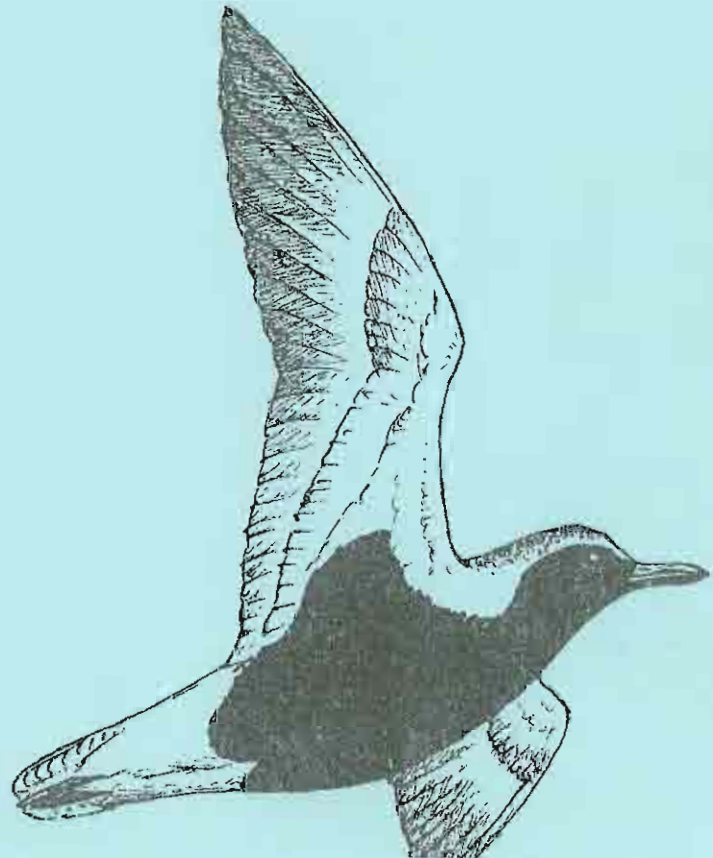


Koz George & Peter Collins

VWSG BULLETIN

JOURNAL OF THE VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP

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Summary of VWSG Activities in 1994

After a record 1993, this year has been more modest, at least in relation to the number of waders caught. The total of 6592 is close to the 16 year average of 6668. However the 1753 retraps of birds previously banded was, at 27%, the second highest ever proportion - an effect of concentrating on core species and a reflection also of the high number of birds banded in the previous year. Overall the Victorian Wader Study Group has now caught 109,143 birds since its inception in late 1975.

Eastern Curlew numbers (92 caught) were an increase on the previous (good) year and reflect the special effort put into this species recently, as requested by the parties to the Japan Australia Migratory Birds Agreement. It is pleasing that this has resulted in a plethora of interesting sightings of leg-flagged birds, both in Australia and overseas, giving, for the first time, some insight into possible migration routes and key stopover sites for this species.

The numbers of Red-necked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers caught returned to more normal levels after 'the bulge' in 1993. They formed the highest ever proportion of the year's catch (95 %). Less effort than usual was spent on other species - partly because some of the equipment and key personnel were away on the N.W. Australia Wader Study Expedition for nearly three months. Thus no Latham's Snipe, Greenshank or Bar-tailed Godwit were banded and only one each of Red Knot, Turnstone and Sanderling. The oystercatcher project also achieved smaller numbers than in other recent years with 107 Pied Oystercatchers and only one Sooty Oystercatcher. Time and tide constraints also prevented a further visit to the south-east of South Australia, for Sanderling and Turnstone, in the 1994 calendar year.

As always the fieldwork programme is designed, inter alia, to gradually build up a collection of biometric and moult data on each species (and age group). Particular achievements in 1994 were increasing the December sample of Eastern Curlew from 5 to 45 and the September Pied Oystercatcher numbers from 10 to 82.

Recovery reports of banded birds and sightings of birds carrying individual colour bands or the Victorian code of orange leg flags produced more valuable information on the migration routes, key stop-over sites and destinations of waders. Detailed lists of these are provided in this report.

Apart from the Eastern Curlew already mentioned, one of our 'resident' species, the Pied Oystercatcher, provided perhaps the most spectacular results. Two more birds were found on the Central New South Wales coast, each successively the longest movements recorded for this species in Australia, now 911 kms. One moved from Westport Bay to Sydney in only eight weeks. News has now also been received that the bird reported in Sydney in the last Bulletin was actually seen at Moruya on the south N.S.W. coast on its way up to Sydney. In the other direction four more birds were seen in south Australia (one a record westward movement of 532 km) and another previously seen there moved on to Tasmania!

Other recovery highlights were our first Bar-tailed Godwit in New Zealand (there had been previous sightings of flagged birds) and a Red knot in Korea (Australia's first). In contrast one of our resident endemic species, the Hooded Plover, was recaptured 13 years after banding just one kilometre from the original site. This is an Australian age record for this species.

Curlew Sandpipers and Rednecked Stints also continue to set new age records with birds of minimum age 16-17 years being recaptured. Such birds will have made at least 16 round trip migrations of around 25,000 kms. between Siberia and Victoria. The total of 400,000 kms. flown, on migration alone, is further than from the earth to the moon (380,000kms.)! Not bad for a little engine weighing only 29g (Rednecked Stint) or 53 g (Curlew Sandpiper!

VWSG studies of terns continued successfully. A record 2339 Crested Tern chicks were banded, aided by the formation of a new large colony on the west end of Phillip Island. Further recoveries and colour flag/band sightings continued to accrue, including a large number of Little and Common Terns on passage down the northern New South Wales coast. The Little Tern which was recovered breeding in Japan in mid 1994 also returned again to the Gippsland Lakes in the 1994-95 summer.

Analysis of the vast collection of information built up by nearly 20 years of VWSG studies is proceeding only slowly but the foundations have been laid in a number of areas. All the banding, recapture and biometric information on VWSG birds is now on the computer thanks particularly to the diligent efforts of Terry and Mark Barter over many years. There are now over 70,000 Red-necked Stint records and Ken Rogers has undertaken extensive investigations into how these can be best analysed to determine annual survival rates from capture/recapture data. Roz Jessop has commenced the computerisation of all Pied Oystercatcher records, to include in due course all the colour band sightings. Clive Minton is advancing steadily in his comprehensive analysis of all recoveries and leg flag reports for all species of migrant waders banded in Australia or elsewhere in the East Asian/Australasian Flyway. Further new initiatives in the data analysis area are planned.

The information generated by the banding and counting activities in which VWSG members take part is of both scientific and conservation value. It is particularly pleasing to see the initiatives being taken by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency to set up a network of reserves for waders throughout the flyway. Data on migration routes and stopover sites, deriving in significant part from VWSG work, is the foundation for such conservation actions. VWSG knowledge has also been extensively applied over the last three years in relation to environmental impact assessments, mitigation measures and the development of compensation initiatives in relation to two major proposed projects in Port Phillip Bay - the Coode Island relocation/chemical storage facility at Pt. Liliias (close to Avalon Saltworks) and the East Coast Armaments Complex at Point Wilson. Without the detailed information generated over the last 15-20 years it would not have been possible to properly assess the effects of these developments and to convince authorities of the need for appropriate disturbance minimisation and ameliorisation measures.

The VWSG fieldwork, equipment manufacture and maintenance, administration, data management and curation, financial records and other activities only occur because of the considerable personal efforts of a great many members in the Group. Whilst it may require more than a few telephone calls to round up a team for banding, counting or net mending, the response is always positive. Members are thanked for their willing input.

One of the most boring tasks is the manufacture of the leg flags. Malcolm Brown has done much of this on his own in the past but now teams organised by Sarah Saraille and Doris Graham have been marvellous at taking on a major part of the task. The list of sightings of flagged birds is a reward for their efforts. And Allan Clarke continues to give generously of his company's facilities for the manufacture of cannons and other hardware as needed by the VWSG or for supply to others.

Many other persons or bodies help the VWSG in a variety of ways, especially via permission to carry out our fieldwork on private land. Special thanks are due to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the provision of boat transport in Corner Inlet, at Inverloch, in the Lakes National Park and for the visit to Mud Island for our banding and counting work. And most of all we appreciate enormously the \$2,500 donation offered to the VWSG by Esso Australia. This has been used to replace and improve our equipment, including purchase of a new half-size cannon-net and an additional portable radio.

Thanks to everyone, do continue to enjoy our activities.

Clive Minton



VWSG receives \$2,500 from BHP and ESSO

The generous help of ESSO and BHP, which is already being put to good use in the replacement and improvement of equipment, is very much appreciated.

RECOVERIES OF BANDED BIRDS

Listed below are all recoveries reported subsequent to those included in the last VWSG Bulletin (Number 18, October 1994).

