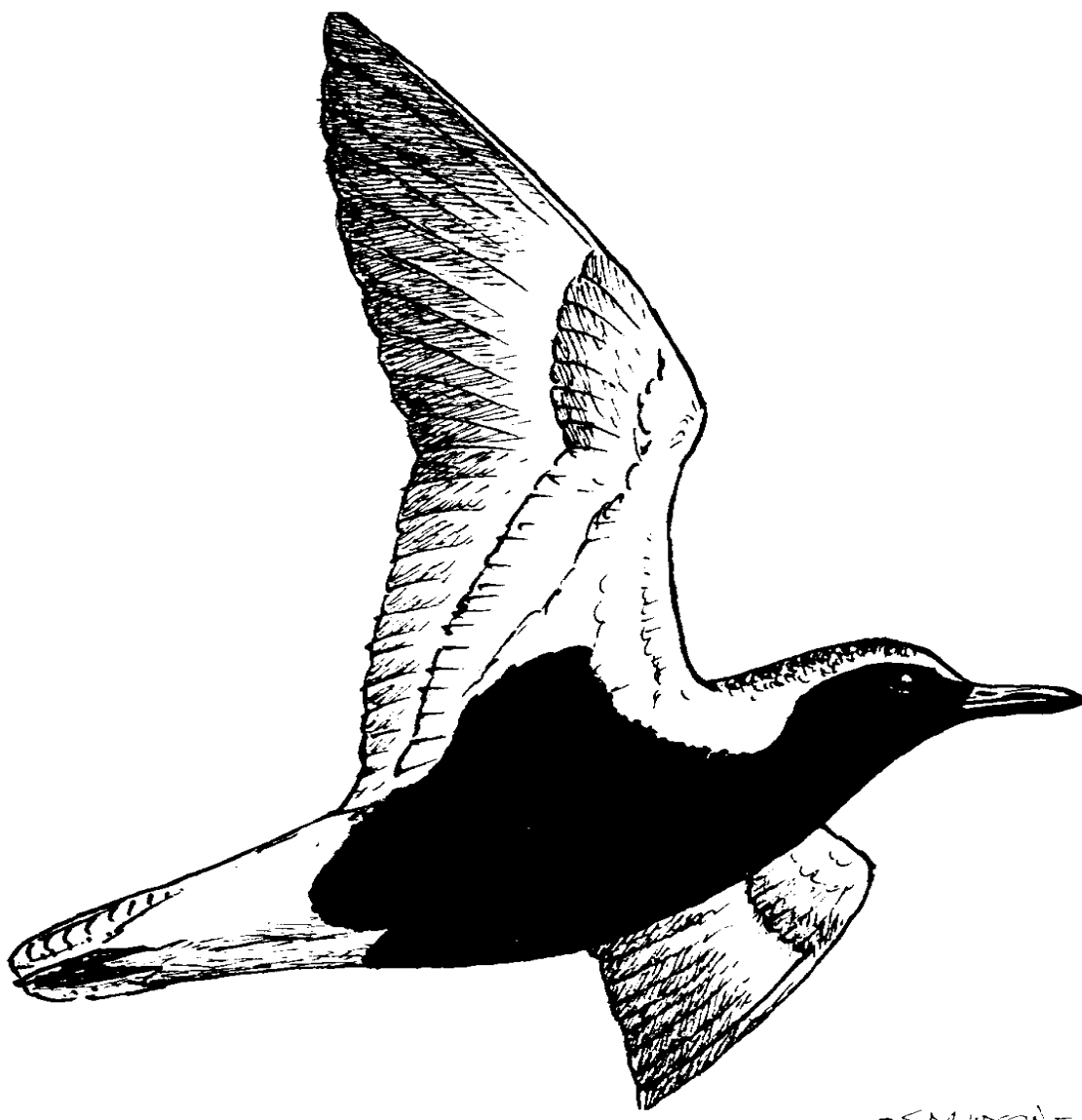


VWSG BULLETIN

JOURNAL OF THE VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP

Number 34
August 2011



ISSN 0159-6896

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP INC.

MISSION STATEMENT

The principal aim of the Victorian Wader Study Group is to gather, through extensive planned fieldwork programs, comprehensive data on waders and terns throughout Victoria on a long-term basis.

This scientifically collected information is intended to form a factual base for conservation considerations, to be a source of information for education of a wider audience, to be a means of generating interest of the general community in environmental and conservation issues, and to be a major contribution to the East-Asian Australasian Flyway and Worldwide knowledge of waders and terns.

FORMATION/BACKGROUND

The wader banding fieldwork, which led to the formation of the Victorian Wader Study Group, commenced in December 1975. The Group was formally named in late 1978 and incorporated in 1986.

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP INC.
OFFICE BEARERS

Chairman
Dr. Clive Minton
165 Dalgetty Road
Beaumaris, Vic. 3193
Tel/fax. 03 9589 4901
mintons@ozemail.com.au

Treasurer/Secretary
Rosemary Davidson
14 Young Street
Ashburton, Vic. 3147
Tel. 03 9885 8231
Yanakie 03 5687 1322
rosiedavidson@iprimus.com.au

Equipment Officer
Paul Buchhorn
PO Box 32
Balnarring, Vic. 3926.
Tel. 03 5983 5537
buchhorn@peninsula.hotkey.net.au

Editor/Deputy Chairman
Dr. Rosalind Jessop
RMB 4009,
Cowes. Vic. 3922.
Tel. 03 5952 1857
moonbird@waterfront.net.au

Assistant Editor
Dr. Doris Graham
14 Falconer Street
Fitzroy North, Vic. 3068.
Tel/fax. 03 9482 2112
grahamdm@melbpc.org.au

Conservation Officer
Dr. Doris Graham
14 Falconer Street
Fitzroy North, Vic. 3068.
Tel/fax. 03 9482 2112
grahamdm@melbpc.org.au

Committee for 2010/11
The above officers and
Robin Atkinson, Malcolm Brown, Maureen Christie, Heather Gibbs, Ken Gosbell, Birgita Hansen,
Penny Johns, Rod McFarlane (Assistant Equipment Officer), Graeme Rowe, Susan Taylor, Inka
Veltheim, Dave Cropley, Prue Wright.

Public Officer: Dr. Clive Minton

Subscriptions for 2011/12 (payable in advance on 1st July 2011)

Full Member	\$20.00
-------------	---------

Student	\$10.00
---------	---------

This bulletin is usually 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. Line illustrations are reproduced from the AWSG journal "Stilt" with permission of the editor unless otherwise indicated.

Views and opinions expressed in “VWSG Bulletin” are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the VWSG.

©VWSG This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealings for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission. Inquires should be directed to the editor.

VWSG WEB SITE www.vicnet.net.au/~vwsg

Our web site is maintained by Roger Standen

Summary of VWSG Activities to August 2011

Clive Minton

Introduction

Each year I try to bring together key aspects and outcomes of Victorian Wader Study Group activities into a summary at the beginning of the annual Bulletin. It is nice that this always presents a selection problem because there have always been so many developments and happenings of note during the year.

This year is no exception. But it is interesting that some of the main highlights are in the same areas as mentioned in last year's Bulletin – geolocator results and outstanding movements determined from banding and flagging. Additionally in this year there was the highly successful banding of Banded Stilt chicks. Also, an unprecedented level of incoming grants and financial support for our geolocator work and equipment/operating costs was extremely welcome.

Pride of place must go to a Ruddy Turnstone from Flinders which successfully carried a geolocator for the second successive year on the 27,000 km round-trip migration through Asia to breed in the Siberian Arctic and then back via Alaska and islands in the Central Pacific. It was by good fortune that this bird was given a new geolocator in April 2010 and amazing that we were able to successfully recapture it again when it returned to Flinders later that year. We are still puzzled why some Turnstone appear to take a much more "Pacific" route back to Australia on southward migration when others return by a similar route through Asia to that which they used on northward migration.

In a totally different field a Crested Tern which was found in New Zealand waters in July 2011 was an extremely unusual movement. It had been banded at the colony at The Nobbies on Phillip Island and was probably storm driven as it turned up, and subsequently died, on an oil rig off the west coast of North Island. There have only been about a dozen previous sightings of Crested Tern in New Zealand and, of course, no previous recoveries of Australian-banded birds.

Of particular scientific interest, especially in relation to the demographics of this species, several more Bar-tailed Godwit which were only two years old have been reported on migration through Asia and eastern Siberia. The most recent was a bird on the Commander Islands, off the coast of eastern Siberia, on 9th June 2011. The accompanying photograph showed that the bird had acquired very little breeding plumage. Until the recent introduction of engraved leg flags for Bar-tailed Godwit caught in Victoria it had been thought that most individuals did not migrate northward for the first time until age 3, or even age 4.

A special article in last year's Bulletin highlighted the extraordinarily good results we have obtained from the use of engraved leg flags on Ruddy Turnstone. Two birds which had been seen on multiple occasions on migration through Taiwan were highlighted. Both these birds have subsequently been further sighted – both on southward migration through Taiwan in August 2010 and one on northward migration again in April/May 2011. The latter has now been seen on seven successive migrations, four northward and three southward, at the same place in Taiwan. A good example of consistent navigation!

The banding highlight of the year was, unusually, 332 Banded Stilt chicks at Lake Torrens in South Australia. This was achieved through the considerable perseverance of Maureen Christie and the exertions and endurance of the small team which managed to round up these birds, sometimes one at a time, in the vast shallow water and muddy expanses of this inland salt lake. I'm afraid that Maureen's unbelievable success has cost me a bottle of champagne!

The VWSG over the years has tried to be self-sufficient in funding but it has had regular small financial help from the Coast Action/Coast Care program and from the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment. Because of the high cost of geolocators however (nearly \$8000 was spent in the year to June 2010, and another \$9000 this year) it has proved necessary to seek major external funding. We are very pleased to have received a grant of \$10,000 from the Norman Wettenhall Trust. It is particularly pleasing to be associated with this Trust because Norman was for many years a member of the VWSG and was the key person in the formation, through Birds Australia, of the Australasian Wader Studies Group in 1980.

Having picked the cream out of this year's news I will now slightly amplify the information on a range of the usual subjects.

Banding

Only 3765 waders were caught by the VWSG in the calendar year 2010. There have only been two years with lower totals (3333 in 1995 and 3503 in 1983) since the VWSG started using cannon-nets in 1979. Banding totals have been steadily reducing in recent years as the result of the increased targeting of fieldwork activities towards the less frequently (and more difficult to catch) species and towards special objectives such as deploying and retrieving geolocators. The 2010 total was also lower because many fewer Red-necked Stint, and almost no Curlew Sandpiper and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, came to the Victorian coast in the 2010/11 non-breeding season. Many remained inland, attracted by the extensive ephemeral wetlands.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper topped the "notable totals" in 2009 with 510 caught. The total was just 12 in 2010, none of which were in the second half of the year. But good totals were achieved for Ruddy Turnstone (583), Curlew Sandpiper (412), Sanderling (386) and Bar-tailed Godwit (348). We were behind our target for Pied Oystercatcher, with only 81 caught, but achieved a satisfactory total of 66 Sooty Oystercatcher. Fifty-four Banded Stilt chicks were also banded at Lake Torrens in June 2010, before the amazing April 2011 total of 332.

There have been some notable catches in the first half of 2011. The excellent catch of 138 Bar-tailed Godwit on Clonmel Island in early February turned out to be rather traumatic with a northerly gale having sprung up whilst we were banding and processing the birds. We only got back successfully to the mainland afterwards due to the skill of the Parks Victoria boatmen. Dave Cropley's hovercraft – such an invaluable adjunct to our fieldwork these days, especially for twinkling – also only successfully made the return journey after considerable help from a Parks Victoria boat.

Sixty-eight Bar-tailed Godwit were caught at Barwon Heads which is the first wader catch in the estuary there for more than 20 years. It seems that the Swan Bay population temporarily moved there for some reason – a third of the birds caught had previously been banded at Queenscliff. It was nice to see Eastern Curlew on the

catch list again also with 29 caught at Inverloch in early February. We had aimed at a catch of 30 birds, to enable us to deploy 25 geolocators on adult birds, so were pretty close to achieving our target. We had much greater difficulty in catching Sanderling to put geolocators on in South Australia in March with the usual large concentration at Danger Point in Brown Bay, near Port MacDonnell, being absent this year.

An unusual banding activity, in December 2010, was the catching of 53 waders in north-west Tasmania (mainly on Robbins Island) by Danny Rogers and Adrian Boyle. The primary purpose was to apply radio transmitters so that flight paths could be tracked as part of an assessment of the suitability of various locations in that area for wind farms. It is amazing that amongst these small catches of birds was a Red-necked Stint carrying a Chinese band. Even more amazing was the huge number and variety of flagged birds from Victoria and elsewhere in Australia, and overseas also, which they sighted during their several weeks of fieldwork in north-west Tasmania (see under Flagging report).

Recoveries, Retraps and Flag Sightings

The flagging activities in Australia have greatly exceeded all expectations in terms of the number of subsequent sightings reported and the valuable information on migration routes and stopover locations obtained. The value of flagging has been further enhanced in recent years by the gradual introduction of engraved leg flags which enables birds to be individually identified, usually with the aid of a telescope or camera, in the field. Some of the highlights of results obtained during the last year have already been covered in the introductory section of this article. Many others are covered in the Recoveries and Flag Sightings sections of this Bulletin. However mention is appropriate of the enormous skills and perseverance of a Japanese bird watcher who, each year, attempts to read the **metal** band numbers on Sanderling which call in on the east coast of Japan on migration. In mid-August 2010 he managed to piece together the band numbers of four individuals, two of which he had also similarly recorded there in previous years. Sanderling use one of the smallest band sizes and never seem to have their legs still, so how this person manages to achieve readable photographs with a telephoto lens is incredible.

Each year we recapture a large number of birds we have banded in previous years. Even with the reduced overall catch total in 2010 the usual retrap rate of around 20% was maintained. It is always of interest to look up the ages of these birds and especially pleasing that one quite regularly finds individuals of a variety of species reaching the age of 15, and occasionally 20. There were quite a few further examples of migratory waders living to these ages during the last year. But the oldest bird recorded was a resident species – a 26-year-old Pied Oystercatcher, still going strong at Swan Island, Queenscliff.

A publication of maps showing all recoveries and flag sightings of 28 different species of waders was published in the AWSG journal "Stilt" in April 2011. VWSG contributed more than 50% of this information.

The volume of flag sightings each year (2-3000 relating to south-east Australia alone) is now such that it is impossible to publish the details of each one in the annual VWSG Bulletin. This year almost all the flag sighting data has been condensed into tabular form, with only a small number of individual sightings detailed. This should not be taken as suggesting that these flag sightings, even of Red-necked Stint, are not as valuable as previously. The fact that we are now receiving sufficient numbers

for quantitative analysis is actually greatly enhancing their value. So please do continue to report every sighting of a flagged bird away from the regular flagging locations – and of course report all birds carrying flags put on elsewhere in Australia or overseas.

Until recently all our flags were made from 0.5 mm thick PVC sheet (Darvic). Blanks were cut by Malcolm Brown, and Doris Graham regularly organised small groups of people to make them into flags. Graeme and Margaret Rowe, Roz Jessop, Vivien Holyoake, Steve Johnson and many others regularly took part in this activity. Engraved leg flags were made from the same plastic but the engraving was ink filled and then sealed with a clear varnish. They proved to have limited life on species such as Ruddy Turnstone, which live in abrasive environments, and on some species in northern Australia where sunlight and dry wind-blown sand cause fading and erosion and gradual illegibility. During 2010 we learned that a bi-coloured plastic material, 0.75 mm thick, was available from a specialist colour-band supplier in Poland. We have now moved over to using this material for all engraved leg flags applied in south-east Australia. They are expected to have far greater durability under field conditions. However the new material has the disadvantage that flags cannot be formed in hot water – only at higher temperatures using hot air guns. After some difficult experiences trying to do this ourselves we have, at least temporarily, resorted to purchasing formed engraved leg flags direct from Poland. These are significantly more expensive, but do seem to be of high quality. Given the huge extra information derivable from the use of engraved leg flags the extra expense seems justified.

Terns

As usual, further interesting data was collected on breeding tern numbers and breeding success as well as on movements and longevity. Full details are given in the Tern reports later in this Bulletin. There was a slight reduction in the 2009 record breeding population of Crested Tern down to 5550 pairs from 6300. In contrast the new Fairy Tern colony at Inverloch showed a further increase, to 50 pairs. Some old birds were recorded, including a 23-year-old and a 22-year-old Crested Tern still breeding at Mud Islands and a 14-year-old Little Tern breeding in New South Wales, but banded in the Gippsland Lakes. Whiskered Tern also produced their first ever flag sightings – six, together, at a location on the Gippsland Lakes. These would have been flagged at Werribee Sewage Farm several years ago.

We hope to start using engraved leg flags on Caspian Tern chicks in the 2011/12 breeding season.

Breeding Success

Wonderfully, the results deriving from the proportion of juvenile birds in our catches in the 2010/11 season indicate that the Arctic breeding season of 2009 was a second successive good one for most wader species. Only Bar-tailed Godwit, which breed in Alaska, showed a poor outcome, suggesting that weather conditions and predation levels, low, were widespread across the parts of Siberia used for breeding by waders which spend the non-breeding season in south-east Australia. Given the severe declines being experienced by many migratory wader species it is particularly good that some contribution to halting or reversing this decline will have come from this good breeding outcome. Full details of “percentage juvenile” results are given in a separate article in this Bulletin.

Finances

It is pleasing that the financial position of the VWSG is at such a satisfactory level. This is because of the extra income we have received in the past year from grants and donations. Whilst we have also incurred further heavy expenditure on geolocators, we were fortunate that in the past year no major items of our cannon-netting equipment had to be replaced.

The VWSG is extremely grateful to all those organisations and individuals which have supported us financially. By having the means to have high quality equipment for use in the field and the ability to use modern technology, such as geolocators, the output of all the volunteer efforts by VWSG members is maximised.

Acknowledgements

As always the successful activities of the Group are facilitated by the huge and varied efforts of a large number of people. We almost always have an adequate team for fieldwork – sometimes at very short notice – and there are a huge number of behind-the-scenes jobs carried out by members which support our overall activities (many of these were listed individually in last year's Bulletin). We are also dependent on many land owners and organisations for access permission and for permits. We thank everyone greatly for their contribution to our activities.

Total Number of Waders Caught by Species

VWSG 2010

SPECIES	New	Retrap	Total
Bar-tailed Godwit	309	39	348
Ruddy Turnstone	341	242	583
Red Knot	17	4	21
Sanderling	277	89	366
Red-necked Stint	1494	310	1804
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	11	1	12
Curlew Sandpiper	384	28	412
Pied Oystercatcher	65	16	81
Sooty Oystercatcher	37	29	66
Banded Stilt	54	0	54
Red-capped Plover	5	0	5
Double-banded Plover	11	1	12
Hooded Plover	1	0	1
13 Species	3006	759	3765

Table prepared by Helen Vaughan and Clive Minton

Total Waders Caught by Species 1975 to 31 December 2010 – VWSG

Species	New	Retrap	Total
Latham's Snipe	347	14	361
Black-tailed Godwit	4	0	4
Bar-tailed Godwit	4926	629	5555
Short-billed Dowitcher	1	0	1
Whimbrel	47	6	53
Eastern Curlew	822	72	894
Marsh Sandpiper	2	0	2
Common Greenshank	535	64	599
Terek Sandpiper	37	1	38
Grey-tailed Tattler	38	3	41
Ruddy Turnstone	4339	1843	6182
Great Knot	689	89	778
Red Knot	5040	739	5779
Sanderling	4588	1761	6349
Little Stint	8	0	8
Red-necked Stint	115756	31558	147314
Long-toed Stint	1	0	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	2	0	2
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	9659	436	10095
Curlew Sandpiper	25700	4864	30564
Cox's Sandpiper	1	0	1
Broad-billed Sandpiper	5	0	5
Pied Oystercatcher	2687	1382	4069
Sooty Oystercatcher	950	349	1299
Black-winged Stilt	44	0	44
Banded Stilt	540	0	540
Red-necked Avocet	368	5	373
Pacific Golden Plover	265	25	290
Grey Plover	176	29	205
Red-capped Plover	691	185	876
Double-banded Plover	3697	1004	4701
Lesser Sand Plover	115	11	126
Greater Sand Plover	31	3	34
Black-fronted Plover	57	4	61
Hooded Plover	31	2	33
Red-kneed Dotterel	136	11	147
Masked Lapwing	187	3	190
37 Species	182522	45092	227614

Table prepared by Helen Vaughan and Clive Minton

New and Retrapped Waders Caught Each Calendar Year by VWSG

Calendar Year	New	Retrap	Total
* 1975	9		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
1997	4366	1050	5416
1998	8083	1408	9491
1999	6515	1591	8106
2000	10350	2594	12944
2001	4839	1320	6159
2002	10421	2162	12583
2003	8495	2854	11349
2004	5110	1224	6334
2005	6320	1893	8213
2006	6676	1467	8143
2007	4689	924	5613
2008	4611	1317	5928
2009	3965	831	4796
2010	3006	759	3765
Totals to end 2010	182522	45092	227614

Average annual total for 1979 - 2010 = 7113 (* excluded)

Table prepared by Helen Vaughan and Clive Minton

Total Waders Caught Each Six Months 1979-2010 – VWSG

Calendar Year	January to June	July to December	Total
1975			9
1976			620
1977			494
1978			1338
1979	4289	3633	7922
1980	4127	3200	7327
1981	2113	3317	5430
1982	2394	2176	4570
1983	2882	621	3503
1984	2654	2663	5317
1985	3972	1152	5124
1986	5000	4201	9201
1987	3135	3774	6909
1988	5235	5481	10716
1989	3854	3167	7021
1990	1661	4383	6044
1991	2376	1698	4074
1992	3357	2156	5513
1993	5287	6132	11419
1994	2789	3803	6592
1995	1521	1812	3333
1996	1802	4496	6298
1997	1913	3503	5416
1998	5568	3923	9491
1999	4142	3964	8106
2000	5987	6957	12944
2001	3851	2308	6159
2002	8174	4409	12583
2003	3033	8316	11349
2004	1288	5046	6334
2005	5003	3210	8213
2006	5192	2951	8143
2007	3646	1967	5613
2008	3812	2116	5928
2009	2726	2070	4796
2010	2136	1629	3765
Totals to end 2010	114919	110234	227614

Table prepared by Helen Vaughan and Clive Minton
Note: Six month data are not available for years 1975 - 1978.

