Roz Jessop & Peter Collins

VWSG BULLETIN

JOURNAL OF THE VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP

Number 21
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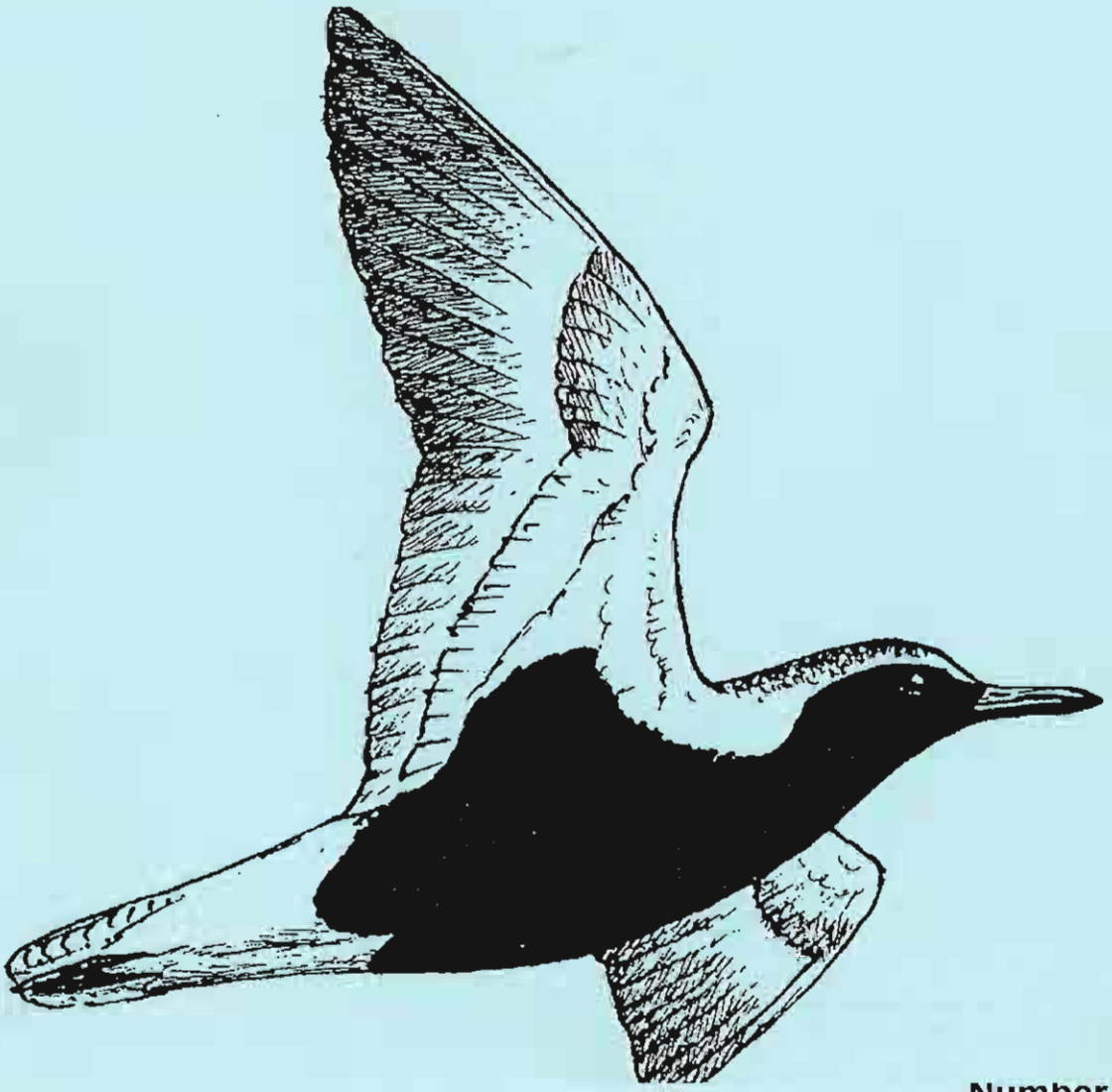

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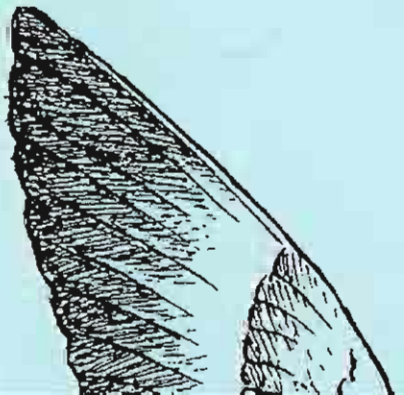

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The above officers and
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This bulletin is published on the date of the annual general meeting and contains reports and cumulative records of fieldwork of the Victorian Wader Study Group with articles, field notes and other material.
Contributions are welcome. Please consult the editor or assistant editor on questions of format.

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Summary of VWSG Activities in 1996 and the First Half of 1997

The past year has been one of significant success, especially for the non-core species being studied by the group. Particular highlights in birds banded were in Common Greenshank, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Bar-tailed Godwit, Pied Oystercatcher, Sooty Oystercatcher, Common Tern and chicks of Crested, Caspian and Fairy Terns. The flow of overseas sightings of leg-flagged birds became a flood - including no less than 15 Bar-tailed Godwits, seven Sanderling and five Eastern Curlew seen in Japan. In contrast recoveries of waders reported via the Bird Banding Office was at a low ebb, with only one overseas recovery. This was more than compensated for, however, by a total of seven overseas movements of Little Terns - including six between Japan and Australia. And capping everything was the recapture of a Common Tern banded as a chick in Finland, a world record movement of 26,000 km (assuming it came via South Africa).

That was 1996 and the first half of 1997 in a nutshell. Now to add a little more detail to the main events and achievements.

The total of waders banded in 1996 was 6298, very close to the 20 year average and almost double the low figure of last year. A further 1913 were banded in the first half of 1997 in spite of fieldwork activities being at a standstill in March/April/May due to the absence of key members of the group, and the equipment, assisting with wader studies in Argentina, Brazil and Delaware Bay (USA).

Some of the most exciting species totals derived from three productive visits to the south-east of South Australia - the Brown Bay, Port MacDonnell, Carpenter Rocks and Canunda National Parks areas. These visits were in February 1996, November 1996 and February 1997. The combined total of the key target species caught on these visits was 597 Sanderling and 335 Ruddy Turnstone. A Pectoral Sandpiper on the last visit was an unexpected bonus.

Another great success for the period was 244 Common Greenshank - including a record catch of 135 on Dream Island, Corner Inlet, in February 1997. A Black-tailed Godwit, caught at Inverloch, was a first for the group.

In contrast the group failed to maintain its good record of recent years on Eastern Curlew, with only four caught in 1996 and none so far in 1997. Red Knot also continued to prove elusive. Japanese Snipe too were harder to come by - possibly because of the dry summer - but 50 were caught in September our earliest catches so far.

The Pied and Sooty Oystercatcher study had record success in 1996 (the eighth year of this intensive project) with double the normal number of birds caught - 253 Pied and 94 Sooties. This was the result of a concentrated effort in June and July with many mid-week catching attempts. Oystercatchers are very intelligent and are quick learners - seemingly being able to recognise a completely camouflaged net - and so the 1997 season has not been quite so successful with 101 Pied and 60

Sooty (up to mid July). With this study still being in the "movements" phase it is pleasing to see the increasing number of long distance interstate movements occurring. Pied Oystercatchers banded on the central Victorian coast have now been recorded as far west as the Murray Mouth in South Australia, as far north as Newcastle, NSW, and into northern Tasmania. Roz Jessop and Pete Collins are currently putting all banding, recapture and resighting records onto computer - 4500 records so far! - prior to undertaking a detailed analysis.

It is always nice to recapture old birds and it never ceases to amaze just how long some individual small waders can live. Pride of place goes to two Curlew Sandpipers at Werribee Sewage Farm which are still going strong at an age of $18^1/_2$ years. A Red knot from Queenscliff recaptured in New Zealand was a record $16^1/_4$ years old and another individual was $14^1/_4$. Double-banded Plovers also produced two record age retraps with a Werribee bird being a minimum $15^1/_2$ years old and a Stockyard Point/Yallock Creek bird $13^3/_4$ years old. Another old Pied Oystercatcher caught in Corner Inlet was a minimum of $17^1/_2$ years old.

The Arctic summer of 1996 appears to have been a poor breeding season for most of the waders from Siberia which visit Victoria. The proportion of juvenile birds in populations of Red-necked Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling and Common Greenshank was generally less than 10% - often only 5%. In good years the proportion of young birds is usually 10-20% and sometimes much higher. Floods, a late spring, and an absence of lemmings in eastern Siberia probably all contributed to the poor breeding season.

Mention has already been made of some of the exciting sightings of colour leg-flagged waders - particularly those in Japan. Other features of the past year have been our first Great Knot to Japan, another to Broome and our first Ruddy Turnstone to New Zealand. Little flagged species also produce some nice records with a Terek Sandpiper seen in Hong Kong and Greater and Lesser Sand Plovers elsewhere in Australia.

Terns have always been an integral part of the VWSG programme, even thought the group's name does not include them. The officially approved Banding Project does however mention waders and terns equally. The long-term nature of the group's data has often proved valuable to conservation authorities, none more so than the 20 year record of tern breeding data. The 1996-97 summer proved a record for Crested Tern numbers and breeding success, for Caspian Tern numbers (but not breeding success), and for Corner Inlet Fairy Terns nesting success. The annual late-January cannon netting in the Lakes National Park was also a record for Common Terns caught (497). Overall 3440 terns (chicks and adults) were banded in the December 1996 to February 1997 period. Some exceptional overseas movements of these terns have already been mentioned. Particularly pleasing also was our first Common Tern recovery from their breeding grounds in central Siberia - in the same area that a bird from NSW was recovered twenty years ago (the only other breeding season recovery from Australia).

The group also contributed to data collection and conservation actions in a number of other ways in 1996/97. A team of members carried out coordinated observations

of waders and other birds in the vicinity of Avalon Airport - assisting consultants assess the visual and noise effects of low flying aircraft. Roz Jessop and Pete Collins coordinated the VWSG team. And in a separate study of waterbirds at the Cheetham Wetlands - the old Laverton Saltworks - Jeff Campbell made weekly observations in the period February to April 1997. Both these projects also benefited the VWSG's finances with fees earned being put into general funds, after the deduction of travelling costs.

The VWSG was particularly gratified to be awarded three Coast Action/Coast-care grants in December 1996. Full details of these and of progress achieved to date, are given later in this Bulletin. They don't directly benefit the group financially, except for the $1800 grant towards equipment, but enable data to be collected (helicopter survey of breeding Pied Oystercatchers in Corner Inlet) and conservation actions taken (fox control in Nooramunga National Park) which would not be possible without external finance for core components. It is hoped that the two main projects will be further extended into 1998 (new grant application results are due to be announced in December 1997).

Acknowledgments

One of the dangers of an "acknowledgments" section is that of leaving out someone who should be thanked for "services rendered". This is specially so for the VWSG with so many different people contributing in such a wide variety of ways to its activities each year. So apologies, in advance, to anyone accidentally omitted - your services are greatly appreciated and were hopefully at least acknowledged verbally at the time!

Maybe this should commence with financially orientated "thank yous". The following are thanked for directly or indirectly contributing to the financial health of the Group;

(a) Esso Australia kindly donated $2500, for the third consecutive year, to general operating costs of the group.

(b) Coast Action/Coastcare provided two grants totalling $18,750 to cover external costs on two information gathering/habitat conservation projects plus $1,800 for a third project involving purchase of equipment for the group.

(c) Terri Allen kindly donated $100 fee she earned for an article written about the Group's activities.

(d) Peter Dann, who sub-contracted to the Group part of the fieldwork associated with the consultancy for the Avalon Airport Noise Disturbance Project ($2000).

(e) Brett Lane, of Ecology Australia, who contracted the Group to carry out waterbird census and disturbance measurements at Cheetham Wetlands, Laverton.

(f) Allan Clarke, the equipment officer, for manufacturing hardware for the Group, at cost, and for numerous free repair and maintenance jobs.

(g) Jeff Campbell, Roger Richards, Lawrence Jessop and Marg Reni for the manufacture or supply of other items of equipment free or at cost.

(h) Parks Victoria, Foster office, and DNRE Yarram for the provision, free of charge, of boat transport on numerous occasions for undertaking fieldwork in Nooramunga National Park/Corner Inlet. This includes boat transport for the

annual national summer and winter wader census, the biennial Hooded Plover/Pied Oystercatcher breeding surveys, the annual tern breeding census and chick banding, annual (usually twice a year) wader cannon netting programmes, fox monitoring/breeding bird monitoring visits and the very extensive fox baiting programme.

(i) DNRE Bairnsdale and the RAOU Rotamah Bird Observatory who provided boat transport for a large team on three successive days tern banding at the Gippsland Lakes National Park.

A major contribution to the VWSG's successful fieldwork programme is made possible by the numerous landowners on whose property the Group operates. The Group sincerely thanks these people for permission to operate on their property and for other assistance (eg. keys for access, transport etc.). In a number of cases landowners have most kindly provided local accommodation or camping facilities for the Group including

i) The "Werribee Hilton"- Beach Road shearing shed- loaned by the Western Treatment Plant of Melbourne Water.

ii) A house on French Island-loaned by DNRE French Island when the Group made it's first extended visit there in December 1996.

iii) Camping facilities at Swan Island-made available by the Department of Defence when the Group is operating on Swan Island/Sand Island/Swan Bay.

iv) Camping facilities at Inverloch, made available free of charge by DNRE when the Group is operating on Anderson's Inlet.

v) Camping facilities made available at various locations on the eastern side of Western Port by;
Richard Prins and Damien Costello at Yallock Creek
Erica Murdoch and Denis Hardy at The Gurdies
Bruce Ridgeway at Stockyard Point

vi) The fisherman's cottage at Green Point, Brown Bay, South Australia- lent to the Group by cray-fisherman Paul Feast.

vii) The lawns of "Kanmurna"-the Stewart residence at Rendlesham in South Australia- which has been the base for all the Group's visits to that state and which have been memorable not only for the birds but for the extreme hospitality, extending to bounteous crayfish suppers!

viii) "Lightning strike hut"-the tin shed "town hall" at the remote Manns Beach hamlet in Corner Inlet. Ideally suited for birds, boats, sandflies and wind it nevertheless makes an ideal summer base for Corner Inlet activities-except when struck by lightning at 5.30 am.

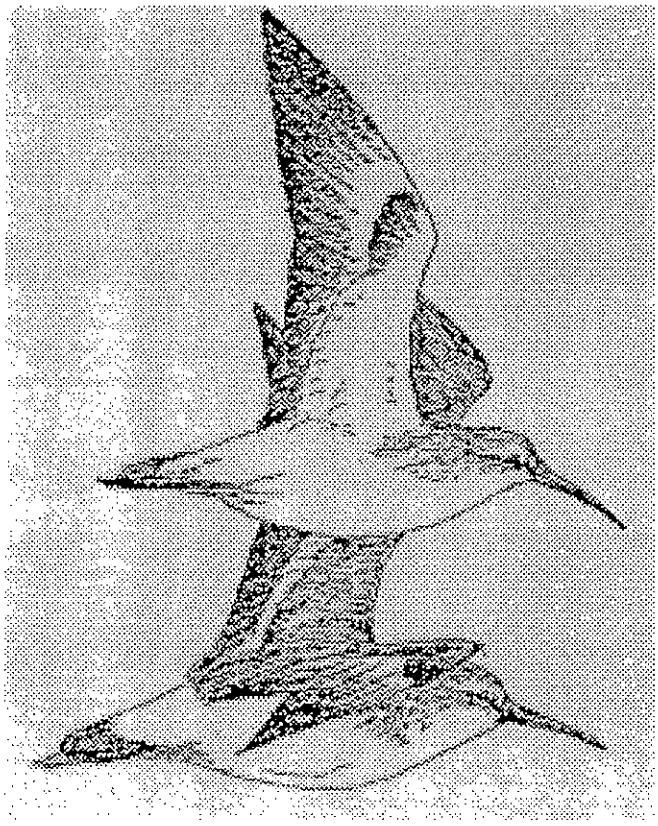
ix) Last and certainly not least the wonderful Yanakie house of treasurer/secretary Rosemary Davidson which has become the much loved winter base for Corner Inlet fieldwork. Since Rosemary invited the Group to use these facilities there has been no problem in securing a team for winter fieldwork!

Within the VWSG many members contribute in a variety of ways to the Group's success, over and above the duties of those who are officers. Mention should be particularly made of Malcolm Brown who for several years took on the principal role

of leg flag manufacturer. He is now joined periodically by a small team of members- they are all thanked for the considerable effort put into this most boring of tasks.

Ros Jessop, Doris Graham and Pete Collins should also be singled out for special thanks in relation to the superhuman effort put into getting this Bulletin out on time. Their soliciting, mammoth typing efforts, and collation of the finished product are all greatly appreciated by members.

Finally a great thank you to all members, and visitors, who have contributed to the fieldwork. They have made it successful, and especially enjoyable, and the benefits of their contributions will be felt long into the future. Keep up the support in the field. Thanks and best wishes to all.
Clive Minton.



Numbers of waders processed by the VWSG each month to December 1996 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 data (preferably on at least 50 birds of each group) 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	51	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	65	62	35	57	314
Long-billed Dowitcher	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Black-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	269	8	308	14	0	195	18	0	64	88	203	271	1438
Whimbrel	0	0	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	19
Eastern Curlew	16	27	1	0	22	17	2	43	147	99	135	75	584
Common Greenshank	1	0	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	153	59	333
Terek Sandpiper	13	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	12	33
Grey-tailed Tattler	31	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	37
Ruddy Turnstone	107	212	133	27	1	7	0	1	12	21	453	79	1053
Great Knot	132	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	16	58	40	129	387
Red Knot	252	68	181	34	2	57	151	81	76	468	264	183	1817
Sanderling	16	238	242	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	242	161	900
Little Stint	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
Red-necked Stint	2396	1171	4487	1871	507	570	608	488	463	1398	2802	2661	19362
Long-toed Stint	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1182	744	117	2	0	0	0	9	519	342	328	1211	4454
Curlew Sandpiper	822	929	1136	144	222	125	215	413	178	954	863	915	6916
Broad-billed Sandpiper	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Pied Oystercatcher	83	94	175	220	376	325	201	99	102	37	9	29	1752
Sooty Oystercatcher	3	0	40	27	68	85	50	19	0	1	0	0	293
Black-winged Stilt	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	6	18
Red-necked Avocet	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	2	46	46	36	236
Pacific Golden Plover	40	27	30	1	0	0	0	0	0	28	47	39	212
Grey Plover	1	14	4	3	0	2	0	0	2	41	17	0	84
Red-capped Plover	39	77	55	114	203	79	65	17	8	11	18	5	691
Double-banded Plover	0	2	144	257	755	857	958	926	1	0	0	0	3900
Lesser Sand Plover	54	1	12	7	3	2	2	0	0	0	15	12	108
Greater Sand Plover	21	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	27
Black-fronted Dotterel	0	7	0	0	11	16	6	9	2	0	4	8	63
Hooded Plover	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Red-kneed Dotterel	0	10	0	20	0	44	11	16	12	8	22	0	143
Masked Lapwing	4	6	77	0	0	13	0	0	0	4	18	11	133
Cox's Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
													45333

VWSG Wader Catches 1975 to 31 December 1996

Species	New	Retrap	Total
Pied Oystercatcher	1244	517	1761
Sooty Oystercatcher	258	36	294
Masked Lapwing	132	3	135
Grey Plover	79	6	85
Pacific Golden Plover	196	21	217
Red-kneed Dotterel	133	11	144
Hooded Plover	15	1	16
Lesser Sand Plover	114	10	124
Double-banded Plover	3080	961	4041
Large Sand Plover	24	3	27
Red-capped Plover	554	177	731
Black-fronted Plover	53	4	57
Black-winged Stilt	18	0	18
Red-necked Avocet	235	2	237
Ruddy Turnstone	852	200	1052
Eastern Curlew	545	39	584
Whimbrel	19	0	19
Grey-tailed Tattler	35	2	37
Common Greenshank	281	52	333
Terek Sandpiper	31	1	32
Latham's Snipe	273	10	283
Long-billed Dowitcher	1	0	1
Black-tailed Godwit	1	0	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	1410	66	1476
Red Knot	1746	135	1881
Great Knot	352	34	386
Cox's Sandpiper	1	0	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	4705	166	4871
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	0	1
Little Stint	3	0	3
Red-necked Stint	59064	17434	76498
Long-toed Stint	1	0	1
Curlew Sandpiper	18825	3697	22522
Sanderling	792	110	902
Broad-billed Sandpiper	3	0	3
35 Species	**95076**	**23698**	**118774**

Wader Banding Totals - VWSG 1996

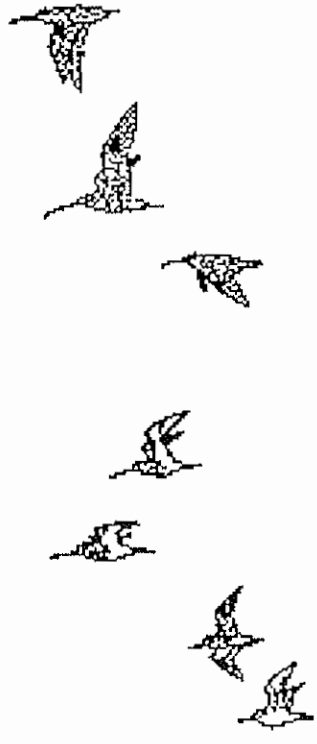
Species	New	Retrap	Total
Pied Oystercatcher	159	94	253
Sooty Oystercatcher	61	16	77
Masked Lapwing	1	0	1
Pacific Golden Plover	6	0	6
Lesser Sand Plover	13	1	14
Double-banded Plover	33	3	36
Red-capped Plover	7	1	8
Black-fronted Plover	1	0	1
Ruddy Turnstone	128	16	144
Eastern Curlew	4	0	4
Grey-tailed Tattler	2	1	3
Common Greenshank	107	2	109
Latham's Snipe	56	6	62
Black-tailed Godwit	1	0	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	174	2	176
Red Knot	59	0	59
Great Knot	35	1	36
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	148	1	149
Red-necked Stint	3054	668	3722
Curlew Sandpiper	890	118	1008
Sanderling	324	105	429
21 species	**5263**	**1035**	**6298**

Wader Banding Totals - VWSG January - June 1997

Species	New	Retrap	Total
Pied Oystercatcher	32	19	51
Sooty Oystercatcher	40	6	46
Hooded Plover	1	0	1
Double-banded Plover	58	7	65
Red-capped Plover	22	1	23
Ruddy Turnstone	156	35	191
Common Greenshank	131	4	135
Bar-tailed Godwit	3	0	3
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	17	4	21
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	0	1
Red-necked Stint	876	131	1007
Curlew Sandpiper	172	29	201
Sanderling	100	68	168
12 species	**1609**	**304**	**1913**

Location of Waders Caught in Victoria and South Australia

	to Dec. 95	1996	Total
Victoria			
Werribee	42966	927	43893
Westernport	28109	847	28956
Queenscliff/Swan Bay	19282	663	19945
Anderson Inlet (Inverloch)	11369	1660	13029
Corner Inlet	8247	1213	9460
Altona	955	0	955
Killarney Beach	426	0	426
Geelong (Point Henry / Belmont Common)	121	58	179
Bendigo SF	143	0	143
Seaford Swamp	98	0	98
Braeside/Croyden	76	3	79
Mud Islands	35	0	35
Gippsland Lakes	18	1	19
Toowong	10	0	10
South Australia			
Canunda/ Carpenter Rocks/ Brown Bay	621	926	1547
Total	**112476**	**6298**	**118774**



Annual Wader Banding Totals by VWSG

Calender Year	New	Retrap	Total
1975	9	0	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
1995	2708	625	3333
1996	5263	1035	6298
Totals to end 96	**95076**	**23698**	**118774**

Average annual total for '79-96; 6462

Fieldwork Programme 1997

The programme of fieldwork to be undertaken in 1997, is listed below. Anyone requiring a copy of the programme, or able to take part in fieldwork activities, should contact Clive Minton on 03-9589-4901 (phone or fax).

