041-61492	25, 01, 92	off Manns Beach Corner Inlet	06, 02, 93	115km SW	Clive Minton & Chris Rowe

In addition to the above several colour banded Little Terns have been seen in Corner Inlet in 1990-92 but individual colour combinations could not be determined.

There is clearly a strong link between the Little Terns occurring in the Lakes National Park in Victoria and those on the New South Wales coast around Botany Bay. There has also been a capture of a Victorian bird near Newcastle (see Recoveries section in this bulletin).

Some of these records probably relate to passage birds which breed further north (in Australia or possibly overseas). But one bird was breeding in Botany Bay suggesting either a change of breeding area or alternatively significant pre- or post-breeding movement into Victoria.

There have also been many sightings of colour-marked birds at the local breeding colonies. These are helping the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (Jim Reside and his team) study such things as the behaviour of individual birds, site and mate faithfulness and longevity.

Sightings of Common Terns colour-marked at Lakes National Park

Below is a summary of all reports of sightings of colour-marked Common Terns banded at Point Wilson, Spermwhale Head, Lakes National Park since canon netting commenced there in January 1989. The dates on which different colour-marking codes were used are shown in a separate table.

10.02.90	Snake Island Corner Inlet	RW/m(bands)	130km SW	Clive Minton et al
18.03.91	off Mann's Beach Corner Inlet	BO/m(bands)	115km SW	" "
18.03.91	" (in flock of 80)	RW/m(bands)	115km SW	" "
18.03.91	off Mann's Beach Corner Inlet	O/m(flag)	"	" "
23.03.92	" (in flock of 30)	RW/m(flag)	"	Chris Rowe
*22.12.91	Long Reef Sydney, NSW	m/O(flag)	560km NE	Gail Kenner
*30.01.92	Balmoral, NSW	RW/m(bands)	559km NE	"
*11.02.92	Elephants Trunk, NSW	RW/m(bands)	537km NE	Keith Egan
*16.01.93	Boat Harbour Kurnell, NSW	BO/m(bands)	550km NE	Stuart Fairbairn
*16.01.93	Boat Harbour Kurnell, NSW (in flock of 150)	m/O(flag)	"	"
*04.10.91	Cooktown, Queensland	RW/m(bands)	2515 N	John McLean

* Reported via the Bird Banding Office in Canberra.

In addition to the above sightings there have been the following recoveries/retraps involving movement:

- (a) A recovery on 14.10.91 at Leyte, PHILIPPINES of a bird banded on 04.03.89 at Lakes National Park (moved 5,889km NE)
- (b) Four recaptures (8-10 years after banding) at Lake National Park from 39 birds banded off Mann's Beach, Corner Inlet on 06.03.82 (moved 115km NE).
- (c) A recapture on 06.03.82 off Mann's Beach of a bird banded at Kooragang Island, NSW on 22.11.80 (moved 830km SW)

This is a good number of reports from only 904 birds banded.

Common Terns visiting the Lakes National Park clearly reach there from their presumed Siberian breeding grounds via Asia and the east coast of Australia.

Whilst there have been many 'subsequent year' recaptures indicating a tendency to return each year to the same area there are a few examples of birds which appear to have been elsewhere (Sydney area) in subsequent summers. There is also evidence of a significant interchange with the Common Terns which occur in Corner Inlet (defined as the area between the SW end of 90 Mile Beach and Wilson's Promontory).

Common Tern Colour Marking Codes at Lakes National Park

Code (Left/Right)	Dates used	Number of birds Colour-marked
BO/m(bands)	31.01.89	38
	4-5.03.89	63
RW/m(bands)	13.01.90	300
	10.03.90	90
O/m(flag)	29.01.91	36
m/O(flag)	9-10.03.91	70
	25-27.01.92	194
O/m(flag)	31.01-01.02.93	113

		904

Recaptures of Common Terns at Lakes National Park from 39 birds which had been banded off Mann's Beach, Corner Inlet on 6.3.82

Band Number	Recapture date	Elapsed time
051-18068	13.01.90	(nearly 8 years)
051-18047	"	"
051-18054	25.01.92	(nearly 10 years)
051-18065	26.01.92	"

These represent movements of 115km N.E.