Location of Waders Caught in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania

	To Dec 2009	2010	Total
<i>Victoria</i>			
Werribee	64587	656	65243
Western Port/Flinders	57824	770	58594
Queenscliff/Swan Bay	31835	140	31975
Corner Inlet	29068	449	29517
Anderson Inlet(Inverloch)	22228	0	22228
Sandy Point/Shallow Inlet	2138	532	2670
Laverton	956	0	956
Mud Islands	757	0	757
Killarney Beach	426	0	426
Geelong (Point Henry/ Belmont Common)	257	0	257
Bendigo SF	143	0	143
Seaford Swamp	98	0	98
Braeside/Croyden	79	0	79
Gippsland Lakes	40	0	40
Barwon Heads	0	16	16
Toowong	10	0	10
<i>South Australia</i>			
Canunda/ Carpenter Rocks/ Brown Bay/Beachport/Coorong	12529	860	13389
<i>Tasmania</i>			
King Island	964	289	1253
North East Tasmania		53	53
Total	223939	3765	227704

Table prepared by Helen Vaughan and Clive Minton

Numbers of waders processed by the VWSG each month to December 2010.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	TOTAL
Latham's Snipe	51	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	106	99	35	61	396
Short-billed Dowitcher	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Black-tailed Godwit	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	4
Bar-tailed Godwit	597	1085	777	99	24	771	127	286	77	334	276	501	4954
Whimbrel	3	0	41	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	3	0	53
Eastern Curlew	16	148	19	0	22	18	21	75	175	124	180	100	898
Common Greenshank	69	135	122	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	176	60	599
Marsh Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Terek Sandpiper	17	2	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	12	39
Grey-tailed Tattler	31	0	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	41
Ruddy Turnstone	410	587	2345	931	39	23	77	63	114	165	714	585	6053
Great Knot	196	83	26	0	0	30	21	6	16	116	74	130	698
Red Knot	853	392	302	201	2	430	469	139	93	1000	545	284	4710
Sanderling	376	1654	1940	385	0	0	1	5	0	265	414	463	5503
Little Stint	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	8
Red-necked Stint	2735	1694	7025	2506	546	749	1032	895	997	2140	3538	3727	27584
Long-toed Stint	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1821	942	240	2	0	0	0	16	635	563	625	2800	7644
Curlew Sandpiper	1516	1649	1722	231	223	128	266	514	348	1139	923	1411	10070
Broad-billed Sandpiper	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5
Pied Oystercatcher	112	218	407	532	656	833	643	344	146	38	16	59	4004
Sooty Oystercatcher	7	97	86	184	214	341	275	101	0	1	0	3	1309
Black-winged Stilt	1	9	0	0	0	0	1	12	0	4	2	15	44
Banded Stilt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	151	151
Red-necked Avocet	39	0	0	0	0	0	3	67	76	46	47	89	367
Pacific Golden Plover	40	27	60	2	0	0	0	0	0	28	62	65	284
Grey Plover	36	14	4	6	0	9	0	0	2	92	42	1	206
Red-capped Plover	44	89	64	118	210	110	77	28	12	23	24	13	812
Double-banded Plover	0	2	217	301	757	956	1053	964	1	0	0	0	4251
Lesser Sand Plover	54	5	13	7	3	2	2	0	0	1	15	12	114
Greater Sand Plover	21	3	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	33
Black-fronted Dotterel	0	7	1	0	11	16	7	9	2	0	4	8	65
Hooded Plover	0	0	1	1	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
Red-kneed Dotterel	0	10	0	20	0	44	11	17	12	8	23	1	146
Masked Lapwing	5	6	92	14	4	13	4	1	1	5	21	19	185
Cox's Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	9053	8908	15512	5544	2713	4496	4092	3543	2814	6235	7765	10579	81254

Table prepared by Helen Vaughan and Clive Minton

Numbers of Waders Leg-flagged in Victoria (orange)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total 1989 - 2010
Latham's Snipe	0	0	0	0	278
Black-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	0	4
Bar-tailed Godwit	186	268	351	308	3652
Whimbrel	0	1	0	0	44
Eastern Curlew	0	0	8	0	552
Marsh Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	2
Common Greenshank	0	0	25	0	456
Terek Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	13
Grey-tailed Tattler	0	0	0	0	5
Ruddy Turnstone	328	497	238	348	3051
Great Knot	36	1	7	0	385
Red Knot	248	5	136	17	3835
Sanderling	506	261	89	277	2929
Little Stint	0	0	0	0	6
Red-necked Stint	1727	2754	2055	1496	61464
Pectoral Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	1
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	285	276	496	11	5490
Curlew Sandpiper	94	308	122	382	10886
Cox's Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	1
Broad-billed Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	3
Black-winged Stilt	0	6	0	0	26
Banded Stilt	0	0	0	54	206
Red-necked Avocet	0	0	0	0	140
Pacific Golden Plover	0	0	0	0	64
Grey Plover	5	0	16	0	107
Red-capped Plover	1	6	3	5	113
Double-banded Plover	10	45	2	11	435
Lesser Sand Plover	0	0	0	0	55
Greater Sand Plover	0	0	0	0	16
Hooded Plover	1	0	1	1	3
Black-fronted Dotterel	0	0	0	0	2
Red-kneed Dotterel	0	0	0	0	3
Masked Lapwing	1	5	0	0	37
Total	3428	4433	3549	2910	94264

*Includes Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling flagged with orange (only) in the south east of South Australia between 1993 and 1998.

Table prepared by Helen Vaughan and Clive Minton

Numbers of Waders Leg-flagged in South Australia (orange/yellow)

Species	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Latham's Snipe	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Grey-tailed Tattler	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	3	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Ruddy Turnstone	234	226	73	193	76	141	74	258	84	141	96	109	1705
Red Knot	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11	0	0	0	0	12
Sanderling	63	420	2	315	328	76	220	250	506	244	87	261	2772
Red-necked Stint	126	383	22	319	163	93	174	465	54	90	179	208	2276
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	0	2	0	27	7	73	27	21	0	15	0	0	172
Curlew Sandpiper	24	11	0	190	13	2	103	8	21	33	1	4	410
Banded Stilt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	334	0	0	0	54	388
Pacific Golden Plover	0	2	0	0	1	0	16	13	0	0	0	0	32
Red-capped Plover	0	0	1	7	5	0	7	4	1	0	0	2	27
Double-banded Plover	0	0	4	5	1	0	0	27	2	0	1	5	45
Black-fronted Plover	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Hooded Plover	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	4
Masked Lapwing	0	0	0	0	4	2	2	4	1		0	0	13
Total	447	1045	106	1062	599	396	623	1395	670	523	365	644	7875

Table prepared by Helen Vaughan and Clive Minton

VWSG FIELDWORK PROGRAM
January to December 2011

DATE	PLACE AND OBJECTIVES	HIGH TIDE	
Mon 10 Jan	Sandy Point – Sanderling [Meet at 11am at Sandy Point]	1652	1.33
Tue 11 Jan to Wed 12 Jan	Barry Beach - Bar-tailed Godwit [Set nets 3pm 11 th , camp overnight or stay at Susan's at Yarram, meet at 0630 on 12 th at BB gates]	0726 (12 th)	2.50
Fri 28 Jan	Corner Inlet - Count – eastern section (Nooramunga)	0819	2.75
Sat 29 Jan to Tue 1 Feb	Corner Inlet – Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Knot etc. [Meet to set nets 2pm 28 th . Stay nights 28 th to 31 st at Mann's Beach Hall]	0855 To 1056	2.71 2.44
Mon 7 Feb	Rhyll - Bar-tailed Godwit & Red Knot	1701	2.61
Thur 10 Feb to Sat 12 Feb	Swan Bay - Eastern Curlew (to attach geolocators) [Set nets pm. 10 th . Stay overnight (10 th & 11 th) *Time at Port Phillip Heads. Up to 2 hours later in Swan Bay	0543* to 0615*	1.44 1.40
Tues 15 Feb	Corner Inlet Count – western section	0918	2.63
Sun 20 Feb	Yallock Creek -Red-necked Stint	1515	2.72
Sat 19 Mar to Sat 26 Mar	South Australia - Sanderling & Ruddy Turnstone [Travel over on 19 th & back on 26 th]	1346 To 17.44	0.89 1.03
Sun 3 Apr to Mon 11 Apr	King Island - Ruddy Turnstone [Fly over am 3 rd and back pm 11 th]	1216 to 1636	1.30 1.55
Sun 17 Apr	Rhyll - Pied Oystercatcher	1122	2.62
Mon 18 Apr	French Island - Pied Oystercatcher	1241	2.82
Wed 4 May	Stockyard Point - Pied Oystercatcher	1403	2.86
Fri 6 May to Sat 7 May	Barry Beach - Pied & Sooty Oystercatcher Charles Hall Road Sooty Oystercatcher [Stay at Yanakie on nights of 6 th & 7 th May]	1608 1645	2.60 2.66
Tues 17 May	Stockyard Point - <i>Pied Oystercatcher</i>	1222	2.93
Thurs 2 June	French Island - <i>Pied Oystercatcher</i>	1328	2.88
Tues 14 June to Fri 17 June	Corner Inlet - Nooramunga Bar-tailed Godwit, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. Stay at Yanakie, nights 13 to 17 June.	1102 to 1435	2.52 2.66
Sat 16 July	Corner Inlet – Roussac's Farm - Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers	1402	2.51
Sun 17 July	Barry Beach - Pied and Sooty Oystercatcher	1504	2.55
Sun 31 July	Stockyard Point - Pied Oystercatcher	1308	2.80
Sun 14 August	Rhyll – Bar-tailed Godwit	1315	2.75
Sat 27 August	VWSG AGM (Clive & Pat's house) 10am – 10pm 10am Equipment maintenance - 4pm AGM : 7-10pm talks <i>Small charge to cover meal costs applies</i>		
Sat 17 Sept	Stockyard Point Early arriving Curlew Sandpiper, Pied Oystercatcher	1551	2.73
Wed 28 Sept Thurs 29 Sept Tues 4 Oct Sun 16 Oct Mon 17 Oct Tues 18 Oct Fri 28 Oct Sat 29 Oct	Inverloch Retrieval of geolocators from Eastern Curlew, weather conditions need to be fairly calm so a range of possible dates are given. Two (successful) catching attempts will be needed.	1158 1247 1629 1520 1555 1630 1213 1304	1.41 1.47 1.48 1.40 1.40 1.39 1.42 1.47
Thurs 3 Nov	Mud Islands - Crested Tern (chicks and adults)	Low tide 1040	
Mon 7 - Sat 12 Nov	South Australia - Retrieving geolocators from Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling	1140 to 1402	0.72 to 0.70
Sat 26 Nov to Fri 2 Dec	King Island - Retrieving geolocators from Ruddy Turnstone	1240 to 1749	1.37 to 1.34
Tues 29 Nov	Mud Islands - Crested Tern (chicks and adults)	15.22	(HT)
Wed 14 Dec	Mud Islands - Crested Tern (chicks and adults)	15.11	(HT)
Sat 17 Dec	Sandy Point - Sanderling	1719	1.36
Sun 18 Dec	Corner Inlet - Caspian Tern (chicks)	1139	(LT)
Wed 21 Dec	The Nobbies – Phillip Island - Crested Tern (chicks)	1451 (LT)	
Wed 28 - Fri 30 Dec	Werribee SF - Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint (meet PM 27 th to set nets)	0637 to 0749	0.90 to 0.91

Recoveries of Waders Relating to Victoria

Clive Minton, Roz Jessop and Maureen Christie

Although numerically flag-sighting reports these days far outnumber recoveries, there are still a good number of valuable records coming in where the band number of an individual bird is known. This is usually because the bird has been captured by another bander. However increasingly it is because a bird carries an individually inscribed leg flag or a unique colour-band combination which can be read on the live bird in the field.

No recoveries were made of South Australian or King Island, Tasmania banded birds, so all reports here relate to Victorian banded birds. Reports of engraved flagged birds from these locations are covered elsewhere.

The listings below fall mainly in the former category. All the Victorian-banded waders which were recaptured overseas and reported during the past year are included. Only a very small selection of the migratory waders carrying engraved leg-flags are detailed because they are now so voluminous that they'd almost fill an edition of the VWSG Bulletin! Short papers of the results from using engraved leg flags on Ruddy Turnstone and Bar-tailed Godwit were included in last year's VWSG Bulletin. The new records will mainly be covered in a further article in a future edition.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Band No.	Banding details			Recovery details		
	Age	Date	Location	Date	Location	Movement
073-59426	1 st Year	10/2/10	Corner Inlet	9/6/11	Commander Islands, off east Siberian Coast, RUSSIA	9000 km. N.
072-80924	2+	23/02/02	Corner Inlet	30/06/11	Ikpikpuk River, Alaska, USA (71 deg N, 155 deg W)	13009 km NE



Only one Bar-tailed Godwit from Victoria was caught overseas over the last 12 months – the Russian bird above was an engraved flag sighting. The bird was an incubating female caught on its nest in the north-east of Alaska at 71° N, 155° W. This is 13,009 km from where it was banded in Corner Inlet as an adult in 2002. This movement is within 100 km of the longest ever movement of an Australian banded wader.

(Photo via Joe Liebezeit)

93 different individual Bar-tailed Godwits carrying engraved leg flags were seen overseas. The majority of these were seen by the expert flag-watching team in New Zealand. But a good number also came from the expert photographers and observers in South Korea. One godwit was seen there 24 times between 24 April and 20 May 2011!

One special new feature emerging from the use of engraved leg-flags on Bar-tailed Godwits in Victoria is the revelation that a small number migrate northwards into Asia when only two years old. Previously it was thought that no Bar-tailed Godwits migrated northwards until they were three years old – and there are some records of even four-year-old birds which have not yet made a northward migration. An extreme example is the bird detailed in the table above which was photographed on the Commander Islands, off the east coast of Siberia, on 9 June 2011. It can be clearly seen in the photos below that the bird is still almost completely in non-breeding plumage, with only a few breeding plumage feathers on its back and none on the under parts. This poses a question – what is the advantage of a two-year-old bird making such a journey when it is clearly not going to get to the breeding grounds in time to breed, if it even gets there at all?



Bar-tailed Godwit seen in the Commander Islands, Russia –including 6J (see above) (Photo via Yuri Artukhin).

Ruddy Turnstone

Four birds carrying engraved leg flags were seen overseas- three in Taiwan and one near Invercargill in New Zealand, on 7 March 2011. It seems that there is a small passage of Ruddy Turnstone through south-east Australia each year on their way to non-breeding areas in New Zealand (where Turnstone is the third most numerous migratory wader, after Bar-tailed Godwit and Red Knot).

Red Knot

Band No.	Banding details			Recovery details		
	Age	Date	Location	Date	Location	Movement
052-59329	1 st Year	23/6/09	Corner Inlet	17/7/10	Miranda, Firth of Thames, NEW ZEALAND	2493 km. E
052-60459	1 st Year	23/6/09	Corner Inlet	17/7/10	Miranda, Firth of Thames, NEW ZEALAND	2493 km. E
052-03981	Adult	10/2/01	Queenscliff	25/5/10	Zuidong, Hebei, CHINA	8794 km. NNE
051-60488	Adult	18/10/97	Queenscliff	28/5/10	Zuidong, Hebei, CHINA	8794 km. NNE
061-89392	1 st Year	24/7/01	Corner Inlet	30/5/10	Zuidong, Hebei, CHINA	8794 km. NNE

The first two records fall into the well established pattern of Red Knot spending their first non-breeding season in Victoria and then crossing the Tasman to become part of the New Zealand non-breeding population. The other three records were all of birds caught on northward migration at the main stopover site for Red Knot in the Yellow Sea.

Note that 051-60488 was a minimum of 15 years old.

Sanderling

Band No.	Banding details			Recovery details		
	Age	Date	Location	Date	Location	Movement
042-53157	Adult	4/3/07	Brown Bay, Port MacDonnell	28/5/10	Zuidong, Hebei, CHINA	8660 km. NNE
042-58193	Adult	2/3/10	Brown Bay, Port MacDonnell	22/8/10	Ishikawa, JAPAN	8324 km. N
042-58159	Adult	2/3/10	Brown Bay, Port MacDonnell	16/8/10	Ishikawa, JAPAN	8324 km. N
042-53357	Adult	4/3/07	Brown Bay, Port MacDonnell	19/8/07 and 16/8/10	Ishikawa, JAPAN	8324 km. N
042-44700	Adult	15/3/05	Brown Bay, Port MacDonnell	17/8/08 and 16/8/10	Ishikawa, JAPAN	8324 km. N

All the records in Japan relate to birds where the metal band number was read on the live bird in the field, often with the aid of a telephoto lens on a camera.

It is interesting that two of the birds have now been seen on migration at the same place in two different years. Note also the extreme similarity of the dates of migration through Ishikawa, both between years and for different individuals. An enormous amount of patience and perseverance will have gone into obtaining these valuable records.

Red-necked Stint

Band No.	Banding details			Recovery details		
	Age	Date	Location	Date	Location	Movement
China C215377	Adult	27/7/07	Hebei, CHINA	9/1/11	Robbins Island, Tasmania	9192 km. SSE

This is the only recovery (technically a control) reported in the past year for Red-necked Stint. It is amazing that Danny Rogers and Adrian Boyle should catch a Chinese-banded bird in only 32 Red-necked Stints they caught at Robbins Island, north-west Tasmania, in December 2010/January 2011.

Curlew Sandpiper

Band No.	Banding details			Recovery details		
	Age	Date	Location	Date	Location	Movement
042-54260	Adult	12/2/08	Yallock Creek	3/4/11	Hong Kong, CHINA	7503 km. NNW

This is the only recovery for the past year. It was caught in Hong Kong on the rather early date of 3rd April.

Pied Oystercatcher

Band No.	Banding details			Recovery details		
	Age	Date	Location	Date	Location	Movement
101-22019	Adult	19/6/03	Roussac's, Corner Inlet	30/3/11	Tathra, NSW	397 km. NE
101-26745	1 st Year	6/7/08	Barry Beach	30/7/10	King Island, Tas	255 km. SW
101-22049	2 nd Year	21/12/03	Barry Beach	11/2/11	Bateman's Bay, NSW	473 km. NE
101-24088	3 rd Year	13/8/06	Barry Beach	11/1/11	Dalmeny Beach, NSW	435 km. NE
101-26716	Adult	5/7/08	Roussac's, Corner Inlet	8/1/11	Tuross Head, NSW	441 km. NE
101-29165	Adult	14/8/10	Barry Beach	23/12/10	Botany Bay, NSW	679 km. NE
101-26639	2 nd Year	26/4/08	Barry Beach	30/9/10 and 9/1/11	Crookhaven Heads, NSW	571 km. NE
101-24112	3 rd Year	13/8/06	Barry Beach	31/12/10	Narrowallee Creek, NSW	526 km. NE
101-26639	2 nd Year	26/4/08	Barry Beach	28/12/10	Shoalhaven Heads, NSW	577 km. NE
100-85027	Adult	4/1/87	Queenscliff	12/11/10	Queenscliff	Min.age 26 years
101-29200	Adult	14/8/10	Barry Beach	22/11/10	Bawley Point, NSW	502 km. NE
101-23587	Adult	26/3/06	Barry Beach	9/11/10	King Island, Tas.	249 km. SW
101-29177	Adult	14/8/10	Barry Beach	11/12/10	Wonboyn Beach, NSW	352 km. ENE
101-29091	Adult	26/7/09	Barry Beach	4/9/10	King Island, Tas.	255 km. SW
101-26608	3 rd Year	8/4/08	Stockyard Point	4/9/10	King Island, Tas.	222 km. SW
101-21995	Unknown	18/6/03	Roussac's, Corner Inlet	4/9/10	King Island, Tas.	238 km. SW
101-04823	1 st Year	6/7/96	Barry Beach	12/9/10	King Island, Tas	264 km. SW
101-22369	Adult	16/4/04	Corner Inlet	31/7/10	King Island, Tas	290 km. SW
101-24119	2 nd Year	13/8/06	Barry Beach	25/7/10	Nelson	463 km. W
101-22014	3 rd Year	19/6/03	Roussac's, Corner Inlet	18/7/10	Twofold Bay, NSW	374 km. NE

The above list contains details of all Victorian birds which have moved interstate during the past year. Note the strong preponderance of records from the well-watched shores of King Island. Movements to the southern half of the New South

Wales coast are also quite common. An unusual movement was a bird from Barry Beach which travelled 463 km. west to Nelson.