VWSG FIELDWORK PROGRAM January - December 1997

DATE	PLACE & OBJECTIVES	HIGH TIDE TIME	HEIGHT (metres)
Sat 4 Jan	**Leg-flag making**		
Sat 11 Jan to Sun 12 Jan	**Yallock Creek & Stockyard Point** Small waders	1505 1605	2.5 2.6
Thurs 16 Jan	**The Gurdies** Eastern Curlew	0710	2.9
Sat 18 Jan	**Queenscliff & Swan Bay** Small waders	0930	1.4
Thurs 23 Jan to Sun 26 Jan	**Lakes National Park** Common Tern & Little Tern		
Tue 11 Feb to Sun 16 Feb	**Corner Inlet** Red Knot, other large waders & Pied Oystercatchers	1550 11th to 0720 16th	2.3 2.5
Sat 8 March	**Werribee SF** Pied Oystercatcher	1350	0.8
Sat 24 May	**Rhyll, Phillip Island** Pied Oystercatchers	1443	2.93
Sat 7 June	**Stockyard Point, Westernport** Pied Oystercatchers	1446	3.03
Wed 18 June	**Werribee SF** Pied Oystercatchers	1250	0.76
Sat 21 June	**Hastings, Western Port** Pied Oystercatchers	1318	2.79
Sun 22 June	**Corner Inlet** - Winter Count	1306	2.35
Mon 23 June	**Roussac Point, Corner Inlet** Pied & Sooty Oystercatchers	1402	2.44
Tues 24 June	**Barry Beach** Pied & Sooty Oystercatchers	1455	2.52
Fri 4 to Tues 8 July	**Corner Inlet** Pied & Sooty Oystercatchers	1135 to 1503	2.35 to 2.39
Wed 23 July	**Bullock Island, Port Welshpool** Pied Oystercatchers	1426	2.48
Thurs 24 July	**Barry Beach/ Roussac Point** Pied & Sooty Oystercatchers	1518	2.57
Sat 2 Aug	**Annual General Meeting** at Clive & Pat Minton's House	10.00 am to 10.00 pm	
Wed 20 Aug	**The Gurdies** Eastern Curlew	1414	2.88
Sat 20 Sept	**The Gurdies** Eastern Curlew	1529	2.89
Sat 18 to Sun 19 Oct	**Queenscliff / Swan Bay** Red Knot & other medium-large waders	1303 1350	1.45 1.49
Sat 8 to Sun 9 Nov	**Queenscliff / Swan Bay** Red Knot & other medium-large waders	0600; 1758 0643	1.46; 1.26 1.40
Wed 19 to Sat 22 Nov	**French Island** Greenshank	1702 to 0707	2.62 2.77
Sat 6 to Sun 7 Dec	**Inverloch** Eastern Curlew & small waders	0504; 1701 0545	1.55; 1.31 1.51
Sat 20 Dec	**Queenscliff /Swan Bay** Small waders & Turnstone	0508 1659	1.53 1.28
Sun 21 Dec	**Mud Islands** Crested Tern chicks Depart 9.00 am from Queenscliff		
Sat 27 to Mon 29 Dec	**Werribee SF** Small waders (including mist netting)	1230; 1326; 1422	0.75; 0.74, 0.74

Wader Recovery Reports

Pied Oystercatcher

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date seen	Location found	km moved
101-03964	3	110994	Stockyard Point	040896*	Merimbula NSW	418 ENE
100-99532	2	210392	Manns Beach	110696* 240996* 151196*	Bithry Inlet NSW	361 NE
101-04602	2	130895	Barry Beach	031096*	Moruya NSW	453 NE
101-03614	2	070593	Manns Beach	071096*	Congo Point NSW	422 NE
101-04647	2	180596	Stockyard Point	111196*	Barragoot NSW	452 NNE
101-03618	1	070593	Manns Beach	131196*	Tuross Estuary NSW	412 NE
101-04602	2	130895	Barry Beach	080197*	Narooma NSW	430 NE
100-96837	3+	060889	Barry Beach	230197*	Botany Bay NSW	673 NE
100-96760	2+	160489	Werribee SF	050295* & 060796* 211196	Carpenter Rocks SA 13 km NW of above	361 W 370 W
101-03961	2	110994	Stockyard Point	291196*	Beachport SA	496 W
101-03556	3+	140692	Rhyll	240993* 240694* 291196*	Canunda NP SA Perkins Island Tas. Beachport SA	440 W 282 S of Rhyll 481 E
101-04643	3+	180596	Stockyard Point	080297*	Pt MacDonnell SA	422 W
100-99360	2	280491	Manns Beach	001295 Dead	McLoughlins Beach	9 NNE
100-99418	3+	290691	Fairhaven French Is	200996 Dead	Where Banded	0
100-82097	2+	141181	Yallock Creek	050797**	Manns Beach	130 ESE
101-03571	2	270393	The Gurdies	041196*	27 km NW Kingston, SA	525 WNW
101-04654	2	180596	Stockyard Point	041196*	40 km NW Kingston, SA	535 WNW

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date seen	Location found	km moved
100-85063	2	070288	Stockyard Point	051196**	29 km NW of 42 Mile Crossing, Coorong, SA	575 WNW
101-03686	2	090794	Altona	051196*	40 km NW of above	500 WNW
101-03999	2+	180395	Werribee SF	051196*	42 km NW of above	500 WNW
?	?	1989-93	Stockyard Pt/Gurdies	051196*	44 km NW of above	580 WNW
100-85198	2+	100788	Stockyard Point	051196*	20 km SE Murray Mouth Coorong, SA	650 NW

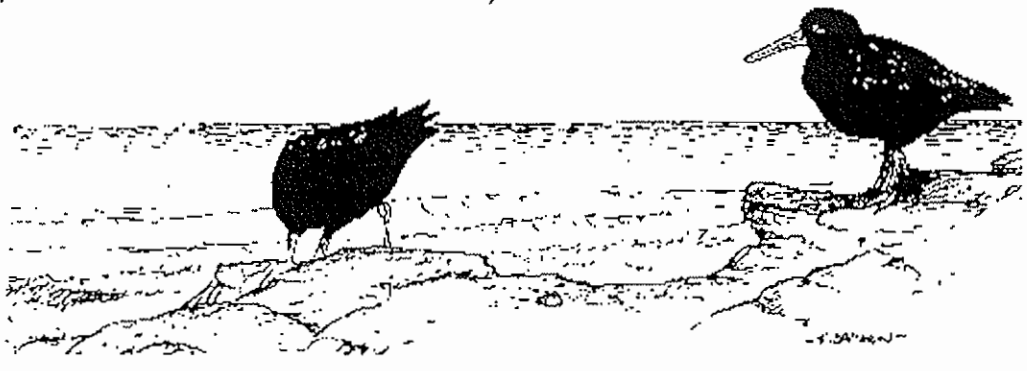
* indicates bird seen alive in the field ** indicates retrapped

This is the best ever collection of sightings of colour banded Pied Oystercatchers, with eight birds moving into New South Wales and eleven into South Australia. Special Thanks are due to Mike Crowley in NSW and Iain Stewart in South Australia who were responsible for making and/or reporting many of these records.

It is noteworthy that all except one of the birds that moved into NSW were banded as immatures(in their first, second or third years). Such birds may possibly move greater distances when searching for breeding territories, compared to established adults commuting to the nearest flock for the non-breeding seasons.

Most of the birds on the coast adjacent to The Coorong, South Australia were paired and breeding when observed in early November 1996. These are the furthest westward movements yet of Pied Oystercatchers from Victoria 100-82297, at 650 km, is actually the longest.

100-82097 was recaptured $15^1/_2$ years after banding and was a minimum of $17^1/_2$ years old. (Three other Pied Oystercatchers of similar age were reported in the 1996 VWSG Bulletin).



Sooty Oystercatcher

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date seen	Location found	km moved
100-85032	2+	140687	Inverloch	021291	Tidal River, Wilson's Prom	65 SE

The band number of this bird was read in the field with a telescope by a German visitor! The bird was presumably breeding in the area.

Double-banded Plover

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date seen	Location found	km moved
C 50562	Chick	041192	Ahuriri River NZ	1994/95 1995/96 300696	where banded where banded Stockyard Point	0 0 2139 W
C 53861	Chick	011195	Ahuriri River NZ	300696	Stockyard Point	2125 W
C 50896	Chick	191194	Ahuriri River NZ	Dec 95 060796	where banded (breeding) Port MacDonnell SA	0 2550 W
041-05008	1	240783 (dead)	Stockyard Point	310896	Yallock Creek	18 N
041-05641	2+	060883 (dead)	Werribee SF	180697	where banded	0

The first three birds on the above list were recognised by their individual colour band combinations. The observations were made by VWSG members Graham Beal (2) and Richard and Margaret Alcorn. These recoveries are in line with the normal pattern of movement of birds from the centre of South Island, New Zealand, coming to SE Australia for the winter.

The fourth and fifth birds are successively the oldest Australian records. 041-05008 was 13 years between banding and recapture, with the bird being $13^{3}/_{4}$ years old. 041-05641 was almost 14 years between banding and recapture and was a minimum of $15^{1}/_{2}$ years old.

The New Zealand banding office (Rod Cossee) reports that the oldest individuals on their files are as listed overleaf.

Band	Age	Date Banded	Last Recorded	Elapsed Time	Age
041-00455 041-18098 NZ C50569	Juvenile	150680	101192	c.12 1/2 years	13 years
NZ B52556	Juvenile	281183	260396	c12 1/4 years	12 1/4 years

Both birds were still alive when last recorded

Common Greenshank

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date seen	Location found	km moved
061-43145	3+	011188	Warneet	161296	Bullock Swamp French Island	6 S
061-43218	2+	110389	Warneet	161296	"	6 S

These are the oldest VWSG Greenshank (and equal Australian oldest) at approximately 8 years between banding and recapture. The first bird was at least 10 1/2 years old and the second at least 9 1/2 years old. It is probable that individual Greenshank can live much longer than this but banding has been insufficient so far for such recaptures to be made.

Red Knot

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date seen	Location found	km moved
05108574	1	050481	Queenscliff	201096	Miranda Firth of Thames NZ	2687 E
05108762	1	240783	Stockyard Point	201096	"	"

These two birds fit into the strongly emerging pattern of many Red Knot spending their first year in Australia but subsequent southern hemisphere summers in New Zealand. The first bird was recaptured 15 1/2 years after banding (an Australian longevity record for this species) and was 16 1/4 years old. The second bird was 14 1/4 years old.

Red-necked Stint

Surprisingly no recoveries, or controls elsewhere, of this most banded wader. There were however some nice reports of leg-flagged birds (see separate listings).

More than a dozen birds aged 10 - 13 years were recaptured at the main banding sites (particularly Inverloch). However there were no exceptionally old retraps in the past year.

Curlew Sandpiper

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date seen	Location found	km moved
041-68506	2+	030193	Stockyard Point	010696	Keng-Kyuel Russia 68^0 5' N, 146^0 13' E	11834 N
041-81112	3+	060994	Broome WA	281296	Werribee SF	3099 SE
040-93386	1+	061178	Werribee SF	271296	where banded	0
040-94877	1	240279	Werribee SF	281296	where banded	0

The first bird was on the breeding grounds in the Siberian Arctic. Note the early arrival date of 1st of June and the total distance of almost 12,000 kilometres. The second bird was almost certainly on migration through Broome, to its normal non-breeding area in Victoria, where it was originally banded. The last two birds represent longevity records for Australian banded Curlew Sandpipers (probably world records also). Recaptured 18 years after banding both birds were $18^1/_2$ (first bird minimum $18^1/_2$).

Sanderling

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date seen	Location found	km moved
041-69880	2+	070393	Manns Beach	081196	Canunda NP SA	593 W
041-60356	2+	020391	Killarney Beach, Port Fairy	060295	Brown Bay SA Canunda NP SA	135 W 75 NW (total 205 WNW)
041-60452	2+	"	"	081196	Canunda NP SA	205 WNW
041-60270	2+	"	"	"	Stoney Point, Port MacDonnell SA	145 k W
041-60452	2+	"	"	"	"	"
041-60482	2+	"	"	"	"	"
041-60523	2+	"	"	"	"	"
041-60539	2+	"	"	"	"	"
041-60550	2+	"	"	"	"	"

In addition to the above interstate movements there were 61 movements of Sanderling between Canunda National Park and Brown Bay/Stoney Point in south eastern South Australia- a distance of 75 kilometres.

These records further confirm the considerable mobility between favoured locations on the coasts of Victoria and south east South Australia. See page 15 of 1996 VWSG Bulletin

Tern Recovery Report

Caspian Tern

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date of retrap	Location found	km moved
09123298	chick	231289	Manns Bch Corner Inlet	170896*	Bribie Island Qld	1418 NNE

* denotes live recovery

South east Queensland seems to be the main area to which Victorian Caspian Terns migrate for the non-breeding season. At $6^{3}/_{4}$ years old this is the oldest VWSG Caspian Tern so far. However, the oldest Australian record is 16 years.

Common Tern

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date of retrap	Location found	km moved
051-40850	2+	270196	Lakes NP	310596	Us-Kyuel, Russia 62^{0} 53' N, 130^{0} 48' E	11311 N
051-41132	2+	270196	Lakes NP	241296*	Agnes Water Beach Qld	1570 N
AT150635 Finland	Chick	300696	Kuopio 62^{0} 46' N, 27^{0} 46' E	240197*	Lakes NP	15192 E

* denotes live recovery

A memorable year for our Common Tern migration studies. The first recovery is our first from the breeding grounds in central eastern Siberia. It is close to the recovery location of the only previous Australian banded Common Tern recovered in Russia (banded in NSW 20 years ago).

The capture of a bird from Finland was remarkable. There have been several previous recoveries of Common Terns (and Arctic Terns) from western Europe in Australia but this travelled the greatest distance if it is assumed that it came via South Africa rather than on a more direct route. This is a reasonable assumption given that the normal "wintering" area for Finnish Common Terns is around the coasts of southern Africa and that there is no evidence of any Finnish ringed birds moving in a southerly or easterly direction.

The movement from Finland via the coasts of western Europe and west/south Africa, and then across the southern oceans to Gippsland, Victoria, has been calculated as 26,000 km. This has been accepted by the Guinness Book of Records as the longest documented journey of a marked wild bird.

Previous records of European banded terns in Australia have referred to dead birds or birds which subsequently perished as a result of their storm blown journey. It is pleasing that this Finnish bird survived its ordeal, its weight and plumage were normal when it was captured on 24th January. This is especially remarkable as the bird was still only seven months old!

Sightings of orange flagged Common Terns all marked in the Lakes National Park are detailed below: These nicely indicate the southward and northward passage of birds along the NSW coast to / from the Lakes National Park.

021095	East Ballina, NSW (2 birds)	John Izzard
111096	South Ballina, NSW	Bo Totterman
280397	South Ballina, NSW (5 birds)	Bo Totterman
110497	South Ballina, NSW (6 birds)	Bo Totterman
140497	South Ballina, NSW (4 birds)	Bo Totterman

Little Tern

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date of retrap	Location found	km moved
3B-36728	Chick	100793	Fuji River Mouth, Japan, 35^0 07' N, 138^0 38' E	240197*	Lakes NP	8177 S
041-59331	2+	140190	Lakes NP	090391* 290194* 150394** 260694* 281094** 161194** 280195** 081195** to 210296 211296**	Lakes NP Lakes NP Lakes NP *Ngashima Japan* Lakes NP Lakes NP Lakes NP Lakes NP Lakes NP Lakes NP Lakes NP	0 0 0 8154 N 0 0 0 0 0
041-92182	2	260196	Lakes NP	290197	Pangasinan Philippines 16^0 20'N, 137^0 10'E	6688 N

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date of retrap	Location found	km moved
041-92158	2+	260196	Lakes NP	250596**	Ishiki, Aichi, Japan 34^0 47'N, 137^0 09'E	8160 N
041-92156	2+	260196	Lakes NP	010797*	Ishiki. Aichi, Japan 34^0 47'N, 137^0 02'E	8161 N
041-92213	2+	270196	Lakes NP	110797*	Chofu, Tokyo, Japan 35^0 38'N, 139^0 32'E	8224 N
041-91585	2+	260196	Lakes NP	190596	Fukuoka, Japan 33^0 40^0'N, 130^0 24'E	8000N
041-90184	2+	280195	Lakes NP	091196**	Bundjaling NP, 40 km N of Ballina, NSW	1200 NE
041-91599	2+	260196	Lakes NP	010197**	Manly Boat Harbour, Moreton Bay, Qld.	1350 N

* indicates live recovery; ** indicates sight record of colour flags*

A wonderful set of Little Tern recoveries, including the first from Japan to Victoria and the first from Australia to the Philippines. The recovery date of the latter, if correct, suggests that the bird did not return to the Lakes National Park in the 1996/97 summer. The further recoveries in Japan adds to the growing evidence that Japan is the principal source of the flocks of non-breeding Little Terns which visit the east coast of Australia each October to March. 041-92156 and 041-92213 were both caught on the nest.

Crested Tern

Recoveries of chicks banded at Mud Islands, Port Phillip Bay

Band	Date of banding	Method of recovery	Recovery date	Recovery location	km moved
071-95448	171288	dying	171295	W. Phillip Island	43 SE
072-04382	161289	retrapped	010195	Lakes NP	268 E
072-15279	1512.90	dead	190896	Stradbroke Island, Moreton Bay, Queensland	1457 NE
072-23594	191292	dead	080297.	where banded	0
072-27738	181293	retrapped	010195	Lakes NP	268 E
072-36087	181293	dead	170896	Anglesea	52 E
072-36545	181293	retrapped	240197	Lakes NP	268 E
072-46994	181294	dead	130295	Cape Woolamai	61 SE

Band	Date of banding	Method of recovery	Recovery date	Recovery location	km moved
072-46988	181294	retrapped	281295	Nudgee, Moreton Bay, Queensland	1442 NE
072-47362	181294	dead	130996	Eden NSW	468 E
072-47524	181294	dying	180597	Moryua, NSW	545 ENE
072-65512	171295	dead	280496	French Island	47 E
072-49712	171295	dead	221096	Beaumaris	40 NE
072-65930	171295	dead	021296	Point Gellibrand	47 N
072-65652	171295	dying	291296	Newhaven	59 ESE
072-65955	171295	retrapped	260197	Lakes NP	268 E
?	171295	seen	140497	South Ballina NSW	1350 NE
072-66984	211296	dead	010297	Williamstown	46 N
?	211296	seen	240297	Port MacDonnell SA	349 W
072-72236	211296	dead	170397	Merimbula, NSW	479 ENE
?	211296	seen	260397	Newcastle, NSW	870 NE
072-66590	211296	alive	300597	Perpendicular Point NSW	1040 NE
072-72281	211296	dying	010797	Newhaven	59 ESE

Recoveries of chicks banded off Manns Beach, Corner Inlet

Band	Date of banding	Method of recovery	Recovery date	Recovery location	km moved
072-27636	121293	retrapped	260197	Lakes NP	1164 NE
072-66179	110196	dying	230696	Sunshine Beach, Queensland	1483 NNE
072-66463	110196	dead	100796	Shearwater, Tas	275 S

Recoveries of chicks banded at the Nobbies, west end of Phillip Island

Band	Date of banding	Method of recovery	Recovery date	Recovery location	km moved
072-48607	221294	dead	170295	Helens Head	9 E
072-49150	160195	dying	220295	Cape Woolamai	21 E
072-49528	160195	retrapped	260197	Lakes NP	241 E
072-73380	220197	dead	050397	Point Wilson	68 NW

Recaptures by VWSG of chicks banded elsewhere

Band	Date of banding	Where banded	Recovery date	Recovery location	km moved
071-46285	131281	Coorong SA	040896	Barry Beach	681 ESE
071-54071	191183	Five Is., Port Kembla, NSW	260197	Lakes NP	478 SW
072-21151	311292	Bicheno, Tas	260197	Lakes NP	440 N

These recoveries of chicks banded at Victorian colonies generally conform to the established pattern of easterly, then northerly, dispersal along the coast to non-breeding areas in New South Wales and south-east Queensland. The sighting of a colour banded bird at Port MacDonnell, South Australia, (by Ken Gosbell), is an exception, this bird moving 349 km westwards within a month of fledging. The recovery in Tasmania is also unusual, especially in mid-winter.