TERN BANDING

The usual programme of banding tern chicks at Mud Island and Corner Inlet and of cannon netting adult terns in the Lakes National Park has continued. Details are given below.

Mud Island

Visited on 19 December 1992 when 1310 Crested Tern chicks were banded. The breeding population was estimated at 1640 pairs. Both figures are very close to those of the previous year.

Only 2 Caspian Tern chicks were banded. Although twenty pairs had bred they seemed to be having a less successful breeding season.

Corner Inlet

Caspian Terns did not breed at either of the previous 2 sites and probably did not breed at all in the area in the 1992-3 summer.

Caspian Terns bred on the NE side of the Port Albert entrance (SW end of Clonmel Island) for the second successive year.

About fiftyfive pairs nested but were subjected to some problems due to periodic exceptionally high tides. Six chicks were banded on 26 January 1993.

Fairy Terns

A colony of twenty+ pairs nested on the SW corner of French Island for the first time for several years. Quite a few young were fledged but none were banded.

Nesting was also attempted on the SW end of Clonmel Island in Corner Inlet but was unsuccessful as usual.

No nesting took place at Werribee S F or Swan Island, Queenscliff.

Lakes National Park

Terns proved elusive over the weekend of 30 January/1 February although good numbers of Common and Little Terns had been present in the preceding week. The total caught (four catches) was:

	New	Retraps	Total
Common Tern	108	17	125
Crested Tern	44	7	51
	-----	-----	-----
	152	24	176
	-----	-----	-----

It was pleasing to get a good number of retraps of Common Terns banded in previous years. The Crested Terns contained two controls from Tasmania as well as five of our own birds banded as chicks at Mud Island and in Corner Inlet.

All the Common Terns were orange leg-flagged. It is a pity we were not able to catch any more Little Terns to individually leg-flag them to assist with the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources studies at local breeding sites.

The tern banding programme will be continued along the usual lines in summer '93-'94.

Clive Minton

Health Hints - A Reminder

Those taking part in fieldwork should be aware of the rare but serious infectious disease *psittacosis*. The symptoms are said to include an initial feeling like a bad hangover accompanied by severe chills, then high fever (but with a slow pulse rate relative to the height of the fever), headache, persistent cough, malaise, loss of appetite, muscle pain, lethargy and tremors. Infection is thought to come from inhalation of dried bird droppings as well as from handling birds. The incubation period ranges from one to three weeks but typically is about two weeks.

Prompt action is required. The doctor should be told of the involvement with birds as at least some of the symptoms are produced by other infections. Dr Malcolm McDonald at Cabrini Hospital has treated this condition.

There are other afflictions transmissible from birds. After handling birds or equipment, care should be taken to wash the hands. This is a basic precaution against many diseases.

No responsibility can be accepted for anyone relying on this note: medical advice alone should be followed.

A HELICOPTER SURVEY OF WESTERN PORT BAY

Jeff Campbell*

On 19 November 1992 I was fortunate enough to be able to join Clive Minton and Malcolm Brown on a helicopter survey of Western Port Bay. The principle objective of the survey was to locate and count the Pied Oystercatchers using the bay, however records were kept of all waders observed.

The helicopter used for the survey was supplied by the Southern Peninsula Rescue Service based in Sorrento, and we flew from there to the starting point of the census on the "inside" of Phillip Island at Point Grant. From the starting point we took an anticlockwise route around the coastline of the bay to the finishing point at Point Leo, a total of some 250 kilometres. During the survey we followed the coastline, flying just offshore and as low as possible to the ground. The total time elapsed during the survey was around two and one half hours (0715 to 0945) however some 15 minutes of that time was taken up with refuelling the helicopter on French Island. High tide (2.8 m) in the bay was at 0800.

A total of 78 Pied Oystercatchers was observed during the count, consisting of 54 birds in flocks and 12 pairs which may have been breeding. The birds in flocks were presumed to be non-breeding immatures.