Also included in the above list is a local Queenscliff bird which is now at least 26 years old.

Sooty Oystercatcher

Band No.	Banding details			Recovery details		
	Age	Date	Location	Date	Location	Movement
101-26709	2 nd Year	4/7/08	Corner Inlet	26/3/11	King Island, Tas.	281 km. WSW

This was the only significant movement reported during the past year.



Pied Oystercatcher at Churchill Island, near Newhaven Phillip Island. (Photo Roz Jessop).

Sightings of Waders Leg-flagged in Victoria, South Australia and King Island, Tasmania

Clive Minton, Roz Jessop, Maureen Christie, Heather Gibbs, Mavis Burgess, Iain Stewart

This year details of the subsequent sightings of waders flagged by the VWSG are presented in even more condensed form, partly because of their considerable volume and partly because of the lack of time to search through all the records for the highlights to publish. Also the flag-sightings from the three separate states in which the VWSG operates are brought together into a single article. A further change from previous years is that all **engraved** flag sightings are included in the summary tables, whereas previously they only referred to birds carrying plain flags.

The data generated by flagging is absolutely invaluable in a whole range of ways. It has greatly amplified the relatively meagre information which comes from recoveries of birds which are only carrying a metal band. All flag-sightings (and recoveries) collected up to the middle of 2010 were brought together into a major paper which was published in the April 2011 edition of the Australasian Wader Studies Group journal "Stilt". Maps of flag sightings and recoveries were prepared for 28 different species of migratory wader which have shown movements out of or into Australia. A summary of the migration routes and principal migratory strategies was given for all the main species. VWSG flagging data contributed more than 50% of the total for those species which visit south-eastern Australia in reasonable numbers.

Given below are three tables summarising flag sightings reported in the last year of birds marked in Victoria, South Australia and King Island, Tasmania respectively. A few comments are made below each table highlighting key outcomes. If anyone seeks additional information on any particular species would they please contact Clive Minton or Heather Gibbs (via Clive Minton's email address)?

All sightings of Victorian-flagged waders processed into the AWSG leg-flag database during the year to 15/08/2011 (NB includes all engraved flags)

Species	Australia	New Zealand	China (mainland)	S Korea	Taiwan (China)	Hong Kong (China)	Russia	Indonesia	Mongolia	Japan	Malaysia	Total Overseas
Red Knot	97	1113	137		1		3					1254
Bar-tailed Godwit	27	484	67	153	1		2			1		708
Red-necked Stint	57		6		15	17	2	3	3			46
Curlew Sandpiper	63		5		5	6					1	17
Sanderling	10				3		7			1		11
Ruddy Turnstone	8	1			5							6
Eastern Curlew	3		1	2								3
Great Knot	8				2		1					3
Grey Plover			2	1								3
Double-banded Plover	1	3										3
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1		1									1
Common Greenshank	1											0
	276	1601	219	156	32	23	15	3	3	2	1	2055

There was a further slight increase in the number of reports during the year of waders flagged in Victoria, even though the number of newly flagged birds has been steadily declining in recent years (see earlier table in this bulletin). The high resighting rate is because of the ever growing network of enthusiastic flag searchers throughout the Flyway and their knowledge of where to report the information.

Red Knot again heads the list, even though relatively few have been marked in Victoria in most recent years. An amazing 1113 records come from New Zealand where it seems that any wader carrying a flag is ultimately sighted by the bevy of expert wader enthusiasts in both North and South Islands. The Bohai Region of the Yellow Sea accounts for the majority of the 137 Red Knot records in mainland China. This is the key stopover area on northward migration and unfortunately now is being almost totally destroyed by reclamation. It was nice also to have reports from Russia further confirming that the race *rogersi* that comes to Victoria go to breed in the Chukotka region in the far north-east of Siberia.

Bar-tailed Godwit sightings were also dominated by records from New Zealand. Many of these were engraved leg-flag birds for which detailed movement histories are now being accumulated. The very large number of sightings (153) in South Korea was also noteworthy, being the result of the efforts of a small number of highly dedicated wader photographers and wader watchers.

The overall total of 15 birds sighted in Russia was again excellent. There is a growing network of Russian experts in the Siberian parts of the Flyway who now go out and search for and send in records of flagged birds. Three sightings in Mongolia (Red-necked Stint) are the first for several years. The low number of sightings from Japan is probably because they have not consolidated their incoming records from field workers and forwarded them to us for some time now.

All sightings of South Australian-flagged waders processed into the AWSG leg-flag database during the year to 15/08/2011

Species	Australia	New Zealand	Taiwan (China)	Russia	China (mainland)	S Korea	Indonesia	Hong Kong (China)	Japan	Total Overseas
Sanderling	42		5	24	5	7	5		3	49
Ruddy Turnstone	11		27		1		1			29
Bar-tailed Godwit		22			3					25
Red Knot		16								16
Red-necked Stint	10		1					4		5
Curlew Sandpiper	11									0
	74	38	33	24	9	7	6	4	3	124

NB Includes all engraved flags

In contrast to Victoria the South Australian flag-sightings table is dominated by records of Sanderling and Turnstone. There was another good crop of 24 Sanderling from their key stopover area (on both northward and southward migration) around the north end of Sakhalin Island, in eastern Siberia. The Ruddy Turnstone records, as previously, are concentrated in their main stopover location in Taiwan, mostly on northward migration.

Amazingly we are still receiving a variety of sightings each year from the eight Bar-tailed Godwit flagged as juveniles in November 2004. The total number of resightings of these birds must now be over 200! Now adults these birds are mostly part of the New Zealand non-breeding population commuting each year via Asia to the Alaskan breeding grounds rather than coming to Australia.

All sightings of King Island, Tasmanian-flagged waders processed into the AWSG leg-flag database during the year to 15/08/2011

Species	Australia	Tas	Vic	WA	NT	SA	China (mainland)	S Korea	Taiwan (China)	Total Overseas
Ruddy Turnstone	29	1	3	12	5	8	2	1	54	57

NB Includes all engraved flags

All the King Island records this year relate to the dominant species flagged there, the Ruddy Turnstone. Of the 57 overseas sightings 20 relate to birds with engraved leg flags.

We are building up quite a life history for some individuals. In last year's VWSG Bulletin a special article detailed the leg-flag sightings of Ruddy Turnstones on migration, especially those from King Island. Two individuals were highlighted (see page 63 of last year's Bulletin). Both have been seen again subsequently. EA (previously XO) was seen on southward migration through Taiwan on 26th August 2010. It has therefore been seen on four consecutive northward migrations and three out of four corresponding southward migrations, all at the same location in Taiwan. Unfortunately it has not been seen so far in 2011. The other bird, XM (formerly 4H), is doing even better. It was also seen on southward migration at the end of August 2010 and then again on northward migration in late April/early May 2011. Thus it has been seen in Taiwan on seven consecutive migrations (four northward and three southward) since it was originally flagged on King Island in March 2008.

"Stop press: a long list of 250 flag sightings including 12 engraved flags of Bar-tailed Godwit and two, King Island, Ruddy Turnstone has just arrived from Japan, relevant details will be included in next year's report."

Sightings of Waders Leg flagged elsewhere and then seen in Victoria, South Australia or King Island, Tasmania

Clive Minton, Roz Jessop, Maureen Christie and Heather Gibbs

Victoria

There were 31 sightings in Victoria in 2010/11 of waders flagged overseas (10) or elsewhere in Australia (21). These are summarised in the table below.

Species	Australia	Russia	China (mainland)	New Zealand	Total Overseas
Red-necked Stint	12	3			3
Curlew Sandpiper	4		3		3
Bar-tailed Godwit	1		2		2
Terek Sandpiper		1			1
Ruddy Turnstone	3			1	1
Common Greenshank	1				0
	21	4	5	1	10

Species	Flagging location	Resighting details		
		Date	Location	Movement
Terek Sandpiper	Sakhalin, Russia	30.12.2010	Werribee Sewage Farm	10,029 km S
Red-necked Stint	Sakhalin, Russia	6, 19 & 30.12.2010	Werribee Sewage Farm	10,029 km S
Ruddy Turnstone	Invercargill, South Island, New Zealand	8.10.2010	Bellarine Peninsula	2,162 W

The Terek Sandpiper, sighted by two different observers at Werribee on 30 December 2010, was the first overseas-marked Terek Sandpiper to be reported in Victoria and the first Russian-marked Terek Sandpiper to be found in Australia. Terek Sandpiper are only occasional visitors to Werribee.

The Red-necked Stint, seen three times at Werribee, had been marked at an active new wader banding and flagging location in the north-east of Sakhalin, east Siberia.

Movements of Ruddy Turnstone between south-east Australia and New Zealand are quite regularly reported now (usually at least one each year). This bird was probably on passage back to Invercargill, at the southern end of South Island, when it was seen by David Rantall on the Bellarine Peninsula in early October 2010.

South Australia

There were 5 records in the past year in South Australia of waders flagged overseas. There was also a massive total of 71 birds seen in South Australia away from their original flagging locations in the south-east of the state. A large number of these referred to Sanderling seen by Jane Cooper and colleagues at Coffin Bay on the Eyre Peninsula.

Species	Australia	Russia	China (mainland)	Japan	Total Overseas
Red-necked Stint	8	2		1	3
Ruddy Turnstone	13		1		1
Great Knot	2		1		1
Sanderling	40				0
Banded Stilt	7				0
Red Knot	1				0
	71	2	2	1	5

Species	Flagging location	Resighting details		
		Date	Location	Movement (in Km)
Great Knot	Chongming Dao, China	11/11/2010	Dublin	8336 S
Great Knot	Broome	1/2/2011	Streaky Bay	2003 SE
Red-necked Stint	Sakhalin, Russia	16 & 17/12/2010	Port MacDonnell	10,027 S
Sanderling	Port MacDonnell	26/10/2007 (3)	Coffin Bay, Eyre Peninsula	554 NW
"	"	28/4/08 (6)	"	"
"	"	17/7/08 (3)	"	"
"	"	28/10/08 (6)	"	"
"	"	24/7/09 (2)	"	"
"	"	9/12/09 (2)	"	"
"	"	6/7/2010 (6)	"	"
"	"	4/11/10 (2)	"	"
"	"	14 & 28/12/10 (2)	"	"
"	"	12/2/11 (1)	"	"
"	Sandy Point, Vic	26/10/2007	"	937 W
"	"	9/12/09	"	937 W

The highlight of the above listing is the large number of sightings of flagged Sanderling at Coffin Bay in the Eyre Peninsula by Jane Cooper, Peter Wilkins and others. This is a valuable collection of data further emphasising how mobile Sanderling can be in their non-breeding area. They appear to show less "site faithfulness" than any of the other migratory waders. Whilst most of the birds had been marked originally in the south-east of South Australia, two had come from Victoria. Almost certainly these were all birds which had changed, at least temporarily, their non-breeding location, rather than birds seen on migration.

VWSG visits to South Australia were initiated in 1993 after Iain Stewart and Ren de Garis reported sightings of several flagged Sanderling from Victoria on the beaches along the south-east coast of South Australia. We plan to take this process one step further by visiting Coffin Bay on the Eyre Peninsula in November 2011 to join with Jane Cooper and colleagues in banding and flagging some of the large population of Sanderling which regularly occur there. Hopefully this will enable us to further

quantify the extent of movement of Sanderling between different non-breeding areas along the south coast of Australia.

The Great Knot records – one from China and one from Broome – are the first sightings of Great Knot in South Australia which have been marked elsewhere. Great Knot are not a numerous bird along the southern shores of Australia.

The Red-necked Stint was marked at a productive new banding location in north-east Sakhalin Island, on the east coast of Siberia.

Tasmania

The table below shows that four overseas flagged birds were seen in Tasmania in 2010 together with 48 birds marked elsewhere in Australia. Normally King Island records are the only ones relating to Tasmania which are covered in the VWSG Bulletin. However this year two VWSG members (Danny Rogers and Adrian Boyle) spent several weeks in north-west Tasmania, mainly on Robbins Island, in connection with an environmental impact statement on a proposed wind farm project. They amassed an amazing 47 sightings of flagged birds of eight different species.

Species	Australia	China (mainland)	Taiwan (China)	Total Overseas
Red Knot	17	3		3
Ruddy Turnstone	11		1	1
Red-necked Stint	7			0
Curlew Sandpiper	5			0
Bar-tailed Godwit	3			0
Great Knot	3			0
Sanderling	2			0
	48	3	1	4

Bar-tailed Godwit

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
VIC	5/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC (2 birds)	21/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S

Ruddy Turnstone

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
Taipei-Kaoshiung	19/12/2010	Robbins Island, Tas	7632 km S

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
NWA	8/10/2009	Burgess Bay, King Island, Tas	3127 km SE
NWA	6/10/2010	Burgess Bay, King Island, Tas	3127 km SE
NWA	6/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	3248 km SE
SA	6/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	515 km SE
SA	20/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	515 km SE
SA	21/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	515 km SE
SA	5/4/2011	King Island, TAS	408 km SE
TAS	6/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	112 km SE

Great Knot

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
VIC (2 birds)	5/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC	6/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S

Red Knot

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
Bohai Bay	20/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	9172 km S
Chongming Dao	5/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	8359 km S
Chongming Dao	21/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	8359 km S

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
Broome	23/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	3314 km SE
VIC	5/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC	6/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC (7 birds)	20/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC (5 birds)	21/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC (2 birds)	23/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S

Sanderling

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
SA	19/12/2010	Robbins Island, Tas	515 km SE
VIC	19/12/2010	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S

Red-necked Stint

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
SA	10/1/2011	Rheban Beach, Tas	848 km SE
VIC	3/11/2010	Lavinia Point, King Island, Tas	201 km S
VIC	8/11/2010	Burgess Bay, King Island, Tas	237 km SW
VIC	19/12/2010	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC	6/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC	20/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC	22/1/2011	Marion Bay, Tas	587 km SE

Curlew Sandpiper

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
VIC	5/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC	6/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC (2 birds)	20/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S
VIC	21/1/2011	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S

Sooty Oystercatcher

Flagging location	Resighting details		
	Date	Location	Movement
VIC	15/12/2010	Robbins Island, Tas	294 km S

This amazing collection of flag sightings from Robbins Island shows what can be achieved by two skilled and dedicated observers looking for flagged birds in an area in which flagging does not take place and which is not regularly visited by flag-scanning

enthusiasts. Their sightings are published in full because they illustrate well that a significant number of birds of almost every species of migratory wader do actually change their non-breeding locations from one year to another. It is particularly surprising, given the modest number of Red Knot flagged in Victoria in most years that they were even picking up as many as seven different Victorian-flagged birds in the one day.



Tern Breeding and Banding Report 2010/11

Clive Minton, Roz Jessop and Susan Taylor

Caspian Tern

Location	Breeding Pairs	Chicks banded
Mud Islands	25	11
Corner Inlet	50	24
Totals	75	35

Breeding and banding results on Caspian Terns were similar to the previous year. As usual the conversion of laid eggs into fledged chicks was quite low. However it seems to be sufficient to maintain the breeding population levels of this species in Victoria, which appears to have changed little over the last 25 years.

It is also a pity that a significant proportion of the Caspian Tern nests on the west end of Clonmel Island in Corner Inlet are washed out each year by the inevitable storm tide which usually occurs some time during the main incubation period (and again over the incubation period of replacement clutches). Unfortunately there appears to be no practical way to help the Caspian Terns lay on higher ground at Clonmel. At Mud Islands clearing of the vegetation on a small section of the top of the island, above storm tide levels, has greatly enhanced the breeding success of Caspian Terns (and Crested Terns) there.

Crested Tern

Location	Breeding Pairs	Chicks banded	Banded adults caught
Mud Islands	850	546	187
The Nobbies	4500	3231	2
Corner Inlet	200	-	-
Totals	5550	3777	189

There was some decrease in the record number of breeding pairs of Crested Tern reached in the 2009/10 season. Nevertheless there were still an estimated 5500 nesting pairs at the three main colonies on the "mainland" Victorian coast. Gabo Island and a small section of Killarney Beach near Port Fairy contain other Crested Tern colonies which are not monitored annually.

A good number of chicks was banded at Mud Islands, and a further estimated 200 fledged before they could be banded because of delays in access due to bad weather. Lack of a boat also prevented an accurate assessment of the situation at Corner Inlet but it is guesstimated that 200 pairs nested and it is known that none successfully fledged. The proportion of chicks banded at The Nobbies was a little lower than usual as other fieldwork priorities meant that the banding effort was less sustained.

A good sample of previously banded breeding adults at Mud Islands was caught and will give an excellent indication of the age structure of the population. It is hoped that a sustained effort to catch banded breeding adults at The Nobbies will take place in the 2011/12 breeding season to determine the age structure of that population.

Searching in the Mud Islands colony for birds carrying coloured metal bands, which indicate a bird's age, have now been discontinued as much of the paint has now been worn off. We now have an excellent set of data awaiting analysis. It will particularly show the ages at which Crested Terns breed for the first time.

Fairy Tern

Fairy Terns are only known to have bred in 2010/11 at three locations on the section of the Victorian coastline which VWSG monitors annually – Corner Inlet to Port Phillip Bay.

The highlight this year was again the recently established colony on a sandbank at the mouth of Andersons Inlet near Inverloch. It is estimated that 50 pairs nested. Thirty-four chicks were banded (and colour-flagged by Steve Johnson). A small colony again nested at Ram's Island, off the south-east coast of French Island, Westernport. The colony size was estimated at 10 pairs and it is thought that some chicks were successfully reared as there was no evidence of predation this year (information from Mick Douglas, Parks Victoria).

Corner Inlet was, as usual, unproductive. Only about 10 pairs were seen nesting – at the eastern end of Dream Island – and only a single chick (unfledged) was seen. It is possible that more pairs nested there or elsewhere in Corner Inlet, but lack of boat access in December meant that the area was not thoroughly searched at the optimum time.



Little Tern – Barry Beach (Photo Roz Jessop)

Tern Recovery Report 2010/11

Clive Minton and Roz Jessop

Little Tern

Band No.	Age	Date banded	Location banded	Date recovered	Location recovered	Km. Moved
042-00551	Adult	13/03/99	Gippsland Lakes	4/12/10	Botany Bay NSW	530km NE

This bird was identified by its individual leg flag combination. It was at a breeding colony and had been previously reported at the same breeding colony in December 2008.

It is now at least 14 years old.

Crested Tern

Banded at Mud Islands, Port Phillip Bay

Band No.	Date banded	Date recovered	Location recovered	Method of recovery	Km. Moved
074-14588	20/12/10	16/7/11	Bermagui, NSW	Found dead	513km NE
072-72248	22/12/96	14/6/11	Apollo Bay, VIC	Found dead	108km W
074-14323	22/12/10	14/7/11	Tathra, NSW	Found dead	492km ENE
073-98274	15/12/09	25/05/11	Ballina, NSW	Injured	1322km NE
073-30755	01/12/04	18/05/11	Gabo Is. VIC	Found dead	459 E
071-82538	18/12/87	04/11/10	Mud Islands	Breeding	(23 yrs old)
071-95780	17/12/88	21/12/10	Mud Islands	Breeding	(22 yrs old)
073-98078	15/12/09	17/12/10	Botany Bay, NSW	Found dead	852km NE
073-98274	15/12/09	24/11/10	Ballina, NSW	Injured	1324km NE

As usual, most recoveries relate to birds which have moved eastward along the Victorian coast and then northward in New South Wales. Two reached Ballina, on the northern New South Wales coast, a distance of 1324 km. north-east. Note there was also one westward movement, to Apollo Bay. There were also two shorter movements within Victoria.

Two very old birds (23 years and 22 years) are also detailed. Both were breeding at the Mud Islands colony where they had originally been hatched.