Recaptures of non-breeding birds at the Lakes National Park in January each year are providing further evidence of the apparent delayed onset of first breeding in Crested Terns. Contained in the above lists are a five year old, a four year old and two, three year old birds (as well as other one and two year olds) which are clearly not yet breeding. Two of these were from non-Victorian colonies and will presumably return to their natal colonies in Tasmania and NSW when they reach breeding age.

A further 34 banded adult Crested Terns were caught at the nest or with chicks at the Mud Islands colony on 21 December 1996. As in samples obtained in previous years there were few birds less than six years old.

Age	Number of recaptures
10	1
9	2
8	11
7	11
6	8
5	1
Total	**34**

Given that an almost constant number of chicks have been banded at Mud Islands for each of the last ten years this pattern strongly suggest that most birds may not breed until they reach an age of six years. The current yearly cohort colour banding programme will more accurately, and independently, test this hypothesis in due course.

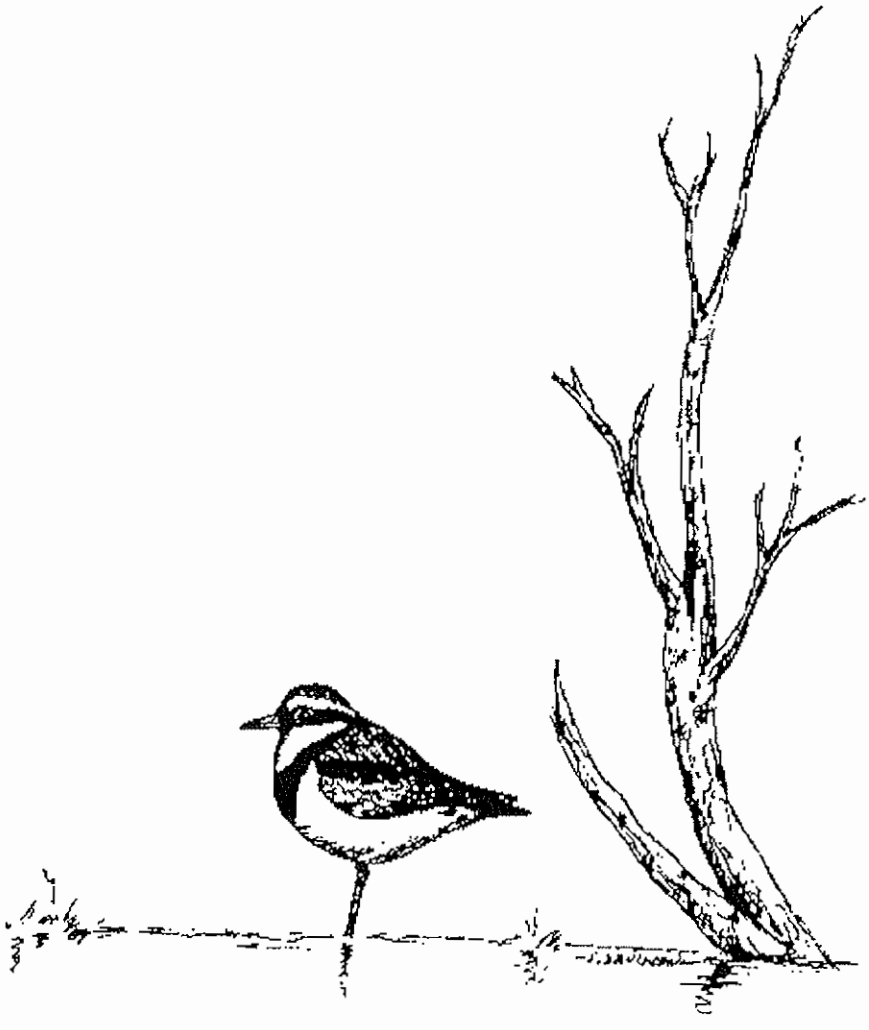
Silver Gull

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date of retrap	Location found	km moved
?	Chick	181090	Five Is., Port Kembla, NSW	110596	Altona	665 SW
?	1+	?	Shortland, NSW	090896	Mud Islands	866 SW

Both the above birds were identified by colour band combinations. The latter bird was probably breeding at Mud Islands. These are quite long movements for Silver Gulls.

Band	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date of retrap	Location found	km moved
081-87913	Chick	281083	Mud Is.	011294	Mud Is.	0

This bird was 11 years old and was obviously breeding at its natal site.



Sightings of Leg-flagged Waders from Victoria
Report number 5.

An orange plastic leg-flag has been placed on the right tibia of most migrant and some resident waders banded in Victoria since 1990. Altogether some 20,000 birds have been marked in this way.

Lists of sightings of orange flagged birds away from the banding areas have been published in past VWSG Bulletins (and in the AWSG bulletin *The Stilt).* This is the fifth such list and mostly covers sightings reported in the year to June 30 1997. Special thanks for reporting sightings are due to Geoff Carey and Paul Leader (Hong Kong), Minoru Kashiwagi (Japan) and the New Zealand Banding Office & Adrian Riegen (New Zealand).

Lesser Sand Plover

240396	Manly Foreshore, Moreton Bay, Qld.	B. Lane, T Tarrant, N. Moores

This is the second year in which a Victorian flagged Lesser Sand Plover has been seen in Moreton Bay at the time of northward migration.

Greater Sand Plover

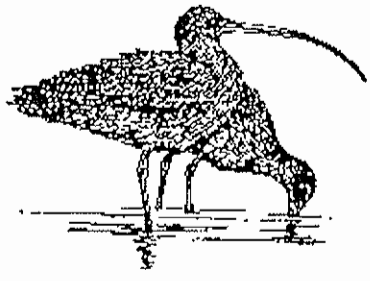
220396	Wynnum, Moreton Bay, Qld	A. Keates
121096	Manly Foreshore, Moreton Bay, Qld.	M. Hayward
261096	Manly Foreshore, Moreton Bay, Qld.	T. Tarrant, A & C. Keates
131196	Tuross Estuary, NSW	M. Crowley

Further indications of a coastal migration route for this species. There have now been seven sightings from only nine flagged birds!

Ruddy Turnstone

230297	Karaka, Manukau Harbour, NZ 37^0 5'S 174^0 50'E	P. Cuming, B. Wooley, *et al.*

This is the first movement of a Ruddy Turnstone between Victoria and New Zealand.



Eastern Curlew

060495	Kamo River, Saijo, Ekime, Japan 33° 55N 133° 10'E	Japan Migration Research Centre
251096	Lan-uang His, Ilan, Taiwan. 24° 42N 121° 50'E	Taiwan Banding Centre
19-210397	Sone, Kitakyushu, Fukuoaka, Japan 33° 49N 130° 58'E	Kazuo Samoto
190397	Sone, Kitakyushu, Fukuoaka, Japan 33° 49N 130° 58'E	Kazuo Samoto
220397	Imazu, Fukuoaka, Japan 33° 36N 130° 15'E	Okabe
260397	Higashi-Yoga, Saga, Japan 33° 11N 130° 16'E	Masayoshi Takeishi
261296	Penrice Saltfields, St Kilda, SA	W. Syson

The bird in Taiwan was on a rather late date for a presumed return to Victoria. A nice collection of five sightings in Japan. The bird in South Australia had obviously changed its non-breeding area.

Terek Sandpiper

110497	Mai Po Nature Reserve, Hong Kong 22° 29N 114° 19'E	R. Meermans
291096	Manly Harbour, Moreton bay, Queensland	A. and C. Keates

These are the first sightings of orange flagged Terek Sandpipers. Only eight have been marked with leg flags in Victoria.

Bar-tailed Godwit

200496 to 050596	Yatsu, Narashino-shi, Japan 35° 41N 140° 0'E	Harutaka Takubo
200496 to 150596	"	Yatsu Nature Observers
200496	Shin-hama, Ichikawa-shi, Chiba, Japan. 35° 40N 139° 55'E	Tsutomu Ishikawa
210496	Arao-shi, Kumamoto, Japan 32° 58N 130° 26'E	Kazumori Yamamoto
270496	Watera, Miyagi, Japan	Hiroshi Ikeno
280496	Yatsu, Narashino-shi, Japan 35° 41N 140° 0'E	Ryuji Iijima
070596	Edogawa Canal, Ichikawa-shi, Japan 35° 42N 139° 56'E	Kenichi Kaneko
110596	Yatsu, Narashino-shi, Japan 35° 41N 140° 0'E	Harutaka Takubo

	Bar-tailed Godwit Continued	
190596	Tori-no-umi, Watari-machi, Japan 38^0 02N 140^0 57'E	Masataka Iguchi
260596	Edogawa Canal, Ichikawa-shi, Japan 33^0 59N 133^0 27'E	Nobuyoshi Ishii
280497	Watari, Miyagi, Japan 38^0 02N 140^0 55'E	Hiroshi Ikena
020597	Yatsu, Chiba, Japan. 35^0 40N 140^0 00'E	Tomoo Hirayama
110597	Yatsu, Chiba, Japan 35^0 40N 140^0 00'E	Simba Chan
17-180597	Watari, Miyagi, Japan 38^0 02N 140^0 55'E	Hiroshi Ikeno
091196	Miranda, Firth of Thames, NZ	K. Woodley
151296	Karaka, Manukau Harbour, NZ	T. Habraken
250497	Mankyung Estuary, Korea 36^0 52N 126^0 43'E	Jin Young Park
261096	Manly Harbour, Moreton Bay, Qld	A. and C. Keates

A wonderful crop of 15 sightings in Japan (only one previously). Also the first sighting in Korea.

Red Knot

300996, 261096, 271096, 151296	Kidd's, Karaka, Manukau Harbour, NZ (2 birds)	T. Habraken, C. Minton, R Clough
231096, 291096, 121196, 171096	Mangere, Manukau Harbour, NZ	T. Habraken, C. Minton, R Clough
171096	Clarke's Bay, Manukau Harbour, NZ	T. Habraken
031196	Tapora, North Kaipara, NZ	N. Green
171196	Miranda, Firth of Thames, NZ	T. Habraken
20-220996	Kooragang I., Stockton, NSW	D. Geering
--0297	Price Saltfields, SA	per D. Paton

As usual New Zealand feature extremely strongly in Red Knot leg-flag sightings. The bird in South Australia has obviously changes it's non-breeding area.

Great Knot

070996	Yatsu, Chiba, Japan 35^0 10N 140^0 0'E	Yasuo Suzuki
190596	Broome, WA	J. Fallaw, B. Hayward

This is the first indication of a link between Victorian and NW Australia Great Knot. The sighting from Japan is also a first.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

161296	Mystic Park, northern Victoria	P. Maher

Sharp-tailed Sandpipers regularly use different non-breeding areas in different years.

Red-necked Stint

240597	Hsu-Tsuo Kang, Tauyuan, Taiwan 25^0 7'N 121^0 9'E	Taiwan Banding Scheme
260597	Nan-kang, Hsinchu, Taiwan 24^0 36'N 120^0 42'E	Taiwan Banding Scheme
010697	Lu-erk-men, Taiwan 23^0 1'N 120^0 6'E	Taiwan Banding Scheme
060596	Matsubase-Machi, Japan 32^0 36'N 130^0 39'E	Kunihiko Watanabe
100596	Nagatsu, Ehime, Japan 33^0 59'N 133^0 28E	Junji Kawada
010896	Tokachi, Hokkaido, Japan (2 birds)	Hitoshi Ochi
200896	Onohara, Kagawa, Japan	Hitoshi Yokoyama
260796	Pankowka, Rosja, Irkutsk, Russia 51^0 0'N 104^0 30E	Polish Banding Scheme
190496	Mai Po Nature Reserve, Hong Kong 22^0 29N 114^0 19'E	Paul Leader
200496	Mai Po Nature Reserve, Hong Kong 22^0 29N 114^0 19'E	David Melville
230497	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
110597	"	W. K. Li
150597	Beidaihe, Hebei, China 39^0 47N 119^0 27'E	G. Carey
04 to 251196 (5 sightings)	Lake Ellesmere NZ 43^0 43S 122^0 29'E	C. Hill
270697	Anna Plains, 80 Mile Beach, WA	C. Hassell, J. Sparrow, M. Russell
271296	Tullakool Saltworks, NSW	P. Maher
260996	Moruya, NSW	M. Crowley
231096	Maroom, Maryborough, Qld	C. Barnes
150196, 061096, 241196,	Cape Portland, Tas.	R. Cooper
010197	Hobart, Tas.	P. Park
090297	Perkins I. northern Tas.	T. Reid
261296	Carpenter Rocks, SA	A. Boyle, I. Stewart
100197, 260197	Lakes NP, Vic/	T. Rolland, C. Minton *et. al*

An excellent array of Red-necked Stint sightings from Russia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and New Zealand.

The sighting in Russia is some 11,000 km from southern Victoria and is well to the west of a direct migration route from the breeding grounds. Previous recoveries have also suggested that some birds carry out a marked westerly loop on their southward migration back to Australia. The sighting in Beidaihe, northern China, is one of very few flag sightings in that country (as opposed to many recoveries of banded birds). It was made by Peter Carey from Hong Kong - the person who also makes many observations in Hong Kong and also prepares the collated list of sightings from there each year.

Some of the sightings in Australia are of birds which had changed their non-breeding locations - an uncommon occurrence. The sighting in June in NW Australia is puzzling. Either it was a 'greater than normal' northward movement by a first year bird or it was an adult which abandoned its return to the breeding grounds after reaching NW Australia.

Curlew Sandpiper

150597	Beidaihe, Hebei, China 39^0 47N 119^0 27'E	G. Carey
070597	Szu-Tsao, Tainan, Taiwan 23^0 1N 120^0 7'E	Taiwan Banding Centre
090496 (2 birds)	Mai Po Nature Reserve, Hong Kong 22^0 29N 114^0 19'E	G. Carey
190496	"	P. Leader
200496 (2 birds)	"	P. Leader, P. Kennerley
240496	"	S. McChesney
010596	"	H. Seigel
240596	"	W. Yeung
230397	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
280397 (2 birds)	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
300397	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
310397 (4 birds)	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
010497 (3 birds)	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
080497 (2 birds)	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
100497	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
110497	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
130497	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
220497	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
230497 (2 birds)	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
260497 (2 birds)	"	G. Carey, P. Leader
270497	"	R. Lewthwaite
280497	"	R. Lewthwaite
300497	"	G. Carey, P. Leader

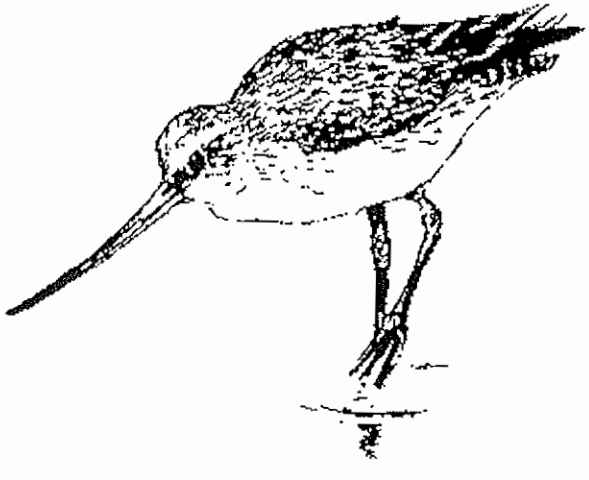
	Curlew Sandpiper Continued	
150996	Broome, WA	C. Hassell
200996 (3 birds)	Kooragang I. Stockton, NSW	D. Geering
220996	Kooragang I. Stockton, NSW	D. Geering
201296	Tullakool Saltworks NSW	P. Maher
061096, 091096	Cape Portland, Tas.	R. Cooper
021296	Cape Portland, Tas.	R. Cooper
090297	Perkins I. northern Tas.	T. Reid

Another good selection of sightings, particularly from Hong Kong. It is interesting that there are quite a few records of birds which have reached Hong Kong on northward migration before the end of March.

Sanderling

210496	Yatsu, Narashino-shi, Japan 35^0 41'N 140^0 00E	Tstomu Ishikawa
280496	"	Yatsu Nature Observers
040596	"	Tstomu Ishikawa
180896	"	Tatsuo Tomioka
240896	Akita, Japan 39^0 21'N 140^0 01E	Hitoshi Sasaki et al
2708 to 010996	Takamotsu, Ishikawa, Japan 36^0 45'N 136^0 42E	Yuji Sasahara
010996 (2 birds)	Ichinomiya River, Chiba, Japan 35^0 23'N 140^0 24E	Yasuo Suzuki
300996	South Ballina, NSW	Bo Totterman
071096 (different bird)	South Ballina, NSW	Bo Totterman
061196 (2 birds)	Sandy Point, Shallow Inlet	S. Taylor, J. Wilson and A. Gutowski

Another excellent series of sightings from Japan. This country dominates overseas reports of this species and is clearly an important stopover for Sanderling on both northward and southward migration.



Tern Banding 1996-97

Tern studies have become an increasingly important component of the VWSG programme over almost 20 years and for the last ten years the effort has been constant and sustained. There are three principal components.

1. Monitoring of the breeding populations and breeding success of colonies of Crested Terns, Caspian Terns and Fairy Terns on the main section of the Victorian coast between Port Phillip Bay and Corner Inlet (including Western Port). The programme includes breeding habitat maintenance at Mud Islands.

2. Banding of tern chicks at the above colonies to study movements, longevity, age of first breeding etc. Some capturing of banded adult breeding Crested Terns in now carried out to aid the third aspect of the study mentioned above. In the last two years this has been supplemented by colour banding (colour coded metal bands) a yearly cohort of 1000 chick Crested Terns at the Mud Island colony. Systematic searches of breeding birds for colour marked individuals will commence this year, and the colour marking programme will continue for at least five years.

3. Cannon netting of Little terns and Common Terns at "loafing" sites in the Gippsland Lakes National Park. This is to study the origin and migration routes of these summer visitors from the Northern Hemisphere, together with return patterns in subsequent years. A minority of Little Terns caught are post breeding adults and fledged juveniles from local breeding colonies. The individual colour flag codes used on Little Terns, and the generic colour used on Common Terns, have greatly increased the rate of data generation from the study.

Breeding Colonies 1996-97

Crested Tern

The 1996-97 summer was the best ever for nesting pairs and breeding success at the three main Victorian nesting colonies (the only other known colonies in Victoria are a few hundred pairs on an island off Mallacoota and a very small colony on rocks at Killarney Beach). After the dip in numbers the previous year, possibly caused by food shortage, numbers returned to a record level at Mud Island (1860 pairs) and close to the 1994-95 level at the Nobbies (800 pairs). The Corner Inlet colony was again at the west end of Clonmel Island. A small colony in the centre of Box Bank was washed out in late November.

Location	Nests	Chicks banded
Mud Island	1860	1716
The Nobbies	800	717
Corner Inlet	400	383
Total	**3060**	**2816**

With continuous settled weather from early December onwards breeding success was extremely high resulting in a record 2816 chicks being banded. 1000 of these at Mud Island were marked with blue painted metal bands to facilitate recognition of this age cohort when these birds subsequently reach breeding age.
Data on the age of retrapped breeding adults is given in the "Recoveries" section. However the opportunity is taken here to correct an omission in the table on page 25 of the last VWSG Bulletin (no.20, July 1996). There were eight birds of age 6 years retrapped in 1995-96.

Caspian Terns

Caspian Terns had a better year in 1996-97. A record 90 pairs nested on the west end of Clonmel Island, Corner Inlet, 10 pairs on Mud Island, and 2 pairs (as opposed to the usual single pair) on Rams Island (off French Island). 39 chicks were banded at Clonmel and 9 at Mud Island. At least one of the Rams Island pairs also raised young.

The reasons for the modest breeding success of the Clonmel Caspian Terns are not apparent. In contrast to most years flooding of the colony by storm tides was not a factor after late November. Crested Terns nesting at the same location and on equally low incipient dunes were, in contrast, highly successful. Predation by the ever increasing population of Silver Gulls is a possibility - Caspian Terns are much less protective of their eggs and young than Crested terns.