AGEING CODE

P = Pullus (nestling or chick)
 1 = First year bird (including juvenile)
 2 = Second year bird
 2+ = Second year or older (adult)
 3+ = Third year or older (adult)

Pied Oystercatcher

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaptured	Recapture location	Distance moved
✓ 100-96771	2+	160489	Werribee	*060993	Southend South Aust.	389km W
✓ 100-82051	2	010380	Rhyll	*170993	Beachport South Aust.	475km W
✓ 101-03556	3+	140692	Rhyll	*240993 *240694	Canunda NP South Aust. Perkins Is. Tasmania(*of Rhyll)	440km W 282km S*
✓ 101-96841 100	2	060889	Barry Beach	*221192 *080194	Moruya, NSW Botany Bay NSW	450km NE 673km NE
✓ 101-03965	3	110994	Stockyard Point W'port	*141194	Botany Bay NSW	696km NE
✓ 101-03694	3+	130894	Barry Beach	*220195	Forster NSW	911km NE
✓ 100-96888	3+	100690	Barry Beach	*040295	Carpenters Rocks, South Aust.	532km W
✓ 100-96760	2+	160489	Werribee	*050295	Carpenters Rocks, South Aust.	361km W
✓ 100-85081	2+	080288	Stockyard Point W'port	220395	Phillip Is. (found dead)	39km WSW
✓ 100-85195	2+	020788	Barry Beach	*250695	Smithton Tasmania	262km SSW

* Recognised by colour band combination and reported through the Banding Office. There were many other sightings of colour banded birds which had moved significant distances within Victoria.

An unprecedented set of long distance movements, all deriving from sightings of colour banded birds. Most notable were two more movements to New South Wales, each successively becoming the longest recorded movements for this species (now 911 km). Furthermore the bird reported in last year's VWSG Bulletin at Botany Bay on 8 January 1994 is included again as it now transpires that it was also seen on route at Moruya, New South Wales, on 22 November 1992!

Four more sightings in South Australia (including the largest westward movement so far - 532 km) illustrate the strong connection with the southeast of that state.

A surprisingly nobile bird (100-03556) from Rhyll (June 1992) was reported in last year's VWSG Bulletin as being seen at Canunda National Park in South Australia in September 1993 and had crossed Bass Strait to Perkins Island in Tasmania by June 1994!

The value of colour banding is strongly illustrated by the results on this species. Only one 'conventional' recovery (detailed in list) was reported during the last year compared with some 50 colour band sightings (of which the 'cream' only is listed).

Sooty Oystercatcher

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaptured	Recapture location	Distance moved
100-99594	3+	170592	Manns Beach Corner Inlet	100195	Judgement Rocks, Bass Strait, Tas.	96km S
101-03691	2+	090794	Altona	111095	Killarney Beach	218km W

This species shows a somewhat different movement pattern from the Pied Oystercatcher. Most birds move only between breeding grounds on Bass Strait islands/northern Tasmanian coast and the Barry Beach/Corner Inlet complex used in autumn and winter, although a few move westwards along the coast.

These were again sightings of individually colour marked birds.

Hooded Plover

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaptured	Recapture location	Distance moved
051-18090	2+	060682	Point Lonsdale	030995	Collendina	1km W

This bird was recaptured (by VWSG member Mike Weston) over 13 years after it was banded. At recapture it must have been at least 15 years old. This is an Australian age record for this species.

Double-banded Plover

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaught	Recapture location	Distance moved
NZ C50778	2+	091293	Ahuriri River New Zealand	210595	Werribee	2230km W
NZ B53552	Juv	231284	Cass River New Zealand	120795	13km SSE of Geelong	c.2200kmW

These were both sightings (by VWSG members Bob Swindley and Mike Weston respectively) of individually colour banded birds. Note that B53552 was nearly 11 years old.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaught	Recapture location	Distance moved
071-83884	2	240392	Barry Beach	231094	Miranda Firth of Thames New Zealand	2532kmE

This is the first recovery of a VWSG banded Bar-tailed Godwit in New Zealand (in fact the first to anywhere!). However there have been previous sightings there of birds colour flagged in Victoria. Note that this bird was banded as an immature. Most Red Knot subsequently reported in New Zealand were also banded in Victoria as immatures.

Red Knot

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaught	Recapture location	Distance moved
051-18455	1	050186	Queenscliff	160492	Nakdong Estuary South Korea	8318km N
051-15348	1	180187	Werribee	181294	Kaipara Harbour New Zealand	2639km E
051-40159	1	050693	Queenscliff	140995	Finnis Beach 100km SW of Darwin, N.T.	c.3100kmNW

The first of these birds was the first Australian banded Red Knot to be recovered in Korea. It may indicate the next 'stop-over' site on northward migration after the well established Shanghai region in China.

Note that, yet again, the bird recovered in New Zealand had originally been banded as an immature.

The bird recovered in the Northern Territory is a first for a Red Knot banded in SE Australia. Finnis Beach was probably a stopover site on the bird's southward migration. Surprisingly there have so far been no recoveries/flag sightings indicating that Broome/NW Australia is on the migration route for SE Australian Red Knot.

Red-necked Stint

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaptured	Recapture location	Distance moved
033-76414	1	180591	Barry Beach	300794	Vladivostok Russia (killed)	9208km N
034-14037	2+	291192	Inverloch	120395	Cape Patterson (found dead)	14km W

An interesting recovery on southward migration in SE Siberia - but still over 9000 km from its presumed destination back in Corner Inlet.

The Inverloch bird is one of the extremely few local, dead, recoveries of waders reported through the Banding Office. Either waders have a low mortality rate in Australia or their remains disappear rapidly with predation or decomposition.

Curlew Sandpiper

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaptured	Recapture location	Distance moved
041-44138	1	260688	Stockyard Point, Westernport	110994	Broome WA	3188kmNW
041-82139	1+	040993	Nudgee Beach, Brisbane Queensland	261194	Inverloch SSW	1427km

The above indicate that Curlew Sandpipers 'summering' in Victoria may enter Australia over a wide range, with birds on southward migration as far apart as Broome and Brisbane. The bird at Broome on 11 September 94 was the second from Westernport caught on that day (see 1994 VWSG Bulletin).

Sanderling

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaught	Recapture location	Distance moved
041-60356	2+	020391	Killarney Beach, Port Fairy	060295	Brown Bay South Aust.	135km W
041-82693	2+	281193	Canunda NP South Aust.	060295	Brown Bay South Aust.	75km SE

Further indications of the mobility of Sanderling along the coastline. It was principally for this reason that the VWSG has extended its activities into the southeast of South Australia in recent years.

Pacific Gull

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaught	Recapture location	Distance moved
111-05859	1	070593	off Robertsons Beach Corner Inlet	020795	Port Welshpool	20km SW

This bird was seen by Peter Dann and recognised by the large numbered band (T109).

Little Tern

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaught	Recapture location	Distance moved
041-59331	2+	140190	Spermwhale Head, Lakes Nat. Park	090391	Lakes N.P.	0km
				290194	"	"
				*150394	"	"
				260694	Ngashima Japan	8154km N
				*281094	Lakes N.P.	0km
				*161194	"	"
				*280195	"	"
041-615xx	?	250192	"	*220994	Harrington NSW	814km NE
041-47387	2+	050389	"	300194	Lakes N.P.	0km
				*260994	Kingscliff NSW	1207kmNNE
				*161194	Lakes N.P.	0km
				*071294	"	"
				*120295	"	"

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaught	Recapture location	Distance moved
041-83694	2+	290194	Spermwhale Head, LNP	*260994	Kingscliff NSW	1207kmNNE
				*091294	Lakes N.P.	0km
				*240195	"	"
				*280195	"	"
041-61519	2+	250192	"	*290994	Nambucca Heads, NSW	945kmNNE
				300195	Lakes N.P.	0km
041-59290	2+	130190	"	290194	"	"
				*290994	Nambucca Heads, NSW	945kmNNE
				290195	Lakes N.P.	0km
041-59282	2+	130190	"	*160190	Lakes N.P.	0km
				250192	"	"
				*031192	"	"
				*211292	"	"
				*281094	"	"
*251095	Botany Bay NSW	544kmNE				

* seen and recognised by colour flag combinations.

This excellent series of records further illustrates the value of individual colour marking.

It was pleasing that the bird caught in Japan in June 1994 (see also VWSG Bulletin No.18) returned again to the Lakes National Park, being seen there as early as 28 October.

Although this was the first banded Little Tern to be reported moving between Australia and Japan there has subsequently been a recovery of a Japanese banded bird in northern Queensland and sightings of two colour banded Japanese birds in northern New South Wales. The link between Little Terns breeding in Japan and birds spending the non-breeding season in eastern and south eastern Australia is now firmly established.

There are six records of birds seen on the northern and central New South Wales coast on southward migration and it is especially valuable that four of these have subsequently been seen back at the Lakes National Park. The sighting dates indicate a September/October passage period in NSW with return to the Gippsland lakes from late October to early December.