The flocks were located at Rhyll (15 birds), Yallock Creek (20), just north of Crib Point (12) and Long Island, Hastings (7).

In contrast to the above findings a similar survey of the French Island coastline, also carried out by Clive Minton in the same helicopter, in December 1990 found 44 birds in presumed breeding pairs and only 24 in non-breeding flocks (C.D.T. Minton, pers. comm). This gives a density of 1.59 pairs per kilometre for French Island and 0.04 pairs per kilometre for the mainland coast.

From the above it can be surmised that French Island is preferred above the mainland coastline of Western Port Bay for breeding by Pied Oystercatchers. This is borne out by the lack of breeding records for the mainland as against the many for French Island (e.g. Loyn 1975, Nest Record Scheme). This is undoubtedly due to the fact that French Island is less disturbed by humans and their animals and, perhaps more importantly, is not inhabited by foxes. It is likely that any oystercatchers attempting to breed on the mainland would be unsuccessful due to continual disturbance and/or predation by domestic dogs or foxes. As regards to human disturbance it was of interest to note from the helicopter that virtually all of the sandy beaches of the bay were almost completely covered with human footprints.

Although the Pied Oystercatcher is not at present threatened as a

species it could become so in future years if disturbance of its breeding sites continues to accelerate (Lane 1982). A study at Mortimer Bay, near Hobart, found a decline in breeding success leading to breeding productivity that was insufficient to maintain the population in the long term (Newman 1991). In order to redress this situation it will be necessary to eradicate, or at least control, foxes and to reduce human disturbance.

Of the 32 areas of international importance for the Pied Oystercatcher in Australia only 9% are fully reserved as conservation areas (Watkins 1993). An increase in this percentage would allow for management options such as the exclusion of people from potential or existing breeding sites during the breeding season.

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to the Southern Peninsula Rescue Service for the supply of the helicopter, to Bruce Taylor who piloted it so expertly, to the Department of Conservation and Environment (now Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources), French Island, for the supply of fuel and to Jon Starks for access to the Nest Record Scheme.

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WADER THESES 3
compiled by Hugo Phillipps

Many of the species, and most of the study sites, are not Australasian, but they may have relevance to ecological and behavioural studies here. As before, corrections and additions would be welcomed by the compiler.

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BULLETIN BOARD**1994 North West Australia Wader Expedition**

The 1994 wader study visit to NW Australia will be the most ambitious yet. The team will be in the field from 1 March to 30 April - 9 weeks - spanning, for the first time in one season, the complete period of northward migratory departures.

Time will be divided, as usual, between Broome, 80 Mile Beach and Port Hedland Saltworks - three equally interesting but contrasting locations. A daily watch for departing waders will be made from 3.30pm-6pm each afternoon at Roebuck Bay, Broome - being continued by the Bird Observatory wardens when the main team is elsewhere. Visible migratory departures were the most exciting feature in April 1993 when 38,000 birds in 370 different flocks were seen departing over a three week period. The VWSG has traditionally provided the core of the fourteen major and minor study visits made to NW Australia since 1981. It is hoped that as many VWSG members as possible will participate in 1994 in order to help provide a viable-sized team throughout this extended visit. Come for as long as you can - and where possible avoid the Easter crush! Ros Jessop, Sarah Sarrailhe and I are intending to be there for the full nine week period and Doris Graham will participate for the first six weeks. Please contact Clive or Ros if you are interested. A more detailed handout for potential participants is available.

Clive Minton

PS The newly appointed wardens for Broome Bird Observatory are VWSG members Jon Fallaw and Becky Hayward.

PUBLICATIONS*A National Plan For Shorebird Conservation In Australia*

This is an action plan published by Australasian Wader Study Group (which developed the idea for the report), the R A O U (on whose data the report is largely based) and World Wide Fund For Nature (which funded the project).

