

BEACH-NESTING BIRDS PROJECT

Background

In 2006, the Australian Government through the Natural Heritage Trust funded a Birds Australia 2.5 year project to improve understanding, awareness and management of resident beach-nesting shorebirds. The project used the Hooded Plover in Victoria as a case study to see what could be achieved, and to apply these experiences and research findings nationally. When the project began, only three coastal parks/areas were actively managed to protect Hooded Plover nesting sites within Victoria (Mornington Peninsula National Park, Phillip Island Nature Park, Inverloch foreshore). Elsewhere land managers and community groups had little awareness of the issues facing beach habitats and resident shorebirds, or where there was awareness, had little time or resources to commit to management.

This project engaged 40 land managers (from 13 agencies/organizations) and 100 volunteers along the coast. In three breeding seasons over 4,500 visits were made to over 70 breeding pairs, collecting data on their breeding success and threats present at beaches. One hundred chicks fledged from 357 nests, 50% from heavily threatened but managed sites, 46% from isolated or low threat sites and only 4% from low to moderately threatened sites that weren't managed. In heavily threatened sites that weren't managed, fledging success was zero. These figures reveal that management is highly effective and can give sites with limited hope, an equal chance at producing chicks to sites that are remote.

A 300 page manual was created at the end of the first phase of the project using site case studies, student research into new management techniques, and a review of management techniques used in Australia and overseas. This manual is a reference tool for managers, policy makers, community groups and individuals, collating practical information in one resource so that these groups can carry out on-ground management and monitoring in consistent and effective ways.

Phase 2 of the project is now underway, funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country. The main purpose is to collaborate with other states and build our understanding of management of beach-nesting birds (BNB) within Australia.

Purpose of September meeting

- Information sharing between the states - learn what has been underway in Tasmania, where the information gaps lie, where community interest lies, what has been effective or ineffective so far, what the limitations are.
- Discuss challenges project faced in Victoria and similarities/differences in Tasmania
- Establish a national BNB network so that information sharing continues
- Explore resources required to include Tasmania (all or parts of) in the Eastern November biennial count (next count 2010)
- Option of choosing 5-10 beaches for monitoring to have comparative/baseline data on breeding success, and to use as case studies for community involvement and social change.
- Determine interest for holding training workshops or awareness raising information days during 2009 and/or 2010.

SHOREBIRDS 2020 PROJECT

Background

The *Shorebirds 2020* Program started in 2007 to reinvigorate the volunteer-led national Population Monitoring Program started by the AWSG in 1981. *Shorebirds 2020* is supported by Birds Australia and the AWSG, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country and WWF-Australia. The program is designed to collect robust data on shorebird populations in a manner that will allow us to more clearly identify how shorebird populations in Australia are changing and why, and to share this information with those charged with conserving and managing shorebirds and their habitats.

The long-term desired outcomes of the program are:

- Improved conservation and management of shorebirds & their habitats
- Improved understanding of the impact of changes in habitat and site management on shorebirds
- A practical model for community-based shorebird monitoring suitable for use in East Asia
- An increase in the number of skilled shorebird counters active in Australia
- An increase in the number of regularly monitored shorebird sites
- An improved knowledge of shorebird population trends

Purpose of September meeting

- Introduce the project and what we're trying to achieve
- Explain links to Birds Tasmania's long-term shorebird surveys in Tasmania
- Discuss threats to shorebirds in Tasmania and the conservation benefits of linking in with a national program
- Determine interest for holding shorebird identification and counting training workshops during late 2009 and/or 2010.