Fairy Tern

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recaptured	Recapture location	Distance moved
041-16246	Chick	100286	Werribee	250192	Spermwhale Head, Lakes Nat. Park	282km E
041-12189	2+	280382	Queenscliff	101094 (found dead)	Gunnamatta Beach	30kmSSE

A movement of 282 km is large for a Fairy Tern. This recovery is further support for the view that the population which used to breed in Port Phillip Bay may have moved to the more attractive breeding site provided by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources on Rigby Island at Lakes Entrance.

In contrast the other recovery indicates a bird which has moved little. It was a minimum of 13 years old when recovered.

Crested Tern

Recoveries of chicks banded at Mud Island, Port Phillip Bay

Band	Date of banding	Status	Recovery	Recovery location	Distance moved
071-82438	131287	Breeding	221294	The Nobbies Phillip Is.	42km SE
071-40185	171288	"	"	"	"
071-95171	"	"	"	"	"
071-95513	"	"	"	"	"
071-95793	"	"	"	"	"
071-95563	"	Recaptured	300193	Spermwhale Head, Lakes N.P.	263km E
072-04538	161289	"	100391	"	"
072-04227	"	"	280195	"	"
071-975xx	"	Seen	240994	Crowdy Head, NSW	1018kmNE
072-04239	"	"	"	"	"

Band	Date of banding	Status	Recovery	Recovery location	Distance moved
071-97233	161289	Seen	240994	Harrington, NSW	1013kmNE
072-04324	"	"	"	"	"
072-15679	151290	"	"	"	"
072-14517	"	"	"	Crowdy Head, NSW	1018kmNE
072-15334	"	Recaptured	310193	Loch Sport	248km E
072-05146	"	"	010293	"	"
072-15970	141291	Found dead	101294	Clontarf, Qld.	1448kmNE
072-23879	191292	Killed by car	030994	Fraser Is., Qld.	1630kmNE
072-27239	"	Seen	240994	Crowdy Head, NSW	1018kmNE
072-27090	"	Found dying	081094	Newhaven	59km ESE
072-24103	"	Found dead	131194	Williamstown	46km N
072-27355	"	"	140395	Beaumaris	39km NE
072-36114	181293	"	251194	Hampton	42km NNE
072-367xx	"	Seen	120295	Ocean Grange Lakes Nat.Park	265km E
072-46989	181294	"	300195	Ocean Grove	20km W
072-37324	"	"	270695	Geelong	35km WNW

This long list of Crested Tern recoveries contains some interesting data.

(a) The movement to Fraser Island (1634 km NE) is the longest yet for a Victorian banded Crested Tern.

(b) Of the seven birds seen at Harrington/Crowdy Head on 24 September six were five or more years old. It is interesting that these were still on their 'wintering grounds' only a few weeks before they would be expected to be sitting on eggs back in Victoria.

(c) All five birds caught breeding at the new colony at The Nobbies on the west end of Phillip Island were six or more years old.

(d) There were only eight dead or dying birds reported via the Banding Office during the past twelve months. This is in spite of constant (in fact increasing in 1994-95) numbers being banded. Either birds are surviving better or the recovery finding/reporting rate by members of the public is falling.

Recoveries of chicks banded off Manns Beach, Corner Inlet

Band	Date of banding	Status	Recovery	Recovery location	Distance moved
071-96821	241288	Seen	120295	Ocean Grange Lakes Nat.Park	116km NE
072-23400	211291	Caught	071092	Port Albert	15km WSW
072-23287	"	Recaptured	300193	Spermwhale Head Lakes Nat.Park	112km NE
072-23396	"	"	"	Loch Sport	96km NE
072-48707	130195	Seen	120295	Ocean Grange Lakes Nat.Park	116km NE
072-48734	"	"	"	"	"
072-48816	"	"	"	"	"
072-48835	"	"	"	"	"
072-48984	"	"	"	"	"
072-49024	"	"	"	"	"
072-49030	"	"	"	"	"
072-49069	"	"	"	"	"
072-49025	"	Caught	160695	Bilinga, Qld.	1323kmNE
072-48734	"	Found dead	070795	Sydney, NSW	649km NE

A remarkable collection of sightings at Ocean Grange by Jim Reside (VWSG member) of birds banded as chicks off Manns Beach, Corner Inlet, a month earlier. It is noteworthy that none of the chicks banded in December/January at Phillip Island and Mud Island had yet penetrated that far east.

Recoveries into Queensland are infrequent. Southeast Queensland is the furthest north reached by Crested Terns from Victoria.

Other recoveries/controls relating to VWSG

Band	Age	Date of banding	Banding location	Recovery	Recovery location/ status	Distance moved
071-51218	1+	030684	Queenscliff	221294	The Nobbies Phillip Is. Breeding	49km SE
071-51143	2+	050383	"	051294	Edithburgh South Aust. Breeding	701kmWNW
071-35764	Chick	141275	Coorong South Aust.	050393	off Manns Beach, Corner Inlet Recaptured	716kmESE

071-51218 must, on account of its age, have bred elsewhere before becoming part of the newly formed colony at The Nobbies in the 1994/95 summer.

Note that 071-35764 was over 17 years old.

WADER BANDING TOTALS - VICTORIA - 1994

	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL
Pied Oystercatcher	83	24	107
Sooty Oystercatcher	1	-	1
Mongolian Plover	8	-	8
Double-banded Plover	6	3	9
Large Sand Plover	5	2	7
Red-capped Plover	17	2	19
Ruddy Turnstone	1	-	1
Eastern Curlew	82	10	92
Terek Sandpiper	2	-	2
Red Knot	1	-	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	28	1	29
Red-necked Stint	3454	1383	4837
Curlew Sandpiper	1148	328	1476
Sanderling	1	-	1
Broad-billed Sandpiper	2	-	2
	4839	1753	6592

LOCATION OF WADERS CAUGHT IN VICTORIA

	To Dec 1993	1994	TOTAL
Werribce	41117	1841	42958
Westernport	24798	2512	27310
Queenscliff/Pt Lonsdale	17422	395	17817
Anderson Inlet (Inverloch)	9734	1334	11068
Corner Inlet	7559	499	8058
Altona	944	11	955
Killarney Beach	426	-	426
Canunda (SA)	161	-	161
Bendigo (Sewage Farm)	143	-	143
Seaford Swamp	98	-	98
Braeside/Croydon	61	-	61
Mud Island	35	-	35
Geelong (Point Henry)	25	-	25
Seaspray (Lake Reeve)	18	-	18
Toowong	10	-	10
	102551	6592	109143

Totals include 87,105 newly banded birds and 22,038 retraps of 33 species.

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
1993	8831	2588	11419
1994	4839	1753	6592
Total catches in Victoria to end 1994	87105	22038	109143

Average annual total for 1979 to 1994 : 6668

VICTORIAN WADER CATCHES
1975 TO 31 DECEMBER 1994

	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL
Pied Oystercatcher	1037	385	1422
Sooty Oystercatcher	197	20	217
Masked Lapwing	130	3	133
Grey Plover	73	6	79
Lesser Golden Plover	190	21	211
Red-kneed Dotterel	133	11	144
Hooded Plover	15	1	16
Mongolian Plover	94	6	100
Double-banded Plover	2995	957	3952
Large Sand Plover	24	3	27
Red-capped Plover	545	176	721
Black-fronted Plover	52	4	56
Black-winged Stilt	18	-	18
Red-necked Avocet	235	2	237
Ruddy Turnstone	533	146	679
Eastern Curlew	458	30	488
Whimbrel	19	-	19
Grey-tailed Tattler	33	1	34
Greenshank	173	50	223
Terek Sandpiper	31	1	32
Latham's Snipe	109	1	110
Bar-tailed Godwit	1192	64	1256
Red Knot	1639	129	1768
Great Knot	314	32	346
Cox's Sandpiper	1	-	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	4335	159	4494
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	-	1
Little Stint	3	-	3
Red-necked Stint	54517	16334	70851
Long-toed Stint	1	-	1
Curlew Sandpiper	17584	3493	21077
Sanderling	421	3	424
Broad-billed Sandpiper	3	-	3
Thirty three species	87105	22038	109143