Banded at The Nobbies, Phillip Island

Band No.	Date banded	Date recovered	Location recovered	Method of recovery	Km. Moved
074-03745	21/12/10	17/7/11	Cutagee Beach NSW	Found Dead	490km ENE
073-19698	16/12/02	16/7/11	Merimbula NSW	Found dead	460km ENE
074-03351	21/12/10	17/7/11	Tathra, NSW	Died	402km ENE
074-05977	21/12/10	14/7/11	Whitemark, TAS	Found dead	305km SE
074-15074	04/01/11	14/7/11	Pambula Beach, NSW	Found dead	457km ENE
073-97851	21/12/09	11/7/11	Cape Egmont, NEW ZEALAND	Found dead	2438km E
073-06823	19/12/00	14/7/11	Mallacoota, NSW	Sick	417km ENE
074-04486	21/12/00	30/04/11	Bumell Lake, NSW	Died	558km NE
074-01264	24/12/09	08/01/11	Peterborough, VIC	Found dead	194km W
072-49864	16/01/95	25/7/10	Beachmore Beach, QLD	Found dead	1462km NNE
072-86933	15/12/98	27/4/11	Redpa, TAS	Found dead	272km S
072-86933	15/12/98	27/4/11	Eden, NSW	Died	447km ENE

The highlight was the recovery just off the south-west coast of the North Island of New Zealand. This is the first Australian banded Crested Tern ever to be reported from New Zealand. Crested Tern are only vagrants to New Zealand with only about a dozen previous records (per Adrian Reigen). The movement was 2438 km. east, by far the longest recorded for this species.

Most of the other recoveries shown follow the usual pattern of movements to the NSW coast for the winter months. Unusually one bird went as far north as south-east Queensland. Another went to Tasmania, and one made a westward movement of 194 km. along the Victorian coast. There were nine other more local recoveries along the Victorian coast.

Caspian Tern and Fairy Tern

There were no recoveries reported for these two species in the past year. However, see the many flag-sightings reported for Caspian Tern, in the next article in this Bulletin.



Sightings of Victorian-flagged Terns 2010/11

Clive Minton, Roz Jessop, Heather Gibbs and Susan Taylor

Caspian Tern

Banded at Clonmel Island, Corner Inlet

Date seen	No. of birds	Location seen	Observer	Km. Moved
3/07/2010	1	Stockton Sandspit, Hunter Estuary, near Newcastle, NSW	Ann Lindsey	785 NE
25/09/2010	1	South Stradbroke Island 27 44 39S, 153 25 57E, QLD	Terry Dillon and Jason Searle	1362 NE
1/10/2010	1	Port Fairy, Vic	Bruce Tindle	400 W
2/10/2010	1	Kakadu Beach, Bribie Island, QLD	Trevor Ford	1420 NE
17/12/2010	1	Wollongong, Lake Illawarra, NSW	Hal Bruce	585 NE
16/02/2011	1	Lake Illawarra Entrance, Wollongong, NSW	Terrill Nordstrom	585 NE
20/04/2011	1	Woy Woy, Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island pelican breeding colony, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	706 NE
1/05/2011	2	Woy Woy / Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	706 NE
24/05/2011	2	Woy Woy / Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	706 NE
3/06/2011	2	Woy Woy / Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	706 NE
16/06/2011	1	South Stradbroke Island 27 44 39S, 153 25 57E, QLD	Terry Dillon and Jason Searle	1362 NE
17/06/2011	2	Woy Woy / Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	706 NE
18/06/2011	1	Wollongong, Lake Illawarra, NSW	Frank Carey	585 NE
1/07/2011	2	Woy Woy / Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	706 NE
19/07/2011	2	Woy Woy / Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	706 NE
28/07/2011	1	Woy Woy / Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	706 NE

Banded at Mud Islands

20/04/2011	1	Woy Woy / Blackwall Bay / Ramsay Island, NSW	Wendy Gillespie	797 NE
------------	---	----------------------------------------------	-----------------	--------

All but one of the above sightings refer to Caspian Tern which have migrated to the New South Wales and south-east Queensland coasts for the winter. The exception was a bird which travelled westward for 400 km., from Corner Inlet to Port Fairy.

Because Caspian Terns flagged as chicks at the Victorian colonies are often seen at quite close quarters or photographed when they are in their non-breeding areas it is likely that we will start using engraved leg flags on them next season. This will provide much additional detailed information on the movements of individual birds. It will also prolong flag life as the ELF material is rather thicker than the Darvic currently used.

Common Tern

Banded in the Gippsland Lakes

11/12/2010	1	Iluka, NSW	Steve Roderick	1087 NE
15/12/2010	1	Ocean Baths, near Newcastle, NSW	Judith Thomas	672 NE
18/12/2010	1	Kurnell Boat Harbour, Botany Bay, NSW	Ken Gilmour	539 NE
20/01/2011	1	Karagi Pt The Entrance (7745), NSW	Laurie Smith	619 NE

It is nice that we are continuing to receive each year a small number of further sightings of Common Terns which were originally flagged in the Gippsland Lakes in the 1990s.

Little Tern

Banded in the Gippsland Lakes

22/09/2010	1	South Stradbroke Island 27 44 39S, 153 25 57E, QLD	Terry Dillon and Jason Searle	1257 NE
25/09/2010	1	South Stradbroke Island QLD JPSI 27 45 51S, 153 26 22E, QLD	Terry Dillon and Jason Searle	1256 NE

These sightings, probably involving the same bird, may refer to a bird returning to Victoria along the Queensland coast from breeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere (Japan and Korea) or to a Victorian bird which had gone north to Queensland for the winter.

Whiskered Tern

Banded at Werribee

23/01/2010	6	Lake Wellington, near Sale, Vic	Michael Hansen	236 E
------------	---	---------------------------------	----------------	-------

These sightings are the first away from Werribee Sewage Farm, which is the only location in Victoria where Whiskered Terns have been caught and flagged. It is several years since any significant number were flagged at Werribee, so these must be quite old birds. The sightings probably confirm that Whiskered Terns are rather ephemeral in where they choose to roam during the non-breeding season, moving around to find the optimum habitat.



Crested Terns at The Nobbies, Phillip Island (Photo Roz Jessop).

South Australian Team Report

August 2010 – July 2011

Maureen Christie

Once again we have had an extremely busy year, yet again having taken on several special projects as well as our normal workload of catching, counting and protecting breeding waders and terns.

Engraved Leg Flags and Geo-locators; Banding and Flagging

The number of SA engraved flags in the field continues to grow, although many are no-longer legible. To date 970 flags have been placed on 'new' birds, and 201 on retraps, giving a total number of engraved flags in the field of 1,171. Of the 424 retraps that had existing ELF's, 183 were replaced mainly because of illegibility of codes. All retraps since 2008 with 2 code flags have had their flags replaced, which suggests that no more of these codes are legible – and therefore the total of legible flags in the field needs to be reduced by 694, leaving a total legible of 477. As some 3 code flags have been replaced on retraps, this figure may be reduced even further. These figures help explain the frustration experienced when trying to read flags in the field, especially when scanning the Nene Valley flock which contains an extremely high number of flagged individuals. In February 2011 we began using, whenever possible, flags made from bi-coloured material. Hopefully this will overcome the problem.

Turnstone Caught in SA since Engraved Flagging commenced in November, 2004

	Catch Total	NEW	RETRAP			NO FLAG	
			ELF	Replaced	Retained	Retrap	New
Nov 2004-July 2010	1300	780	194	152	152	11	11
2010/2011	320	190	7	31	89	2	1
	1620	970	201	183	241	13	12

Summer found us, once again, searching for turnstone with geo-locators. The 2 geo-locators put on in Gerloff Bay in April 2009 have still not been sighted. Of the 10 put on in March 2010 at Nene Valley, 6 were resighted of which 5 were retrieved. Tracks for 4 of these have been successfully downloaded. On retrieval, two geo-locators were used in calibration trials –with ATH tracking me to and from the AWSG expedition in Broome. Not surprisingly, considering my journey included a detour to Lake Torrens, turnstone powered flight was faster than 4x4 – ATH took 5 days Nene Valley to Indonesia, whilst I took 9 days Carpenter Rocks to Broome! The table below summarises our records. In addition, a check has been made of resightings of individuals involved in the geo-locator catch of 4.3.2010. There were 24 turnstones caught - 3 were juveniles and, although all three have been resighted, they have been excluded from these calculations. There were 21 adults – 11 without geolocators (7 were resighted summer 2010/11 - 64% - of which 6 were retrapped), 10 with geolocators (6 resighted - 60% - of which 5 were retrapped).

Fate of geolocators put on Ruddy Turnstone in SA – 2009 and 2010

Geo	On	Last seen	Left	Returned	First Seen	Off
ADX	23.4.2009					
ADK	23.4.2009					
CAH	4.3.2010	24.4.2010				
CAP	4.3.2010	21.4.2010				
AYV	4.3.2010	24.4.2010	30.4.2010	31.10.2010	11.11.2010	19.11.2010
AZT	4.3.2010					
CAK	4.3.2010	24.4.2010			26.10.2010	19.11.2010
ATP	4.3.2010	13.4.2010				
AVU	4.3.2010	13.4.2010			5.10.2010	
ATD	4.3.2010	13.4.2010	21.4.2010	4.10.2010	12.10.2010	21.11.2010
ATH	4.3.2010		25.4.2010	4.10.2010	12.10.2010	19.11.2010
AUP	4.3.2010	24.4.2010	26.4.2010	App 1.10.2010	12.10.2010	19.11.2010

This year a further 19 geo-locators were put on Turnstone at Danger Point on 23rd April, and 24 were placed on Sanderling at Pethers Rocks on 23rd March.

We continue to manage to pay our way in this tri-state project – this year we received \$2,200 from DENR for 10 geo-locators bringing our total contribution from various sources to \$6,400, with funding in the pipeline for another 20 for next year from DENR.

Although recoveries and flag reports are discussed in separate articles, I would like to mention here several sightings that aroused considerable excitement in our group. Top of the list must be our first sighting of an internationally flagged stint – yellow over white – Sakhalin Island - seen by Sarah & Jeff Campbell at a small beach east of Port MacDonnell on 16.12.2010. The first Pied Oystercatcher chick to be flagged with the SA code of Black engraved White was banded on 6.1.2009 at Piccaninnie Ponds Beach, seen in Livingston Bay in April and on the Coorong Ocean Beach, 37 kms south of the Murray Mouth in November 2009, and then, on 4.12.2010, back on the beach where it was hatched! The Sooty Oystercatcher chick flagged on Cowrie Island on 23.11.2010 has been seen several times in the Pelican Point area during July, in a flock of 18 (see photo). We are still receiving sightings from the famous catch of 8 juvenile godwits on 23rd November 2004. They were first seen on the South Island of New Zealand on the 1st December, 2004. And yes, they are still returning to the same sites, 6 years on.....the first sighting for this season was on 28th September at Motueka Sandspit, near Nelson, NZ. Turnstone ZBM was banded at Danger Point on 21.3.2011 weighing 94gms, retrapped (and geolocator added) 23.4.2011 weighing 159gms, seen in Taiwan 9th May (& 15th, 16th, 18th & 22nd, all within a short distance of each other). It put on 65gms in 33 days – almost 2gms a day!!

One of our main catching targets continues to be overwintering turnstone as well as departure weights, but we now also concentrate on newly arrived back turnstone carrying geo-locators. The first flag confirming returnees amongst the Blackfellows Caves flock was read on 10th September – but we did not see the first geo-locator until 11.10.2010. So, our two successful catches in September did not include a geo-locator, and our attempts in October and November were unsuccessful! Our main contribution this year has been in support of small Victorian teams in November to retrieve geo-locators and in April to put geo-locators on.

Counting

Our President, Jeff Campbell is count organiser. Efforts to try and gauge the effect of predation control measures being undertaken as part of a Caring for Country Grant have seen us undertake more counting than usual. Hooded Plover counts were completed in November and May. The usual PMP counts, 'extra' sections of the coast along with counts of coastal lakes were done. We also participated in the annual AWSG Coorong count. Highlights for the summer count include 141 Pacific Golden Plover on Lake Eliza. There have been good numbers of overwintering turnstone, the largest count being of 110 at Nene Valley in July. At the same time there were

about 20 at Gerloff Bay and about 30 at Nora Creina. Interestingly, the flocks at Gerloff Bay and at Nora Creina did not include any flagged birds.

Iain Stewart is co-ordinating a special project on Lake George. Commenced in July, 2009, the aim is to monitor the lake monthly, with an emphasis on Little Lake. This is in response to a proposed 'Lake George Environmental Enhancement and Marina Development' which would see the bulk of Little Lake converted into a marina and golf course. Despite not managing to get out every month, data continues to accumulate.

Rob Clemens from Shorebirds 2020 conducted an extremely successful Shorebird Identification Workshop at Port MacDonnell on 24.11.2010. Adelaide Optical gave an interesting talk on how the optics of binoculars and telescopes are structured and sensible tips on how to maintain the equipment. Golo Maurer of Shorebirds 2020 is planning a similar workshop this year to be held at Robe on 17.9.2011. This year there will be a segment on small terns presented by Clare Manning, the Senior Ranger Ecologist with Coorong and Lower Lakes DENR.

Predator Control – Threat Abatement Project

Although funds are structured differently, ultimately funding for this project is still coming from Caring for Country. The project continues much as outlined in last year's report. Our main commitment continues to be to monitor how successful the project has been in improving conditions for beach nesting birds. In addition to the normal summer and winter counts, we do a count during May to assess the number of fledged juveniles in the population. We have continued with our program of artificial nest monitoring, with 10 nests of 3 quail eggs once again set up in two sites - Rivoli Bay and Canunda. The work load is shared, with DEH responsible for the nests in Canunda and our group responsible for those in the unbaited Rivoli Bay. Nests were monitored during November/December, 2010. This year there were large numbers of shearwater carcasses on the beach which provided an easy meal for predators and presumably would have affected the level of nest predation. This year birds were probably high on the list of egg predators, with ravens and Silver Gulls the suspected culprits. Assessing disturbance at nests was also made difficult by tracks being obliterated by rain and high winds. This year we were lent two night vision cameras and one was deployed at each site. Unfortunately the cameras were unsuccessful. Funding has been received to purchase two night vision cameras so hopefully we will be able to get worthwhile results next season. Once again the bulk of the workload, and the data organisation, were handled by Wendy and David Trudgen.

Their work was recognised when the artificial nest component of this project received the DENR's 2010 *Outstanding Group Volunteer Project Achievement Award*. The Award was presented at the 2010 Friends Forum held at Woomera, and came with a framed certificate and a cheque for \$1250.

Barry Schriever, DENR officer involved with this project, attended our AGM and gave us a report on bait uptake, etc. His initiative of involving adjoining landowners has been particularly worthwhile – in some instances extending the baited area into farmland adjoining beach front that we are unable to bait because of the close proximity of houses. It has also meant 3 times as many baits have been put out! Figures of bait up-take, etc., are available upon request!

Next season it is hoped that we will be able to commence a banding and flagging study to learn more about how Hooded Plover utilize our beaches.

Dog's Breakfasts

I'm a wet sand walker and I don't chase chicks – a message originally coined in Tasmania by Eric Woehler one that we hope to get across to all the dogs that go for a run on the beach. Craig Billows, local DENR Coast & Marine Officer, was successful in obtaining a Caring for Country Grant for our group with a strong component of public education. So, in January 2011 we held a

series of five Dog's Breakfasts - Kingston, Robe, Beachport, Southend and Port MacDonnell. Presentations were made by a local vet, the District Council by-law officer and a local member of our Friends group. A BBQ breakfast was served to dog and owner. Giveaways included a lead for each dog, stickers and leaflets. We certainly would not have been able to carry this off without the enthusiastic support of DENR staff and the support of the Four District Councils and three veterinary practices that were involved. Advice and support from both Grainne Maguire from the Birds Australia Hooded Plover team and Emma Stephens from the Fleurieu Peninsula was extremely helpful. It is planned to hold a similar series next summer.

Danger Point

The District Council of Grant, working with Craig Billows, Coast & Marine Officer, DENR, put up signs at Eight Mile Creek/Danger Point to discourage vehicular use of this part of the beach during summer. Our stall at the Bayside Festival at Port MacDonnell on 2.1.2011 explaining this project was well received, with a number of people saying that they would take extra care whenever they were at Danger Point in the future. The signs were removed on 6.4.2011 and we were pleased to see that the detour had worked well. Although some vehicles have driven around the point, it is obvious that there has been much less disturbance than in past summers. The Council has always been supportive of our efforts to protect nests with temporary fencing but this is the first time that they have been involved in a project that asks people not to drive on the beach. Congratulations to all concerned, especially Richard Sage, the Mayor of the District Council of Grant, who has taken a strong personal interest in the project.

Breeding Waders and Terns

Little Tern visit the coast of the Lower South East in small numbers. For the last seven summers a small number of pairs have nested here, with 3 young fledged in 2006/7 and 5 or 6 fledged 2007/8. The fate of the single chick banded in the 2008/9 breeding season is unknown. In 2009/10 two chicks were banded at Port MacDonnell but it is not known whether they fledged. This year 3 chicks were banded at Danger Point and at least 2 fledged. All other nests of both Little and Fairy Terns at this site failed, as did those in Port MacDonnell. A new nesting site in Port MacDonnell was located this year with one pair of Fairy Terns nesting at Hammonds Drain. This is the first year that the Little Tern originally banded by David Paton at the Murray Mouth, in November 2006, has not nested at Piccaninnie Ponds. First seen at Piccaninnie Ponds on 28.12.2006, it has failed in its breeding attempts in 4 consecutive seasons. This year it was seen at Danger Point and Stony Point but it is not known if it attempted to breed.

This year we put extra effort into trying to locate breeding small terns, checking all of the Fairy Tern breeding sites between Beachport and Robe detailed by John Bransbury in the March 1992 issue of the SA Ornithological Journal. Unfortunately we did not find any! Clare Manning – Ecologist based in the Coorong, is planning a statewide census of small terns during 2010/11. She is hoping to organise 3 statewide counts – provisionally November, February and April/May.



We will be responsible for the section from the Vic border through to The Granites. This fits in with our Hooded Plover and counting obligations, so we should be able to manage it, although coverage will need to be more intensive than what we normally do.

Crested Tern regularly breed on Penguin Island, Beachport. Unfortunately bad weather once again meant that we were unable to get to the island. However, we made two visits to the colony on Baudin Rocks. On 8.1.2011 the Trudgens reported that there were about 2,000 Crested Tern at many stages of breeding, most were sitting

on an egg or two, but there were small groups of 10 or so chicks in a crèche. On the 14.1.2011 we were able to field a team of 8. The majority of tern were still on eggs, but there were still plenty of chicks to band. We were surprised how easy it was to catch the chicks, and how little disturbance our presence caused. We banded 107.

As usual, a great deal of effort was put into monitoring and protecting Hooded Plover and Oystercatcher nests, with Jeff Campbell co-ordinating the protection of all beach nesting waders/terns. Our first Hooded Plover nest of the season was found in Canunda on 4.9.2010. Our first chick was seen on the Nene Valley beach on 9.11.2010 and our first fledged chick was seen there on 11.1.2011 in Gerloff Bay. The Blackfellows Caves/Nene Valley area continue to be a stronghold for Hooded Plover, with a flock of 10 hoodies at Blackfellows Caves – 5 adults, 3 'older' juveniles, and 2 youngsters as well as 2 pairs of adults on the Nene Valley beach on 10.5.2011.



Sooty Oystercatcher juvenile C1 at Livingston Bay

Surveys of the Bool Lagoon Ramsar Site

Some time ago we were approached by Lachlan Farrington, Wetland Management Advisor for the South East Region, to conduct a series of 3 waterbird surveys at The Bool. Although not planned that way, conditions for each survey have been markedly different. On 6/7/8th August the Bool was dry; on 29/30.31st October there was a small amount of water. For the final survey, planned for 12/13/14th August, the Bool should be full to nearly overflowing!

Banded Stilt

As a group, we continue to be deeply involved with recording Banded Stilt activity in the Coorong, and tracking them as they move around the continent. Once again we have had the thrill of being involved with the breeding event at Lake Torrens which is the subject of another article in this bulletin. A flock estimated on 6.6.2011 by DENR to be 80-85,000 breeding on Ibis Island in Lake Eyre North was discovered by Trevor Wright, of Wrights Air, William Creek. Unfortunately on 16.6.2011 DENR found that the Banded Stilt had deserted the island. Despite checking other islands they did not find any stilt at all – squashing hopes that perhaps the stilt had managed to fledge chicks and that we were witnessing the final stages of a successful breeding event.

To encourage members to report flags, and to make them aware of the configurations used for each Banded Stilt breeding event, it was decided to develop a set of 'flick cards'. The idea was quickly expanded to cover all types of wader flags/bands. The first prototype will be available at the VWSG AGM.