Fairy Terns

Fairy Terns nest in Corner Inlet every year but with extremely poor breeding success- in spite of two or three attempts in some years- due to storm tides and wind blown sand. The settled summer of 1996-97 gave them a rare opportunity and 32 pairs successfully hatched at least 23 chicks (all banded) on the west end of Clonmel Island.

Murray Portbury checked out the Fairy Tern colony which has bred at Rams Island, just off French Island, in several recent years. Nesting had just commenced on 17 December (3 nests with eggs) and the colony had grown to 30 pairs by 12 January, with the first eggs just hatched. A return visit to band the chicks was not possible.

As in other recent years no Fairy Terns were known to have nested in Port Phillip Bay, either at Werribee Spit, Sand Island (Queenscliff) or Mud Island.

Cannon netting, January 1997, Gippsland Lakes

Clive Minton

The usual single annual visit over the Australia Day weekend in late January was made to the Ocean Grange area of the Lakes National Park. This was again practicable only because of the generous provision of boat transport by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Bairnsdale, and by the RAOU's Rotamah Bird Observatory.

Five catches were made- three on Albifrons Island and two on Point Wilson- with a record total of 553 birds. Common Terns dominated (497) and there were good numbers of Crested Terns, including some valuable recaptures (see "Recoveries" section).

Little Terns (25) were disappointing and well down on the record 145 caught in January 1996. There were plenty of Little Terns present but the large numbers of Common Terns dominated the catching area and pushed roosting Little Terns to outlying areas.

Species	New	Retrap	Total
Common Tern	424	73 (15%)	497
Little Tern	21	4 (16%)	25
Crested Tern	21	6 (22%)	27
White-winged Tern	4	0	4
	470	83	553

The January 1997 visit was most memorable for the capture of a Common Tern from Finland and a Little Tern from Japan. The former resulted in worldwide media coverage as it turned out to be the longest documented journey of any marked bird - 26,000 km (see "Recoveries" section).

Until very recently many doubted that the flocks of Little Terns present on the east coast of Australia during the summer were of northern hemisphere origin.

The fact that many of these birds breed in Japan is now well established and the "Recoveries " section contains several new records, mostly deriving from the excellent catches in January 1996.

Cannon netting Common and Little Terns will be continued in January 1998, with every effort being made to increase the proportion of Little Terns caught.

Monitoring the Effects of Aircraft on Curlew Sandpipers, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints at Avalon Airport, Geelong, Victoria.

Pete Collins and Rosalind Jessop

As part of their environmental monitoring programme the Avalon Airport Corporation commissioned Synnot and Wilkinson to study the effect of aircraft on sensitive bird habitat abutting the airport. Synnot and Wilkinson retained Peter Dann as their bird specialist.

The objective of the study was to measure the effects of aircraft type, height and noise level on waders using areas around the Avalon Airfield and to assess the potential impact these effects have on the ecology of the birds.

The VWSG undertook to provide six experienced observers per day over three two day sessions to monitor the effects of aircraft noise on waders at the Werribee Sewerage Farm and Avalon Saltworks. These dates covered periods when their was training aircraft present in the area (9th & 10th November) and immediately before (17th & 18th March) and during the Avalon Airshow (22nd and 23rd March).

The activity of three migratory wader species (Red-necked Stints and Curlew and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers) was monitored before, during and after the passage of aircraft and the duration of any changes in activity associated with the passage of the aircraft were recorded. Noise from the aircraft was monitored using noise monitors and the height and speed of the aircraft determined from radar observations at Melbourne Airport.

The significance of effects on the birds are being assessed by converting behavioural changes into energy lost due to increased flying activity or interrupted feeding.

Although the data has yet to be formally published (by Peter Dann) our impressions were that small aircraft did disturb the birds to a small degree but the main disturbance came from a jet-ski which was at least two kilometres away and from two large flags dragged behind a pair of parachutes which sent the whole of the saltworks into a tizzy. The main disturbance however was entirely natural, raptors being the principal culprits. Also disturbing was a visit by cattle to drink and multiple car-loads of bird observers on their annual Werribee outing - nothing strange there!

Thank-you to Angela Jessop, Nicole (what have I done to the car lights?) Grenfell, Moira (boggy) Longdon, Will (cactus car) Steele, Howard Simco, Colin and Gail (flatty) Gibbs, Jeff and Sarah Campbell, Matilda, Doris Graham, Malcolm Brown, Ken (flatty) Gosbell, Trevor Pescott, Laurie Living, Marg Reni, Vivien Holyoake, Brenda Murlis and Peter (dead car) Dann.

PS a hint to all those with electric car windows - if you wind them up and down all day with the engine turned off the battery will go flat and you will need the RACV - who are quite familiar with the sewerage farm - its amazing what fishermen get up to!

Cheetham Wetlands Bird Monitoring Programme

Jeff Campbell

Part of the old salt works is being filled in for housing and a golf course and the remainder is being preserved under the jurisdiction of Parks Victoria which will be incorporated into Point Cook Park.

In early February 1997 the Victorian Wader Study Group and Ecology Australia Pty Ltd were retained by Parks Victoria to carry out a pilot study to design a monitoring program for determining the impacts of human visitation on the Cheetham Wetlands (ex Cheetham Saltworks, Laverton).

Now managed by Parks Victoria, the Cheetham Wetlands holds significant numbers of waders and waterfowl and is an important, relatively undisturbed, refuge for such birds close to Melbourne. The draft Strategy Plan for the wetlands includes a proposal to allow limited and controlled human visitation. The pilot study carried out in the wetlands was designed to test sampling methods for measuring the possible effects of such visitation.

With my knowledge of the area, having carried out Australasian Wader Studies Group population monitoring counts there for several years, and as a member of the Cheetham and Point Cook Wetlands Reference Committee, I was asked to organise the field work for the VWSG.

The field work was carried out over five days between 2nd February and 6th April 1997, and involved a complete census of the distribution and abundance of all waterbirds present, block scanning to measure behaviour and recording any reasons for disturbance. Of the three sampling techniques used the flock scanning trial was the only one to reveal methodological difficulties.

Following the field work a report was prepared by Brett Lane of Ecology Australia. In addition to presenting the results of the trial program the report recommends further monitoring and the methods that should be used for this monitoring.

Thanks must go to the following volunteers (in alphabetical order) who gave their time to the program: Graham Beal, David Cafiso, Allan Clarke, Peter Hermans, Angela Jessop, Laurie Living, Bernie McCarrick, Phil Peglar, Marj Reni, Will Steele.

Trivia:

Q. Does the Curlew Sandpiper breed in Alaska?

A. Yes, but only rarely, it is a Eurasian species.

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BREEDING SEASON CENSUS OF PIED OYSTERCATCHERS *Haematopus longirostris* IN CORNER INLET, VICTORIA.

Minton, C. 165 Dalgetty Road, Beaumaris, Vic. 3193. AUSTRALIA.

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a breeding season survey of the distribution of Pied Oystercatchers in the Corner Inlet section of Nooramunga National Park, made by helicopter, in December 1996. An exceptionally large breeding population was located. Significant flocks. presumably of immature birds, were also found. The area was therefore considered to be extremely important for Pied Oystercatchers in the breeding season. The significance of this data is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Pied Oystercatchers *Haematopus longirostris* occur along the coast and in bays and inlets all around Australia. Watkins (199')) estimated the total Australian population at 10000, with all states except New South Wales having at least 1000 birds. However his data, reflected in the distribution map in Marchant & Higgins (1993), suggested that the greatest concentration was in south eastern Australia. This information was based on late summer and winter counts of birds in flocks and showed that "Corner Inlet", in south-eastern Victoria, had the highest population (average 870) at such times.

There is very little quantitative information on the distribution of Pied Oystercatchers in the breeding season, and in particular of the main breeding locations and breeding concentrations. In Victoria some data on coastal beach breeding sites has been collected during the course of other studies (eg. of the Hooded Plover *Thinornis rubricollis).* Also a comprehensive survey, by helicopter, was undertaken in Western Port in 1990 and 1992, covering both French Island and the total perimeter coastline of the Bay (Campbell 1993). In Corner Inlet only those areas readily accessible by boat (and thereafter on foot) - mainly the outer islands of Dream Island, Box Bank, Clonmel Island, and the ocean shore of Snake Island - have been censused during the breeding season. However this was sufficient to indicate the extreme importance of the area as a breeding location for Pied Oystercatchers.

The 1996 aerial survey

With the aid of a grant from the Coast Action/Coast Care program a helicopter survey of the shores of all islands and the mainland of the Nooramunga National park section of "Corner Inlet", was carried out on 23 December 1996. The survey took 4.5 hours of flying time (plus 2 refuelling stops) at a speed of 40 knots and mostly at a height of 50 ft. It coincided with

the high tide 1 period, thus minimising the area to be covered. Under these conditions all waders and waterbirds could be 1 readily identified and numbers and locations were marked on large scale maps. it was necessary to fly at this low altitude in order to ensure all Pied (and Sooty) Oystercatchers *H. fuliginosus* were flushed - they seem to be the species least perturbed by the helicopter.

Most breeding Pied Oystercatchers were sighted together in obvious pairs. Occasionally two individuals were located a little distance apart and were also classed as a pair. Also a few single birds on suitable breeding habitat and displaying a strong attachment to an area were considered as paired. Some of these, and others, were seen leaving nests above the high tide mark while other pairs obviously had chicks (some half grown chicks were seen). But the majority of pairs were just standing around at or close to the tide edge suggesting that many breeding attempts had failed. This is a common occurrence at Corner Inlet because of storm tides. Such tides in late November 1996 are known to have washed out most breeding terns. However some of the pairs may also have been "non-breeding" pairs.

RESULTS

The area covered by the survey is shown in Figure 1 and the results are detailed in Table 1.

Breeding pairs

A total of 250 pairs of Pied Oystercatchers was located in the Nooramunga National Park and adjacent areas of "Corner Inlet" between McLoughlin's Beach in the east and Snake Island/Barry Beach Point in the west.

Between 20 and 32 pairs were found on each of the main 'ocean barrier' islands - Dream, Box Bank, Clonmel and Snake - with the majority of birds being, on the inland side of the islands and on the sandy spits at each end, rather than on the narrow seaward ocean beach.

By far the biggest surprise in the results was the huge number of breeding pairs on Sunday Island and the associated Drum Island (73 pairs). These were around much of the perimeter of the island. It is probably significant that this is the only 'inland' island where the coastline is not dominated by mangroves. Instead there are extensive areas of narrow salt marsh as well as sandy beaches and muddy inlets, all providing suitable nesting habitat. It is also interesting that it is the only inhabited island in the area, being privately owned, with many small 'weekend cottages' (much used by deer hunters). Another key factor in its popularity for breeding Pied Oystercatchers may also be its long-tern freedom from foxes and cats - exterminated many years ago.

Another slight surprise was the significant number of pairs of Pied Oystercatchers with territories on the mainland coast of the complex. Nearly

Coast Action / Coastcare Grants

Clive Minton

The federally funded state administered Coast Action / Coastcare Grants scheme provides funds to assist community groups to undertake desirable programmes to improve, in a variety of ways, our coastal environment and our knowledge of how to manage it. It is usually a partnership between a community group and a government agency- with each rendering its (costed) services free of charge - with financial input from Coast Action/Coastcare to cover tangible external costs.

The Victorian Wader Study Group were successful in all three applications made for Coast Action / Coastcare grants in late 1996. These were:-

Fox Control in Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park (Corner Inlet)	$16,250
Census of Pied Oystercatcher breeding population in Corner Inlet	$ 2,500
Equipment to support fieldwork of VWSG	$ 1,800

Some further information on the projects, and progress achieved to July 1997, is given below.

Fox Control in Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park

The islands of "Corner Inlet" - particularly the outer "barrier" islands Dream Island, Box Bank, Clonmel Island and Snake Island - are extremely important breeding location for Hooded Plovers, Pied Oystercatchers, Caspian, Crested and Fairy Terns. They are also very important daytime and night-time high tide roosts for up to 30,000 waders.

Foxes have long been present on most islands in the Corner Inlet complex. During the breeding season there is considerable evidence of foxes searching the upper beaches systematically for nests and chicks and for actual predation of eggs and young - and even of the occasional parent bird.

It has long been obvious that fox control- preferably elimination - from islands would benefit breeding success and ultimately lead to an increased breeding population of the ground nesting waders and terns. However the size of the task - needing a major widespread effort sustained over a period of years - was beyond an "amateur" group like the VWSG and even the government agencies Parks Victoria and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

The current project, which runs from December 1996 to November 1997, is an extensive regular 1080 poison baiting programme on the four outer barrier islands mentioned already, plus adjacent inner islands St. Margarets, Little Snake, Little Island (between St. Margarets and Dream Island), and a small island at the entrance to the channel to Robertsons Beach (Robertsons Beach "Mangrove Roots" island).

The professional fox baiters have been employed for an average of 1 day per week, to carry out the fox poisoning programme. Their employment costs, and the costs of the 1080 bait, are covered by the Coast Action / Coastcare grant. The Nooramunga Parks Victoria staff have provided, at their expense, all the boat transport and additional ranger assistance with the bait laying. The VWSG members at their own expense have regularly visited the relevant islands to check the presence of foxes and have monitored the populations of breeding waders and terns in the 1996-97 summer. Boat transport for the VWSG component of the programme was provided again, free of charge, by Parks Victoria and by the Yarram Region of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

The rate of bait take on many islands, especially Snake Island, has been phenomenally high indicating a very large fox population. The rate is gradually reducing but only Clonmel Island is currently considered to be fox free.

The first phase of the programme is now halfway through it's planned course - both in timescale and in expenditure. Hopefully some tangible benefits to the birds may even become apparent during the surveys scheduled for the 1997-98 breeding season. A further application has been made to Coast Action/Coastcare for funds to continue a sustained programme throughout 1998.

Census of Breeding Pied Oystercatchers in Corner Inlet.

The inaccessibility of many parts of the Corner Inlet complex has in the past prevented a comprehensive census of the number of breeding Pied Oystercatchers. Selected areas previously censored suggested it was an extremely important area, possibly the most important in Australia. Helicopter surveys had already proved their suitability for determining the Pied Oystercatcher breeding populations in Westernport (see VWSG Bulletin 17, December 1993). A complete coverage of Nooramunga National Park - islands and mainland - and other parts of Corner Inlet was planned, with funds for helicopter hire provided by Coast Action/Coastcare. VWSG put in, free of charge observer effort and parallel ground counts in some of the more accessible parts of Nooramunga National Park and also elsewhere along the Victorian coast. Parks Victoria/DRNE Yarram again provided necessary boat transport.

The aerial survey was spectacularly successful with the total of 250 breeding pairs found in the Nooramunga National Park making it the most important breeding site in Australia. The full results are written up in a separate article in this bulletin.

Limited funds, and fuel availability, prevented the perimeter and islands of the "true" Corner Inlet being also surveyed. An application has been made to Coast Action/Coastcare for a further grant in 1997/98 to enable the total survey to be completed. A repeat survey of Sunday Island - the island with

the highest concentration of breeding pairs(76) - will also be carried out and a parallel ground/boat survey of Sunday Island will be used to validate the aerial survey.

Equipment to support VWSG fieldwork

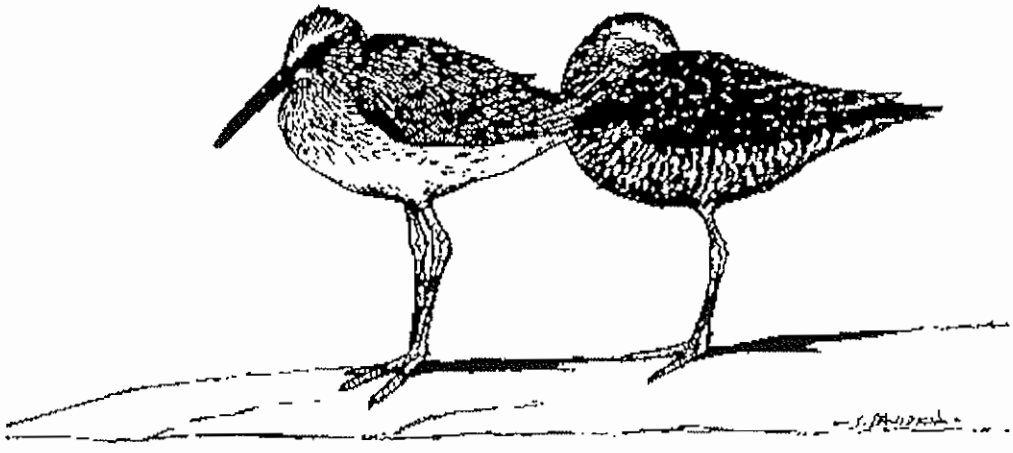
The VWSG spends several thousand dollars each year on new, or replaced, items of equipment and on consumable items such as gunpowder, safety electric fuses, colour bands and colour flags. These are financed from members subscriptions, from 'profits' made from members inputs into various activities (e.g. from equipment manufacture for other organisations, field survey work for other organisations), and from occasional generous donations (e.g. from Esso Australia in each of the last three years.

The Coast Action/Coastcare grant of $1800 was specifically designed to facilitate a much needed keeping cage re-equipment programme and a major investment in colour bands for an expanded Pied and Sooty Oystercatcher catching programme. Details of expenditure covered by the grant are included in the Annual Accounts published elsewhere in this Bulletin.

No further application for equipment to Coast Action/Coastcare will be made in 1997/98 as it currently appears that the equipment / consumable needs for the next year can be adequately met from existing financial resources.

Acknowledgments

The Victorian Wader Study Group would like to thank Coast Action/Coastcare for it's generous financial assistance in 1996/97. Considerable progress in the knowledge and understanding of waders and terns in the Corner Inlet area was achieved as a result of this funding and major steps implemented in habitat improvement via predator control. The generous support role of Parks Victoria (Foster office) and DNRE Yarram is also gratefully acknowledged, as well as the input of many VWSG members.

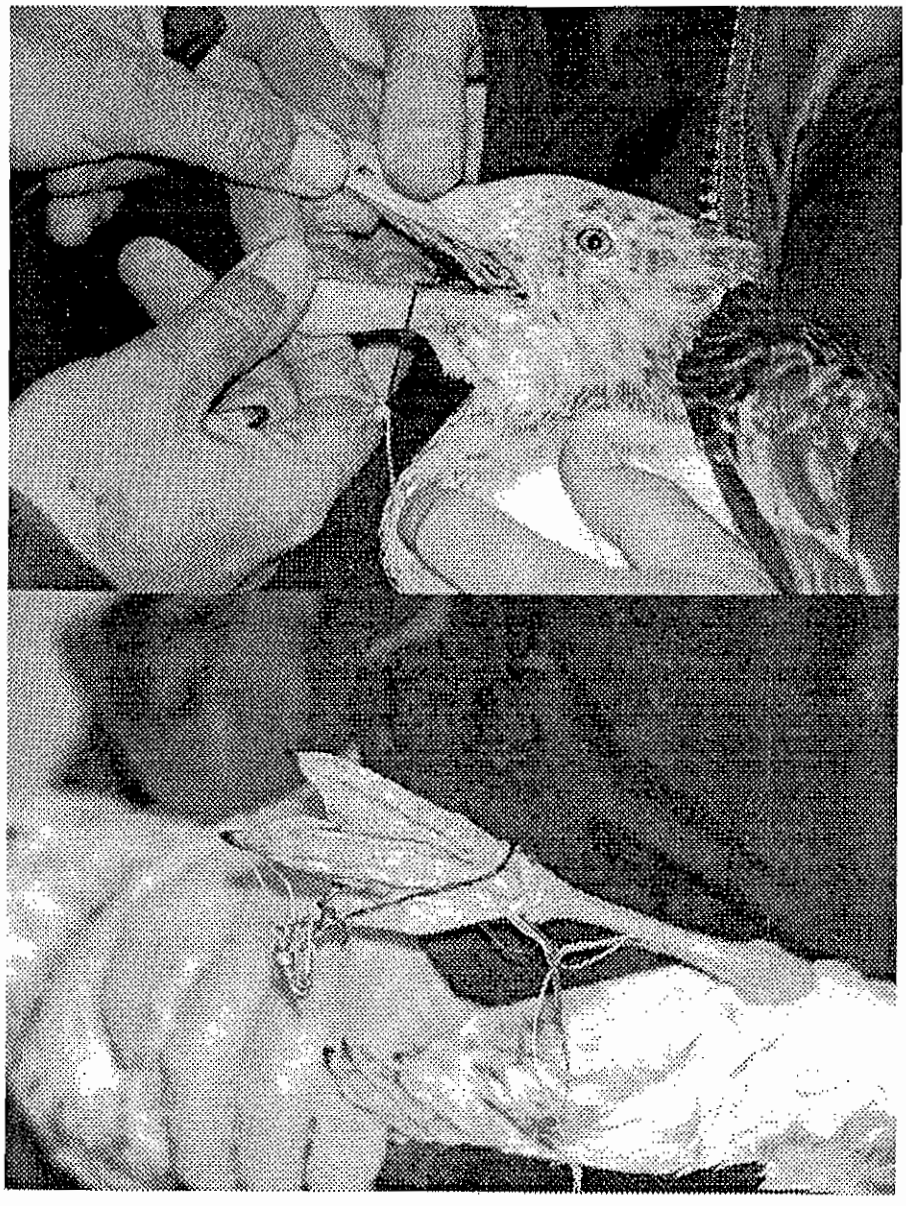


END OF THE (FISHING) LINE.