NUMBERS OF WIADERS "PROCESSED BY WWSG IN VICTORIA IN EACH MONTH TO DECEMBER 1994

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
Latham's Snipe	50	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	24	22	141
Bar-tailed Godwit	134	8	308	14	-	157	18	-	64	83	197	267	1250
Whimbrel	-	-	16	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	19
Eastern Curlew	16	27	1	-	22	15	-	43	95	99	135	45	488
Common Greenshank	1	-	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	12	224
Terek Sandpiper	13	2	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	33
Grey-tailed Tattler	28	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
Ruddy Turnstone	18	18	133	27	1	7	-	1	12	7	402	53	679
Great Knot	96	1	7	-	-	4	-	-	18	54	40	129	347
Red Knot	194	68	181	34	2	44	151	81	76	435	263	176	1705
Sanderling	12	-	242	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	161	422
Little Stint	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3
Red-necked Stint	2330	1046	4487	1871	507	450	461	364	463	1397	2728	2639	18743
Long-toed Stint	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1089	603	117	2	-	-	-	9	519	335	277	1188	4139
Curlew Sandpiper	785	877	1136	144	222	121	215	411	178	873	662	906	6530
Broad-billed Sandpiper	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Pied Oystercatcher	83	94	167	220	262	237	136	68	82	36	9	20	1414
Sooty Oystercatcher	3	-	40	27	62	25	44	14	-	1	-	-	216
Black-winged Stilt	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	6	18
Red-necked Avocet	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	2	46	46	36	236
Pacific Golden Plover	21	27	30	1	-	-	-	-	2	28	47	39	193
Grey Plover	1	14	4	3	-	2	-	-	2	35	17	-	78
Red-capped Plover	38	77	55	114	203	79	65	16	8	11	12	5	683
Double-banded Plover	-	2	144	257	755	804	950	898	1	-	-	-	3811
Lesser Sand Plover	54	1	12	7	3	2	2	-	-	-	15	-	96
Greater Sand Plover	21	-	3	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	27
Black-fronted Dotterel	-	7	-	-	11	16	6	9	2	-	4	7	62
Hooded Plover	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Red-kneed Dotterel	-	10	-	20	-	44	11	16	12	8	22	-	143
Masked Lapwing	4	6	77	-	-	13	-	-	-	3	18	11	132
Cox's Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

Tern Banding

1994-95 has been another good year for the various aspects of the VWSG Tern Study programme.

Crested Terns

Crested Terns had another magnificent breeding year, with a new colony formed, with a good output of young and with a record number of chicks banded.

	Nests	Chicks banded
Mud Island, Port Phillip Bay	1520	1156*
The Nobbies, Phillip Island	900	718
McLaughlin's Beach, Corner Inlet	480	465
	2900	2330

*347 nests still had eggs when visit made on 18th December 1994.

The Mud Island colony seems to have plateaued at 1500-1800 pairs in recent years. As there is plenty of cleared nesting area still available some other factor such as local food supply may now be a limiting parameter. The Corner Inlet colony moved to yet another location - after bad flooding experiences in recent years - and this time nested on higher ground at McLaughlin's Entrance with great success (97% egg to fledging).

Most exciting of all was the creation of a new colony on the inner Nobbies on the west end of Phillip Island. Birds started arriving in late November but new pairs continued to join the colony until early January, resulting in an unusually extended season. The site was secure from high tides, being on the rocky slopes and grassy top of a small island knoll, and the birds did not seem overly affected by a steady stream of passing tourists. Fledging success was again high (80% or more, from the egg).

Many of the breeding adults at the new Nobbies colony were observed to be banded. Seven were caught; six were banded as chicks at Mud Island six or seven years previously and one had been banded nearly twelve years beforehand as an adult at Queenscliff. It would appear possible that one reason for the formation of a new colony was the high number of fledged young consistently produced at Mud Island in recent years, which are now mature enough to breed and which may be limited by food supply from returning to their natal colony area.

A baffling feature is the age of birds recaptured as breeding adults. In addition to those mentioned above three were caught at the Mud Island colony and all were seven years old. Eight adults caught in the previous summer were all six or seven years old (one five years old). Given that a high and roughly constant proportion of the chicks fledged each year for the last nine years have been banded, the retraps have shown an unusual age distribution. Either first breeding is delayed until age five or six - which compares with published indicators that it occurs at age two - or else younger birds are not so easy to catch by hand!

To determine the correct age of first breeding, some chicks will be marked with colour-coated metal bands in the 1995-96 season. These can then be ascribed to a particular year/cohort when

subsequently observed back in the breeding population. By eliminating the need for recaptures any age/tameness bias will be removed. The experiment is likely to be continued for several years, with a different colour being used each year.

Caspian Terns

In contrast to Crested Terns, Caspian Terns fared poorly in 1994-95. Because they breed much earlier than Crested Terns (most lay eggs in October) they were all affected by flooding during the exceptionally severe storms over the first weekend in November (5th-7th). Many re-nested but most of these had poor nesting success too. Thus at Mud Island on 18th December there were 15 adults at the colony but only six nests with eggs, and no chicks. Forty of the 50 pairs on the west end of Clonmel Island, Corner Inlet, had new eggs by 17th December. Many were lost in further high tides at Christmas and though some relaid again only six chicks were banded and these may have been the only birds which fledged. The exposed nature and low sandflats of the west end of Clonmel are nothing like as secure a nesting site as the high dunes in the middle of Box Bank which the Caspian Terns used to use in the 1980s.

Fairy Terns

Fairy Terns had their usual problems in Comer Inlet. Fortysix pairs nested in December on the west end of Box Bank but were washed out by high tides at the end of the month. No signs of successful re-nesting were located. About 45 pairs nested in late January at Rams Island, Westernport, and eleven chicks were banded on 14th February (when there were still 16 nests with eggs). One pair nested unsuccessfully on Sand Island, Queenscliff - the only known nesting in Port Phillip Bay. For the first time some of the chicks at the Lakes National Park/ Lakes Entrance colonies were banded by Jim Reside (eight Fairy Tern and seven Little Tern).

Common Netting

Two visits to the Gippsland Lakes were made in order to try and increase the number of Common and Little Terns banded and leg-flagged. Four catches between 30th December 1994 and 2nd January 1995 followed by three catches on 27-28th January resulted in the following total of birds caught:-

	Newly banded	Retraps	Total
Common Tern	233	41	274
Little Tern	48	4	52
Caspian Tern	5	-	5
Crested Tern	1	2	3
Fairy Tern	2	-	2
	289	47	336

Many most interesting and valuable recoveries and sightings of leg-flagged terns have been reported in the last year. These are listed elsewhere in this Bulletin together with relevant explanatory comments. The various elements of the tern study programme will continue to be an integral part of the VWSG fieldwork activities in the 1995-96 summer.

Clive Minton

FURTHER SIGHTINGS OF LEG-FLAGGED WADERS AND TERNS FROM VICTORIA

Report No.3.

Clive Minton, 165 Dalgetty Road, Beaumaris, 3193.
(Phone/Fax (03) 9589 4901).

Orange leg-flagging of waders was commenced in Victoria in January 1990 and the majority of birds caught (except for some in large catches) have been orange flagged on the right tibia (a few on the right tarsus) since then. The results have been spectacularly successful with some five times as many reports being received as came from 'recoveries' reported via the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Office. Our knowledge of migration routes and key stopover sites for each species, both within Australia and overseas, is thus growing much faster than previously.

Below is a list of all flag sightings away from the banding areas reported since the last summary was prepared in October 1994. Appropriate comments are appended for each species.

These sightings are being analysed, in conjunction with recoveries, for all wader species banded in all locations in the Australian/East Asian Flyway. They will be extremely important in relation to identifying key sites for the proposed network of shorebird reserves throughout the flyway.

It is extremely important that everyone continues to report all sightings of colour flagged birds (except where close to the known banding site). Please do not become blasé or think that future sightings are any less valuable than past ones. Sighting details should be sent to me (at the above address) or to Mark Barter or the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (PO Box 8, Canberra, ACT 2601).

Lesser Sand Plover

Date	Location	Finder
26/03/95	Thornside, Moreton Bay, Queensland	Arthur & Cheryl Keates
29/04/95	Manly Harbour, Moreton Bay, Qld.	Arthur & Cheryl Keates

These records could possibly refer to the same bird. Surprisingly, the bird/s did not show any breeding plumage.

Large Sand Plover

Date	Location	Finder
13/01/95	Mouth of Brisbane River, Qld.	Peter Driscoll

Only eight Large Sand Plovers have been leg-flagged in Victoria. This one appears to have changed its non-breeding area.

Ruddy Turnstone

Date	Location	Finder
18/10/94	Broome, W.A.	Helen Toohey et al.
16/02/95	Nelson Bay, 8km S of Arthur River Tasmania	Priscilla Park

This is the second Victorian banded Ruddy Turnstone to move on to Tasmania. The sighting in Broome is the first indication of the entry point into Australia of birds on migration to SE Australia.

Eastern Curlew

Date	Location	Finder
31/03/95	Yoshino River, Tokushima City Japan (34°04'N 134°36'E)	Hirotake Sora
early 04/95	250km W of Tokushima, Japan	?
14/07/95	Okinawa Island, Japan	per Asian Wetland Bureau
03/09/95	Port Curtis, Gladstone, Qld.	Don Arnold
14/08/95	Mouth of Brisbane River, Qld.	Peter Driscoll
03/09/95	Tweed River, Qld.	Edward Keiver
30/08/95	Kooragang Island, Newcastle, NSW	Renee Ferster Levy
07/09/95	Moruya, NSW	Mike Crowley
08/10/95	" (different bird)	"
03/02/95	Kangaroo Island, northern Tasmania	Simon Plowright

This is a wonderful selection of sightings and an appropriate reward for the increased effort put into this species in the last two or three years. This was partly at the request of parties to the Japan Australia Migratory Birds Agreement who singled out this species for special study at their 1993 meeting.