Bird Hide and Information Shelters

Funding has now been received for a bird hide, 4 information shelters and signage. We are still working through all of the permits, etc. A suitable site for the bird hide has been selected at Danger Point and we are hopeful that it will be approved. David Trudgen is designing the hide for us. Information shelters and/or signage are planned for Blackfellows Caves, Port MacDonnell, Beachport, Wrights Bay and Boatswain Point. Mount Gambier Men's Shed and Beachport Lions Club are assisting us with this project.

General

All SA and King Island data is entered by David and Wendy Trudgen. David is also responsible for maintaining the VWSG Oystercatcher Database. Flag making is organised by Jeff and Sarah Campbell, in collaboration with Malcolm Brown. Newsletters continue to be issued from time to time.

The group continues to provide input into various forums, with both Jeff Campbell and myself representatives on various committees. The Trudgens represented us at the weekend Friends Community Forum. Press reports and radio interviews are conducted as the opportunity arises. We continue to be involved in more and more public relations activities. Jeff Campbell acts as our unofficial 'Conservation Officer' and makes comments on Draft Plans and the like. Once again we mounted a display in the foyer for The Threatened Species Autumn Talks. Displays were mounted at 2010 World Wetlands Day at Valley Lake and in 2011 at the Bool, at the DENR series of *Autumn Talks*. Display material has also been made available for various presentations at the Mount Gambier library. And so the list goes on.....

During the year we signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Data Sharing Agreement with the University of Queensland's Shorebirds Project: *Understanding and Reversing the Declines in Australia's Shorebirds*. Rob Clemens is our principal contact with this important project and Heather Gibbs is Chair of the Steering Committee. A wide range of wader groups have also signed, including VWSG, AWSG and Birds Australia. In SA Jane Cooper for the Friends of Streaky Bay District Parks has signed, also Birds SA.

A very successful AGM was held at the Campbell family home in Mt Gambier on 28th May. The meeting adopted a constitution and resolved to become incorporated – all is now complete and from the 16th July we are officially 'Friends of Shorebirds SE Incorporated'! A copy of the constitution is available 'on request'.

Thank you to the members of the group who have worked hard to produce these results. Thank you too, to the members of both the Regional and District Offices of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who have provided encouragement and practical help.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TEAM CATCHES 01.08.10 TO 31.07.2011.

DATE	PLACE	Sanderling	Ruddy Turnstone	Red-necked Stint	Curlew Sandpiper	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Banded Stilt	Other		TOTALS
17.8.2010	Blackfellows Caves									*
21.9.2010	Blackfellows Caves		12	1						13
28.9.2010	Blackfellows Caves		26	4						30
12.10.2010	Nene Valley									*
16.11.2010	Nene Valley									*
19.11.2010+	Nene Valley		22	19						41
21.11.2010+	Nene Valley		14							14
23.11.2010	Cowrie Island							1	Sooty Oystercatcher	1
7.12.2010	Piccaninnie Ponds							2	Pied Oystercatcher	2
11.1.2011	Baudin Rocks							107	Crested Tern	107
25.1.2011	Danger Point							3	Little Tern	3
16-19.4.2011	Lake Torrens						332			332
23.4.2011+	Danger Point		96							96
Sub Totals			170	24			332	113		639
B/F	1.12.00 – 30.7.10	26	450	402	18	107	388	199		1590
	TOTALS TO DATE	26	620	426	18	107	720	312		2229

+ catch by visiting Vic team. *net set, no catch made. ** chicks/'runners'

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TEAM CATCHES - Month Waders Caught in 1.12.2000 TO 31.07.2011

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTALS
Ruddy Turnstone	5		1	338	38	16	46	61	77	1	37		620
Red Knot				1		12							13
Sanderling		17	2	2				5					26
Red-necked Stint		34	34	100	4	20	49	67	32	43	20	23	426
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper									6	101			107
Curlew Sandpiper						2	7	6		3			18
Pied Oystercatcher	6			1	1						2	10	20
Sooty Oystercatcher			2	3	2						1		8
Banded Stilt	185	149		332		54							720
Red-capped Plover	3	4	1	4				5		1		1	19
Double-banded Plover			4	6		4		2					16
Black-fronted Dotterel			3										3
Hooded Plover		2		1								3	6
Little Tern	16												16
Fairy Tern		104											104
Crested Tern	107												107
TOTALS	322	310	47	788	45	108	102	146	115	149	60	37	2229

Conservation Report - August 2011

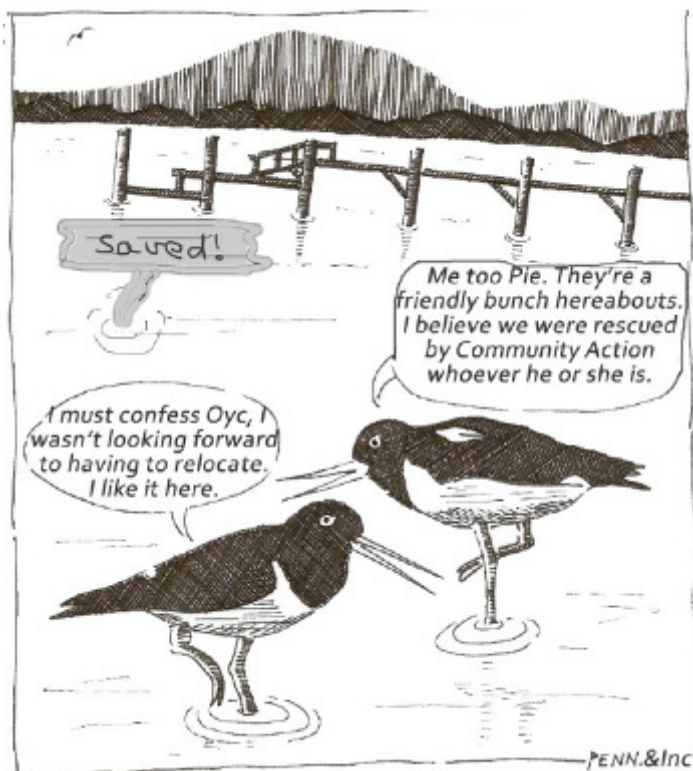
Doris Graham

This year has been very interesting regarding conservation. As the VWSG representative, I have attended bi-monthly meetings, of the Western Port Conservation Committee and several seminars and forums instituted by East Gippsland Coast Care/Coast Action.

Ralph's Bay, Tasmania, has been saved

As detailed in the 2010 Bulletin a 6-year fight by the Save Ralph's Bay Inc. (SRBI) to have the "Lauderdale Quay Development" rejected by the Government was won on 22 June 2010, when the Tasmanian Planning Commission delivered its final Integrated Assessment Report to the Premier, David Bartlett. There was however still time for the developer to appeal. This did not happen and the area is now safe.

Furthermore, the Conservation Area has been enlarged to 171ha. and now protects the sandflats which are homes to the myriad of molluscs, crabs, worms and microbes so essential for the survival of the many resident and migratory shorebirds which depend on them for food, roosting and nesting sites,



All who helped this project should be proud as everyone's assistance was needed to obtain this victory.

(Permission to use cartoon obtained from SRBI – via SRB Newsletter Issue 20, 2010, and communication co-ordinator)

The SRBI is now working towards the annexation of the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area to the Pitt Water Orielton Ramsar-listed Wetland of International Significance.

<http://www.saveralphsbay.org>

Unfortunately the Tasmanian Canal Estate Ban Bill was rejected.

Point Nepean National Park

The Draft Master Plan was submitted for Public comment some months ago, at an Open Day in the Park. I attended and obtained a much better appreciation of the buildings as well as

the still-wild areas of this superb National Park.

Many aspects of the use of the park were under discussion, and I considered I should comment on 3 which could bring disaster to the park if contravened. All these related to camping being allowed in the Park and I submitted a letter expressing concerns:

- That every care should be taken to protect both bay and ocean beaches used by our resident waders, oystercatchers, and Hooded and Red-capped plovers;
- That no fires are lit, except in registered BBQ structures, and intention to do so be taken upon entry;
- No alcohol be allowed to be purchased or consumed within Park boundaries except by residents of the Hotel, the establishment of which I was also concerned.

The Management Plan is not yet completed.

Werribee River Park

The title of this Park has recently been changed as above but the Draft Management Plan is not yet completed. Despite this the Park was opened by The Hon. Ryan Smith, Victorian Minister for the Environment and Climate Change. On National Tree Day, 31 July, a very successful Planting Day was held, with over 200 people joining the fun indicating that there are many people in the area who will care for this very interesting but fragile Park.

Western Port Catchment Committee (WPCC)

This group was established in 2002 as a community/agency liaison group to provide a meeting place for groups concerned with the conservation of the unique aspects of Western Port and its catchment region. This area extends from Point Nepean to the north boundary of Cardinia Shire and south east to include Bass Coast Shire, Phillip and French Islands.

In 2009 this area was incorporated into the Western Port Biosphere Reserve. This support together with our close association with Melbourne Water has widened our usefulness as a networking forum, and enables us to share our concerns with a wide range of experts. Meeting bi-monthly, there are over 150 representatives of groups-- on our mailing list—from several levels of Governments---employees, councils, Landcare, coastal management authorities, plus community/voluntary and independent groups such as, VWSG, Blue Wedges, Environment Coalition, Melbourne Water, Climate Change Alliance, Phillip Island Nature Park, Western Port Conservation Committee, plus Tertiary Education Institutes and Universities, Farmers Association, Western Port Seagrass Partnership Ltd. and the Port of Hastings Corporation.

Speakers over the last year included experts in many aspects of our area, research and professional scientists and volunteers; topics described and detailed many aspects of WP both within and on the land, as well as the coast and the undersea of the reserve, such as aboriginal involvement now and over the centuries, including monitoring of waders and waterbirds, seagrass ecology, salt marshes, mangroves, coastal changes and the meaning of the Biosphere.

The last meeting for 2011 took place as a “getting to know you and your work for WP”, carried out during a boat-adventure trip to the north east corner of WP. Where possible talks were designed to inform us about the aspects of the Bay that were highlighted specific areas. Speakers were from Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority, the Biosphere Foundation and, with a five minute limit I spoke of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, detailing our work on the migratory waders and the resident ones that make the WP their home.!

Despite the storm on the return journey all present agreed that it had been a very exciting and informative trip—surprisingly many had not previously been out on the bay itself previously.

AWSG Conservation

The AWSG has appointed State Conservation Officers and I hold that position for Victoria. While VWSG is principally concerned with matters specific to our own area I and several other VWSG members are very concerned about matters relating to the East-Asian Australasian Flyway. Within the vast area through which our birds must navigate their way to their breeding areas there are huge problems relating to their future survival. Discounting the effects likely to occur on their breeding grounds due to climate change, currently their staging places are under great pressure mainly due to development and the subsequent industrial pollution – yes, there are many areas such as Saemangeum where these are being destroyed for “development to improve the lives” of the many millions of people inhabiting these areas. To keep in touch with

some of these check the AWSG web site www.aswg.org follow the links, and become a member of AWSG to get the latest news and needs as soon as possible.

There are many problems and without pressure of people passionate about wader/shorebird we may find that our next generations will never know the fascination of these birds.

Conservation activities of some other VWSG members.

When I had finished my report I had the idea that I, and I am sure others would be interested in conservation activities that other VWSG members were involved with so. So, I asked Roz to send a very late email to get a quick glance/snippet of information on this topic.

Here are the questions that I asked relating to conservation—followed in order of my reception of replies, by abbreviated answers:-

- (i) What work do you do? (ii) Under which group do you do this work?
- (iii) What frequency? (iv) What bird(s) does (do) your work aim to benefit?

Ken Rogers : Biostatistics; ASWG and individuals worldwide: Daily; Waders.

Ken Gosbell: Represents AWSG and Birds Australia(BA) as Liaison Officer linking Flyway countries,-attends meetings of the Flyway Partnerships, strategy developments addressing serious conservation issues, and Chair of the Shorebird Working Group; AWSG/ BA; periodically, but often full time; all waders, especially migratory ones.

Steve Johnson: see article on page 57

Colin Gibbs: “None” *I used my authority to reply to Colin that he has so many Brownie Points regarding the decades of work that he has put into conservation of coastal and migratory birds that he hardly has to itemise them for the VWSG!!*

Mark Anderson: Chair the BA-Victorian Conservation Committee, very active group for many years; BA-Vic and Victoria Naturally; 2-3 times weekly; all birds.

Sue Longmore : Coastal and Wetland protection and restoration; Bellarine Catchment Network; Migratory Shorebirds, Orange-bellied Parrots and Hooded Plovers

Malcolm Brown: Mist netting project 20 years, Braeside Park: grassland surveys and banding at Terrick Terrick National Park; 3 year Program Co-ordinating Hooded Plover Warden program, Mornington Peninsula National Park; self and colleague, ABBBS approved, and Parks Victoria; every 2 and 3 months, and weekends in breeding season; Heathland and other grassland species including Plains Wanderer, Hooded Plover.

Jeff Campbell: Marine Parks, Wrack harvesting, nest protection; Friends of Shorebirds of SE of South Australia as and when required; shorebirds and terns.

Naoko Takeuchi: In June, I visited to Daruski Nature Reserve, which is near the Russian-Mongolian border, for few days with two other Japanese. University students spend a month there conducting ecological surveys for part of their training, including migratory wader surveys. The environment of the panoramic grassland “steppe” appears slightly similar to central Australia to me. Its climate has a big cycle of wet and dry periods which comes each 30 years.

I have heard the very exciting news that they saw several Red-necked Stints with colour leg flags! (from VIC, SA and WA and one from China). During the peak of migration, about 2000 waders are recorded in one day in their survey. Surprisingly, none of the people in the reserve knew what the flag meant, so they were very interested in the PowerPoint about VWSG and its activities which Roz kindly sent me, (thanks Roz!). They also seemed that being amazed by waders in the completely different habitat from Russia. And, of course I gave them contact information for the flag sightings.

In Japan, I participate in occasional bird related activities (but not as much as VWSG). I have started training for bird banding under experienced Japanese banders. I know little about Japanese passerine species, so I am learning ID, sexing, and ageing and it will take me a while to be competent. I think it was meant to be that I failed to get a job in Canberra this time. In one of the projects, the geolocators were used for revealing wintering area of the Siberian Thrushes population which breeds near Mt. Fuji. And one male successfully recaptured after travel from Cambodia.

Meg MacMillan I work with Seawinds volunteers mostly propagating indigenous plants for Parks Victoria and foreshore groups, also planting for various groups when labour is required. Flinders Coastal Reserve once a fortnight, Endeavour Gully, a temperate rainforest area in Red Hill owned now by the National Trust, once a month more or less. For birds, all these different areas are super important for many different species of bird.

So these are only some of our members that are working in many ways to assist the survival of our waders. Thanks to you personally for rising to this questionnaire at such a late hour. I have found your answers most enlightening and maybe next year I may ask the questions earlier!!! I thank you very much for participating in this very late request.

This Bulletin shows and details the huge amount of work that our chairman, and the many members and supporters put into the VWSG. It is good to know also that there are increasing numbers of people on the ground throughout the Flyway who are learning to care for our very special birds.

Banded Stilt Breeding Event at Lake Torrens 2011

Maureen Christie

An edition of *Stilt* devoted to Banded Stilt is on the drawing board, and an academic report of this, the first reported instance of Banded Stilt breeding in consecutive years, will be included. Meanwhile, a personal account.....

Early in February 2011, 100+ mm of rain from ex-tropical Cyclone Yasi was dumped on the pastoral lands around Roxby Downs, with run-off going into Lake Torrens. Iain Stewart reported that satellite images suggested that there might be sufficient water to trigger a breeding event.

Our host at Roxby Downs, and keen member of Friends of Shorebirds SE, Reece Pedler, organised a flight. Hopes were high as we gathered at the airport on Saturday 12th Feb. From the air, the countryside was vibrant with colour and scattered with wetlands. We flew along the western shore of the lake, checking any small islands that we came acrossnothingalmost time to turn back and then the first scattered Banded Stilt were sighted. Suddenly we had two small islands, covered in Banded Stilt!

Lunch back in Roxby was a flurry of activity.....maps were checked.....Reece consulted with Pete Paisley from the BHP Billiton land management section and station managers Marie and Leo McCormack..... camping gear packed.....and we set off to see if we could find the colony which was due east of Andamooka. An arduous drive out – much of the time there was no track at all, and we lost count of the number of times we were bogged! Finally we arrived. Nothing much was visible from the shore, but Reece had taken GPS co-ordinates whilst in the air, so we confidently set off, wading in the shallow, hyper-saline waters of the lake. I soon spied a concentration of white, and verged off towards it. Others spread out, with Reece and Parky continuing on to the yet unseen island. Whilst I found newly made scrapes, Reece and Parky hit the jackpot – with a single egg in about 70 of the scrapes. Unbelievably we had arrived as the first eggs were being laid!

As you can imagine, discovery of a breeding colony of Banded Stilt caused quite a stir. At Port Augusta DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) formed a committee – headed by Regional Ecologist Nicki De Prue, District Ranger Darren Crawford and including Reece acting in his NRM role and Alex Clarke who had been involved with the breeding event last June. Next Nicki and Alex flew over virtually all of the salt lakes – and found another stilt colony not far south from our flock, on an islet that had no stilts on it when we had flown over it a few weeks before. It was estimated that there were 20,000 breeding pairs in the northern colony, and 5,000 in the southern colony. They also found a small colony on Lake Eyre South. Nothing like the 70,000 breeding pairs of the 2010 event, but significant never-the-less!

Steps were taken to ensure that predation by Silver Gulls and foxes/dingoes were not a serious issue.

Never before had anyone been in on a breeding event from the first day - a team of locals, led by Reece and Parky, were determined to capitalise on this opportunity and visited every weekend. The biggest threat facing the colony was soon evident - water levels and food supply! Reece and party visited 12/13th March– at the northern colony

there were lots of chicks – but they already had 500m or so to walk to the water over mud and crust too hot for human feet. The southern colony had more water, but observers were faced with an arduous trek across deep mud to get to the breeding island.

Careful calculations were made, and it was thought that the first chicks would hatch 8/10th March, with the optimum time to attempt to band 15/ 31st March. A banding expedition was planned for 19/21st March. Soon everything was in place. Roz Jessop had organised permits, Jeff, Jean & co had gathered up all of the banding gear and delivered it to Vicki at Kingston, who was joining the banding team. DENR had made staff available to accompany us (a condition on my permit). Because of the arduous conditions, Dave Cropley agreed at very short notice to bring his hovercraft. Then disappointment extremely hot weather, arduous conditions at the colony and forecast rain meant that the DENR Committee considered it unwise to proceed on Occupational Health and Safety grounds.

Where to from here? As we were almost there when news of the cancellation came through, Prue and I decided that we would continue on to Roxby anyway to catch up with Reece and Parky and we were so glad we did weather conditions moderated, and we just managed to make trips to both of the colonies despite rainfall nearly landing us in trouble! First, the northern colony. There was NO water! There were only a few adults left – & we feared for the ultimate fate of the few chicks still hatching out. We watched in amazement – and admiration - as 3 adults accompanied 3 chicks marching resolutely southward across the dry, salty expanse. Conditions were much healthier in the southern colony plenty of water adults and chicks feeding in shallow water not far from shore. We kayaked over to Calamanthus Island, where we found evidence of both Avocet and Red-capped Plover breeding. And so on to the breeding island. Hatching had virtually finished, and we could see a LARGE flock lost in the heat haze to the north. It was assumed that this comprised individuals from both breeding sites.

Would the water last long enough for the chicks to fledge?.....would we have an opportunity to band them??

Once again, a flurry of planning. Nicki agreed to accompany us, as well as attend to all of the red tape involved with the expedition. A satellite phone was organised. Nicki hired two kayaks and Reece organised another two. Lynn Pedler made walk-in traps..... David Paton lent us some more..... permits were amended. Perhaps walk-in traps would result in catching some adults?.....to cover this eventuality David Roshier from Deakin Uni endorsed me on his permit and lent us his blue engraved bands. Finally we were ready to go.....and, once more, we meet at Reece's home in Roxby. At the last minute several people pulled out, and so, instead of being 10, we were 5!

We set out on Sat 16th. Conditions were perfect – still plenty of water at the southern colony, and no wind. Juvenile stilt were widely scattered, but there wasn't an adult in sight. Catching was obviously going to be a challenge! That night we set up a 50m line of walk-in traps, and decided to check them regularly throughout the night. No-luck with the walk-in traps, but Reece and Parky resorted to dab nets and wading – by midnight they had caught 17, and we all retired to bed exhausted! Next day we set up base camp on Calamanthus Island. Heather, Nicki and I put up another line of walk-in traps whilst Reece and Parky kayaked off to assess the situation. In the Coorong we had

successfully caught advanced chicks from a dingy, but I had always been sceptical as to whether it could be done from a kayak. Reece and Parky proved me wrong, and it wasn't long before they had arrived back with chicks to band. As the chicks were feeding out to the north, my shopping baskets were converted to keeping cages, the truck tube into a floating banding station and we moved off shore! We soon had a system working. Heather caught and banded; Reece and Parky caught, Nicki ferried chicks to be banded and caught whenever possible, and I banded! 62 for the day!133 the nextand 120 on the last day. A grand total of 332!! The walk-in traps proved unsuccessful – although they had LOTS of footprints around them, no amount of encouragement could tempt a chick to walk inside. The vast majority of chicks present were very close to fledging – some were already flying. And this was just as well – Mike Geddes from the Uni of Adelaide, who joined us on Tuesday morning, painted a grim picture of the amount of food left in the system. The water, now 5 times saltier than sea water was killing off the Brine Shrimp that the stilt were relying on.