Pete Collins.

(Photographs by Doris Graham)

I remember as a kid seeing a poster with a European Robin hanging from a piece of fishing line after finding a convenient worm flying in a tree. This flying worm had a secret in the way of a hook and the inevitable happened resulting in an unfortunate non-piscine death but a very memorable picture.. I enjoy fishing and since man began hunting denizens of the deep for a quick fry up I suppose he has thrown away bits and pieces that are no longer any good. As I was ploughing a furrow through Pied Oystercatcher resightings several non-banded birds have been reported as limping or with legs or feet amputated and some having fishing line around their legs and feet. It can be surmised that the pristine beaches of Australia and in particular Victoria are no longer as pristine as they were. Take a stroll along any beach, and carry a plastic bag with you, collect fishing paraphernalia, commercial as well as leisure types, and any pieces of rope, string or the like. You might be surprised at the collection you can achieve. All potentially loops to catch the beachcombing Oyc.



There are three instances of actual entanglement that I have personally seen and if you mention the subject it starts a whole avalanche of third party and personal stories. The Pied Oyk at Swan Island was witnessed by several people as was Pacific Gull in the picture which thought it had procured a free energy saving meal and it was only the strength of Rob Berry that stopped it being its last. The third instance was of a Pied Oyk that had

lost its fishing line but had retained a deep scar as a souvenir. When handling shorebirds especially Oystercatchers it is surprising how many have this sort of injury and worse possibly due to junk.

I don't advocate jumping on every member of the fishing fraternity and demanding that they account for every last bit of their tackle, this can be intimidating and can lead to some interesting situations for ladies of a blushing nature. What I would suggest is if you find fishing line stick it in your pocket and melt it into a lump as soon as possible, after all Silver Gull and Ravens on the nearest dump will probably end up flying it back if it is put into a bin even if it is via the local landfill.

Summary of Presentations
Hooded Plover Seminar, 26 June 1997, Portsea, Victoria

About seventy people attended this one day seminar. The following abstracts are from papers presented at the seminar. Malcolm Brown (see next section) is setting up a Hooded Plover Network to provide support and ideas to people interested in helping to preserve this vulnerable species. Many of the techniques useful to help the "Hoodies" will also assist other beach nesting species such as Little Tern, Pied Oystercatcher and Red-capped Plover.

Trivia
Q. How many species of gulls inhabit Antarctica, and name them
A. Only one the Kelp Gull.

Sharing the Beach, how fair is it?
Monitoring and Management of the Hooded Plover within the Mornington Peninsula National Park.

Bernice Dowling, Ranger, Mornington Peninsula National Park, PO Box 117, Sorrento, Vic. 3943.

Abstract
Hooded Plovers *Thinornis rubricollis* inhabit the ocean beaches of the Mornington Peninsula National Park. A ground nesting bird with flightless young, this bird relies on the tidal zone of sandy beaches to feed for two months before fledging. With 2.8 million tourist visits to the National Park annually, this study looks at the impact of recreation on the Hooded Plover.

Two methods are used to assess the impact of visitor numbers on Hooded Plovers. Friends of the Hooded Plover survey the ocean beaches every 2 weeks during the breeding season and every 4 to 5 weeks when the plovers form wintering flocks. During the survey, Friends record all species they observe including dogs and people. While surveying, the Friends walk below the high tide area to avoid any disturbance to tidal nests or plover runners. In the second method nest searching is undertaken where Friends regularly

record adult plovers, particularly when only one plover is sighted on the beach. Approaching nests is avoided to minimise disturbance and prevent foxes from following foot prints to the eggs. Observations of nests and recording a plover sitting (incubation- eggs) are made from a distance. Searching is done by experienced observers only. After locating the nest, the site is visited regularly and the most obvious nest fate recorded. The combined efforts have provided 4,700 records relating to adult plovers, 109 records relating to flightless runners and the results of 143 nest attempts.

This presentation summarises the data collected and identifies practices in coastal management that do not adequately protect breeding areas. The presentation also highlights the positive management undertaken by Parks Victoria and the Friends of the Hooded Plover to increase the hatching success and the survival rate of runners.

Monitoring the Hooded Plover on Phillip Island

Bob Baird, Phillip Island Nature Park, PO Box 97, Cowes, Phillip Island, 3922.

Abstract
Studies of Hooded Plovers on Phillip Island over the past 5 breeding seasons have shown that breeding success is very low. This presentation covers details on adult Hooded Plover numbers, breeding sites, current and discontinued, breeding success and the terrain at nest sites.

An Experiment: Study of Egg Loss in Hooded Plovers on Phillip Island

Peter Dann and Bob Baird, Phillip Island Nature Park, PO Box 97, Cowes, Phillip Island, 3922.

Abstract
Studies of Hooded Plovers on Phillip Island in recent years have shown that breeding success is very low, possibly too low to sustain a stable population unless the birds are relatively long-lived or considerable immigration occurs. One contributing factor to the low breeding success, is the high rate of egg loss to predation by foxes, dogs and trampling by sheep (51%).

In 1995, we started an experiment to determine if excluding predators and stock from nest sites would improve hatching success and have a corresponding effect on overall breeding success. We tested three types of exclosures and have developed what we believe to be on optimal design for excluding predators and stock as well as permitting access to the birds. A mesh size of 50 x 65 mm appeared most suitable as smaller mesh sizes caused problems for the birds and larger mesh may have allowed limited access to predators.

Eight exclosures have been deployed to date and hatching success has been substantially increased as a result. So far, overall breeding success has not been improved and it will take several more years before we have sufficient

data to reach definite conclusions. The management implications of this experiment will be discussed.

Same place, same time - same Plover? Colour-banding the Hooded Plover in Victoria.

Michael A. Weston, Department of Zoology, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Vic. 3052.

Abstract

Hooded Plovers *Thinornis rubricollis* face a variety of perceived threats, everything from disturbance by recreationists to rising sea-levels resulting from the Greenhouse Effect. Relatively little is known about the nature and impact of these threats, and the low population levels and possible population decline in the species means that there is an urgent need for research into these problems. One method applied by this study is capture and marking. Over 100 Plovers have been marked in coastal Victoria (about 25% of the State's current population). In particular, this study is characterised by intense follow-up of marked birds, largely thanks to a network of interested groups and governmental agencies. To date about 1,000 sightings of marked birds has been received. This presentation will discuss the methods employed, and the different kinds of data generated by this technique, with an emphasis on movements. Some preliminary results will be presented in the context of population monitoring and coastal management.

The work described in this presentation is only one component of a multi-faceted research project entitled *"The Hooded Plover: Conservation Biology, Habitat and Disturbance"*. A brief summary of some of the other components of the project will be given.

Breeding Success of the Hooded Plover in Victoria A synthesis of results from Mornington National Park, Phillip Island and the Bellarine Peninsula.

Bernice Dowling, Parks Victoria, Mornington Peninsula National Park, PO Box 117, Sorrento 3943; Bob Baird, c/- Phillip Island Nature Park, P.O. Box 97, Cowes Phillip Island. 3922. Michael A. Weston (Speaker), Dep. of Zool., Uni. of Melbourne, Parkville, Vic. 3052.

Abstract

Monitoring of Hooded Plover *Thinornis rubricollis* breeding success has been conducted at three sites in Victoria: Mornington Peninsula National Park, Phillip Island and on the Bellarine Peninsula. This presentation synthesises the breeding results from these areas, which represent some of the areas most highly utilised by recreationists in Victoria. The number of nests has been used as a measure of breeding effort. The results are preliminary but suggest considerable variation in reproductive success within and between areas. Overall, the reproductive success was low, and given that the combined areas represent a substantial proportion of Hooded Plover habitat in the State, there is some cause for concern.

HOODED PLOVER NETWORK

Malcolm Brown

Communication between Natural Resource Managers and voluntary groups is vital when members of the public are trying to protect threatened native species of flora and fauna. The Friends of the Hooded Plover on the Mornington Peninsula have shown this to be true with their recent achievements of working with National Park staff to better manage the park for Hooded Plovers - a species that has been in decline for many years. During the last breeding season, 13 chicks fledged within the Mornington Peninsula National Park. A result that would have been considered impossible only a couple of years ago.

I believe this can duplicated in other coastal areas of Victoria where volunteers are willing to work with Natural Resources Managers to help protect other Hooded Plover populations.

The objectives of the **"Hooded Plover Network"** is to encourage other community groups like those on the Mornington Peninsula to work with Management authorities. New techniques in providing protection, establishing survey protocols, increasing public awareness and applying for funds, are all vital for the Hooded Plovers future.

The "Hooded Plover Network" has already received funding assistance from "Biosis" a private company involved in native flora and fauna management and hopes to receive a seeding grant from Coast Action. This will help fund the distribution of newsletters to interested people and groups who want to help increase Victorian Hooded Plover numbers.

I believe if people have the commitment, have accurate data and information and are willing to work hand in hand with Management Authorities, they can, in the long term achieve positive results for Hooded Plovers in their region.

If you wish to be involved, write to the:

"Hooded Plover Network"
PO Box 8, Rye 3941.

Trip to South Australia - 24 February to 2 March 1997

Ken Gosbell

After a successful visit to South Australia in November 1996 we gathered again on Monday 24 February at Brown Bay (Port MacDonnell) hoping to repeat the pleasant and successful previous trip to this area near the Victorian - South Australian border. Our intrepid group consisted of Clive, Howard, Angie, Roz, Pete, Rosemary, Graham Rowe, Graeme Beal, Liz & Stuart, Thierry, Dale, Carlene and myself. We spent the next few nights in the Fisherman's Cottage; a remote and quaint cottage that had to be out of Storm Boy.

All the early action was on Stoney Point with flocks of 300-400 Sanderling seen there together with other small waders. (A highlight was the observation of a crested tern with a blue leg flag - banded by the group at Mud Islands on 20-12-96.) Our catch on the Tuesday on the 'rocks' yielded 273 birds of which 168 were Sanderling (68 retraps), 51 Curlew Sandpiper 36 Red-necked Stints, 11 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and 7 Turnstone. It was good to have the locals - Maureen, Adrian, Mary, Victoria and Meredith come to lend a hand and contribute their local knowledge.

The birds were a bit wary of us the next day so we took advantage of some turnstones (28) and godwits (3) on the town beach much to the interest of the local population. One of the joys of staying in the Fisherman's Cottage is to meet with Paul, the owner who has a vast knowledge of the area and of cray fishing in particular. After spinning his yarns well into the evening he reappeared with samples of his wares - several large crayfish! Clive suggested we gather for a cray breakfast - some found this a little daunting so doggie bags appeared for later enjoyment. Clive however had no trouble at all!

We reluctantly moved on to Carpenter Rocks where we again had a successful catch of Turnstone (28), sharpies (4) and even a Pectoral Sandpiper. It was good to then drive on through Millicent to Iain and Sandy Stuart's farm at Rendelsham where they and their children Sallie, Anna and James gave us a great welcome. Showers were very popular that night as was the green oasis of grass surrounding their home amongst the dry farmland beyond. Over the next two days we drove to Carpenter Rocks and set at several locations along the beach. Catches ranged from 58 to 106 with the dominant species being Turnstone which was our target species for the trip.

Saturday night was party night and Iain and Sandy with the help of some of our group turned on a wonderful spread where all the local helpers and other friends joined us. Entree was abalone which was followed by- you guessed it- crayfish. Yes, several crayfish, one weighing in at over 4 kg! Emu, kangaroo and other delicacies were provided by Ren de Garis as well as

some excellent red wine. A great evening capped off by Nick and son Robert from Kalangadoo reciting some wonderful Aussie prose.

Despite the privations suffered we all managed to survive and voted it a most enjoyable trip. And yes it was successful in meeting our catching targets too. Interestingly we caught 536 birds compared to 538 caught in the same span of time in November 1996. The final figures were:

Species	New	Retrap	Total
Ruddy Turnstone	156	35	191
Sanderling	100	68	168
Curlew Sandpiper	89	8	97
Red-necked Stint	53	1	54
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	15	4	19
Bar-tailed Godwit	3	0	3
Red-capped Plover	2	0	2
Double-banded Plover	1	0	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	0	1
	420	116	536

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotus*

Graham Beal

An added bonus to the very enjoyable trip to South Australia, in February 1996, was the finding of a Pectoral Sandpiper amongst a catch of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, *Calidris acuminata*, and Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria intepres* (or Turtle Backs as they are known locally), at Carpenter Rocks. This is only the second ever caught by the VWSG.

Pectoral defined as; of the chest, an ornamental breast plate or vestment over the chest, refers to the main distinguishing feature from the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper which is a very similar species. It's heavily brown streaked neck and breast is sharply cut of from the white lower breast and belly. It has a streaked brown crown, not chestnut, and generally brighter yellow legs.

Otherwise known as the American Pectoral Sandpiper, it breeds in the American Arctic and North East Siberia and migrates through North America and Mexico to winter in South America. It is a scarce but regular migrant to Australia and New Zealand, usually occurring singly or small groups. It prefers fresh or brackish water where it often associates with 'sharpies' and is easily overlooked.

Having said that it seems that this season was exceptional with widespread reports. Numbers peaked at 20, in late April at the Western treatment Plant. Werribee, 11 at Mystic Park near Swan Hill, Victoria in December and in January there were up to 8 at Greenfields Wetlands near Adelaide.

The group of 10 at Clear Lagoon, South Arm, south of Hobart, Tasmania is though to be the biggest concentration ever from this region and perhaps even more surprising were the two seen at the recycling works in Alice Springs where very few have been recorded.

Eds note. An alternative name for the sharpie is Siberian Pectoral Sandpiper just in case you wondered why Pectoral was qualified with American.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* - 1996/7 Banding Weekend

Peter Mitchell and Barbara Moss

Over the long weekend in January 1997 members of the Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG), staff from DNRE, members of the Little Tern Taskforce (LTTF) and Gippsland Lakes Ornithological Group (GLOG), TAFE students and the wardens from Rotamah Island Bird Observatory (RIBO) combined for three successful days of catching and banding of terns at Albifrons Is. and Point Wilson.

Friday 24th January: Fine weather. Boats from NRE and RIBO met the VWSG at Pt Wilson and transported equipment and personnel to Albifrons Is.. Two cannon nets were set near the western end of the island where terns usually roosted. One net was fired in the morning, catching 127 birds. The net was quickly reset before the birds were processed.

Each bird was banded with a metal band, weighed, head and wings measurements taken and the degree of moult recorded. In addition, all Common Terns were banded with orange flags and Little Terns were banded with individual combinations of colour flags.

The net was refired in the afternoon with a catch of 211 birds, all processed as before. The weather remained fine and the VWSG personnel were returned to Pt Wilson and hence their camp at Emu Bight well before dark.

Saturday 25th January: Strong easterly winds were blowing waves onto Pt Wilson. After a quick reconnoitre trip to Albifrons Is. by DNRE staff and Dr. Clive Minton (VWSG) it was decided not to attempt to transport everyone to Albifrons Is.. A net was set on the sand spit at Pt Wilson. This net was fired late in the morning for 57 birds and again in the afternoon for 30 birds. After the birds were processed, the VWSG group were transported Rotamah Is. for a barbecue.

Sunday 26th January: A return to calm conditions. Nets were set on Albifrons Is. in the morning, and birds soon gathered for catch of 128. Processing was completed and personnel and equipment returned to Pt Wilson early in the afternoon.

Of 553 birds caught, 83(15%) were retraps and 11 (2%) juveniles. With exception of the seagulls and Hooded Plover chick (which was banded) four species were caught over the weekend; Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Little Tern (*S albifrons*), Crested Tern (*S. bergii*) and White-winged Black Tern (*Chlidonia leucoptera*). The results from each site and day are detailed in Table 3a & b.

Table 3a.: Results of tern banding in the Gippsland Lakes in January 1997

Total number of birds banded for each species over the three days at each site, including the number of retraps (& % of total birds) and number of juveniles (Juv) (& % of total birds). Data supplied by Clive Minton, VWSG (pers. comm, Babbler No. 42., Wingspan 7(I): 19).)

Date	Catch site	Species	Total Caught	Retraps	% Retraps	Juv	% Juv
240197	***Albifrons Island***	Common Tern	126	13	10	1	1
	First catch	Little Tern	1	0	0	0	0
	Second	Common Tern	195	23	12	5	3
	catch	Little Tern	13	1	8	0	0
		Crested Tern	2	1	50	0	0
		White-winged Black Tern	1	0	0	1	100
250197	***Pt Wilson***	Common Tern	49	17	35	0	0
	First catch	Little Tern	8	2	25	3	38
	Second	Common Tern	28	3	11	0	0
	catch	Little Tern	1	0	0	0	0
		Crested Tern	1	0	0	0	0
260197	***Albifrons***	Common Tern	99	17	17	2	2
	Island	Crested Tern	24	5	21	0	0
		White-winged Black Tern	3	0	0	3	100
		Little Tern	2	1	50	0	0
TOTALS		**Common Tern**	**497**	**73**	**15**	**8**	**16**
		Crested Tern	**27**	**6**	**22**	**0**	**0**
		Little Tern	**25**	**4**	**16**	**3**	**12**
		White-winged Black Tern	**4**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**100**

extracted from Little Tern Taskforce Report 1996.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY WADER WRITINGS

Extracted by Hugo Phillipps.

Colonel William Vincent Legge (1841-1918) was the first President of the Australasian Ornithologists Union (the RAOU before it acquired its 'Royal' prefix). He was born in Tasmania and served in the British Army for much of his life, including nine years in Ceylon which provided the material for his most notable ornithological work, *The Birds of Ceylon*. The following extract regarding waders comes from his President's Address, read *in absentia* at the Inaugural General Meeting of the AOU in Adelaide on 1st November 1901. It is notable both for the way it sets out the need for research on migratory and resident waders, and for its perceptiveness in foreseeing the discovery of the north-western Australian coast as a major staging area and terminus for Palaearctic migrants. My annotations are in square brackets [].

To allude first to one great Order which I know is a favourite with many of our members - I refer to the Limicolae - there exists in it alone, without going further, a wide field for research. The position of our continent, lying immediately to the south of the vast Asiatic breeding haunts of the Waders, affords these birds a very extensive region for winter migration, beyond which the vast Southern Ocean stops their flight. Consequently typical Asiatic species travel down to us in fair numbers, some reaching farther south than others.

At the same time we have as winter visitants in our summer season not a few of those interesting globe-wanderers which, for lovers of this "order", always have a peculiar fascination. These are the Turnstone, the Common Sandpiper (*Tringoides hypoleucos*) [now *Actitis hypoleucos*]; the Grey Plover, Knot, Sanderling, and the Curlew Stint [Curlew Sandpiper]. Further, we are visited, by way of Oceania, by those interesting American species *Heteractitis incanus* [now *Heteroscelus incanus* - Wandering Tattler] and *Bartramia longicauda* [Upland Sandpiper].

In connection with all these migrants further attention should be given to their varying times of arrival on our shores, and their subsequent distribution or wandering throughout the various States; and records of their occurrence in New Zealand, where some have not as yet been met with, will be highly interesting. Again, the internal distribution and migration of our purely Australian Limicolae is a point which demands our notice and study. Chief among these is our Dotterel [Inland Dotterel], and next to it, as regards northern limits, the Double-banded Dotterel [Double-banded Plover].

Very interesting work in connection with the Waders will continue to be done, we may depend, along the vast stretch of coast line from about Dirk Hartog Island to Cambridge Gulf, in a portion of which Mr T. Carter has already made many interesting discoveries. This north-western littoral region of our continent is a paradise for the observer of Waders; for it is here that so many species first make land, or push onward to after alighting on the north coast.

Apparently it is here, too, where the immature of several well-known species manifest the singular propensity already alluded to in my "Birds of Ceylon" of foregoing their return journey to northern climes and remaining with us throughout the year.

Species which will occur under these conditions, and which have already been recorded from the district in question, will be the Turnstone, the Sanderling, Eastern Stint [Red-necked Stint], Curlew Stint, and the Golden Plover. This habit forms another problem for solution in connection with the migratory instinct, about which we know so little.

Sir Charles Frederic Belcher (1876-1970) was born in Geelong and was a foundation member of the RAOU. He spent most of his long life overseas as a barrister and judge in Britain and its colonies, serving, for example, as Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago. However at 28 years old, well before the heights of his eminent career abroad, he had published *The Birds of the District of Geelong, Australia*, from which the following extracts from his wader species accounts are taken. Although some of his speculations have turned out to be wrong, he had a good eye (and sometimes a palate) for the waders of the wetlands near Geelong.

Hooded Dotterel [Hooded Plover].
I do not know a more charming little bird than this representative in Australia of the Ringed Plover of Europe. Scattered in pairs during the summer all along the ocean beach from Port Phillip Heads to Point Castries, near Lorne, you may see the plump little bodies on tiny twinkling feet racing down from above high-water mark where their nest is hidden, then hurrying along the hard beach at the water's edge in front of you, the cock bird conspicuous with black head and white collar, the hen suited in plainer grey. Follow them along the beach, and after a few hundred yards they will fly out to sea and behind you to their home again.