Previously there has been only one recovery of a Victorian banded Eastern Curlew (in northern China) and no sightings of flagged birds away from the banding area. There have been only three overseas recoveries (in total) of Australian banded Eastern Curlew.

The sightings in Japan are particularly significant in view of the severe threats to the few remaining intertidal estuarine sites. It is clear that they are important stopover sites on northward migration - a Queensland flagged bird was seen at the

Tokushima site in 1994.

The recovery in Okinawa is especially exciting, particularly the early (14 July) date. The Eastern Curlew is the first wader to arrive back in Australia at the end of the southward migration (from early August) and this one, on an island between Japan and The Phillipines, seemed to be on course for its scheduled arrival.

The string of sightings down the east coast of Australia, from Gladstone in northern Queensland to Moruya in southern New South Wales, suggests a significant migration route. Several observers reported that birds were not observed again on subsequent days, which suggests birds may have been estuary-hopping rather than making single long-flight journeys at this stage of their migration.

The sighting in Tasmania may refer to a bird which was still on migration when banded or to a bird which had genuinely changed its non-breeding area.

Greenshank

Date	Location	Finder
late 09/94	Kooragang Island, Newcastle, NSW	Renee Ferster Levy

This is the first 'recovery' of a Greenshank in Australia. There are no previous recoveries or flag sightings away from the banding locations. This bird was probably on its way back to Victoria.

Latham's Snipe

Date	Location	Finder
22/10/94	Kyabram (northern Victoria)	Danny Rogers

This is the first sighting of a leg-flagged Snipe. It would have been banded at Braeside Park, Melbourne in one of the two previous summers. It was pleasing that the observer did find it possible to see the flag on a bird as it took off.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Date	Location	Finder
02/10/94	Botany Bay, Sydney, NSW	Clive Minton et al.
04/10/94	Wallis Lake, Forster, NSW	Tony Rose & David Woods

Both of these birds were probably returning to Victoria via an east coast migration route. The number (except for the last figure) of the metal band on the first bird was read with a telescope. 071-8367x was banded at Corner Inlet on 19/03/91 or at

The Gurdies, Westernport, on 29/09/91.

There were no sightings of orange flagged Bar-tailed Godwit from New Zealand in the last year.

Red Knot

Date	Location	Finder
25/05/95	Hualien, Taiwan (121h°36'E 23°57'N)	per Wild Bird Society, R.O.C.
14/10/94	Miranda, Firth of Thames, New Zealand	Keith Woodley
02/01/95	Jordan's, Kaipara Harb., New Zealand	D. Lawrie
01/01/95	Karaka, Manukua Harbour, New Zealand	Tony Habraken (2 birds)
04/03/95	" "	" "
13/09/95	" "	" "
25/09/94	Parramatta River, NSW	Tom Kelsey
01/09/95	Karumba, Gulf of Carpentaria, Qld.	Mark Barter

The sighting in Taiwan is the first record of an Australian banded Red Knot there, although there have been many recoveries in China. The further reports from New Zealand confirm the strong link between Red Knot there and in Victoria. The sighting in the Gulf of Carpentaria is the first in northern Australia, indicating a likely entry location (see also under 'Recoveries').

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Date	Location	Finder
15/01/95	Braeside Park, SE Melbourne	Anthea Whitelaw

This location is at least 40 km from the nearest site at which Sharp-tailed Sandpipers have been flagged. This species has a tendency to move location more frequently than other small migrant waders, probably because it often frequents ephemeral wetlands.

Red-necked Stint

Date	Location	Finder
22&25/ 05/95	Sakhalin, Russia	Vladimir Zikov
01/08/94	Shounai River, Miriato-ku, Nagoya Aichi, Japan (35°04'N 136°52'E)	per Japanese Bird Migration Res. Cntr.
17/05/95	Ta-Tu River, Taichung, Taiwan	per Wild Bird Society R.O.C.

27/05/95	Hualien River, Hualien, Taiwan	"
21/04/95	Mai Po, Hong Kong	J&K. Shrader
06/05/95	" "	P.J. Leader
22/04/95	Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam	Michael Hake
13/10/94	Lake Ellesmere, New Zealand	Colin Hill
08/11/94	Cairns, Queensland	Ian Burrows
21/09/95	Maryborough, Queensland	Chris Barnes
14/05/95	Roebuck Bay, Broome, W.A.	Kerry Jarvis
02/04/95	Port Hedland Saltworks, W.A.	Richard Chandler
20/09/94	Kooragang Isl., Newcastle, NSW	Renee Ferster Levy
23/09/94	Smiths Lake, 30km S of Forster, NSW	John Duranti
10/09/94	Long Reef, Sydney, NSW	Simon Blanchflower
18/09/94	Moruya, NSW	Mike Crowley
03/10/94	Congo Point, Moruya, nsw	"
19/04/95	Josse Springs, South Aust.	John Reed
21/01/93	Moulting Lagoon, Coles Bay, Tas.	Mike Crowley
26/10/94	Pipe Clay Lagoon, Hobart, Tas.	Priscilla Park
10/05/95	Bridgewater Bay, Portland, Vic.	Rob Farnes
14/11/94	Tamboon Inlet, eastern Vic.	Lyn Turner
13/11/94	Werribee S.F. (orange-flagged juv.)	Bob Swindley

Another interesting and varied set of Red-necked Stint sightings. Those in Russia and Taiwan are 'firsts'. It is noteworthy that the one at Sakhalin was present at the same time as a yellow flagged bird from NW Australia. They were presumably in their last stages of migration to the NE Siberian breeding grounds. It is interesting that others were still in Taiwan around the same time and one was still as far south as Broome on 14 May.

The Lake Ellesmere (NZ) sighting could well be a further return of one of the birds which was seen there in the 1990-91 and 1991-92 summers.

The September-November sightings in Australia indicate that some birds use an east coast route on southward migration back into

Victoria. As with Curlew Sandpiper a few also carry through to Tasmania.

Two sightings in Victoria well away from the banding/flagging sites are also included. A third was a juvenile Red-necked Stint with an orange leg-flag seen at Werribee S.F. on the afternoon of 13 November. The only juveniles previously flagged that season were 18 at Queenscliff on that same morning! A same day movement of 25 km.

Curlew Sandpiper

Date	Location	Finder
21/08/94	Mai Po, Hong Kong	Geoff Carey
01/04/95	"	"
20/04/95	"	P.W. Maton
06/05/95	" (2 birds)	P.J. Leader
01/05/95	Ashmore Reef, 650kms N of Broome	Des Pike
09/11/94	Roebuck Bay, Broome, W.A.	Becky Hayward & Jon Fallaw
12/11/94	" " (different bird)	"
04/06/95	" "	Tim Thornton
12/08/95	" "	Becky Hayward & Jon Fallaw
30/10/95	" "	"
10/01/95	Carnarvon, W.A.	Doug Watkins
21/11/94	Ballina, NSW	David Rohweder
09/11/94	Kooragang Is., Newcastle, NSW (2 birds)	David Geering
10/11/94	" " (2 birds)	Renee Ferster Levy
23/01/95	" "	David Geering
01/09/95	" "	Renee Ferster Levy
19/09/94	Botany Bay, NSW	Keith Egan
26/09/94	"	"
12/09/94	Moruya, NSW	Mike Crowley
25/08/95	Lake Alexandrina, South Aust.	per Adrian Boyle
01/01/93	Orielton Lagoon, Hobart, Tas.	Mike Crowley

14/09/94 Cape Portland, NE Tas.

Ralph Cooper

12/11/94 Cundare Pool, Colac, Vic.

Don Arnold

Another nice selection of Curlew Sandpiper sightings. The August to September records probably refer to birds on return southward passage to Victoria. There seems to be a wide spread of routes, some entering via Broome in NW Australia whilst others filter down the east coast. One bird however seems to have remained at Kooragang Island, NSW, for the summer - indicating that not all birds return to the same location each year.

The record at Broome in early June was of a bird in non-breeding plumage. This indicates a surprisingly large movement by a presumed first year bird.

The bird at Carnarvon appears to have changed its 'summering' area in Australia. There are other examples in the past where this has occurred (e.g. between Newcastle, NSW, and Victoria) but not with such a large distance involved (c. 3200 km).

The sighting at Cundare Pool, Victoria, is included because it is well away from any of the banding/flagging areas.

There were fewer than normal sightings in Hong Kong during northward migration in 1995 because water levels in the Mai Po Reserve were not so suitable as usual for resting migrant waders.