At least one successfully fledged – and was seen, and photographed, by Jane on 28th April, 20kms south of Streaky Bay, on the Eyre Peninsula!! First egg laid 18th February – 1st fledged juvenile seen 10 weeks later on 28th April.....What an amazing journey we had been on!

OhI almost forgot.....there was 1 Gull-billed Tern chick on the beach on Calamanthus Island.

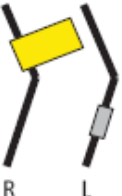


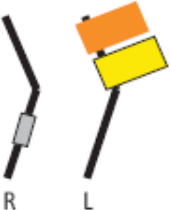

Of course, banding and flagging the chicks is only the beginning.....now we need to record how the flock, and the chicks, disperse to their non-breeding areas. If indeed, that is what they do.....I remember saying the same thing last August, only to find that most of the adults presumably stuck around the pastoral lands ready to begin breeding again some 7 months later!!!! And, with water flowing into Lake Eyre, who is to say that they won't breed again soon?!!

For photos taken at this year's breeding event – Heather Gibbs' are on her Facebook page - search on hgi@deakin.edu.au

Parky's are on: [Picasa Web Albums - Ben Parkhurst - Banded Stilts...](#) also <http://beforeitsgone.com.au/2011/07/18/banded-stilts-breed-on-lake-torrens-the-banding/>

I am delighted to advise that Friends of Shorebirds SE have been nominated for the Friends of the Parks *Outstanding Achievement – Volunteer Group Project for 2011* for their work with Banded Stilt. The successful recipients will be announced at the Friends of Parks Annual Forum to be held at Kimba on 3/4th September.

BANDED STILT FLAGS

	<p>A single yellow flag on the right upper leg was flagged as a chick in 1995 at Lake Ballard in WA. Several of these were seen at Lake Eyre in 2000 and one at Lake George in April 2001.</p>
	<p>A single orange flag on the right upper was flagged in Victoria, the majority at Werribee in 2000. Several of these have been seen in the Coorong (Feb 2005, August 2007). And one in the pastoral lands in May, 2011.</p>
	<p>Orange above yellow flags on the right upper (rectangular flags) was flagged as a chick in the Coorong in 2006. There have been several sightings of these in Victoria. In Feb 2008 one was seen at Yalgorup National Park, WA (about ½ way between Mandurah and Bunbury, on the coast). This is the first recorded movement of Banded Stilt from eastern Australia to Western Australia. One was seen accompanying a group of chicks to the water at Lake Torrens in June, 2010. A Coorong flagged adult was seen in the 2011 Lake Torrens breeding colony</p>
	<p>Orange above yellow flags on the left upper (rectangular flags) was flagged as a chick at Lake Torrens in June 2010. One seen in the pastoral lands in May, 2011.</p>
	<p>Orange above yellow flags on the left upper (triangular flags) was flagged as a chick at Lake Torrens in April 2011.</p>

Lake Torrens Banded Stilt Colony 2011

First sight of the colony 12.2.2011



Freshly made scraps 12.2.2011



Reece Pedler surveys Northern Colony 18.3.2011



Setting up Walk-in traps (photo Ben Parkhurst)



*Lake Torrens 2011 code – OY diagonal cut on left leg
(photo: Ben Parkhurst)*



Banding Station (photo: Reece Pedler)



Near fledged juveniles, Lake Torrens 19.3.2011 (photo: Ben Parkhurst)



*Juvenile Banded Stilt Seagull Lake, Streaky Bay 28.4.2011
(Photo: Jane Cooper)*



Banded Stilt at Ibis Island in Lake Eyre - June 2011

Maureen Christie

(extract from Friends of the Shorebirds SE Newsletter 80, July 2011)

Then suddenly – news filtered through that Trevor Wright, of Wrights Air, William Creek, had discovered a large flock breeding on Ibis Island in Lake Eyre North. On 6.6.2011 Alex Clarke, Regional Ecologist for the area, flew over the lake*'and verified the presence of about 80-85,000 Breeding Stilts and about 4-500 breeding gull pairs. The Ranger Team and I are ready to intervene and control the gulls if their numbers build to those seen in 2000.'* Alex was just off for two weeks on a field trip to Innamincka. In his absence, the District Ranger, Tony Magor, was to be our contact. Weekly flights were to be made to monitor the colony and organise Silver Gull control measures if necessary. Concerned that 4-500 breeding gull pairs were considered acceptable, I asked for a copy of the Management Plan for the species. There was no Management Plan – only an Action Plan.....however, I was pointed in the direction of the Biodiversity Strategy for the Region - *the South Australian Arid Lands Biodiversity Strategies. Volume 5 (Sandy Desert Conservation Priorities)*.....on Page 26, it states that *'Nest abandonment of Banded Stilt due to Silver Gull interaction during breeding events not exceeding 30%'*. Whilst there was much loud muttering from the ranks that this seemed an unacceptably high trigger point, it was appreciated that DENR did, indeed have an action plan and were committed to implementing it.

I decided that we should wait for the next flight, scheduled for Thurs 16th June. Yes, it was 10 days rather than a week from the last flight, but I reasoned a public holiday wouldn't have helped their planning and I should not be unreasonable. In the meanwhile my phone ran hot – permits, quotes for a helicopter, provisioning, how to fund it all.....etc. Then, disaster..... on 16.6.2011 DENR found that the Banded Stilt had deserted Ibis Island although some Silver Gulls were still there. Despite checking other islands they did not find any stilt at all – squashing hopes that perhaps the stilt had managed to fledge chicks and that we were witnessing the final stages of a successful breeding event. The same day Josie reported 'billows' of Banded Stilt in the Southern Lagoon of the Coorong.

Lots of lessons to be learnt here. The time delay between when Trevor Wright first observed the Banded Stilt on Ibis Island, and when we heard about it, was critical. I also consider it important for us to review 'trigger points' with DENRit is frightening to calculate how many eggs/chicks are needed to sustain the growth of a single clutch of Silver Gull chicks and to extrapolate the numbers over 400+ breeding pairs personally, I think the presence of any BREEDING Silver Gulls in a Banded Stilt breeding colony present an unacceptable risk. Having said that, it is important to remember that DENR kept us informed and were prepared to act 'at the drop of a hat' if their criteria for carrying out protection measures was met. It is our challenge to check the science underpinning their criteria and, if it is inappropriate, have it changed!

Since then there have been no more reports of big numbers in the Coorong but, there are LOTS of scattered stilt on Lake Eyre South and parts of Lake Eyre North (the SE corner and Belt Bay). Clive considers that it is still possible that they may breed again this season! Oh, and I almost forgot..... Fosters Point, Lake George, 31st May..... 26 or 27 Banded Stilt, a mixed bunch of adults and younger birds (1 had no band, several had pale bands, others had darkish bands.....and then there were the adults!).

**Please report any sightings of colour flagged Banded Stilt to Maureen Christie 08 87380014
Mobile 0427 380014 twinceppers@icisp.net.au**

The Seagull and the Banded Stilt

The seagull is a vicious beast.
It makes the whole wide world its feast.
Both scavenger, and killer, too,
It benefits from me and you.

The rubbish that we throw away
Will more than likely make its day.
Its numbers (it's a flame we fan)
Have paralleled the growth of Man.

Confess, I must, to pangs of guilt,
Which brings me to the banded stilt,
A much more meekly-mannered soul,
Now forced to play the victim's role.

Quite specialised (is that a fault?)
It thrives on waters filled with salt,
And has a strong, unbending need
For islands in large lakes to breed.

When floods, then, come to fill Lake Eyre,
It's no surprise you'll find it there
In mighty flocks - majestic, grand -
To block out water, sky and land.

Alas, the gulls, their eyes will peel
For offers of an easy meal.
The end is brutal, savage, quick.
They eat each egg, and new-hatched chick.

The banded stilts don't stand a chance.
All gone, their products of romance,
And if, by chance they breed again,
Once more their offspring will be slain.

A new role now arrives for Man.
He views the carnage, forms a plan.
Lace some butter. Spread it thick
On lumps of bread. Should do the trick.

Should put the little gulls to sleep,
A deep sleep where their dreams they'll keep.
In sev'ral minutes - ten at most,
Feathered corpses line the coast.

The killers in their thousands die,
And banded stilts re-claim the sky.
Seagulls learn their trusted friend
Will turn against them in the end.

*Oh, who would be a Man, then, in a world where no-one's free,
With intelligence and power and responsibility;
Capacity, a life to give, and then, a life to take,
And who's to say what course is right, and what is a mistake?*

© Stephen Whiteside 29.07.2011

Very Large Wading Birds !!!

Graham Beal

Every year I am usually asked by Roz and Doris to contribute an article for the annual VWSG Bulletin, this year the best that I could come up with is about “very large” wading birds that I saw in May this year in The Camargue, south of France. These were Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*, so please excuse the rather tenuous link!

The Camargue, Provence, is the region located south of Arles, France, between the Mediterranean Sea and the two arms of the Rhône River delta. With an area of over 930 km² (360 sq. miles), the Camargue is Western Europe's largest river delta and on December 1st 1986 was designated a Ramsar Site.

The Ramsar Convention treaty is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. It was signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971.

Ever since Bob Swann, a mutual friend of Clive and myself, returned from there many years ago and told me about the birds he had seen, I have always wanted to visit. This year on our trip to Italy and France we stayed in the beautiful town of Arles that is close by. The part of this huge wetland delta that we chose to visit one afternoon was Le Parc de Ornithologique.

Here flocks of Flamingos were quickly evident flying in V formation overhead and feeding in shallow lagoons. This is the only place in Europe that they breed. They stopped for several years due to unsuitable sites, but thankfully efforts to re-establish them were successful with the making of artificial nest sites.

500 chicks are banded each year with large readable plastic bands on the right tibia and metal on the left. There have been many sightings around the Mediterranean and Africa.

On small islands were breeding colonies of Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*, Cattle Egret *Bulbulcus ibis* and Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* which were supplementary fed. A Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* dropped in for a free feed and I started to think that it was maybe an unusual species for the area. I have since read that they are part of a feral population of 20 birds introduced in the 1970s from Kenya to Brittany, France. In 2005 a census revealed there were 3000 birds that are now devastating and competing with breeding colonies of Terns, Herons and Egrets.

For the benefit of the Wader Study Group Bulletin readers, also breeding there were Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*, (here in Australia we have our own race) and Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*, different from our Red Necked Avocet *R. novaehollandia*, by having a black neck and crown. Passing through on its northward migration was a Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*.

On some small islands on another lagoon Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* and Little Terns *Sterna albifrons* were breeding with the usual busy to-ing and fro-ing of the adults with fish in their beaks. On another island nearby was a colony of Black Headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* and 3 or 4 pairs of Mediterranean Gulls *Larus melanocephalus*.

The 2010 Biennial Hooded Plover Count

Grainne Maguire

**Project Manager – Beach Nesting Birds Project
Birds Australia**

A total of 257 volunteers took part in the November 2010 Biennial Hooded Plover (HP) count; braving wild weather and covering 1753 kilometres of high-energy coastline (82% of suitable HP habitat), all the way from 250 kilometres west of Ceduna in SA to south of Jervis Bay in NSW. What a feat! This snapshot of HP numbers is the best opportunity we have to understand the status of the population in eastern mainland Australia. A total of 1231 HP (1164 adults and 67 juveniles) were counted: in Victoria (81% of coast surveyed): 585 HPs (569 adults and 16 juveniles); in South Australia (88% of coast surveyed): 613 HPs (568 adults and 45 juveniles), and; in New South Wales (35% of coast surveyed): 33 HPs (27 adults and 6 juveniles).

These counts have been occurring since 1980, but for the first time, fixed routes were established and used in this Count and we were able to report the proportion of suitable coastline surveyed and relate this to the density of birds observed. It is now possible to begin making meaningful interpretations of what these numbers might mean. Comparison with the 2008 Count revealed that, in proportion to the coastline length surveyed in each region, there appeared to be significantly fewer HPs between the NSW border to Point Hicks, and in The Coorong; and more HPs between Warrnambool and Yambuk, as well as between Wilsons Promontory and Waratah Bay. The highest densities of HPs were recorded between Warrnambool and Yambuk, on the Mornington Peninsula, Bass Coast (San Remo to Inverloch), and on Kangaroo Island. Birds Australia will use this data to ensure that the best habitat for Hooded Plovers is protected and we will seek to determine why numbers appear to be declining in certain areas.

For a copy of the detailed report visit: <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/our-projects/management-resources.html>

If you would like to be involved with the count or in helping Hooded Plovers contact Grainne g.maguire@birdsaustralia.com.au 0400 910 761

Bass Coast becomes a prime habitat for Hooded Plover

Steve Johnson

A 42 kilometre strip along Victoria's George Bass coast stretching between the coastal townships of Inverloch and San Remo has been identified as a significant breeding ground for the struggling Hooded Plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*). Yielding 18 fledglings in the 2010/11 season and 20 in 2009/10 it now tops the state for the most successful number of fledglings despite its heavily visited ocean beaches and a huge desalination plant. Under the guidance of Birds Australia's Beach Nesting Bird Team and with assistance and cooperation of the Parks Victoria team at Wonthaggi the Bass Coast Friends of the Hooded Plover Group have done fantastic work in revealing these outcomes. As well they have protected and monitored vulnerable nests in heavily visited and dog walked areas, sign posted and enclosed nest sites and access tracks, made and placed chick shelters, caught both chicks and adults for banding/flagging and biometrics gathering and done presentations to local schools, TAFE courses and community groups.

Some of last year's statistics handed onto Birds Australia were; Breeding Pairs 22, Nests 37, Eggs 98, Hatchings 25, Fledglings 18 (highest of all state regions) Observations 412 (between 8/8/10&9/4/11). Rising sea levels and storm surges have taken a heavy toll on eggs resulting in multiple attempts by the bird. Fox, cat, raven, gull and birds of prey continue to be the main predators. During last year's breeding season the group banded and placed Orange engraved (black ink) leg flags on the Tibia of 19 chicks and 16 adults. Some of these birds have since been sighted on the Surf coast at Anglesea. Any flagged sightings of Hooded Plover can be reported to the Groups Coordinator Steve Johnson (0429 188 330) or Birds Australia. This condensed article extracted from the groups end of season report to Birds Australia.



Report of visit to King Island 4 – 12 April 2011

Clive Minton, Robyn Atkinson and Prue Wright

Introduction

This was the fifth successive annual March/April visit to King Island to continue the VWSG's long-term study of Ruddy Turnstone. All the principal objectives of this visit were met:

- a) Sufficient Ruddy Turnstones (197) were caught to obtain enough recaptures (75) for survival rate analysis and to maintain a constant level of banded birds in the King Island Turnstone population.
- b) The eight catches at seven different sites provided sufficient data for a good estimate of the 2010 breeding success. At 14.7% juveniles this was close to the previous year (14.2%) and indicated a welcome second consecutive year of good breeding success.
- c) Six further geolocators put on in March 2010 were retrieved from Ruddy Turnstone and 22 new ones were deployed. Seven of these were fitted to individuals which had also carried geolocators in the previous year.

2011 Visit

The team of 10 people was slightly smaller than in previous years, with two people having to back out at the last minute due to illness. Team members were Clive Minton, Robyn Atkinson, Prue Wright, David Wilbraham, Eric and Heidi Miller, Ila Marks, Peter Jenkins, Tessa Lamin and Hazel Watson. This year four local people (Margaret Bennett, Graeme and Margaret Batey, Don Robertson) assisted in every catch and Henry Bennett was only prevented from doing so in the first part of our visit by a strained back. Mavis Burgess and Ann Pimento also took part in some catches. We were again based at Jenny Marshall's house in Currie but two people slept at the house of Graeme and Margaret Batey and three at the home of Henry and Margaret Bennett.

Population Count

As usual the first day was spent visiting all the main Ruddy Turnstone locations along the west coast of the island. This produced count data for comparison with earlier years as well as serving as an initial recce for subsequent catching activities.

The results of the counts are given in Table 1. This includes the comparable counts from the two previous years. In addition count data from 1985, recently unearthed by Maureen Christie, have also been included. Amazingly, the person who carried out these counts (D. B. Whitchurch) is still resident in Currie and helped with interpretation. When sites are compared the data shows a slow annual decline over recent years in the Turnstone population. However the 1985 data suggests that this may have been going on for a prolonged period as the 2011 count is less than half that of 26 years previously. This also mirrors the marked population declines detected over a 15 year period at Flinders on the central Victorian coast and some decline in the population on the coast of the south-east of South Australia.

With no perceived cause of this decline in Australia it is suspected that it is associated with changes in the available habitat at the Turnstones' migratory staging locations in Asia. Further investigations will be made, particularly at locations identified by banding and flagging, and more recently by geolocators, as the main places used as stopover sites.

Catching and Banding

a) Catches.

Full details of catches are summarized in Tables 2 and 3 and full details are available in Tables 4 and 5. The total of Ruddy Turnstones caught (197) is slightly lower than that of previous years, mainly because we had two successive unsuccessful catching days, an unprecedented occurrence. It would have been nice to blame this on the inclement weather which had arrived by then but it was more to do with less than perfect judgement on our part – net location, when to fire (bird in the hand is worth a lot more than two on the seashore!). There was also an element of bad luck e.g. when a lone raven flushed birds only seconds before we would have fired.

One good aspect of catching so late in the season was that birds were keen to feed in order to complete their pre-migratory fattening process. When disturbed they would only sit out on off-shore rocks for a relatively short period before flying to the shore to feed. In November 2010, when birds were under no time pressures, they would sometimes take more than three or four hours to come off some inaccessible rock in the sea to give us a chance of catching them on the shore.

b) Controls and retraps.

A good proportion of the birds caught were again retraps (38% vs. 42 and 44% in the previous two years). Most were at the same site where they had originally been banded but a small number were at different locations. These included a juvenile bird which moved from Springs to South Whistler (about 15 km.) in two days. Two birds originally banded in South Australia were recaptured and a third one was seen (recognized by its flags). Each year we find a few examples of the small interchange which takes place between the King Island and the south-east of South Australia Turnstone populations.

c) Percentage Juveniles.

It was extremely pleasing that Ruddy Turnstones seem to have had another good breeding season in the Northern Hemisphere in June/July 2010. The proportion of juveniles (14.7%) was almost identical with that of the previous year (14.2%). It is interesting that in both years the figure for percentage juveniles in South Australia was rather higher than this (20-30%) suggesting perhaps that slightly fewer juveniles travel as far south as King Island.

d) Sexes.

In March/April it is possible to determine the sex of adult Turnstones by plumage differences. The males have much whiter heads (brown on the females) and much more of the chestnut brown (ruddy) colour on the wing coverts and back.

Table 2 shows a breakdown of the sexes in each catch. As usual there were some quite marked variations between locations, ranging from 32% to 74% males. But the overall sex ratio was again fairly equal (47.6% males). We probably now have enough data to look at whether the sex ratio at particular sites is consistent from year to year, indicating some preferential segregation of the sexes, or whether the variation is purely random.

e) Weights.

Not surprisingly, given the late date of this visit, the highest ever average weights were recorded for catch samples. In three catches the average weight exceeded 170 grams – with a peak of 173.1 grams on 11th April. This is a higher average weight than previously recorded for Ruddy Turnstone anywhere else in the world.

Yet again (see March 2009 and March 2010 visit reports) average weights were lower than elsewhere in some of the catches at Manuka. Nevertheless the peak overall average weight was

achieved at the central Manuka location. This may however have been partly associated with the late date (11th April) of this catch.

Recoveries and flag-sightings away from King Island

There has been a plethora of further sightings, throughout the Flyway, of Ruddy Turnstones marked on King Island. On a great many of these the engraved flag code was also reported, enabling the individual bird to be identified. Taiwan continues to be the most frequented location for stopovers on both northward and southward migration, but there is increasing evidence that many birds also use the shores around the Yellow Sea as a second key area.

An updated analysis of movements of Ruddy Turnstones will be made during the next year.

Geolocators

A further six geolocators, three British Antarctic Survey (BAS), three Swiss Ornithological Institute (SOI), were retrieved in the Manuka area where they had been deployed in March 2010. This brings to 12 the number of geolocators now recovered from the 38 originally deployed on King Island. Several additional returned individuals with geolocators have been seen but have not yet been recaptured.