The author, Doug Watkins, has drawn on the extensive data collected over the past twelve years during the Shorebirds Studies Program - which involved over 700 individual bird-watchers - and on numerous publications listed in a reference section. He has produced what is not only a valuable summary of available information but also what promises to become an important reference source for all interested in and responsible for conservation of shorebirds and their habitat. The Report identifies 180 areas of international importance and a further 21 areas of national importance. Individual accounts show the status, population estimate, distribution, conservation concern, breeding area of migrant species and the areas of international and national importance for each of 43 species.

Brief accounts are also given for an additional eight species which, although regular migrants, occur only singly or in small groups.

The Report is intended for wide circulation as an easy-to-use reference and "focuses on the identification of areas of international and national importance for shorebirds based on criteria contained in the Ramsar Convention." It proposes a comprehensive action plan which should greatly assist governments and government agencies in making land use and management decisions. It will be a useful guide for community conservation organisations and individuals in understanding the need to preserve wader habitat and the need to continue gathering information. It will also be a stimulating read for the less involved.

The Report is illustrated with fine drawings by Stephen Davidson and is available at the special price of \$10 to VWSG members. Copies are available from Brenda Murlis (03 -8742860).

A review of the use and effects of marks and devices on birds.

Barry Baker, the new Executive Officer of the Australian Bird & Bat Banding Schemes has drawn attention to this article by B Calvo and R W Furness in *Ringing & Migration* (1992) 13, 129-151, the Journal of the British Trust for Ornithology Ringing Scheme. The authors say that very few studies on birds which are marked for research test for harmful effects. They conclude that more attention should be given to the effects of marks and devices and that care should be taken to minimise problems when they are used.

OTHER WADER GROUPS

Over the past ten years or so the number of groups working on waders round Australia and in New Zealand has gradually increased. Most put out newsletters or bulletins. Some examples supplied by Brenda Murlis are:

Queensland Wader Study Group Newsletter. The membership fee for the QWSG (a special interest group of the Queensland Ornithological Society) is \$10. Applications should be sent to Rev Gary Harch, Parish of St Colomb's, 25 Victoria Street, Clayfield, Qld. 4011.

NSW Wader Study Group Newsletter. Applications should be sent to P O Box 165, Engadine NSW 2233

The Wetlander - Newsletter of Hunter Wetlands Trust. Wetlands Centre, Sandgate Road, Shortland PO Box 130, Wallsend, NSW 2287

Miranda Naturalist's Trust Newsletter publishes the results of the New Zealand Wader Study Group (formerly the 'Miranda Banders'). Membership of the Trust costs NZ\$20. Contact Kay Haslett PO Box 90-180, Auckland Mail Centre.

The Stilt. Bulletin of The Australasian Wader Studies Group of The Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union. Subscriptions: Australasia \$15, Overseas \$20 and Libraries \$25. Applications to Brenda Murlis, administrative secretary, 34 Centre Road, Vermont, Victoria 3133

FIELDWORK PROGRAMME January - December 1993

DATE	PLACE & OBJECTIVE	HEIGHT	
		TIME	HEIGHT
Fri 1 Jan- Sun 3 Jan	Yallock Creek	19.17	2.5
	Eastern Curlew and small waders	09.17	2.7
		19.58	2.5
		07.49	2.6
Fri 15 Jan- Sun 17 Jan	Queenscliff	18.13	1.4
	Large and small waders	06.10	1.5
		19.12	1.4
		06.51	1.4
Fri 22 Jan- Sun 24 Jan	Werribee S.F.	14.15	0.7
	Small waders, Golden Plover & Pied Oystercatchers. Cannon netting & mist netting	04.35	0.8
		15.49	0.7
		05.20	0.8
		16.50	0.7
Fri 29 Jan- Mon 1 Feb	Lakes National Park	-	-
	Little and Common Terns	-	-
Sat 13 Feb- Sun 14 Feb	Yallock Creek	19.08	3.1
	Eastern Curlew	06.57	2.9
Fri 26 Feb- Sun 27 Feb	Westernport-Yallock Creek/ Stockyard	17.24	2.8
	Point/ Gurdies	18.00	2.8
	Eastern Curlew & Pied Oystercatchers	18.34	2.8
Wed 3 Mar- Mon 8 Mar	Corner Inlet	07.00	2.2
	Large & small waders, Pied O'catchers	11.13	2.4
Sat 13 Mar- Sun 14 Mar	Werribee S.F.	18.53	0.9
	Pied Oystercatchers	06.36	0.9
Sat 20 Mar	Waderbirds-Odyssey of the Wetlands	-	-
Sat 27 Mar- Sun 28 Mar	Queenscliff	14.56	1.5
	Premigratory weight gain in large & medium waders. Also Oystercatchers	15.31	1.5
Sat 24 Apr	Fairhaven, French Island Pied Oystercatchers	14.58	3.0
Sun 25 Apr	Long Island, Hastings Pied Oystercatchers	15.38	3.0