Sanderling

Date	Location	Finder
27/08/94	Ichinomiya River, Chousei-gun, Chiba Japan (35°24'N 140°24'E)	per Japan Bird Migration Res. Centre
26/09/94	Congo Point, Moruya, NSW	Mike Crowley
13/10/94	Hopetoun (west of Esperance), WA	W. Heermans

Yet another nice sighting in Japan which seems to be the key stopover area on migration. The Australian sightings either indicate widely dispersed routes of birds returning to Victoria/S.E. Australia or else more nomadic wanderings.

Broad-billed Sandpiper

Date	Location	Finder
13/11/94 to 29/04/95	Little River, Werribee S.F.	Bob Swindley & Fred Smith

This was presumably the only Broad-billed Sandpiper ever banded/flagged at Werribee S.F. (on 19/02/94). It is interesting that it had returned in a subsequent season to this same location even though this is outside its regular range.

Common Tern

Date	Location	Finder
24/09/94	Harrington,NSW	Clive Minton
26/09/94	Kingscliff,NSW	"
29/09/94	Nambucca Heads,NSW (5 birds)	"
30/09/94	Harrington,NSW	"
20/11/94	Long Reef,Sydney,NSW	Jim O'Shea
25/01/95	Point Lonsdale,Vic. (3 birds)	Craig Morley
15/04/95	Point Cook,Altona,Vic.	Claire Appleby
23/09/95	Ballina,NSW	Bo Totterman
01/10/95	"	John Izzard
02/10/95	" (2 birds)	"

This large series of records from northern New South Wales indicates the timing of birds on passage back to Victoria. Of the five birds at Nambucca Heads one carried colour bands specific to January-March 1989 and two to January-March 1990.

The remainder would have been banded since January 1991. All were banded in the Lakes National Park (Gippsland Lakes).

The sighting of two birds at Point Cook on 15 April was a surprisingly late date for them still to be at the southern extremity of their range.

Fairy Tern

Date	Location	Finder
26/10/94	Ocean Grange,Lakes Nat. Park	Thierry & Joanne Rolland

This orange flagged bird was banded at Queenscliff on 12/06/94. It is interesting that it was wintering further west on the Victorian coast than its (presumed) breeding area.

BANDING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Petina Pert

In previous years the VWSG has travelled to Canunda National Park, South Australia to band Sanderling and Ruddy Turnstone. This year, a group of ten VWSG members made the trip across the border. The first night we camped at Port Fairy Football Ground so as to break up the journey as well as doing a reconnaissance at Killarney Beach. The next day we split into three groups with Clive's group doing a reconnaissance at Brown Bay, Jeff and Sarah doing a reconnaissance at the mouth of the Fitzroy River and Tim and I doing a reconnaissance at Blackfellows Cave, Pelican Point and Carpenters Rocks. We were then to meet up with our South Australian contingents at Canunda National Park at 1.00 pm to discuss the potential sites for catching over the next few days. We knew something must have gone wrong when Clive had not arrived by 1:05 pm. After awhile we decided to drive along Canunda beach to see if there were any waders. Remarkably there was a marked absence of these birds along the open beaches (and it wasn't because they saw that green trailer either). As we headed back we met up with Clive. Clive had not had much luck since we'd left him that morning. A wheel had come loose on the trailer and had to be fixed in Port Macdonnell (putting them an hour behind schedule). Once they reached Brown Bay Clive must have been so enthused with the numbers of Sanderling and other waders that he saw that he drove right through clumps of rotting seaweed and ended up getting the trailer and car bogged in it. The other members in his car were not impressed by the stench of the rotting seaweed and maggots feeding on it as they tried to dig him out. Eventually they had to get a local farmer to pull them out with his tractor.

We discussed what each of us had seen at our reconnaissance sites and Clive was most interested in the Pelican Point, Carpenters Rocks area, so we drove back to see where we could make a potential catch. Afterwards we went back to Iain Stewart's farm and set up our tents. That night Clive gave a slide talk to the Millicent Field Naturalists Club about his Siberian trip which was very well received. Clive mentioned how he had observed a Sanderling in its breeding grounds which had been banded in S.E. Australia (with a possibility of having been banded at Canunda) whilst he was in Siberia which the locals found most interesting. The locals were encouraged to participate in the cannon-netting over the weekend so as to see some of these birds in the hand.

Quite a few familiar faces from Clive's talk the night before turned up the next day and assisted in the catches we made at Pelican Point with their help being much appreciated. Sanderling and Turnstone were the only species which were orange leg flagged (indicating South East Australia) as they are considered to be very mobile species moving along the coast and into Victoria. Other species were not orange leg flagged as they are considered to be faithful to that area. Details of species caught, retraps and number of juveniles are indicated in the table below.

DATE	SITE	SPECIES	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL	JUVS	
4/02/95	Pelican Point, Carpenters Rocks, S.A.	Sharp tailed Sandpiper	75	0	75	5	
		Red necked Stint	62	0	62	9	
		Ruddy Turnstone	17	0	17	2	
		Curlew Sandpiper	11	0	11	1	
	TOTAL		4	165	0	165	17

DATE	SITE	SPECIES	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL	JUVS	
5/02/95 1st catch	Pelican Point, S.A.	Sharp tailed Sandpiper	33	5	38	2	
		Red necked Stint	7	0	7	0	
		Ruddy Turnstone	13	0	13	0	
		Curlew Sandpiper	19	1	20	3	
	TOTAL		4	72	6	78	5

DATE	SITE	SPECIES	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL	JUVS	
5/02/95 2nd catch	Pelican Point, S.A.	Sharp tailed Sandpiper	6	0	6	1	
		Red necked Stint	8	0	8	1	
		Ruddy Turnstone	76	0	76	3	
		Curlew Sandpiper	4	0	4	0	
	TOTAL		4	94	0	94	4

DATE	SITE	SPECIES	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL	JUVS	
6/02/95 1st catch	Brown Bay, 15 km E of Port Macdonnell (S.A.)	Sanderling	47	2	49	0	
		Red necked Stint	20	0	20	4	
		Ruddy Turnstone	3	0	3	0	
		Curlew Sandpiper	5	0	5	1	
	TOTAL		4	75	2	77	5

DATE	SITE	SPECIES	NEW	RETRAP	TOTAL	JUVS	
6/02/95 2nd catch	Brown Bay, 15 km E of Port Macdonnell (S.A.)	Sharp tailed Sandpiper	14	0	14	0	
		Red necked Stint	19	0	19	4	
		Ruddy Turnstone	4	0	4	0	
		Curlew Sandpiper	9	0	9	5	
	TOTAL		4	46	0	46	9

From the table above, you can see how we were able to make two catches on the one tide thereby increasing the numbers of species and individuals banded. Clive certainly made use of the time we had available, therefore when we returned to Iain Stewart's for dinner we were most pleasantly surprised with the three huge lobsters (half the size of some of his children). We then started to head eastwards to Brown Bay leaving the larger team of volunteers and Iain and his family behind. With a reduced number of people we once again made two catches, getting our first Sanderling for the trip in our first catch.

After two catches at Brown Bay we headed back into Port Macdonnell. As it was raining so hard none of us could face putting up our tents so we got two caravans for the night. The next day we all went our separate ways and made our way back to Melbourne. Tim and I stopped at Picanninnie Ponds and walked along the open beach, where we recorded our last colour banded oystercatcher for the trip.

Other highlights of the trip included the sighting of the furthest west an Victorian-banded Pied Oystercatcher has been observed to move (from Corner Inlet to Pelican Point* - 532 km west). Other sightings observed during reconnaissances made by Tim Gunn and Petina Pert in South Australia are detailed below:

Site observed	Date	Species	Banding location	Distance moved
Pelican Point*	4/2/95	Pied Oystercatcher	Corner Inlet	532 km W
Carpenters Rock	5/2/95	Pied Oystercatcher	Werribee	361 km W
Picanninnie Ponds	7/2/95	Pied Oystercatcher	Werribee	320 km W

Thanks go to Iain Stewart and his family for accommodation and hospitality of VWSG members, Ren de Garais and his wife, Adrian Boyle and his family for reconnaissances prior to our visit and for all the people who participated in our fieldwork programme over the weekend.

HEAVE-A-HO, HEAVE-A-HO, BAND FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Lyrics by Graeme Rowe, accompaniment by Michael.



"Well there's good news and there's bad news. The good news is that, just along the beach there are hundreds of Golden Plover, Turnstone and Sanderling that we wouldn't have found if we hadn't got bogged. Oh, and the bad news is: We're bogged!"

So it was that members of the Victorian Wader Study Group auspiciously got, to the tune of "Oh You Beautiful DOL" (or words to that effect), stuck into the second annual South Australian expedition in early February, 1995. Adverse predicaments such as these call for the charm and eloquence of an 007. Miraculously he materialised from the midst of the swirling waders, claiming to owe his longevity to someone he did not like - one Paul Keating, for he felt personally obliged to survive beyond the next change of government.