Double-banded Dotterel [Double-banded Plover].
Until in the Eastern Hemisphere there is adopted the method, now coming into vogue with European ornithologists, of "marking", by means of metal rings, or otherwise, large numbers of birds at their breeding-stations, so as to make them identifiable at whatever place they may migrate to, we shall remain in ignorance of the full life-history of many of our birds. Of these, one of the most perplexing is the Double-banded Dotterel. The current statement is that it breeds in New Zealand and migrates to Australia for the winter. The facts certainly do, so far as they go, fit in with this theory, which, if proved, constitutes the unique instance of a wading bird travelling east and west on its seasonal migrations instead of north and south. There is a quite obvious reason for the Asiatic Waders coming here: they procure for themselves thereby a double, in fact a perpetual summer and continuous food-supply. But why should a small bird leave New Zealand and cross a thousand miles of ocean to spend six months in a climate which can exhibit very little

difference from that which it would have experienced had it remained in New Zealand the winter through?

Little Stint [Red-necked Stint]
Of all the twenty odd species which pass under the popular term "sandpiper", the Little stint is at once the smallest in size, and in point of numbers the most abundant. Measuring rather less than 6 inches in length, there is but one bird, the Red-capped Dotterel, likely to be mistaken for it; the latter, however, is rarely seen in such big flocks as the Stint, of which I have sometimes seen as many as a thousand together. On the south-eastern side of the Big Lake at Connewarre you may frequently see such a flock wheeling about in the air, now flashing white as the countless tiny breasts turn as one towards you, now occulting into brown again.

Sharp-tailed Stint [Sharp-tailed Sandpiper].
Threepence per pair is what the shooters get in the market for the Sharp-tailed Stint, or Marsh Tringa (Teringa it is pronounced "in the trade"), and yet so great are the flocks of this species which annually about September arrive in the swamplands of our district, that men make quite a good living out of them even at that figure. Nor are they to be despised as table-birds; I consider them quite as good eating as the Snipe, though of course they are less than half the Snipe's size.

Knot [Red Knot]
It seems to me, considering that the Western Knots which breed in Northern Europe only travel as far south as Southern Europe in winter, more reasonable to suppose that our variety of the Knot does not make such a huge journey as to the extreme north of Asia, but breeds somewhere in the Northern Chinese uplands, a district which when well explored will, I think, be found to contain the solutions of a number of problems in Australian ornithology.

Snipe [Latham's Snipe].
Melbourne sportsmen assign the arrival of the Snipe to the period of the full moon nearest to the end of August, and assert that they travel by night only. The numbers in which they appear vary, the impression prevailing that of late years they have steadily decreased. First of all after their arrival they are to be found in open well-watered country; later, as the summer heats increase, they favour the shelter of timber and the high grass that grows along the margins of swamps and fresh-water streams. They will suddenly appear in a place, and as suddenly leave it, so that the sportsman who hears the magic word "Snipe" knows that he must act promptly, even were no others on similar purpose bent.

Quick Reference Charts for Breeding Ranges and Departure and Arrival Dates of Some Migratory Waders in Australia

Jeff Campbell

Whilst undertaking recent interviews, with a reporter for a newspaper article, and an artist working on a project for Parks Victoria, I was questioned about the breeding ranges and the timing of departure and arrival from and to Australia of various migratory wader species. At this time it became apparent that there were no quick and easily interpreted documents showing these breeding areas or dates available to me. Although this data is available in various books and papers it requires a good deal of time and effort to go through them, checking each species in turn.

Given that my memory for such details is not extremely good, I thought that it may be useful to prepare quick reference charts for these breeding areas and dates for selected species. The tables below are not meant to be perfectly accurate but are a useful guide. For more accurate information consult more detailed references such as The Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds, Shorebirds in Australia, and various papers in *The Stilt*.

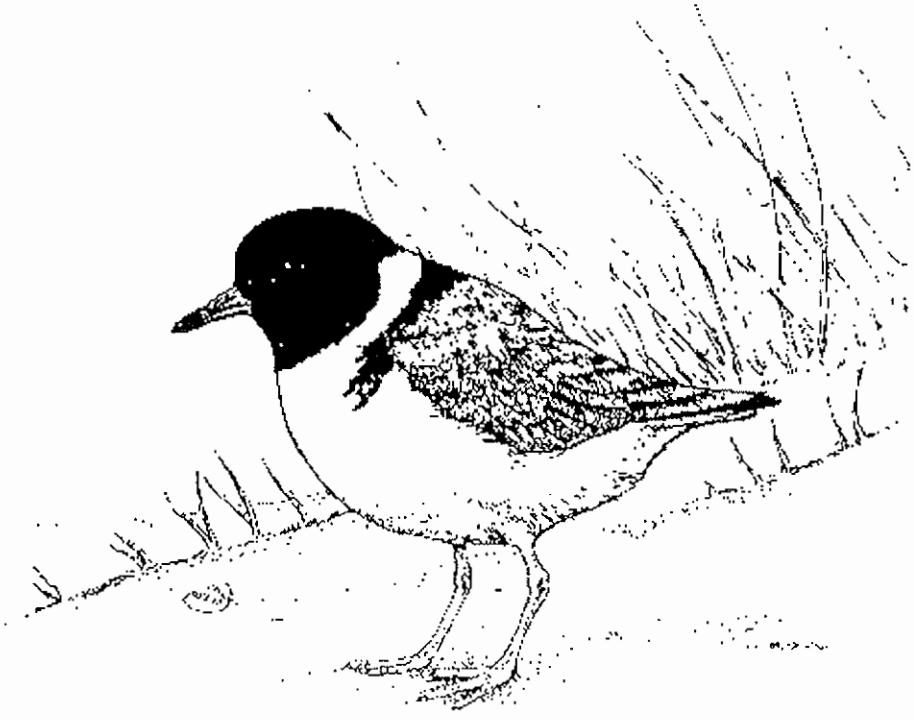
Table 1. Breeding ranges of selected migratory wader species (* race occurring in Australia).

Species,	**Breeding Range**
Latham's Snipe	Japan and adjacent coastal Asia
Black-tailed Godwit	Eastern Siberia *
Bar-tailed Godwit	Northern Siberia and Western Alaska
Eastern Curlew	Eastern Siberia and Northern Mongolia
Common Greenshank	Across N Europe from British Isles to Kamchatka Peninsula excluding NE Siberia
Terek Sandpiper	Across N Europe from Finland to Chukotski Peninsula excluding NE Siberia
Grey-tailed Tatter	Poorly known. NE Siberia. Kamchatka Peninsula and Kurile Islands?
Ruddy Turnstone	Circumpolar on Arctic coasts
Great Knot	NE Siberia
Red Knot	North-central Siberia and Western Alaska
Sanderling	Scattered across entire high Arctic
Red-necked Stint	Far NE Siberia from Taimyr Peninsula to Chukotski Peninsula and NW Alaska
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	NE Siberia from Lena River to Kolyma R.
Curlew Sandpiper	Central Arctic Siberia

Table 2. Presence and absence periods of selected migratory wader species.

x x x Breeding age (and non-breeding age) birds present
..... Some non-breeding age birds may be present
----- Non-breeding age birds present

Species	Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Latham's Snipe	x x x x x x x x x x.....x x x x x x x x x x x
Black-tailed Godwit	x x x x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x x
Bar-tailed Godwit	x x x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x x
Eastern Curlew	x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x x x
Common Greenshank	x x x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x x xx
Terek Sandpiper	x x x x x x x x x x ----------x x x x x x x x x x x
Grey-tailed Tattler	x x x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x
Ruddy Turnstone	x x x x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x x
Great Knot	x x x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x x
Red Knot	x x x x x x x x x.x----------x x x x x x x x x x xx
Sanderling	x x x x x x x x x ----------x x x x x x x x x x
Red-necked Stint	x x x x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x x
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	x x x x x x x x x x.....x x x x x x x x x x x
Curlew Sandpiper	x x x x x x x x x x----------x x x x x x x x x x x



South American Section

Please refer to map below for locations mentioned in the following three articles

Shorebird Expedition to Argentina and Brazil

March 9 to April 15 1997

Rosalind Jessop and Peter Collins

INTRODUCTION

Dr Allan Baker from the Centre for Bio-diversity and Conservation Biology, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada invited us to participate in an international Shorebird Expedition to Argentina and Brazil. Participants came from Australia, Canada, The Netherlands, Norway, Great Britain and the host countries. Three sites, San Antonio Oeste, Peninsula Valdez and Punta Rasa were visited in Argentina and Lagoa do Peixe and Salinas (near Belem) in Brazil. The expedition later visited Delaware Bay in the United States of America (we did not attend this part of the expedition).

The main aim of the expedition was to collect further information on the northward migration of Red Knot *Calidris canutus rufa,* a population that winters mainly in the southernmost part of South America at Tierra del Fuego. It was hoped to catch large number of shorebirds that could be marked with colour flags (denotes country of banding) and colour bands (denotes site of banding, year and whether the birds is on northward or southward passage). Information on body condition, feather moult was to be collected and blood samples taken. Blood samples were to be used to elucidate the genetic population structure and sex-related differences in wintering and migration strategies. The expedition also aimed to promote international collaboration in the conservation of shorebirds migrating between North and South America. Responsibility for the protection and survival of these birds shared by all locations in the flyway.

Attempts were made to catch shorebirds at all sites with either cannon nets or mist nets. Generally we were successful, however no birds were caught at the appropriately named Fracasso Playa (Failure Beach), Golfo San Jose, Valdez Peninsula.

1. San Antonio Oeste and San Antonio Este Rio Negro, Patagonia, Argentina

The first site we visited was some 1140 km south of Buenos Aires (see map). Our visit was hosted by the Fundacion Inalafquen (an indian word meaning "next to the sea"), a non-profit organisation created in 1989 with the following goals:

- to develop activities in order to protect the environment and to guarantee rationality in the use of natural resources
- to encourage research activities related to the north Patagonian region, when these activities are related to the study of resources and their conservation
- to collaborate with state authorities in these matters

- to support any action in order to achieve a better knowledge of the environment and the natural resources

In the area around San Antonio issues tackled have included the impact of a soda-ash plant on the water quality of the Bahia San Antonio, the impact of tourism activities on the coastal environment, environmental education and waste management. The group is also working on a project to obtain funding for a Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre and a game warden.

Another area of bird conservation concern was the smuggling of endemic birds, mainly to the United States.

Students from the local school and the university at Puerto Madryn participated in the expedition. University students were members of the Association Patagonica de Ornithologia and interested in pursuing a career in ornithology.

During our visit we were guests of honour at the induction of San Antonio Oeste as a site of international significance (hosting >100,000 shorebirds or 10% of a flyway population) in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. The WHSRN was founded by a coalition of organisations in 1985 to address shorebird conservation issues. WHSRN is implemented through Wetlands International: Americas headquartered in Canada. Thirty-seven sites in seven countries currently make up the WHSRN. Sites are provided with technical assistance, training, and materials to support their own research, management and public awareness efforts. Environmental education and "twinning" of geographically distant reserves that host shared species are promoted to increase local benefits. Membership of WHSRN brings international recognition to critical wetland sites and enhances local capacity for effective conservation. An example of the value of this declaration was the announcement, by the Minister for Economics, at the "launch" that the soda ash factory currently being built in San Antonio Oeste would have to meet international standards of pollution control (their previous plan of pumping waste products into the bay would have to be abandoned). The importance of the occasion was also emphasised by the attendance of the minister - the first time a minister from Buenos Aires had visited the area and the presence of the governor of the Province of Rio Negro - another first.

Some 10,000 Red Knot were present in the San Antonio area and generally gathered as one huge flock - a smoke of knot. San Antonio is a stopping off spot on migration with few birds remaining throughout the austral summer. Unlike birds in Australia - an end destination - the birds in San Antonio were very restless and did not have 'typical' roost spots, each day they utilised a different area of the beach, the falling tidal series may also have been influential in their behaviour. This behaviour and their tendency to move in one huge flock made it very difficult to decide where to put the net which has to be set a number of hours before high tide so it could be disguised. As a consequence we only caught a total of 15 Red Knot. The smaller waders exhibited more 'typical' behaviour and regularly roosted on a area of beach

near the Port (San Antonio Este) and good samples of White-rumped Sandpiper and Two-banded Plover were made (see Table 1.1). Observations were made of colour marked birds from Tierra del Fuego and the USA.

2. *Peninsula Valdez - Fracasso Playa, Golfo San Jose, Chubut, Patagonia, Argentina*

From San Antonio Oeste we travelled 280 km southwards by bus to Puerto Madryn - the gateway to Peninsula Valdez. Dr Luis Bala of the Centro Nacional Patagonico provided logistic support for our visit to Fracasso Beach, which was located on the shores of Golfo San Jose about half way along the northern coast of the peninsula (see map). CENPAT is part of the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas y Tecnicas (CONICET) and was opened in 1972. The institute has laboratories and offices in Puerto Madryn. Research at the institute centers around the marine environment (including marine mammals, fish, benthos and marine pollution), the ecology of the arid zone (including revegetation and desertification) and geology and anthropology of Patagonia. Funding is in short supply.

During our visit we undertook a tour to the edge of the Valdez Peninsula including Punta Delgada (Patagonian foxes and seals) and Punta Norte (sea-lions, elephant seals). No orca were present at Punta Norte (where the famous scenes from "Life on Earth" were filmed) as it was not the sea-lion breeding season. We also saw some Magellanic Penguins. Late chicks and moulting adults were present in their burrows etched into small limestone caverns and under bushes. Most Magellanic Penguins migrate north from Argentina between April and September.

No waders were cannon-netted during the time we spent at Fracasso Playa. The main contributing factor was incorrect recce information on where the Red Knot roosted. Alan Baker had been assured that they roosted in a salt-marsh behind the beach on all tides. This proved to be incorrect and the birds spent the high tide (neap series) roosting on a barnacle (introduced California barnacle) encrusted restinga (reticulated sandstone platform). Although the local members of the expedition wanted to catch the birds the unseasonal heavy rains intervened making the roads impassable - luckily they dried out enough to retrieve the net we had left on the beach the evening before our departure! Data was however, collected on the condition of the 200 Red Knot present and colour marked birds from the USA and Tierra del Fuego were seen.

3. *Punta Rasa, near San Clemente del Tuyu, Rio Grande, Argentina*

Leaving Peninsula Valdez we flew north to Buenos Aires then took a bus some 500 km to the mouth of the River Plate. Our visit to Punta Rasa was jointly hosted by Mundo Marino (Marine World) and the Fudacion Vida Silvestre Argentina, a foundation for conservation of Argentina's Wildlife. We stayed in the town of San Clemente del Tuyu some 10 km from Punta Rasa.

Mundo Marino had a complex of pools. Orca, flamingos, ducks, and other wildlife were exhibited. Also speedboat displays including skiing and plays about conservation were shown to a paying audience. Attached to the aquarium facilities was a separate rehabilitation facility that was funded by donations. Mundo Marino contributed veterinary care - there were four vets on site. The rehabilitation facility catered for seals, sea-lions and penguins - both Magellanic and Rockhoppers.

The Fundacion Vida Silvestre Argentina was created in 1977 and its objectives are:

- preservation of genetic diversity of species and ecosystems
- to ensure that natural resources are used in a sustainable way
- to promote actions to reduce toxic wastes and to use energy more efficiently
- to promote education and change people's attitude towards the environment

Since 1985 the foundation had been running a biological research station at a naval base near Punta Rasa. The naval base had been built on reclaimed land and planted with exotic and native trees. The Research Station concentrated on studying Common Terns which migrate to the area in large numbers from the United States (breed on islands near New York). The government had recently leased the land to Mundo Marino which has turned the base into a tourist attraction called Bahia Adventura (Adventure Beach) - the main attraction being a trip to the top of the lighthouse in an external lift. A foundation representative Esteban Bremer maintains a presence at the Base and assists at an interpretation centre. The centre has displays outlining the importance of Punta Rasa and the surrounding area for terns and shorebirds.

Punta Rasa is the most significant wintering area for Common Terns migrating from North America in Argentina and probably South America. (Hays *et al.* 1997). Large concentrations of up to 30,000 Common Terns have been observed by Esteban Bremer since 1985. The major conservation issue is the conflict between the use of Punta Rasa as a roosting area for the terns and its use as a recreational area - mainly for week-end fishing using gill nets, especially at Easter when over 10,000 Common Terns are present.

Other conservation problems include the driving of cars over the dune system, unattended dogs and use of the dune system as a latrine. The commercialisation of the Naval Base may also attract more people to the area further reducing the amount of beach available to the terns. The area around the Naval Base is used as a second choice roosting site by terns and shorebirds when Punta Rasa is crowded with holiday makers.

We managed to catch good number of Common Terns (Table 1.2) and deploy 10 radio-transmitters on Red Knot brought by Theunis Piersma from the Netherlands. We hoped to detect the presence of birds with transmitters further north at Lagoa do Peixe in Brazil and particularly in Delaware Bay.

4. Lagoa do Peixe, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

From Punta Rasa we returned to Buenos Aires and then flew to Porto Alegre in southern Brazil before undertaking a four hour, 240 km drive south to Lagoa do Peixe on the coast. Our hosts were the Centro de Pesquises para Conservacao dos Aves Silvestres (CEMAVE), the Brazilian banding scheme, which was founded in 1979. Lagoa do Peixe was declared a National Park on 6 November 1986 under the jurisdiction of Instituto Barzileiro do Meiombiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renovaveis (IBAMA). It is part of the WHSRN. The Brazilian government has supported bird banding at Lagoa do Peixe since 1984, first through CEMAVE and then through CEMAVE/IBAMA.

The national park is some 33,400 ha. Twenty six species of migratory birds from the northern hemisphere utilise the area, either on passage further south or for the northern winter. The lagoon is about 35 km long and water varies from 10 to 60 cm in depth making ideal wader and shrimp habitat. Within the park are a number of fishing villages. Fishermen set gill nets along the Atlantic coast and within the lagoon, shrimp fishing is carried out. Nets are set between permanent poles and lights are put on all night to attract the shrimps. It is hoped to phase out shrimp fishing and no new licences are being issued, oceanic gill net fishing will remain as the park does not extend below the high tide line.

During our visit a tidal surge from a storm flowed over the bar at the mouth of the lagoon increasing the water level significantly, in fact the highest in over ten years. Behind the storm there was a passage of Red Knot, White-rumped Sandpiper and Sanderling some of which we managed to catch with cannon nets (Table 2.1). Three of the radio-tagged birds from Punta Rasa were detected and ten more transmitter deployed. Colour marked birds from Punta Rasa, Tierra del Fuego and the USA were observed.

Several wader species were involved in a die off following the storm. On 7 April S.B. Scherer (from CEMAVE) found 26 Red Knot, 10 White-rumped Sandpiper and three Sanderling along a 10 km stretch of Atlantic Ocean beach running north from the mouth of Lagoa do Peixe. More than half the birds we dead and the others lethargic, lame and showed no response to handling. Attempts to revive them failed. There were no outward sign of illness and the birds were approximately the same weight as those we had cannon netted the previous day. Further dead and dying birds were found that afternoon and the following morning as we drove along the beach on our return journey. The reasons for the die off is as yet unknown but work is being carried out to determine the cause by Theunis Piersma in the Netherlands.

5. Salinas, Para, Brazil

From Porto Alegre we flew north to Belem and then continued another two hours by bus to the mouth of the Amazon at Salinas. Our visit to Salinas was

hosted by the Genetics Department (the leading genetics laboratory in South America) at Belem University. At the moment the department concentrates on birds and mammals in the Amazon Basin as this area is deemed to be the most threatened and the most important internationally. However, during our time there the head of the genetics department, who accompanied us in the field, also saw the possibilities of shorebird research and the conservation value of coastal wetlands so it may become more of a priority in the future. Catching was carried out using mist-nets (day and night) and cannon nets and a wide range of species were caught (see Table 2.2). No colour marked birds or birds with radio-transmitters were detected.

None of the area around Salinas is included in conservation reserves. Housing extends down to the edge of the mangroves. Waders foraged in the garden of the house in which we stayed as it was so close to the shoreline and continually wet. Two Spotted Sandpipers were bought to us by local people who had accidentally trapped them in fish traps. The frequency of this accidental by-catch is unknown.

Table 1: Details on birds caught in Argentina, March 1997.