Unfortunately the SOI geolocators have not provided any useful data because of corrosion of their copper alloy terminals. The most recent BAS geolocators are still being downloaded and a separate report of the results of the geolocator work will be published later in the year. But some good results have already been obtained giving much more detail of the migration route and stopover strategy of Ruddy Turnstones as they travel from south-eastern Australia to their breeding grounds in northern Yakutia (Northern Siberia) via the Asian continent and off-shore islands.

A further 22 new geolocators were deployed on Ruddy Turnstone in the Manuka area. Seven of these were put onto birds which had previously carried geolocators.

The future

It is intended to continue the Ruddy Turnstone studies on King Island for as long as possible. We now have a good body of birds with a known history and a five-year set of data against which to compare further future changes.

The next visit will be by a small team in November 2011, with the primary aim of retrieving as many as possible of the 22 geolocators deployed at Manuka this April. There will then be the usual major visit in late March/early April 2012. Would those interested in participation please let me know, so that I can put their names on the team list?

Acknowledgements

Enormous thanks are due to everyone who made this recent visit possible and so successful. Mavis Burgess always does a huge amount of work behind the scenes to make necessary arrangements. She also very kindly now stores equipment for us between visits as well as collecting (and returning) my car from Grassy, where it is shipped from/to Melbourne (courtesy Angus Roberts, master of the Searoad ferry).

It was really great this year that Margaret and Henry Bennett, Margaret and Graeme Batey and Don Robertson joined us in fieldwork on every day of the visit, making our load much lighter. The Bateys and the Bennetts are also thanked for providing accommodation, as is Jenny Marshall for allowing us to be based in her house in Currie. Shelley Davidson is thanked for lending us the Parks Tasmania trailer. Ann Pimento of the Natural Resource Management Group is also thanked for bringing school children out to participate, for arranging a lecture and a voluminous finger supper associated with a talk on waders, and for writing an excellent article for the local newspaper.

Table 1. Counts of Ruddy Turnstone on King Island (West Coast) 4-12 April 2011

Location – listed from south to north	2011	2010	2009	1985[±]
[Seal River Mouth]	Not counted	(60)	Not counted	Not counted
Stokes Point	30	20	90	
Stokes Point to Surprise Bay	70	110	40	
Surprise Bay (including Denby Beach)	75	105	80	
Seal Rocks	0	0	0	
Dripping Wells	62	65	40}	
Ettrick Beach	0	0	0}	60
Miller Bay	0	0	0	
Currie Golf Course (Burgess Bay)	85	90	96}	
Currie Harbour	15	25	14}	330
Dirty Bay	13	30	22	
Manuka – South	45}	10}	67}	
– Central	50}155	150}175	68}200	67
– North (Whalebone)	60}	15}	65}	
South Porky	9	4	28	
Unlucky Bay	48	10	20	
North of Bungaree Creek	0	0	35	
Duck Bay – Island Point}	70	115	15}	260
South Whistler}			80}	
Whistler Point	4	40	55	106
[The Springs (Cape Wickham)]	(50)	(45)	Not counted	
[Lighthouse area]	Not counted	0	0	
	636*	785*	827	

* Excludes the two areas in brackets

[±] Also British Admiral 63, Fitzmaurice Bay 26, Sea Elephant 309 – counts by D.B. Whitchurch

Comparison with same locations counted in 1985	400*	510*	540	851
------------------------------------------------	------	------	-----	-----

Table 2: Ruddy Turnstone Catch Details, King Island, 4-12 April 2011

Date	Place	New	Retrap	Total	(Juvs)	♂	♀	%♂	Mean Weight Adults (g)	Weight Range (g)
5.4.11	South Manuka	14	14	28	(6)	7	15	32%	159.7	131-175
6.4.11	North Manuka	18	12	30	(4)	13	13	50%	150.3	128-166
6.4.11	Currie Golf Course	4	11	15	(-)	5	10	33%	170.7	154-188
7.4.11	Surprise Bay	21	2	23	(4)	14	5	74%	160.6	142-180
8.4.11	Springs	22	3*	25	(3)	12	10	54%	167.3	147-195
11.4.11	South Whistler	13	7	20	(5)	5	10	33%	165.5	154-176
11.4.11	Central Manuka	16	9	25	(0)	11	14	44%	171.1** 173.1	129-186 162-186 (leaving out one at 129)
12.4.11	Currie Golf Course	14	17*	31	(7)	13	11	54%	170.6	161-189
Total	(8 catches)	122	75	197	(29)	80	88	47.6%		
			38%		14.7%					

*Includes one from South Australia: **Excludes two birds aged as "2"

Average weight of 29 juvenile/first year birds was 101.8g. (range 91-113)

Table 3. Ruddy Turnstone Catch Totals on King Island 2007-11

	New	Recapture	Total	(Juveniles)	%Juv
2007	230	11	241	(0)	0%
2008	354	65	419	(75)	17.9%
2009	124	99	223	(0)	0%
2010	123	88	211	(30)	14.2%
2011	122	75	197	(29)	14.7%
	953	338	1291		

Table 4. Totals for King Island 4-12 April 2011

	Species	New	Retrap	Total	Number Juv.	% Juv.
8 catches	Ruddy Turnstone	122	75 (38%)	197	(29)	(15%)
	Double-banded Plover	8		8	(3)	(-)
	Red-necked Stint	2		2		(-)
	Hooded Plover	2		2		(-)
	Red-capped Plover	2		2		(-)
		136	75	211		

Table 5. King Island Catches – April 2011

			New	Retrap	Total	(Juvs)	Nets fired
5.4.11	Manuka South	Ruddy Turnstone [2 geolocators retrieved and replaced and 15 others applied]	14	14	28	(6)	1
6.4.11 (First catch)	Manuka North	Ruddy Turnstone [4 geolocators retrieved and replaced; 1 other applied] Double-banded Plover Hooded Plover TOTAL	18 4 2 24	12 - - 12	30 4 2 36	(4) (-) (-)	1½
6.4.11 (Second catch)	Currie Golf Course	Ruddy Turnstone Red-necked Stint TOTAL	4 2 6	11 - 11	15 2 17	(-) (-)	1
7.4.11	Surprise Bay North	Ruddy Turnstone	21	2	23	(4)	½
8.4.11	Springs (N.W. K.I.)	Ruddy Turnstone *Includes one banded in South Australia	22	3*	25	(3)	1
11.4.11 (First catch)	South Whistler	Ruddy Turnstone	18	7	20	(5)	½
11.4.11 (Second catch)	Manuka Central	Ruddy Turnstone Double-banded Plover TOTAL	16 2 18	9 - 9	25 2 27	(0) (1)	½
12.4.11	Currie Golf Course	Ruddy Turnstone Double-banded Plover Red-capped Plover *Includes one banded in South Australia TOTAL	14 2 2 18	17* - - 17	31 2 2 35	(7) (2) (-)	½

HAVE YOU SEEN?
By Roz Jessop

Always read flag combinations from top to toe

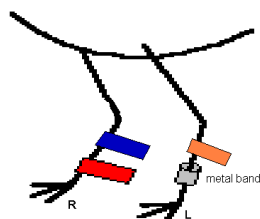
RED-CAPPED PLOVERS WITH ENGRAVED LEG-FLAGS?

In 2008 Deakin University commenced a banding study of Red-capped Plover at Cheetham Wetlands and Truganina Swamp, west of Melbourne – near Altona and Altona Meadows. Dr Mike Weston and students have flagged over 100 Red-capped Plover on the upper leg with an orange leg-flag engraved with two letters. They would greatly appreciate any sightings you may make. Masked Lapwings have also been marked with engraved flags at Phillip Island.

Please send details (including date and place) to
Dr Mike Weston, Deakin University,
221 Burwood Hwy, Burwood, 3125.
Email: mike.weston@deakin.edu.au
Phone: (+61 3) 9251-7433

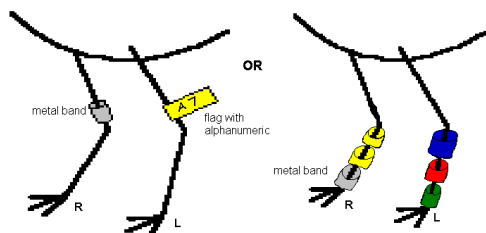
Mike and his post graduate students would also like to acknowledge the generous support of the VWSG in helping with the manufacture of the flags – especially Doris Graham.

HOODED PLOVERS, OYSTERCATCHERS OR GREY WADERS WITH FLAGS?



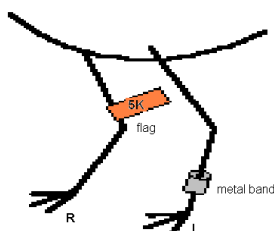
Hooded Plover with colour bands or flags?

Phillip Island Nature Park has an ongoing study colour flagging Hooded Plover chicks on Phillip Island. Any sightings of colour marked Hooded Plover should be sent to Roz Jessop
rjessop@penguins.org.au



Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers with colour bands or flags?

Any sightings of Pied and Sooty oystercatchers with colour bands or flags should be sent to David Trudgen
trudgen@iinet.net.au



"Grey" waders and terns with engraved or plain flags or colour bands? Any sightings of grey waders or terns with engraved flags or plain colour flags should be reported to Clive Minton
mintons@ozemail.com.au

Wader breeding success in the 2010 Arctic summer, based on juvenile ratios of birds which spend the non-breeding season in Australia

Clive Minton, Rosalind Jessop & Chris Hassell

Introduction

This paper gives the results for 2010/2011 of the “percentage juvenile sampling” based on catches carried out in south-east Australia (SEA) and in north-west Australia (NWA) during the November 2010 to March 2011 wader non-breeding season. This is the time when wader populations in Australia are relatively stable with all juvenile birds having arrived and before northward migration of adults has commenced.

This type of data has now been systematically collected over 33 seasons for some species in SEA and for 13 years in NWA. Since 2000 the results have been published annually in *Arctic Birds* and in *Stilt* (Minton *et al.* 2000, 2009). The long series of data now enables each year's activity to be seen in context and periods of above or below average breeding success to be identified. Productivity is a key parameter to monitor, especially at a time when many wader populations in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway are declining rapidly (Stroud *et al.* 2006).

Methods

Data was collected in 2010/2011 in the usual way (Minton *et al.* 2005). All birds included in the analysis were caught by cannon-netting, generally at the same range of sites each year. The timing of catches is also similar in most years, although in this last season the main catching in NWA was carried out in the second half of February/early March rather than the usual November/early December period. Also the results of Ruddy Turnstone* catching in King Island in the period 5–12 April are included in the SEA analysis because no adult birds had yet departed and because King Island birds were a significant part of the sample in other recent years. The percentage of juveniles in these catches is an indication (an index, not necessarily an absolute measurement for the whole population) of breeding success in the previous Arctic summer (in this case 2010).

Based on percentages of juveniles and deviation of this parameter from the species-specific long-term average we use a 6-grade scale (excellent, very good, good, average, poor, very poor) to evaluate breeding success in 2010. When the figure is close to average but not on it and not different enough to be called good or poor then we suggest to indicate which side of average it was (e.g., below average). Obviously where we put the assessments in brackets this is because either this year's sample is too small to be confident or because there isn't a previous history of data to compare with.

Results and Discussion

The data is presented in the usual format in a range of tables (Tables 1 to 4).

South-east Australia (SEA)

In SEA it was not possible, for the first time ever, to obtain samples of Curlew Sandpiper and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (Table 1). Sampling of Red-necked Stints was also reduced from most recent years. This is attributed to exceptional circumstances whereby regular heavy rainfall across the whole of inland Australia occurred in almost every month from April 2010 up to the present time (May 2011). The result of this was that there were large numbers of ephemeral wetlands across inland Australia providing extremely suitable wader habitat. It appears that Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, which prefer inland freshwater habitats if available, and many Curlew Sandpipers and Red-necked Stints stopped off at these locations during southward migration across the continent in August/October 2010. They therefore never

* – scientific names are given in tables

reached the main catch sampling sites along the Victorian coast. Small waders have often been reported using temporary inland wetlands but most of these normally dry up during the hot December to February period each year and such waders then continue their journey on to the coastal non-breeding areas. Because of the continuing inland rains this did not happen in the 2010/2011 period.

Good catching success was however achieved on those species which are strongly coastal in their habitat preference. It is particularly pleasing that some small catches of Red Knot were obtained in the sampling season for the first time since 2006/07 (Table 3). This was mainly because numbers increased as a result of a very good breeding season (*rogersi* subspecies from Chukotka in north-east Siberia).

The results in Table 1 show that most of the wader populations in SEA had a second successive good/very good breeding season during the Arctic summer of 2010. It was pleasing that Red-necked Stints had an improved breeding season. Although the percentage juvenile figure was only marginally above the average for the last 12 years this was the first time since the 2003 breeding season that this has occurred. Only Bar-tailed Godwit had a poor breeding year. The population in SEA is mainly the *baueri* subspecies, which breeds in Alaska where conditions may well have been markedly different from those of northern Siberia during the 2010 Arctic summer.

North-west Australia (NWA)

The results for NWA wader populations are given in Tables 2&4. There is nothing in the data to suggest that this year's sampling being rather later in the non-breeding season has had any significant effect on the juvenile percentage figures.

As in SEA Red-necked Stint and Curlew Sandpipers were rather harder to come by as numbers were reduced, probably again caused by some birds moving inland to feed in the extensive freshwater habitats present this year. A similar reason probably accounts for a complete lack of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers on the shore and, for the first time ever, no Sharp-tailed Sandpipers being cannon-netted either at Roebuck Bay, Broome, or at 80 Mile Beach.

All the Arctic-breeding waders for which adequate samples were obtained in NWA had average or above average breeding success in 2010. Great Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit (*menzbieri* subspecies) had excellent breeding outcomes. Unfortunately insufficient Sanderling and Ruddy Turnstone were caught for any measure of their breeding success this year.

Waders breeding at slightly lower latitudes in Siberia also had very good breeding success (Table 2). Only the most southerly breeders of those regularly monitored – Greater Sand Plover – had a poor breeding outcome. This suggests that weather conditions (early snowmelt, above average temperatures, no late snowfall at the time of chick hatching etc.) and predation pressures (high Lemming numbers, low numbers of adult predators) may have been favourable for wader breeding success over wide areas of northern and central Siberia during the 2010 June/July breeding season.

Conclusion

It is particularly pleasing to have now had two successive good breeding seasons in the Arctic, in 2009 and 2010. With so many wader populations in marked decline in the East Asian–Australasian Flyway this will be of particular benefit in trying to make good some of the losses. Hopefully wader migration patterns within Australia will return to normal in the 2011/2012 season thereby enabling population counts to be more realistic indicators of population trends.

Monitoring of the juvenile content of wader populations in SEA and NWA will be continued in the 2011/2012 season.

Acknowledgements

All members of the Victorian Wader Study Group and participants in the NWA Australasian Wader Study Group Wader Expeditions are thanked for their enormous efforts in the field in collecting this data during the 2010/2011 non-breeding season in Australia. The physical effort of making catches and the need to band and process birds within a reasonable time scale after capture means that large teams are necessary for cannon-netting operations. This is especially so in NWA where protective shade has to be erected to keep birds cool in the generally hot and sunny conditions.

Heather Gibbs is thanked for typing this year's update of Tables 1 to 4.

References

Minton, C., Jessop, R. & Hassell, C. 2000. 1999 Arctic breeding success from Australian perspective. – *Arctic Birds* 2: 19-20.

Minton, C., Jessop, R., Collins, P. & Gosbell, K. 2005. Monitoring wader breeding productivity by the proportion of first year birds in wader populations in S. E. Australian non-breeding areas. – *Status and Conservation of Shorebirds in East Asian–Australasian Flyway*. Proceedings of the Australian Shorebirds Conference, Canberra, Dec. 2003. IWSG Special Publication 17 and Wetlands International Global Series 18. Pp. 73-85.

Minton, C., Jessop, R. & Hassell, C. 2009. 2008 Arctic breeding success, based on juvenile ratios of Northern Hemisphere waders which spend the non-breeding season in Australia. – *Arctic Birds* 11: 53-62.

Stroud, D.A., Baker, A., Blance, D.E., Davidson, N.C., Delany, B., Ganter, B., Gill, R., Gonzalez, P., Haanstra, L., Morrison, R.I.G., Piersma, T., Scott, D.A., Thorup, O., West, R., Wilson, J. & Zochler, C. 2006. The conservation and population status of the world's waders at the turn of the millennium. In Boere, G.C., Galbraith, C.A. & Stroud, D.A. (eds). 2006. *Waterbirds around the world*. The Stationery Office, Edinburgh, UK. 960 pp.

Table 1. Percentage of juvenile/first year waders in cannon-net catches in south-east Australia in 2010/2011

Species	No. of catches		Total caught	Juv./1st year		Long term median* % juvenile (years)	Assessment of 2010 breeding success
	Large (>50)	Small (<50)		No.	%		
Red-necked Stint <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	6	5	1219	249	20.4	14.1 (32)	Good
Curlew Sandpiper <i>C. ferruginea</i>	0	0	0	0	(-)	10.6 (31)	-
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	3	0	284	29	10.2	19.4 (21)	Poor
Red Knot <i>C. canutus</i>	0	4	63	49	77.8	52.1 (17)	Very good
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	1	17	446	114	25.6	9.8 (20)	Very good
Sanderling <i>C. alba</i>	1	0	70	15	21.4	12.6 (19)	Good
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper <i>C. acuminata</i>	0	0	0	0	(-)	11.6 (29)	-
All birds cannon-netted in period 15 November to 28 February except for Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, and Sanderling, for which catches up to 25 March are included.							
* Does not include the 2010/2011 figures							

Table 2. Percentage of juvenile/first year waders in cannon-net catches in north-west Australia in 2010/2011

Species	No. of catches		Total caught	Juv/1st year		Assessment of 2010 breeding success
	Large (>50)	Small (<50)		No.	%	
Great Knot <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	8	4	1166	279	23.9	Excellent
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	3	5	365	78	21.3	Excellent
Red-necked Stint <i>C. ruficollis</i>	2	4	432	80	18.5	Average
Red Knot <i>C. canutus</i>	2	7	210	34	16.2	Average
Curlew Sandpiper <i>C. ferruginea</i>	0	6	82	20	24.4	Good
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	0	4	4	1	(-)	-
Sanderling <i>C. alba</i>	0	3	3	1	(-)	-
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper <i>C. acuminata</i>	0	0	0	0	(-)	-
Non-arctic northern migrants						
Greater Sand Plover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	4	6	586	100	17.1	Poor
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>	1	6	151	38	25.2	Very good
Grey-tailed Tattler <i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>	1	10	130	41	31.5	Very good
Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	0	2	29	17	58.6	Very good
All birds cannon-netted in period 1 November to mid-March						

Table 3. Percentage of first year birds in wader catches in south-east Australia 1998/1999 to 2010/2011

Species	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Average (12 yrs)
Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	6.2	29	10	9.3	17	6.7	12	28	1.3	19	0.7	19	26	13.2
Red-necked Stint <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	32	23	13	35	13	23	10	7.4	14	10	15	12	20	17.0
Curlew Sandpiper <i>C. ferruginea</i>	4.1	20	6.8	27	15	15	22	27	4.9	33	10	27	(-)	17.6
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper <i>C. acuminata</i>	11	10	16	7.9	20	39	42	27	12	20	3.6	32	(-)	20.0
Sanderling <i>C. alba</i>	10	13	2.9	10	43	2.7	16	62	0.5	14	2.9	19	21	16.3
Red Knot <i>C. canutus</i>	(2.8)	38	52	69	(92)	(86)	29	73	58	(75)	(-)	(-)	78	53.1
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	41	19	3.6	1.4	16	2.3	38	40	26	56	29	31	10	25.1
All birds cannon-netted between mid-November and 25 March (except Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Curlew Sandpiper to end February only). Averages (for previous 12 years) exclude figures in brackets (small samples) and exclude 2010/2011 figures														

Table 4. Percentage of first year birds in wader catches in north-west Australia 1998/1999 to 2010/2011

Species	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Average (12 yrs)
Red-necked Stint <i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	26	46	15	17	41	10	13	20	21	20	10	17	18	21.3
Curlew Sandpiper <i>C. ferruginea</i>	9.3	22	11	19	15	7.4	21	37	11	29	10	35	24	19.0
Great Knot <i>C. tenuirostris</i>	2.4	4.8	18	5.2	17	16	3.2	12	9.2	12	6	41	24	12.2
Red Knot <i>C. canutus</i>	3.3	14	9.6	5.4	32	3.2	(12)	57	11	23	12	52	16	20.2
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	2.0	10	4.8	15	13	9.0	6.7	11	8.5	8	4	28	21	10.0
Non-arctic northern migrants														
Greater Sand Plover <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	25	33	22	13	32	24	21	9.5	21	27	27	35	17	24.2
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>	12	(0)	8.5	12	11	19	14	13	11	13	15	19	25	13.4
Grey-tailed Tattler <i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>	26	(44)	17	17	9.0	14	11	15	28	25	38	24	31	20.4
All birds cannon-netted in the period 1 November to mid-March. Averages (for previous 12 years) exclude figures in brackets (small samples) and exclude 2010/2011 figures														

Spring and Summer in Northern Europe

Peter Madvig

Spring and early summer in Northern Europe is a wonderful opportunity to observe birds, not the least of which is shorebirds. My wife, Penny, and I have been using the opportunity to do just that. Here we've seen Common Redshank by the dozen (WHY do I fail to catch them on Roebuck Bay?!), some Spotted Redshank, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew, Common Sandpiper, and a single Temminck's Stint.