In a perverse kind of a way that sinking feeling was fortuitous for it enabled a more intimate inspection of the substrate of Brown's Bay, just beyond the Victorian border. Intermingled with the seaweed was a seething mass of maggots writhing in an intricate kind of three dimensional peristaltic form of larval leap frog. Our new found friend explained that storms interleave alternate layers of sand and seaweed which, when the seaweed rots, leaves the amalgam with no visible means of support. Exclaiming that "Anyone can get bogged - even been bogged myself", he coaxed the prehistoric tractor, adroitly parked on four small patches of unusually hapless maggots, into life. But

for the dubious it was one of those times when discretion is the better part of valour.

Despite vehemently denying being "a bit of a greenie", 007 explained that not only do the maggots on the beach nourish atypical numbers of birds, but as tide and storm reclaim the seaweed, fish stocks benefit as well. Coming from a fishing background, he had been campaigning to not allow the harvesting of seaweed from the coastline: it affords protection to the coastline and the maggots in the food chain: "To remove the seaweed would destroy the whole ecology of the beach."

And so it came to pass that for a few brief days in its chequered career, DOL 007 became the strongest vehicle in the South Australian south east as its aroma matured and ripened to its full potential. Like an aura to remind us of past indiscretions, the vehicle with real atmosphere became so overwhelming that eventually the two just had to be separated, much to the dismay of our Rendelsham hostess. But the hungry limestone knob of the home paddock was very much in need of additional fertiliser, and the homestead mice in need of a high protein diet to supplement the scraps from the crays personally caught by our host and provided as our somewhat over-catered entree. But still, the distractions of the unexpected new food sources undoubtedly diverted the mice from the trampolines and trapezes of tent city!

Meanwhile, reverting to the nuances of traditional bitumen revealed a trailer whose left wheel had dispensed with all sense of direction, for it had lost its bearings. The unscheduled stop for lunch and repairs, however, served to provide the South Australian welcoming contingent additional time to decide how to explain the lack of waders, previously present, from the ocean beach of Canunda National Park.

Fortunately waders were found by Petina and Tim at two Carpenter's Rocks venues which then became the focus for the weekend's catches. One site was an enormous platform of loose rocks. In their hundreds there were Crested Terns on the rocks, and Turnstones doing as their name suggests. As resilient as the local habitat, VWSG members found themselves between a rock and a hard place, with little choice but to utilise local materials to chock the cannon bases, camouflage nets, embed stakes, provide markers and the like. By contrast the other Carpenter's Rocks site was a thick mat of kelp, but between the two sites, good catches of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Turnstone and Curlew Sandpiper were made.

Reunited with 007 on the homeward journey, the group caught a few of the waders which chose not to seek wind shelter behind the little conical hillocks of maggot mix, hereinafter referred to as catching area markers. As well as the ubiquitous Red-necked Stint and Curlew Sandpiper, and the somewhat unexpected Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, was a small sample of Sanderling, which together with Turnstone, were the major target species of the expedition.

So we parted company with our South Australian hosts of the past few days. They appeared pleased with our input at the time, but were yet to ponder as to why they so easily allowed Victorian orange coloured leg flags to infiltrate South Australian birds. As for VWSG members, we left to ponder if, when the horrible truth dawned, would we be banned from South Australia ?

Field Outing to the Gurdies

Saturday 30th September 1995.

On a pleasant but dull overcast day 16 of us met at midday at Motton Road and headed across the paddocks to the usual spot for catching Eastern Curlew on Westernport Bay.

Three nets were set, two of which were alongside each other, overlapping, and four decoys were put in place. We then moved out of sight behind the tea tree and had lunch as we waited.

As high tide neared a few people moved into the hide and the others sat nearby hidden amongst the tea tree. It wasn't long before a single Curlew had settled in the catching area.

Clive instructed me to head south to do some "twinkling" at a known gathering spot at the end of Blakeney's Road and elsewhere but before I had ventured too far Curlews and Pied Oystercatchers started moving in of their own accord and I was told not to proceed any further.

Very soon the adjoining two nets were fired resulting in a good catch of birds. Two or three Curlew managed to walk out the back of the net to freedom. Nevertheless the rest were quickly and efficiently extracted in the usual skilful manner as the tide was still coming in.

With the light fading the Curlew were the first to be banded, processed and colour-flagged. Most were found to be in moult. The Oystercatchers then had the same treatment only they had their multi-coloured "jewellery" fitted! The last few being done in darkness with the aid of lights.

The final tally was 62 Curlew, two of which were retraps, and 22 Oystercatchers, 11 being retraps. Unfortunately those people who stayed at home to watch what was promised to be a close and exciting Grand Final doubly missed out as this was the second largest Curlew catch ever made by the VWSG.

Graham Beal

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP
FIELDWORK PROGRAMME January-December 1995

DATE	PLACE & OBJECTIVES	HIGH TIDE	
		TIME	HEIGHT (m)
Fri 6 Jan-	Queenscliff/NW Swan Bay/Swan Is.	15.01	2.8
		16.26*	1.4
Sun 8 Jan	Small waders, large waders and Turnstone		
		05-05	1.6
		17.17	1.4
		05.43	1.5
Thur 26 Jan-			
Sun 29 Jan	Lakes National Park Little and Common Terns		-
Fri 3 Feb-	Canuda National Park (S.A.) & Port Fairy	16.43	1.4
Tues 7 Feb	Sanderling & Turnstone		
		18.30	1.4
Sun 19 Feb	Queenscliff Pied Oystercatcher	15.48*	1.4
Sun 5 Mar	The Gurdies Eastern Curlew	17.10	2.8
Sat 18 Mar	Werribee S.F. Pied Oystercatcher	15.56	0.8
Sun 2 Apr	Stockyard Point Pied Oystercatcher	15.04	2.8
Sun 30 Apr	Rhyll Pied Oystercatcher	13.47	2.8
Sat 17 June-	Barry Beach & Bullock Is.	15.38	2.7
Sun 18 June	Pied & Sooty Oystercatcher	16.26	2.7
Sat 15 July	Fairhaven, French Is. Pied Oystercatcher	15.18	3.0
Sun 30 July	Long Is., Hastings Pied oystercatcher	15.01	2.8
Sat 13 Aug	The Gurdies Eastern Curlew	14.54	2.9
Sat 9 Sept	<i>Annual General Meeting -</i> at Pat and Clive Minton's home		
Sat 30 Sept	The Gurdies Eastern Curlew	16.36	2.7
Sat 28 Oct-	Queenscliff	14.30*	1.4
Sun 29 Oct	Large waders	03.22	1.6
		15.14	1.4
Sat 25 Nov-	Inverloch	14.19	1.4
Sun 26 Nov	Eastern Curlew & small waders	15.10	1.4
Sat 2 Dec-	Swan Is., Queenscliff Turnstone	08.05	1.4
Sun 17 Dec	Mud Island Crested Tern chicks		
Wed 27 Dec-	Yallock Ck/Stockyard Pt. The Gurdies	17.54	2.7
Thurs 28 Dec	Small waders & Eastern Curlew	06.30	3.0
		18.48	2.7
Fri 2 9 Dec-	Queenscliff, NW Swan Bay		
		18.33*	1.4
Sun 31 Dec	Small and large waders	06.48	1.5
		19.36	1.3
		07.30	1.4

**VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP
FIELDWORK PROGRAMME January-December 1996**

DATE	PLACE & OBJECTIVES	HIGH TIDE	
		TIME	HEIGHT(m)
Tue 2 Jan-	Werribee S.F	11.45	0.8
Wed 3 Jan	Small waders	12.33	0.8
Wed 17 Jan-	Corner Inlet	08.01	2.5 (17h)
Sun 21 Jan	Red Knot and other migrant waders	12.02	2.3 (21st)
Thurs 25 Jan-	Point Wilson, Spermwhale Head,		- -
Sun 28 Jan	Lakes National Park Common and Little Terns		
Wed 7 Feb-	South Australia	14.44	1.4 (7th)
Sun 11 Feb	Sanderling and Turnstone to	16.14	1.4 (11th)
Sat 24 Feb	The Gurdies Eastern Curlew	18.22	2.9
Sat 23 Mar	Queenscliff Migrant waders & Pied O'catchers	*15.08	1.6
Sun 14 April	Werribee S.F. Pied Oystercatchers	10.09	0.8
Sat 18 May	Stockyard Point Pied Oystercatchers	13.51	2.9
Sat 15 June	Fairhaven, French Is Pied Oystercatchers	12.25	2.7
Sun 16 June	Rhyll, Phillip Is. Pied Oystercatchers	13.20	2.8
Sat 6 July	Barry Beach Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers	16-15	2.7
Sat 27 July	<i>Annual General Meeting</i> <i>Pat and Clive's house</i>	<i>10.00am</i>	
Sat 3 Aug	The Gurdies Eastern Curlew	16.02	3.0
Sun 1 Sep	The Gurdies Eastern Curlew	15.36	2.9
Sat 19 Oct-	Queenscliff	04.17	1.5
Sun 20 Oct	Large waders	16.13	1.3
		05.00	1.5

FIELDWORK PROGRAMME January-December 1996
 CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Sat 30 Nov- Sun 1 Dec	Inverloch Eastern Curlew & small waders	04.18 16.02 04.51	1.6 1.3 1.5
Sat 14 Dec	Yallock Creek Small waders	16.16	2.6
Sat 21 Dec	Mud Island Crested Tern chicks		
Fri 27 Dec- Sun 29 Dec	Werribee S.F. Small waders	05.58 17.10 06.35 17.56 07.09	0.9 0.8 0.9 0.8 0.9

*The times in Swan Bay are two hours later than indicated

In addition to the above programme there will be *ad hoc* fieldwork arranged when recce information indicates opportunities for:

- (a) catches of Greenshank, Pacific Golden Plover & other less frequently caught species.
- (b) "Top-up" catches of small waders or Pied Oystercatchers.
- (c) Mist-netting of Latham's Snipe.
- (d) Crested, Caspian & other tern chicks at Corner Inlet, The Nobbies etc.
- (e) A visit to South Australia for Sanderling & Turnstone (in the Sept-Dec period.)