1.1 San Antonio Oeste and San Antonio Este (Port)

Date	Location	Species	New	Retrap	Total	Nets
120397	Mar Grande	Two-banded Plover	1	0	1	1/2
	(Town Beach)	White-rumped Sandpiper	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**2**	**0**	**2**	
130397	Banco Lobos	Two-banded Plover	56	0	56	1
	(Port)	**TOTAL WADERS**	**56**	**0**	**56**	
140397	Banco Lobos	Sanderling	17	0	17	1/2
	*one from	Red Knot*	14	1*	15	
Brazil	H29889	**TOTAL WADERS**	**31**	1	**32**	
150397	Banco Lobos	Two-banded Plover	2	0	2	1/2
	(Port)	Western Sandpiper	109	0	109	
		Sanderling	2	0	2	
		TOTAL WADERS	**113**	**0**	113	

1.2. Punta Rasa

Date	Location	Species	New	Retrap	Total	Nets
230397	Punta Rasa	Red Knot	47	1	48*	1
		White-rumped Sandpiper	7	0	7	
		TOTAL WADERS	**54**	1	**55**	
		*16% juvenile				
240397	Punta Rasa	Two-banded Plover	7	0	7	1
	First Catch	White-rumped Sandpiper	4	0	4	
		Red Knot	3	0	3	
		TOTAL WADERS	**14**	**0**	**14**	
2/0397	Punta Rasa	Common Tern	361	75	436	1
		TOTAL TERNS	**361**	**75**	**436**	
260396	Punta Rasa	White-rumped Sandpiper	85	1	86	1
		TOTAL WADERS	**85**	**1**	**86**	
270396	Punta Rasa	Red Knot	13	3	16*	1
	First Catch	**TOTAL WADERS**	**13**	**3**	**16**	
		*40% Juvenile				
2/0396	Punta Rasa	Common Tern	73	24	97	1
	Second catch	**TOTAL TERNS**	**73**	**24**	**97**	

Table 2: Details of birds caught in Brazil, April 1997

2.1 Lagoa do Peixe

Date	Net type	Species	New	Retrap	Total	Nets
020497	Mist-nets	Red Knot	16	0	16	21
		Pied Stilt	4	0	4	
		Hudsonian Godwit	2	0	2	
		Southern Lapwing	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**23**	**0**	**23**	
		Black Skimmer	9	1	10	
		Royal Tern	3	0	3	
		Cayenne Tern	2	0	2	
		Large-billed Tern	1	0	1	
		Common Tern	1	0	1	
		TOTAL TERNS	**16**	1	**17**	
030497	Mist-nets DAY	South American Painted Snipe	1	0	1	1
030497	Mist-nets EVENING	White-rumped Sandpiper	17	0	17	10

Date	Net type	Species	New	Retrap	Total	Nets
040/97	Cannon net	Sanderling	65	0	65	1
		White-rumped Sandpiper	3	0	3	
		TOTAL WADERS	**68**	**0**	**68**	
050497	Cannon net	Southern Lapwing	4	0	4	1
	1st Catch	Pied Stilt	4	0	4	
		White-rumped Sandpiper	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**9**	**0**	**9**	
050497	Cannon net	Red Knot	128	5	133	1
	2nd catch	**TOTAL WADERS**	**128**	**5**	**133**	
060497	Cannon net	Grey Plover	17	0	17	1
		Semi-palmated Plover	7	0	7	
		Red Knot	5	2	7	
		White-rumped Sandpiper	6	0	6	
		Ruddy Turnstone	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**36**	**2**	**38**	
060497	Mist-nets	White-rumped Sandpiper	2	0	2	7
		South American Painted Snipe	1	0	1	
		Two-banded Plover	1	0	1	
		Semi-palmated Plover	1	0	1	
		Collared Plover	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**6**	**0**	**6**	
		Night Heron	1	0	1	
		TOTAL OTHER	**1**	**0**	**1**	
070497	Cannon net	Red Knot	238	9	247	1
		Ruddy Turnstone	2	0	2	
		Two-banded Plover	1	0	1	
		Semi-palmated Plover	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**242**	**9**	**251**	
070497	Mist-nets	Red Knot	4	2	6	7
		White-rumped Sandpiper	5	0	5	
		Collared Plover	3	0	3	
		Semi-palmated Plover	1	0	1	
		Ruddy Turnstone	1	0	1	
		Hudsonian Godwit	1	0	1	
		Rufous-chested Dotterel	1	0	1	
		Southern Lapwing	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**18**	**2**	**20**	
		Black Skimmer	3	0	3	
		TOTAL TERNS	**3**	**0**	**3**	

2.2 Salinas near Belem

Date	Net type	Species	New	Retrap	Total	Nets
110497	Mist-nets	Semi-palmated Sandpiper	129	0	129	10
		Spotted Sandpiper	18	0	18	
		Semi-palmated Plover	9	0	9	
		Wilson's Plover	1	0	1	
		Collared Plover	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**158**	**0**	**158**	
120497	Cannon net	Ruddy Turnstone	36	0	36	1
		Grey Plover	22	0	22	
		Red Knot	7	0	7	
		Semi-palmated Sandpiper	8	1	9	
		Sanderling	3	0	3	
		Collared Plover	2	0	2	
		TOTAL WADERS	**78**	**1**	**79**	
		Common Tern	1	0	1	
		Cayenne Tern	1	0	1	
		TOTAL TERNS	**2**	**0**	**2**	
120497	Mist-nets	Spotted Sandpiper	4	0	4	3
		Semi-palmated Sandpiper	2	0	2	
		Semi-palmated Plover	1	0	1	
		Short-billed Dowitcher	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**8**	**0**	**8**	
130497	Mist-nets	Spotted Sandpiper	5	0	5	3
		Semi-palmated Sandpiper	21	0	21	
		Least Sandpiper	5	0	5	
		Semi-palmated Plover	3	1	4	
		Short-billed Dowitcher	2	0	2	
		TOTAL WADERS	**36**	1	**37**	
1/0497	Mist-net (Ciuarona) DAY	Semi-palmated Sandpiper	57	0	57	
		Collared Plover	10	0	10	
		Spotted Sandpiper	3	0	3	
		Semi-palmated Plover	1	0	1	
		Least Sandpiper	1	0	1	
		TOTAL WADERS	**72**	**0**	**72**	
150497	Fish Trap	Spotted Sandpiper	1	0	1	
150497	Cannon net	Sanderling	1	0	1	1
		TOTAL WADERS	1	**0**	1	
		Yellow-billed Tern	11	0	11	
		Cayenne Tern	1	0	1	
		TOTAL TERNS	**12**	**0**	**12**	
150497	Mist-nets	Wattled Jacana	4	0	4	3

Date	Net type	Species	New	Retrap	Total	Nets
150497	Mist-nets	Spotted Sandpiper	5	0	5	3
		Semi-palmated Sandpiper	21	0	21	
		Least Sandpiper	5	0	5	
		Semi-palmated Plover	3	1	4	
		Short-billed Dowitcher	2	0	2	
		TOTAL WADERS	**36**	**1**	**37**	

Wading through South America

Pete Collins

When you are given the opportunity to go to a new country let alone a new continent every twitching fibre and nerve starts to quiver like a jelly and for the months before the trip you dream of exotic species dripping from every branch and lurking behind every dune. South America was never disappointing with 400+ new species for my list and the dreams came true, well most of the time. I still wake up in a cold sweat about Darwin's Rhea even though my favourite geneticist insists that they are all the same species but I have an idea that this is said just to make me feel better.

However for the purpose of this article I am going to concentrate on the waders and forget the toucans, foliage gleaners, earth creepers, screamers and other amazingly named species that abound. Our first stop was Buenos Aries and as Clive had been before he immediately recommended a wetland by the dock as our first birding place. On his first visit it had been fairly deep water but it was dry enough to be called a swamp and while we were watching the birds we became watched by the locals who seem to use the area as a holiday camp. Our first wader species that we saw was Wattled Jacana which is similar to our Comb Crested Jacana in the north they obviously enjoyed the conditions as they were breeding. Southern Lapwings were very common as were their equivalent of Black-winged Stilt the aptly named South American Stilt. Having seen a lot of Common Snipe I really couldn't get excited about them even though they were in the company of more exotic species. One of these was a species that has eluded my life list for years, even though they turn up in the UK and I have looked for them in North America, was a Lesser Yellowlegs and there were seven of them with their Greater cousins. Ticking is easy when you are in the right place at the right time. The final wader that we saw here was Baird's Sandpiper and in common with its relatives is pretty uninteresting to look at and the very devil to identify. Field guides are no replacement for having world experts with you.

However the time for birdwatching went very quickly and the first of many moves with the cannon nets came and we headed off into the wilds of Argentina to San Antonio where the theory was that it was easy to catch hundreds of Red Knot. There were thousands there, but catching ten thousand toey birds who preferred exercise to bands proved to be too much.

So we settled on catching White-rumped Sandpipers and Two-banded Plovers which proved to be very co-operative as we twinkled them backwards and forwards in and out of the catching area. There were other waders there including Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling as well as the odd and I use the word in its true sense Snowy Sheathbill which is apparently a most unwader like wader. I think it must be one of the few places in the world where you can find three species of Oystercatcher namely American, Magellenic and Blackish. For a wader buff this was probably the most exciting stop on the whole trip. It isn't bad for a birder either.

The world famous Valdez Peninsular was the next stop and thanks to unreasonable and unseasonable rains the place was awash in the space of two days even though we were assured it never rains in Patagonia. If the deluge that happened when we were there was not classed as rain then I hope I'm not there when it does rain. The lake that formed during this time was like a magnet and Least Seedsnipe made the most of it as did a small group of Tawny-throated Dotterels. The latter was a mega tick as old South American birders assured me that these are rare birds. In reality the Valdez Peninsular is an amazing area with plenty of other wildlife to keep the most avid of birders happy even I was impressed with the guanacos and even more impressed with pony sized guinea pigs called mara. The best though was chasing and catching an armadillo with the Argentinian Crocodile Dundee. I digress there are very few waders on the Valdez Peninsular at least when we were there.

The next stop was Punta Rasa which is more famous for captive killer whales than its birds but 8000 Common Terns in one place is pretty amazing. As for waders they have a very good selection including Red Knots which we actually caught. Hudsonian Godwits are also common and there were old favourites like Sanderlings though without any proof they did seem that they had been on steroids compared to the ones in Australia. Perhaps its because they were on their way north they were so big? White-rumped Sandpipers seemed to be the equivalent of our Red-necked Stints as they scuttled around everywhere. Grey Plovers were in small numbers and our first but by no means our last views of Semi-palmated Plovers were had here. Rumours of a single Surfbird sent me into a bit of a frenetic rush around for a telescope but it turned out to be something else probably a lump of mud and I nonchalantly regarded all other sighting as definitely stringy. We made more good friends here as we did in all our places in Argentina and as a farewell we were privileged to be taken to a reserve where Pampas Deer still cling to existence not to mention the fact that I added over 80 pampas specialities to my life list in the trip there.

So it was farewell to Argentina and hello Brazil where, by the most amazing route I think I have ever driven, but not as amazing as the route taken by the other half of the party, we eventually arrived at Lagoa do Peixe. On the trip Pectoral Sandpipers seemed to be in every gully and run off. Just to make us feel at home they had the worst storm for 10 years and this brought in a lot of waders. White-rumped Sandpipers were no surprise nor were the Red Knots

and Sanderling but real goodies were Collared Plover, Buff-breasted Sandpiper and the most excellent Rufous-chested Dotterel which made even Clive forget about catching as did the Buff-breasted Sandpipers that briefly appeared. Our first American Golden Plovers were seen here. There were thousands of waders along the lagoon and it was some of the best wader mist netting I have ever done. Two waders were special though in this area the first was at first considered to be a Common Snipe until it was looked at carefully and the people who know assured me that it was a Giant Snipe. It must have been the runt of the brood as Pintail Snipe look bigger but the best was catching a pair of South American Painted Snipe that had chosen a really unfortunate time to breed as the nest was completely washed out by the storm surge.

Our final destination before saying goodbye to the rest of the internationals was Salinas, near Belem, on the Brazilian north coast. Mist netting waders will never be the same as we had very good catches every night and amazing catches of waders during the day. It was unbelievable. New species by this time were hard to come by but Least Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willets and even a Whimbrel or two kept us happy. There was the usual chase for Red Knots but mist netting the birds was amazing with the backdrop of torrential rain and very Wagnerian thunder and lightning. It was here that we had the best banding base camp I have ever experienced. One of our sites was opposite a local bar and our glass was never allowed to be too empty.

It was a fabulous trip made all the more special by the people who travelled with us and the people who we met there.

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	NOTES
Wattled Jacana	*Jacana jacana*	family party mist-netted on flooded soccer pitch
South American Painted Snipe	*Nycticryphes semicollaris*	Breeding pair mist netted Lagoa do Peixe male killed by cat?
American Oystercatcher	*Haematopus palliatus*	the common oyc at San Antonio
Blackish Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ater*	only 2 seen at San Antonio
Magellenic Oystercatcher	*Haematopus leucopdus*	very few seen
South American Stilt	*Himantopus melanurus*	common
Southern Lapwing	*Vanellus chilensis*	everywhere cannon-netted some at L.d.P
Grey Plover	*Pluvialis squatarola*	not as common as we had read about
American Golden Plover	*Pluvialis dominica*	Very few seen
Semi-palmated Plover	*Charadrius semipalmatus*	Looks like a Ringed Plover but has webbed feet. Mist netted

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	NOTES
Wilson's Plover	*C. wilsonia*	This got the DNA people going looks like a washed out Large Sand Plover. A good bird mist netted.
Killdeer	*C. vociferus*	I never saw this but 2 were found in northern Brazil.
Collared Plover	*C. collaris*	Common in northern Brazil. Mist netted
Two-banded Plover	*C. falklandicus*	V common cannon netted.
Rufous-chested Dotterel	*C. modestus*	one or two seen one mist netted at L.d.P
Tawny-throated Dotterel	*Oreopholus ruficollis*	A beautiful bird that was seen in the morning on the Valdez Pen and gone in the afternoon.
Hudsonian Godwit	*Limosa haemastica*	Surprisingly uncommon
Whimbrel	*Numenius phaeopus*	A few seen in northern Brazil
Lesser Yellowlegs	*Tringa flavipes*	quite common in small groups
Greater Yellowlegs	*T. melanoleuca*	common often with Lesser
Solitary Sandpiper	*T. solitaria*	very few seen a few mist netted
Willet	*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*	We only saw a few in the north of Brazil
Spotted Sandpiper	*Actitis macularia*	A lot mist netted in mangrove creeks
Ruddy Turnstone	*Arenaria interpres*	Behaved and looked like Turnstone all over the world
Common Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	turned up in odd places one bounced out of a mist net very frustrating
Giant Snipe	*G. undulata*	A stringy one as identification is primarily on location
Short billed Dowitcher	*Limnodromus griseus*	Common in northern Brazil where several were mist netted
Red Knot	*Calidris canutus*	The Holy Grail cannon netted and mist netted but not as many as some would wish.
Sanderling	*C. alba*	common along the sandy coasts
Semi-palmated Sandpiper	*C. pusilla*	Very common mist netted and cannon netted in Brazil
Least Sandpiper	*C. minutilla*	Very small which might account for few being seen but more mist netted
White-rumped Sandpiper	*C. fuscicollis*	very common mist netted and cannon netted, the bread and butter species
Baird's Sandpiper	*C. bairdii*	only seen in Buenos Aires
Pectoral Sandpiper	*C. melanotus*	Small parties along the southern Brazilian coast
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	*Tryngites subruficollis*	A small party discovered by Jim Wilson on his constitutional sent everybody running for scopes
Least Seedsnipe	*Thinocorus rumicivorus*	A lovely bird and clever a missing mist nets
Snowy Sheathbill	*Chionis alba*	Hard to see this as a wader looks more like a pregnant pigeon

Searching for Red Knots from a trimaran off the coast of Brazil

Doris Graham

The South American section of the 1997 International Wader Expedition initiated by Professor Allan Baker, University of Toronto and lead jointly by Allan, Clive Minton and Patricia Gonzalez, San Antonio Oeste, Argentina, involved catching, banding and flagging waders and terns in Argentina and Brazil for 6 weeks. This section concluded in Belem on the north coast of Brazil, and there were now four weeks before the final two weeks of the expedition were to be conducted on Delaware Bay, USA.

The question was how to fill these weeks? The first answer was obvious, a few days R and R in the Amazonian rainforest birdwatching. Then after farewelling Roz and Pete, Jim Wilson and I found that the second answer was also obvious, we would stay in this area and try to find the Red Knot, *Canutus canutus rufa*, which several workers have reported use this coast of Brazil as a wintering area and/or as a major stopping place on their northward migration. In particular we would search for the 20 which Theunis Piersma had radio tagged during our expedition in Argentina, few weeks previously. But how to do this? Third answer, liaise with Augusto Rodriquez, a PhD student living in Sao Luis and studying the migration of Red Knot. Our idea was to hire a catamaran and to sail north west. Jim is a Red Knot specialist and has worked with them in Europe, Iceland, Greenland and West Africa, and I had the time, energy, enthusiasm and finances to accompany him on this exciting quest.

After the 12-hour overnight bus trip from Belem, Augusto met us n San Luis and within a few days had found us a trimaran, skippered by a trusty Brazilian fisherman, Capella, who has lived all his life in this area and knew the waters into which we were headed very well. He will bring his 20-year old son, Vella, and another friend, Marjo, as crew and it will cost us $500.00 - we accepted and were excited at the prospect of finding our knots.

We travelled the first day by bus, ferry and bus, and rendezvoused with our trimaran at the small town of Currurrupu, 15 hours sailing from San Luis. Augusto had suggested this strategy as he had had a bad experience some years previously sailing this section. We were very glad we agreed as Capella and crew sailed through a big storm on their way. Currurrupu is a nice town with wide clean streets, a neat hotel, and shops carrying a wide range of goods. We shopped for our food for the next seven days, and after a good meal tried to sleep. This proved difficult for me as visions of being washed overboard or being stranded on an island disturbed my mind!!.

Next morning, April 29th we boarded our boat, "Darinha-do-Mar" and, packed food and 55 litres of water plus rucksacks into the storage area of the tiny cabin. Once aboard we grew to have complete confidence in the ability of our crew to navigate us safely; they must have had over 75 years experience of sailing these waters between them! Our plan was to travel north-west as

far as we could, for three or four days then to return to Sao Luis. .As we travelled we would search the mud flats and banks exposed at low tides, and the sandy beaches, which we expected to find along the ocean. When possible we planned also to walk to check for wader tracks and obvious sources of wader food.

Away from Currurrupu it was obvious that this whole area is covered with several species of mangroves, mostly 10-15 metres tall. Some had aerial roots growing from the trunks to mud, from up to about three metres from the ground. The trees grow close together and the understorey of shorter bushes and vines form a dense mass of vegetation. We did not ascertain the names of any of these species and apart from when in the villages did not have the opportunity to enter these forests. In some places the mangroves had been cut, and only the two to three meters of trunk and aerial roots were left, making a bizarre pattern of black shapes against the mud.

The coast was heavily indented with peninsulas and bays, formed during the ice age. On the ocean side were beaches backed by low sand dunes, and at low tide sand and mud was exposed. On the sides of the inlets, often many kilometres long, the mangroves grow down to the water, with only the occasional clearing, in which nestled a single thatched house or a village. Each had a jetty, around which one or more frail looking boats were usually moored, and often we could see the silhouette of the typical Brazilian hammock slung under the thatch. It was easy to see that the lives of the inhabitants are totally dominated by and dependent on the sea and its contents. The sea here contains an abundant supply of fish, crabs and shrimps. These creatures formed the staple diet of our crew and we were given tastes of each. They were delicious with often less than 30 minutes from sea to palate, Each species was simply boiled with tomato, onion and salt, in an open pressure cooker, over a charcoal burner, on the cabin roof, under a bright blue sky, with our deep green, beige and maroon sails filling with the breeze, with a dash of lemon, what could be a better menu, off the coast of north east Brazil?

Our route was initially along the Rio Currurrupu, to its mouth, in a long, wide inlet, "Cabel da Velha" or translated "The hair of an old lady", for reasons unknown to us. This was the first of many such bays and we developed a routine. We motored towards the southern point at the ocean entrance and searched the sand and mud either from the boat or by mooring, alighting and walking. We then motored across to the northern point of the ocean entrance and repeated the plan. On one of these walks I distinctly heard a flock of waders flying high overhead. They were travelling south to north, but we did not see them despite frantic searching. Within each inlet, and near the ocean points we used the radio tracking equipment which Theunis had lent us to try to detect our radio tagged birds.

Because of the dangers of taking such a small craft as ours into the ocean, Capella elected to motor through waterways which separated the peninsulas, strictly speaking, into islands .He knew them very well; and were stranded

only once, at night when the tide was too low. So while we slept our boat remained on a mud bank....when the tide rose we floated free. The width of the waterways varied from maybe 100 metres to a mere boat's width and many were navigable only at high tide.

And now to the birds ... along all the waterways, where any mud was exposed we saw Snowy and Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons and the most spectacular of all the Scarlet Ibis...what an incredible splash of brilliance they provided, particularly when flying in the sunshine; they breed in huge colonies in the mangroves, their chicks are black and the young birds are darker then the adults

Sometimes we saw small numbers of waders along these mud banks, Willets, Whimbrels, Grey Plovers, Dowitchers, small waders and very occasionally one or two Red Knots.. We found the largest flock of our whole trip on the first day near to where Rio Currrurrupu opened into Cabel da Velha; over 1,000 birds roosting on a narrow sandy beach-

Grey plover 450,	Willet 200,	Turnstone 150,
Whimbrel 100,	Black skimmers 100,	Greater yellow legs 8,
Red Knot 1,.	Sanderling 15.	

Our hopes were high but we found few waders during the next day and a half, until we got to Maiou Island. Here, on a marvellous, long, sandy, ocean beach we found a flock of-

Grey plover 80, Terns 90 and Red Knot 32. We could not get close enough to identify the species of terns, but the red knot were FAT... FAT...FAT, and most were in brilliant breeding plumage but none was banded or flagged. The plovers were also coming into breeding plumage and looked dramatic even now with their partially black, fronts, which shows clearly why the Americans call them Black-bellied Plovers

All the birds were very restless, and while we were about 150 meters from them, they flew inland to an area of low dunes, grassed and with shallow water lagoons. Following them Jim was very surprised to see that they were feeding avidly.. but on what? We investigated these areas but could find no likely food source except insects, on the surface of the sand.

That afternoon we found another flock of Red Knot feeding on mud on a point at the entrance to a waterway about 500 metres from where we had seen our 32 that morning. Here there were 340 *C.c.rufa* feeding by probing in the mud as fast as they could go, many in advanced breeding plumage and many fat, but less so than the morning's flock. There were 40 "juveniles", adjudged as such by lack of breeding plumage and being much slimmer than the majority.