But, a birding trip to Estonia was 'jaw-dropping' stuff. Never mind the geese and various swan species, passerines, Capercallie, and Black Grouse on the Lek, or the raptors - but, we were treated several times, at close range, to large numbers of displaying, Ruff...!!! Our British companions told us that this was no longer common in Britain, just the opposite. These birds, so much larger than the Reeves, were absolutely stunning in their magnificent plumage, with extended ruff and ear-tufts, in amazing colours: black and white, ginger, rufous, striped or 'blotched' like a marmalade cat... and variations on these. Low to the ground, they sort of dash at one another and then retreat.

What a magnificent spectacle. A couple of White-winged Terns among Black Terns had me keenly searching for leg bands; would the NW Australian birds banded by the AWSG in March travel this far?! Well, Citrine Wagtails breed here, so anything seemed possible!!

Banding Ruddy Turnstone on King Island

Margaret Bennett

An energetic and happy group of 10 from Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG) led by Dr Clive Minton arrived on King Island in early April and were joined by half a dozen locals to help with their annual banding and flagging of as many Ruddy Turnstone as could be captured using the cannon netting method. All Ruddy Turnstone which were captured were 'processed'.

After the canon has been fired, the birds are retrieved as quickly as possible and put in small dark cages so they can settle, while the net is packed away for next time and the business end of the proceedings is organised.

Each bird is weighed; aged, sexed, head and beak measurements are taken along with the stage of moult. All this information about each bird is recorded on data sheets. New birds are given a metal band with a number on it; a blue flag is applied to the tarsus and an orange flag to the tibia, with an engraved number, so they can easily be read in the field with a telescope or binoculars. These are the Tasmanian colours. Occasionally a South Australian banded bird is captured on King Island, while some King Island banded birds are sighted/captured in South Australia. Generally the Ruddy Turnstone returns to the same place each year.

Birds banded in previous years which are re-trapped again provide important data. This helps to determine their age, and also tells us that they had a successful trip to the Arctic and back again.

This year twenty two birds had a geolocator attached to one leg. These small electronic devices which weigh approximately 0.9 gram can tell us which was the migratory route of the Ruddy Turnstone, where they stopped to rest and feed and for how long. Some fly to the Northern Hemisphere and back the same way, usually to Taiwan, the Yellow Sea, then on to their breeding grounds in Siberia, and back the same way, but for others the return journey is across to The Aleutian Islands, then back via The Pacific.

This method means the ruddy turnstones with the geolocators attached must be re-trapped and the geolocator removed, which is then sent to the lab so all this important information can be analysed.

Generally all breeding ruddy turnstone have left King Island by early May, and they begin to return again by September. The juveniles follow later and begin to arrive by November/December. They then stay here in the southern hemisphere for the first winter before migrating and breeding as two year olds.

This year there were 197 Ruddy Turnstones captured in one week at various locations on the west coast. Each year a bit more data is gathered to help us understand these little birds a bit more.

Members of the VWSG also had a chance to have a look about the island and enjoyed looking for bush birds as well as beach birds. All in all it was a very successful week.

Nigel Burgess

Sadly Nigel Burgess died on 23 January 2011 aged 74. He died while sawing logs at the Forestry. If you have to go, then doing what you most liked to do -- in Nigel's case anything out in the countryside -- right up to the end is the best way.

Nigel and his dearly-loved wife Mavis are the reason the VWSG now has King Island as part of its operating territory. Ten years ago they started to report sightings of colour-banded Oystercatchers. These were birds which had "wintered" on the Victorian Coast and then gone out into Bass Strait to breed. Then one day a mention of flagged Ruddy Turnstone and our interest grew even more!

Nigel welcomed us to visit and he and Mavis facilitated everything- permissions, accommodation, transport, mountains of local cheese etc. Beneath that sometimes slightly brusque exterior was one of the kindest, most generous, unbelievably helpful, knowledgeable, amusing (dry humour) and friendliest persons imaginable. Nothing was too much trouble. It was because of the encouragement and warmth of Nigel and Mavis that the first visit of a VWSG team in March 2007 was so enjoyable and why we have returned (sometimes twice) each year since.

Nigel had lived on King Island for more than sixty years. He had a multitude of jobs during his life- from wolfram /scheelite miner (tungsten) to Parks and Wildlife ranger. It was in the latter role, from which he only retired in 2010, that he was most in his element. He knew every bit of the island and he was as involved in the recovery of the northeast section of the island from the extensive wildfires of 2007 as he was in the monitoring and preservation of the avifauna including Orange-bellied Parrots. He was an inveterate and skilled cat- catcher (there are no foxes on King Island) and acutely aware of the benefits of appropriate predator control.

Nigel probably knew more people on King Island than anyone else. He delighted in a "chat" to anyone and everyone. The church was packed to overflowing- and more - for his funeral. He will be greatly missed by all his friends on King Island, by the VWSG, and especially by his family and his cherished wife Mavis, daughters Jan and Margaret and by Sarah- Jane, his devoted cocker-spaniel.

Publications and Presentations using VWSG data

Compiled by Roz Jessop

NEWSLETTERS

Members made contributions to the following:

- “**The Tattler**”, Newsletter for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Copies can be downloaded from the AWSG web page <http://www.awsg.org.au/>. You can also download previous copies of the AWSG journal *Stilt* from this site.
- “**VicBabbler**”, quarterly newsletter of the Birds Australia – Victoria Regional Group of Birds Australia <http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/the-organisation/victoria.html>

Papers of interest:

Barshep, Y., Minton, C., Underhill, L. and Remisiewicz, M. 2011. The primary moult of Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea* in North-Western Australia shifts according to breeding success. *Ardea* 99: (1) 43-51.

McGowan, C.P., Hines, J., Nichols, J., Lyons, J., Smith, D., Kalasz, K., Niles, L., Dey, A., Clark, N., Atkinson, P., Minton, C. and Kendall, W. 2011. Demographic consequences of migratory stopover: linking Red Knot survival to horseshoe crab spawning abundance. *Ecosphere* 2 (6) Article 69.

Minton, C., Christie, M., Johns, P., Chiang, Chung-Yu, Liu, Chih-Hui and Gibbs, H. 2010. Sightings of engraved leg flag Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres* on migration. *Stilt* 58: 63-64.

Minton, C., Jessop, R., Collins, P. and Standen, R. 2011. The migration of Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis* to and from Australia. *Stilt* 59: 6-16.

Minton, C., Jessop, R., Hassell, C. and Christie, M. 2011. North-west Australia Wader and Tern Expedition report 19th February to 12th March 2011. *Stilt* 59: 63-69.

Minton, C., Taylor, S., Jessop, R., Gibbs, H., Habraken, R. and Schuckard, R. 2010. Amazing initial results from the deployment of engraved leg flags on Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica* in Victoria, Australia. *Stilt*: 58 10-12.

Minton, C., Whal, J., Gibbs, H., Jessop, R., Hassell, C. and Boyle, A. 2011. Recoveries and flag sightings of waders which spend the non-breeding season in Australia. *Stilt* 59: 17-43.

Rogers, D., Hassell, C., Boyle, A., Gosbell, K., Minton, C., Rogers, K. and Clarke, R. 2011. Shorebirds of the Kimberley Coast – Population, key sites, trends and threats. *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia* 94: 377-391.

The VWSG Web site is regularly updated by Roger Standen – previous copies of the VWSG Bulletin can be downloaded from the site.

www.vicnet.net.au/~vwsq

VWSG Financial Report

Rosemary Davidson and Clive Minton

The Victorian Wader Study Group's financial position remains in a strong and healthy condition. This is particularly due to the income received from generous personal donations by members, a major grant from the Wettenhall Foundation (for the purchase of geolocators), most valuable grants from DSE and Coast Action/CoastCare (towards the cost of equipment and consumable items used during fieldwork) and from the South Australian Department of Environment and Natural Resources (for geolocators deployed in South Australia).

This year was the first for some time in which we did not have to incur major expenditure on significant items of equipment. However wear and tear takes considerable toll and we will probably need to renew some major items in the next year or two. Overall this year our general operating expenses (i.e. excluding geolocators) of around \$9000 more or less balanced our income, excluding grants and other one-off items (payments for special services), which is a satisfactory situation.

It should also be noted that our cash reserves are mostly kept in interest-bearing accounts and that they are therefore increasingly providing interest income to assist our activities. These reserves are likely to reduce during the next year as we incur further major obligated expenditure on geolocators.

Victorian Wader Study Group Inc.

ABN 12 724 794 488

Income & Expenditure Statement for the year ended 30 June 2011

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Subscriptions	\$2,277.00	Printing Bulletins	\$1,837.00
Bank Interest	\$1,459.84	Postage, photocopying, stationary & phone calls	\$182.90
Donations	\$1,120.00	Bank Charges	\$42.50
B&G Abbot,M Anderson,R Atkinson			
M&N Burgess,R Clemens,R Davidson,		Incorporation Fee	\$41.80
P Gibbs,A Gutowski,J Knight,			
P Mc Whirter,H Phillipson,J Reside,		Miscellaneous expenses	\$94.95
N&N Roussac,D Thomas,P Valder			
		Gifts in appreciation of help	\$130.00
Proceeds from door prizes (AGM)	\$840.00		
Excess from AGM food	\$296.00		
Surplus from KI and Manns Beach stays	\$77.00	Door prize expenses	\$120.00
Sale of T Shirts	\$2,236.05	Shortfall on SA visit	\$43.00
Sub-total	\$8,305.89	SA Licence fees	\$140.00
Payment for Barry Beach Consultation	\$1,600.00	Payment for T shirts	\$3,118.28
		Postage on T shirts	\$60.10
Resale of cement,Darvic& leg flags	\$160.00		
		Sub-total	\$5,810.53
DPI Payment for Influenza sampling	\$200.00	<i>Equipment:</i>	
		Colour bands & engraved flags	\$1,989.00
DSE		Flag making equipment	\$221.88
Payment for cannon net use by D Rogers	\$3,000.00		
		Trailer Registration	\$37.00
Sub-total	\$4,960.00	Net needles & thread	\$171.40
		Balances (3)	\$243.00
		Glue, choc. blocks, grease etc.	\$227.00
Grants:		Sub-total	\$2,889.28
<i>Coast Action/Coast Care</i>			
Grant for equipment	\$3,000.00	<i>Geolocator Expenses</i>	
		Purchase of geolocators	\$8,989.00
DSE South Gippsland		Postage for interpretation	\$101.60
Grant for field work	\$3,000.00		
		Sub-total	\$9,034.76
Wettenhall Foundation			
Grant for purchase of geolocators	\$10,000.00		
SA department of Environment & Natural Resources (Shorebirds SE)			
Grant for geolocators	\$2,200.00		
Sub-total	\$18,200.00		
TOTAL INCOME	\$31,465.89	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$17,734.57
Cash Balance 1/07/2010		Cash Balance 30/06/2011	
Petty Cash	\$42.70	Petty Cash	\$98.45
Westpac Com. Solns. Account	\$4,120.45	Westpac Com. Solns. Account	\$749.13
Westpac Bus. Cash Res. Bonus Account	\$39,061.64	Westpac Bus. Cash Res. Bonus Account	\$32,860.99
Macquarie Account.	\$385.16	Westpac Term Deposit	\$20,698.50
Unpresented cheques	\$213.55	Macquarie Account	\$3,415.40
Net Total	\$43,396.40	Net Total	\$57,822.47

VWSG Inc. MEMBERSHIP LIST July 2011

Bev & Geoff Abbott
 Richard & Margaret Alcorn
 Charles & Jocelyn Allen
 Malcolm Allen
 Terri Allen
 Mark Anderson
 Peter Anton
 Allen Archbold
 Robyn & Steve Atkinson
 Mark & Terry Barter
 Graham & Jenny Beal
 Lauren Beasley & Digger Jackson
 Andy Bennett & Kate Buchanan
 Margaret Bennett
 Rob & Gail Berry
 David Billinghamurst
 Malcolm & Judy Brown
 Paul & Anna Buchhorn
 Mavis Burgess
 Bill Bygott
 Aiden Campbell
 Jeff & Sarah Campbell
 Mervyn & Ann Chappel
 Rob Clemens
 Maureen Christie
 Allan Clarke & Marj Reni
 Bretan Clifford
 Pete Collins
 Christine Connel
 Mike Connor
 Dave Cropley
 Rosemary Davidson
 Michael Dawkins
 John Dawson
 Xenia Dennett
 Barbara Dickson
 Elizabeth Dunn
 Dianne Emslie
 Alice Ewing
 Jon Fallaw & Becky Hayward
 Erin Farmer
 Maureen & Robin Fitzgerald
 Tim & Liza Gale
 Dave Gerard
 Colin & Angela Gibbs
 Heather Gibbs
 Don & Joyce Gillespie
 Ken & Carlene Gosbell
 Andrew & Kath Gosden
 Doris Graham
 Nicole Grenfell
 Patrick-Jean Guay
 Angie Gutowski
 Graham Hancock
 Birgita Hansen
 Trish Hart
 Neville Hatten & Robin Borland
 Peter Haward
 Peter Hermans
 David & Margaret Hollands
 Vivien Holyoake
 Damian Howard
 Tania Ireton
 Gavin Jackson & Debbie King
 Peter Jenkins
 Roz Jessop
 Penny & Murray Johns
 Steve Johnson
 Peter Johnstone
 Marcel Klaassen
 Irma Kluger
 Ken & Femma Kraaijeveld
 Joy Knight
 Tessa & Angus Lamin
 Brett Lane
 Bruce Lavender

Janet Limb
 Moira Longden
 Sue & Andy Longmore
 Richard & Debbie Loyn
 John & Susie Lyons
 Meg Macmillan
 Bernie McCarrick
 Geoff & Joan McDonald
 Rod McFarlane & Helen Vaughan
 Pat McWhirter
 Kathryn Manago (nee Goyen)
 Ila Marks & Eric Miller & Heidi
 Brian Martin
 David Melville
 Clive & Pat Minton
 Stewart Monckton
 Lorraine Moore
 Maureen, Paul & Jordan O'Neill
 Kim O'Riley
 Priscilla Park
 Rob Patrick
 Hugo Phillipps
 Heather & David Phillipson
 Mike Preston
 Thomas Putt
 Susan Quirk
 David Rantall
 John Renowden
 Jim, Jenny & April Reside
 Roger & Annabel Richards
 Bruce Ridgeway
 Don & Jude Ripper
 Bruce Robertson
 Ken, Annie & Danny Rogers
 Don & Greta Robertson
 Neville & Nancy Roussac
 Graeme & Margaret Rowe
 Liz Sarraillhe
 Kelly Shannon
 Julie Shaw
 Andrew Silcocks
 Charles Silveira
 Howard Simco
 Jenny Skewes
 Charles Smith
 Ron & Shirley Smith
 Roger Standen
 Will & Angela Steele
 Kate Stevens
 Iain, Sandy, Sally, Anna & James
 Stewart
 John Stoney
 Bob Swindley
 Naoko Takeuchi
 Andrew Taylor
 Susan Taylor
 Deryn Thomas
 David & Wendy Trudgen
 Lyn Turner
 Stephanie & Lindsay Tyler
 Paul Van Loon
 Inka Veltheim
 John & Caroline Walmsley
 Hazel Watson
 Marion Weaving
 Mike Weston
 Jim & Anthea Whitelaw
 David & Jean Wilbraham
 Ross Williamson
 Kailash Willis
 Prue Wright
 Dallas & Judi Wyatt
 Elizabeth Znidersic

Bulletins are also sent within Australia to:

ABBBS
 AWSG
 Birds Australia
 BOCA
 Broome Bird Observatory
 CSIRO Library, ACT
 Dept. of Defence, Swan Is.
 Queenscliff
 DSE Geelong
 Dept. of Primary Industry
 Eyre Bird Observatory
 French Is. Head Ranger FINP
 Melbourne Water (Werribee Sew. Farm)
 National Library- ACT
 NSW Wader Study Group
 NWA WSG- Chris Hassell
 Phillip Island Nature Park
 Parks Victoria, Foster
 Parks Victoria, Queenscliff
 Parks Victoria, Wonthaggi
 Queensland Wader Study Group
 Victoria Museum
 Victorian Ornithological Res. Gp
 Victorian State Library
And landowners on whose property the group operates in Victoria

Overseas recipients of the

Bulletin: *Alaska:* R Gill- Alaska Science Centre
 B McCafferty-US Fisheries & Wildlife Service
Cambodia: R Thomson WCS Cambodia Program
China: National Birdbanding Centre
 Ma Qiang -Chongming Dongtan Nature Reserve
France: Natural History Museum, Paris
Hong Kong: Geoff Carey, Yu Yat-Tung
Indonesia Y R Noor-Wetlands International
 Iwan Londo, Dr J Phillipa
Japan:
 Kiyo Ozaki & Y Shigita - Bird Mig. Res. Cent.
 T Hiroi-Japan Wetlands Active Network - M Kashiwagi
Korea:
 Nial Moores, Dr K Jin-Han
Mongolia:
 M Gilbert, Wildlife Conservation Soc.
New Zealand:
 NZWSG – Adrian Riegen
 P Battley, T Habraken, R Schuckard
Russia:
 Dr P Tomokovich, Dr Y Gerasimov
Singapore: J Gan
Switzerland: Senckenbergische Bibliothek
Taiwan: Chung Yu Chiang, Weiting Liu
Thailand: Prof. P Round
United Kingdom:
 Highland Ringing Group, Scotland
 Wash Wader Ringing Group - Dr H Sitters

Journal of the Victorian Wader Study Group
Bulletin Number 34 2011

CONTENTS		
Mission Statement		2
VWSG Office Bearers		3
Summary of VWSG Activities to August 2011	C. Minton	4
Total waders caught by species January to December 2010	H. Vaughan, C. Minton	9
Total waders caught by species 1975 to December 2010.	H. Vaughan, C. Minton	10
New and retrapped waders caught each calendar year by VWSG	H. Vaughan, C. Minton	11
Total waders caught each six months 1979-2010 – VWSG	H. Vaughan, C. Minton	12
Location of waders caught in Victoria, SA and Tasmania	H. Vaughan, C. Minton	13
Number of waders processed by the VWSG each month to Dec. 2010	H. Vaughan, C. Minton	14
Number of waders leg-flagged in Victoria (orange)	H. Vaughan, C. Minton	15
Number of waders leg-flagged in SA (orange/yellow)	H. Vaughan, C. Minton	16
VWSG Field Work Programme 2011	C. Minton	17
Recoveries of waders banded in Victoria	C. Minton, R. Jessop & M. Christie	18
Sightings of waders leg-flagged in Victoria, SA and King Island Tasmania.	C. Minton, R. Jessop, M. Christie, H. Gibbs, M. Burgess & I. Stewart	23
Sightings of waders leg-flagged elsewhere and then seen in Victoria, South Australia or King Island, Tasmania.	C. Minton, R. Jessop, M. Christie, H. Gibbs	26
Tern breeding and banding report 2010/11	C. Minton, R. Jessop, S. Taylor	31
Tern recovery report 2010/11	C. Minton, R. Jessop, S. Taylor	33
Sightings of Victorian flagged Terns 2010/11	C. Minton, R. Jessop, H. Gibbs, S. Taylor	35
South Australian Team Report – August 2010 – July 2011	M. Christie	37
Conservation Report August 2011	D. Graham	44
Banded Stilt breeding event at Lake Torrens 2011	M. Christie	48
Banded Stilt breeding event at Ibis Island, Lake Eyre – June 2011	M. Christie	53
The Seagull and the Banded Stilt	S. Whiteside	54
Very large wading birds	G. Beal	55
The 2010 biennial Hooded Plover Count	G. Maguire	56
Bass Coast becomes a prime habitat for Hooded Plover	S. Johnson	57
Report of visit to King Island 4 to 12 April 2011.	C. Minton, R. Atkinson, P. Wright	58
Have you seen?	R. Jessop	64
Wader breeding success in the 2010 Arctic summer, based on juvenile ratios of birds which spend the non-breeding season in Australia.	C. Minton, R. Jessop, C. Hassell	65
Spring and summer in northern Europe	P. Madvig	69
Ruddy Turnstone on King Island	M. Bennett	70
Nigel Burgess	C. Minton	71
Publications and presentations using VWSG data	R. Jessop	72
Financial Report	C. Minton, R. Davidson	73
VWSG Membership List	R. Davidson	75