The team normally meets at the banding site five hours before high tide. Overnight camping is involved for full weekends of fieldwork in Jan - Feb. and Oct - Dec

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9482

BULLETIN BOARD

Hooded Plover Study: A Plea for Help

"I do not know a more charming little bird than this plump little bodies on tiny twinkling feet..."
Belcher, A.J. 1914. *The Birds of the District of Geelong, Australia*. W.J. Griffiths, Geelong (pg 83).

Introduction

I am currently undertaking a PhD on Hooded Plovers *Thinomis rubricollis* at the Department of Zoology, University of Melbourne. My project is basically one of conservation biology.

There are two ways in which VWSG members can help this research project:

- * # * By checking all Hooded Plovers encountered for colour-bands and reporting these findings.
- * ! By reporting all records of Hooded Plovers away from open ocean beaches.

1.1 Colour-banding

Hoodies are being colour-banded in Victoria in order to learn more about their movements and their ecology. In fact, we have now banded over 60 Hoodies in Victoria. Sightings of colour-banded birds are crucial to the success of the project, which seeks to gather information that will be essential for the conservation of the species. **All sightings of colour-banded Hooded Plovers should be reported immediately.**

1.2 Preliminary Results

Preliminary results (highlights) include the recovery of a Hoodie banded as an adult in 1982 (by the VWSG at Lake Victoria). This bird is the oldest Hooded Plover known (ABBBS pers. comm.) and it had moved about one kilometre in 13 years! Other recoveries have shown that juveniles are prepared to move a bit further, and a number have crossed *The Rip*, at the mouth of Port Phillip Bay. The most recent recovery has shown that some adults are willing and able to move about as well! Every colour-band sighting is another piece of the jigsaw!

2 Records Away From Open Ocean Beaches

I have also been compiling records of Hooded Plovers away from open ocean beaches (e.g. up creeks and rivers, in inlets etc). Both recent and historical records are of interest. Please send details such as date, location, number, weather conditions etc. to Michael Weston at the address given below.

Your help is desperately needed and much appreciated. Please help the Hoodies.

Mike Weston

Colour-banded Hooded Plovers

Information required

Information that should be recorded and reported includes:

- (1) Date
- (2) Time
- (3) Location (as exact as possible)
- (4) Sequence of colour-bands (which leg and whether each colour is on top or underneath)
- (5) How many Hooded Plovers the colour-banded bird is with (e.g. with 1,2,3.... birds)
- (6) Any other information (e.g. age)

In other words, report sightings as you would for Pied Oystercatchers!

Example:

On 25/8/1995, at 14:00, I saw a colour-banded Hooded Plover (Left leg:- black over metal, Right leg: Blue over black). The bird was with one other Hooded Plover which was not banded, and both appeared to be adults. These birds were 20 metres west of the SW exit to the beach at Point Lonsdale, Victoria (ie. last exit west along Beach Road). My name is Jack Bander and I live at 12 Plover Way, Charadriville, 3136. You can phone me on XX 9XXX-XXX.

Colours used

Colours used in this study are:

- (1) Red
- (2) Dark Blue
- (3) Yellow
- (4) Light Green
- (5) Orange
- (6) Black
- (7) White
- (8) Mauve

Band configuration

Each bird has one metal band, and three colour-bands. On one leg there is a single colour-band above a metal band. On the other leg there are two colour bands, these are either the same or different colours.

Contact information

Please send reports of all sightings to Michael Weston by 'phone on 03 9870-1586 (after hours, or a message on an answering machine) or 03 9344-4334 or 03 9882-2622 (business hours). Alternatively, post full details to: Michael Weston, 28 Craig Road, Donvale, Victoria, 3111.

Please leave full contact details including postal address and phone numbers. Thank you.

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Senckenbergische Bibliothek
Victorian Ornithological Research Group

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP INC.

Financial Statement from 1st August 1994 to 30th June 1995

INCOME	\$	EXPENDITURE	\$
Subscriptions	1365.00 (947.50)	Printing Bulletin	710.00 (514.00)
Sale of bulletins	7.00	Postage	109.45 (189.10)
Donations:		Stationery & Photocopying	64.35 (4.20)
Esso	2500.00 (27.00)	Publications	32.70
Other	5.00	Telephone Calls and Faxes	46.61
Trading Table	45.20 (49.20)	Cards & Gifts	30.00
AGM Excess	150.00	Reimbursement of Sub.	15.00
Sale of leg flags (DCNR)	28.40	Bank charges &	
Sale of net to Northern Territory Quarantine Service	3485.00	Government fees	32.23 (25.03)
Bank Deposit Error	5.00	* Equipment including Trailer Reg., leg blanks, batteries, choc. blocks, plasticine, glue, shackles, trailer wheel bearings, grease, repairs to stools, cable, multimeter, cord, petrol, puncture repair.	711.15
Term Deposit:		Colour bands & orange darvic sheets	251.43
Refund of tax	29.50	Balance	96.10
Interest on Advantage Saver Account	19.76 (25-13)	Firing Boxes	536.45
Interest on Term Deposit	75.10 (65-44)	Cannons, projectiles & cartridges	963.00
SUB-TOTAL	7714.96	Keeping cage materials	206.80
Cash & Cheques in hand at 31/07/1994	34.86	Cable winder	12.40
Cash in Bank at 31/07/1994	449.92	Safety fuses	480.00
Term Deposit at 31/07/1994	2000.00	Netting & ropes	1325.95
SUB-TOTAL	2484.78	Shadecloth	299.50
		SUB-TOTAL	5923.12
		Cash & Cheques in hand at 30/06/1995	4.56
		Cash in Bank at 30/06/1995	3533.66
		Term Deposit at 30/06/1995	2075.10
		Less unrepresented cheques	1336.70
		SUB-TOTAL	4276.62
TOTAL	10199.74	TOTAL	10199.74

Rosemary Davidson
Hon. Treasurer

* Further Details of
Equipment on Page 41.

EQUIPMENT DETAILS OVERALL	\$	\$
Total Cost of Equipment including repairs for Period 01/08/1994 to 30/06/1995	4882.78	
Materials for Northern Territory net	3113.20	
Equipment & Repairs for VWSG	1769.58	2508.86

DETAILS OF COST OF NET FOR N.T. QUARANTINE SERVICE

Hardware:	
cannons, projectiles, cartridges	937.00
Netting:	
rope, rubber etc.	954.00
Electrics:	
firing box, circuit tester, cable & winder	507.40
Materials for 4 keeping cages	206.80
Ancillary Equipment:	
covering material, safety fuses	508.00
Sub-total	3113.20
Labour:	
making up nets, 4 keeping cages, cable winder	371.80
Sub-total	371.80
Total Cost of N.T. Net	3485.00

DON JEANS

Those of us who were privileged to take part in the early expeditions to North West Australia, particularly the first exploration when we knew not what to expect, will have particularly fond memories of Don Jeans. Flying over huge distances in a light



aircraft to find remote airstrips and often in difficult weather called for high skills both as a pilot and as a navigator. He took us too, to Lake Callabonna, Lake Eyre and Atlassing in the Northern Territory and enabled numerous other groups to reach out of the way birding areas all over Australia. In doing this he gained many friends and a

solid knowledge of bush birds. He saved the Anna Plains station aircraft by flying it out of a bush fire when the station manager and all the hands were many miles away looking after the stock. A fine pilot, keen bird photographer and good companion. Don Jeans died last May.

JGD

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The Bulletin is published on the date of the annual general meeting and contains reports and cumulative records of the fieldwork of the Victorian Wader Study Group with articles, field notes and other material.

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