Wed 5 May-	Corner Inlet & Barry Beach	10.18	2.3
Sun 9 May	Pied Oystercatchers & overwintering waders	15.06	to 2.6
Sat 5 June	Queenscliff or NW Swan Bay Double-banded Plovers & overwintering waders	12.31	1.6
Sat 19 June	Fairhaven Pied Oystercatchers	12.05	2.7
Sun 20 June	Rhyll Pied Oystercatchers	13.05	2.8
Sat 3 July	Stockyard Point Pied Oystercatchers & overwintering waders	11.58	2.9
Sat 24 July	Barry Beach Pied Oystercatchers & overwintering waders	15.43	2.6
Sat 21 Aug	Yallock Creek/Gurdies Eastern Curlew	15.24	3.0
Sun 5 Sept	Yallock Creek/Gurdies Eastern curlew and newly arrived waders	15.35	2.8
Sun 3 Oct	Yallock Creek Eastern Curlew	14.26	2.6
Sat 16 Oct	Werribee S.F. Small waders	14.31	0.8
Sat 23 Oct	<i>VWSG Annual General Meeting</i> <i>10.00 am - 10.00 pm</i>		
Sat 6 Nov-	Werribee S.F.	19.41	0.8
Sun 7 Nov	Golden plover & small waders	08.50	0.8
Sat 20 Nov-	Inverloch	17.10	1.3
Sun 21 Nov	Eastern Curlew & small waders	06.07	1.5
Sat 4 Dec-	Yallock Creek	17.04	2.6
Sun 5 Dec	Small waders	05.51	3.0
Sat 18 Dec	Mud Island Crested Tern chicks	(09.58 low tide)	
Mon 27 Dec-	Werribee S.F.	13.10	0.7
Wed 29 Dec	Small waders	14.06	0.7
		15.02	

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP INC

Financial Statement - May 21st 1992 to August 31st 1993

INCOME	\$	EXPENDITURE	\$
Subscriptions	1050.00 (1125.00)	Printing	410.00 (320.00)
Sale of Fuses	252.00	Postage	174.80 (137.58)
Donations for Radios	2147.00	Stationery	12.60 (36.95)
Other donations	1585.00 (727.00)	Colour Bands	366.40 (23.00)
Income from Waterbird Count	3681.25 (2575.00)	Waterbird Count (Labour)	2945.00 (1909.25)
Sale of Unused Colour Bands	29.80 (84.00)	Part Payment of Radios	1000.00
Profit from sale of cards	22.00 (46.60)	Incorporation Fee	29.00 (27.50)
Interest on Advantage Saver Account	87.36 (46.87)	Fuses	336.00
Interest on Term Deposit	60.49	Trailer Registration	11.00
Cash at Bank - 20/5/92	1437.94	Repairs & Equipment: Inc: Batteries Glue, Solvent, Computer Disc, Screwdrivers, Plasticine, etc.	(173.91 & 347.28 191.14)
Cash in Hand - 20/5/92	81.45	Keeping Cage Materials	133.20
		Leg Flag Materials	25.00
		Bank charges & Government duties	25.31 (20.20)
		Term Deposit & Interest - in bank	2560.49
		Cash at Bank - 31/8/93	1985.89
		Cash in hand - 31/8/93	72.32
	<u>10434.29</u> *****		<u>10434.29</u> *****

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