AND there were two adult birds carrying flags:- one had a bright orange flag on left tibia, plus a yellow band on left tarsus... surely a bird banded in Tierra del Fuego during the 1995 expedition there organised by Allan, Clive and Patricia. The full designation of these birds would have included a black

band on right tarsus and metal band on right tibia (Baker and colleagues, Wader Study Bulletin, Vol.7, No. 9, pages 103 - 108, April 1996) We did not see these latter 2 bands, probably because of the distance we were from the flock, and the difficulty of seeing those colours against the blackness of the mud. without a telescope. The other bird had a deep green flag on left tibia and metal band on left tarsus indicating that it had been banded in the USA We were very excited and encouraged to keep searching.

Unfortunately, we had time only to visit one more place, nearby Campecha Island. The tide was high next morning and we spent several hours on this beautiful island watching birds; Turnstones in beautiful black, white and chestnut breeding plumage. Grey Plover in their spectacular black and white outfits, Whimbrel, always feisty birds, fighting with each other and the one pecking a Grey Plover looked particularly angry.. and the small waders, beautiful in their breeding plumages also..
Our totals were

Turnstone 400 Red Knot 120 Grey Plover 75 Whimbrel 40, Collared Plover 40 Semi-palmated Plover 20 Semi-palmated Sandpiper 20 Short-billed Dowitcher 12 Wilson's Plover 8 Willet 5 Greater Yellowlegs 1.

But still we had found no big flocks of Red Knot.

Time had run out and we had soon to turn for home, but not before one more check of the beach and dune areas of Maiou Island. Wow! 4,000 Semi-palmated Sandpipers feeding furiously on a large shallow mud inlet. We wondered if they had just flown in on their way north as there were so many more here than yesterday.
We also found here--Red Knot 120 Short-billed Dowitcher 30
Grey Plover 20 Sanderling 10
Greater Yellow Legs 8, Collared Plover about 50
Semi-palmated Plovers about 15.

However, we had found no radio tagged birds despite many attempts, also on the return trip. When Jim decided after dark that we should try once more on the last night at Maiou Island, he climbed the big sand dune beside which we were moored, but only switched on his torch after he slid down a 2 meter slip face!!! I was not there to enjoy the spectacle! Luckily he was not hurt and nor was our equipment.

Next morning we began our return journey to Sao Luis. The first part was across the entrance to a wide bay and the sea was quite rough. Our boat was expertly navigated by Capella, but it was a case of sit on the cabin roof, avoid the boom, and hold on very tightly; we were travelling fast almost at right angles to the waves, with both sails filling in the strong breeze and the motor increasing our speed. We survived, but my arms and hands took a while to recover.

The remainder of the two day trip back was speedy and uneventful. Some of the highlights for me were passing an island which looked to have perfect habitat for tern breeding.....sure enough, Capella told us this was so before the locals raided their nests. and the three hours from 1 to 4am of our final day. We had moored just on dark on the first day at the jetty of a very populous village. Eventually we persuaded the inquisitive children to leave our boat, and slept. I woke at 1am to feel the boat moving quietly from our moorings. It was very dark, with only the light from the stars throwing a gleam on the water bright enough to show the outline of the mangroves lining the wide waterway. In magical silence we slid then into the narrowest of channels...just wide enough for our boat, despite the mast and support wires catching the mangroves above. For the next three hours Capella guided our boat at the lowest speed possible along this channel, which twisted and turned. It was obvious why we had had to wait for the highest part of the tide and if we had taken the wrong turn we could have met with a blocked channel-- it was a wilderness experience to remember. At 4 am we were again in a wide waterway and we anchored till daylight, about 5.30 am.

We set off again and travelled almost non-stop. Back in Sao Luis Harbour and anticipating "civilisation" again I was changing into dry socks on the deck, when I noticed two beehive like ,1 cm diameter eruptions under the arches of both feet...Mild panic as we had been told to always wear shoes to avoid hookworm in the mud in northern Brazil. I had disobeyed this advice once only some two weeks before! However, it was my lucky day as Capella knew exactly what to do. He inserted a needle into the base of each eruption, tore the whole thing off with a piece tissue, then flung both into the water, then one application of Betadine and all healed perfectly!!! ..This infestation was diagnosed as the very common "foot beast", a flea *Tunga penetrans*, which is carried here by dogs, pigs and chickens.

And so back to dry land----we had not found the large flocks of Red Knot described by others, nor our radio tagged birds, but we had found other migrating birds on this coastline. These findings suggest that further longer explorations could well determine whether, and if so, which beaches the Red Knots use. Furthermore, we had seen several beaches where cannon netting looked possible.

Finally, Jim and I felt that we had had a unique experience. Our thanks go to Augusto who organized our boat, then accompanied us as local ornithologist, colleague and interpreter. My personal thanks go to Clive, Allan and Patricia for inviting me to join their 1997 International Expedition, which gave me the opportunity to revisit one of my favourite countries, and gave me an exciting and unforgettable three months working with the waders, and with great local and international people.

Trivia

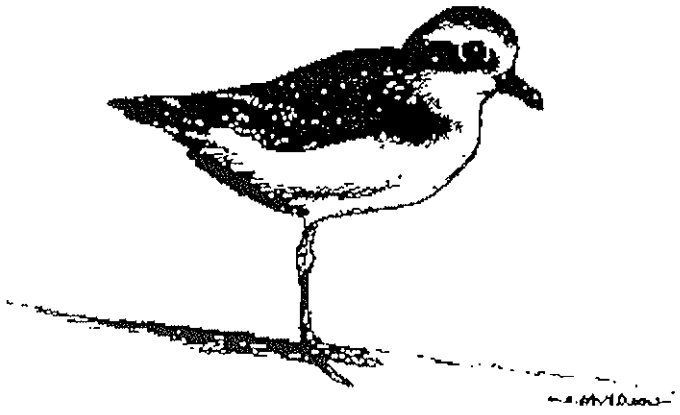
Q. Is the White-rumped Sandpiper well named?

A. No, it's upper tail is white but not it's rump.

GULL by Terri Allen

Inquisitively he leaves his pool,
stretches his glorious white wings, black barred
and curves his way to land beside a sunworshipper
Red legs knobby and red beak agleam,
he is a very perfect gentleman, seemingly
Quietly striding around,
he keeps a watchful eye, however.
His impeccable white head and chest
give way to soft dove grey on the back.
Standing on one leg, clown-wise,
he belies his nature.
Virgin snowiness masks a scavenger,
the pecker- out of dead men's eyes,
Yet, hunched and huddled as he is against the sea's blast,
who can deny his pristine beauty?
After all, he is the keeper of the beaches,
the king of the clean-up
Gleaming white and flying free
the regal gull, he
sanitizes beach and sea
where people sully

Glorious shore, golden sand
with ugly litter.
Keep Australia pure, our land,
pure, clean, not bitter



Membership List at June 30th 1997

Rick Aitchison
Khalid Al Dabbagh
Richard & Margaret Alcorn
Charles Allen
Terri Allen
Stephen Ambrose
George Appleby
Lisa Barter
Mark & Terry Barter
Graham Beal
Mark Bennett
Rob & Gail Berry
Pat Bingham
Adrian Boyle
Malcolm & Judy Brown
Prue Brown
Margaret Cameron
Jeff & Sarah Campbell
Jo Chadwick & Anthony Mitchell
Allen Clarke & Marj Reni
Rohan Clarke
Mike Connor
Dave Cropley
Amanda Dalgleish
Rosemary Davidson
Steven Davidson
Michael Dawkins
John Dawson
Ren De Garis
Lee Duclos
Andrew Dunn
Dianne Emslie
Jon Fallaw & Becky Hayward
Dave Gerrard
Gail, Colin & Heather Gibbs
Peter & Melanie Gibbs
Doris Graham
Nicole Grenfell
Tim Gunn & Petina Pert
Angie Gutowski
Peter Hermans
Vivian Holyoake
Peter Houston &
Marguerite Cordell
Tania Ireton
Angela Jessop
Ros Jessop & Pete Collins
Irma Kluger
Leona Knight
Brett Lane
Rowena Langston
Laurie Living
Moira Longden
Sue & Andy Longmore
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Jan Mangan
Pat McWhirter
Luke Naismith
Rory O'Brien
Priscilla Park
Hugo Phillipps
Heather Phillipson
Murray Portbury
John Pratt
Phillip Pratt
Thomas Putt
Jim, Jenny, April & Shane
Reside
Roger Richards
Ken, Annie & Danny Rogers
Thierry & Joanne Rolland
Diane & Bob Ross
Neville & Nancy Roussac
Graeme, Margaret,
Chris & Michael Rowe
Ira Savage
Clinton Schipper
Charles Silveira
Howard Simco
Terry South
Will & Angela Steele
Iain & Sandy Stewart
Tony Stokes
Bob Swindley
Susan Taylor
Pavel Tomkovich
Dale Tonkinson
Lyn Turner
Mark Walker
Mike Weston
Norman Wettenhall

Copies are also sent to

Australasian Wader Studies Group
NSW Wader Study Group
Queensland Wader Study Group
Wash Wader Ringing Group

Landowners on whose properties the group operates in Victoria

Arthur Rylah Institute
Environment Australia
Australian Bird & Bat Banding Schemes
Environment, Victoria
Victorian Ornithological Research Group

Birds Australia (RAOU)
Natural Resources & Barren Grounds Bird Observatory
Broome Bird Observatory
Eyre Bird Observatory
Rotamah Bird Observatory
Bird Observers' Club of Australia Library
CSIRO Library, ACT
Senckenbergische Bibliothek

The following fully paid up members names have
been omitted from the members list.
The editors wish to apologise for the omission
Vivien Kluger
Donald and Meg Macmillan
Oliver Rosznay
Sally Symonds
Jim Vadolaus
Dianne and Nick Walton

1996-97 VWSG Annual Accounts

As an incorporated body, the Victorian Wader Study Group Inc., is required to publish - , and after auditing, submit to the regulatory authorities - details of the income and expenditure for each financial year together with a summary of its balance sheet. The all embracing nature of the financial accounts can make it difficult for VWSG members to comprehend the detailed financial state of the Group. This note is designed to explain the various components of the VWSG accounts in a manner which members can more easily assimilate.

The various components which go to make up the 1996-97 accounts are :-
1) The general operating income/expenditure of the group. Income includes members' subscriptions, donations, interest on bank deposits and other small items.

Expenditure includes the printing and posting of the Bulletin, consumable items such as electric fuses, colour bands, colour flag material, maintenance and replacement of equipment, new equipment for VWSG use etc.
In many years expenditure in this general category will equal or exceed income. Only the generous donation of $2,500 in each of the past three years by Esso Australia and the $ 1,800 from Coast Action/Coastcare in the present year have kept this area of the VWSG income/expenditure in balance.

2) Manufacture of equipment for other organisations.
The VWSG makes engineering drawings of equipment available free of charge to other appropriate organisations interested in acquiring cannon netting equipment. This is on the basis that the VWSG potentially benefits directly and/or indirectly from more widespread use of the technique, particularly on wading birds, and the development of a greater pool of experience in cannon netting methods.

The VWSG also undertakes manufacture and procurement of equipment, if requested, for other organisations. In recent years equipment has been prepared for the NSW Wader Study Group, the Queensland Wader Study Group, the Australasian Wader Study Group (deposited at Broome Bird Observatory), the Northern Territory Conservation Commission, the Northern Territory Quarantine Service, the Queensland Quarantine Service and the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada. Hardware, electrical equipment, covering material etc. are all supplied at cost. The VWSG receives a 'fee' of $300 for the 60 man hours which go into making a new net. A small fee is also charged, above the cost of materials, for making up keeping cages.

This equipment supplying activity thus brings in a small amount of net income to the Group which can be applied to its general expenditure.
The current accounts contain income from the sale of equipment to the Queensland Quarantine Service and Queensland Wader Study Group. The accounts also note that $3,650 is due from Canada for the equipment

supplied to the Royal Ontario Museum. The corresponding expenditures are included in the overall equipment purchases for the year, except for c.$1,000 of hardware expenditure (for Canada) which will be included in the 97-98 financial year.

3) Fieldwork / Surveys undertaken for other organisations.
The VWSG occasionally receives requests from consultants or other organisations for expert manpower assistance in fieldwork. This is undertaken only when it is closely allied to the Group interests e.g. waterbird counts undertaken by Mike Weston for Melbourne Water at Werribee SF, several years ago.

During the past year the VWSG assisted with two projects:-
a) measurement of the reactions of birds to aircraft in the vicinity of Avalon Airport ($2000).
b) Measurement of the reactions of waterbirds to disturbance at Cheetham Saltworks, Laverton ($1500).
After deduction of travelling costs incurred these activities generated a useful net income for the VWSG.

4) Coast Action/Coastcare grants and work programmes.
This is a new item for the VWSG accounts, resulting from three successful grant applications in December 1996 (see elsewhere in this bulletin). The monies ($ 29,550) have to be spent or returned by December 1997.
As of June 30th 1997 :-
(a) $5188 of the $16,250 allocated to the fox-baiting project has been spent. The current activity level suggests that most of the balance ($11,062) will be consumed by the end of the year.
The VWSG cash balance is of course inflated by this amount in the current accounts.
(b) $2248 of the $2500 allocated for the aerial survey has been expended. The remainder will be spent in November/ December 1997.
(c) The whole of the $1800 allocated to the purchase of equipment, has been spent. Details are contained in the equipment expenditure section of the current accounts.

Cash Position
At the beginning of the 1996/97 financial year the VWSG had cash reserves (in various deposit and current accounts) of $6541.
At the end of the year the accounts show $22,261 as the cash balance. However $11314 is committed to Coast Action / Coastcare projects. $3650 is expected to be received from Canada for equipment already supplied and bills of $1025 are yet to be received for items associated with this equipment. The fairest estimate of the net financial 'free' cash balance of the VWSG at the end of the 1996/97 financial year is thus $13,572.

Rosemary Davidson and Clive Minton.

Financial statement from 1st July 1996 to 30th June 1997 - Victorian Wader Study Group Inc.

INCOME	***$***	***EXPENDITURE***	***$***
Subscriptions	1685.00 (984.80)	Printing Bulletin	598.00 (499.00)
DONATIONS		Postage	260.50 (130.44)
Trading table	72.20 (66.25)	Stationary & photocopying	86.50 (22.15)
Esso	2500.00 (2500.00)	Slide duplication & sleeves	120.60
Other (T. Allen)	100.00 (5.00)	Incorporation charge	32.00
		Maps of Corner Inlet	11.90
Avalon Airport Survey	2000.00	Gifts	98.00
Cheethams Wetland Monitoring	1500.00	Bank charges & government charges	122.75
Coast Action Projects	20550.00	**Sub-total**	**1330.25**
Sale of net etc to QLD Quarantine Service	4309.00	***Equipment***	
Sale of firing box to QLD WSG	400.00	Trailer registration & bearings, cable winder, bags, shackles, grease, stool repairs, glue, cable, stove, thermometer, hammer	454.45
Sale of back issues of Bulletin	8.25	Cartridges	320.00
Corner Inlet Hall hire surplus	27.00	Keeping cage material	155.35
French Island barge payment	150.00	Drill (cleaning cartridges)	99.00
INTEREST		Firing Box	400.00
Advantage Saver Acc.	45.00 (8.48)	Fuses	765.00
Bonus Saver Acct	325.00 (76.51)	Batteries	280.48
Macquarie Account	64.23	Colour bands and flags	743.40
		Sub-total	**3217.68**
TOTAL INCOME	**33735.73**		
		Barge to French Island	280.00
		Materials for nets (to replace those sold to Canada)	1507.00
		Materials and equipment sold to QLD Quarantine Service: keeping cage materials, cannons, firing box, shade cloth etc.	310.00 3372.55
		Cheethams Wetland Monitoring	
		Travelling expenses for observers	65.00
		Avalon Airport Survey	
		Travelling expenses for observers	495.90
		Coast Action* expenses	
		Helicopter survey of Corner Inlet	2144.00
		Maps for survey	104.50
		Fox Baiting Project - baits	762.00
		waders	100.00
		labour	4326.70
		Sub-total	**13467.90**
		TOTAL EXPENSES	**18015.83**
Cash Balance 01/07/96		**Cash Balance 30/06/97**	
Petty cash	9.33	Petty cash	8.76
Advantage Saver Acc.	662.66	Advantage Saver Account	681.63
Bonus Saver Acc.	3674.30	Macquarie Account	21570.53
Term Deposit	2194.73		
TOTAL CASH	**6541.02**	TOTAL CASH	**22260.92**
TOTAL	***40276.75***	***TOTAL***	***40276.75***

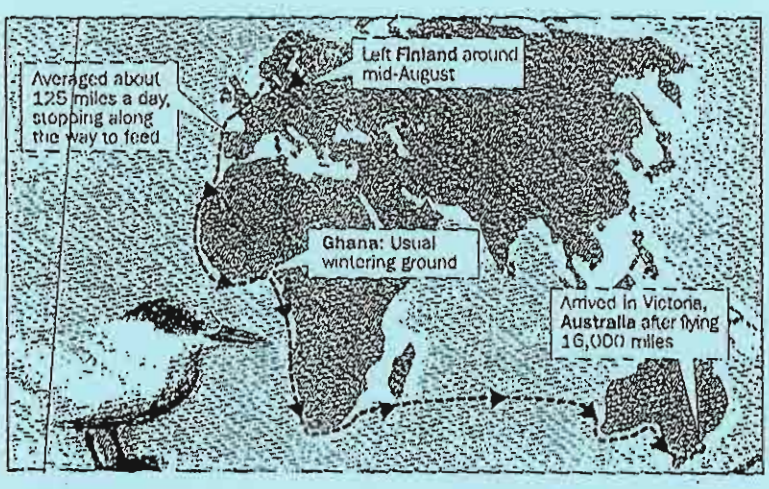
Outstanding Credits - Payment for net sold to Canada **$3650.00**
Future Costs Replacement of cannons, projectiles & cartridges sold to Canada

*NOTE - Balance of *Coast Action* Grants ($13,112.80) to be spent by 01/01/98.

Rosemary Davidson - Hon. Treasurer

Daily Express (U.K.) 31st January 1997.

For my next tern I'll fly 16,000 miles



BY JOHN INCHAM
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

A YOUNG seabird has flown into the record books by making a marathon journey half-way round the world.

The common tern covered more than 16,000 miles from its lakeside nest in central Finland to south-eastern Australia.

And it clocked up the longest known flight by a wild bird . . . by going the long way round.

The four-ounce tern could not travel the most direct route over land because it needed fish to live off.

So it went via the world's oceans to reach its destination more than 16,000 miles away, smashing the previous record by 2,000 miles.

It left Finland around August 15 and was caught and later released on January 24 near the Gippsland Lakes in Victoria.

About half-way through the journey it reached its traditional wintering ground, the coast of Ghana in West Africa — and just kept going.

When it landed in Australia among a flock of common terns — known as sea swallows - seeking winter refuge from Siberia, it looked as fit as the day it left.

Experts believe it averaged about 125 miles a day.

And its journey means the common tern has at last beaten the bird thought to

Bird that was all at sea covers record distance

14,000 miles from White Russia to Fremantle, Australia, in 1956. Arctic terns also migrate from their breeding grounds to spend winter in the Antarctic and then fly back again for the northern summer.

But their 12,000 mile direct North-South route cannot compete with the trek performed by the Finnish bird.

Clive Minton, who caught the world-beating tern, said: "You would not have known it from any of the other 500 common terns we caught on this trip - except this one travelled a lot further."

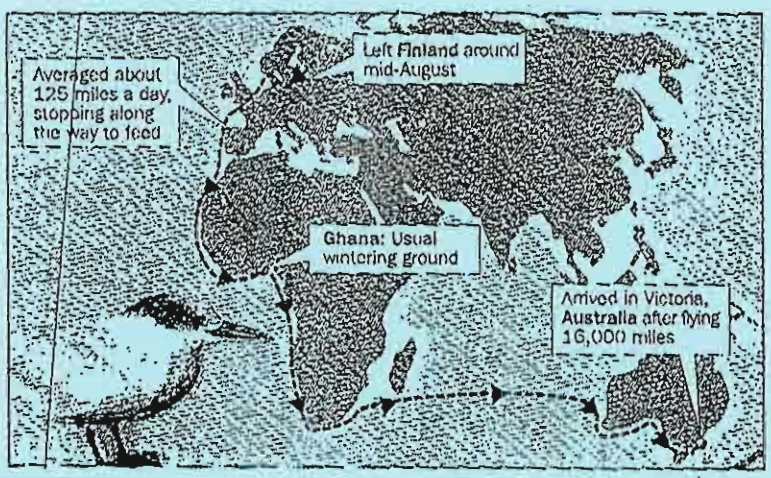
Chris Mead, of the British Trust for Ornithology, added: "It is no surprise that a tern should retain the world record since they are the supreme wanderer.

"Technically, it is lost because the European common terns usually winter off tropical Africa, around Ghana.

It will almost certainly sort itself out and find its way back to Finland."

The bird's journey is also a triumph for technology.

"A few years ago we would have waited a long time to find out about this. It would have involved writing letters,



The Times (London) 31st January 1997

Wrong tern leads to bird's record flight

Daily Telegraph (U.K.) 31st January 1997

Tern makes record 16,000-mile flight

The Times (London) Zealand Herald 1st February 1997

Wrong tty tern's record 25,000km flight bird's rede from Finland to Australia

(Australia) 1st February 1997

Daily Telegraph (U.K.) **tern's a hero**

Tern mak

:en Dagblan (Holland) 1st February 1997

16,000-n ordvlucht visdiefje

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