

# Word about the Hood *Second Edition Dec 2009*

*Contributors: Grainne Maguire, Meghan Cullen & Emma Stephens*



It's time for another hoodie newsletter! Please have a read of what is happening in all the different areas in South-eastern Australia – it's a good way of getting ideas for your own area and it is always good to know that you're not on your own, that there are lots of people trying to help the hoodies. We tried to keep things brief and not to have the newsletter sounding like a report to a funding body! We also try to remember and acknowledge people, so please forgive us if we've missed you out; it is by no means intentional. Feedback is welcomed, let us know what types of things you want to be hearing about and we'll do our best.

We've added a lot of downloadable files to our website ([www.birdsaustralia.com.au/beach](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/beach)) to make resources more accessible. There are volunteer registration forms (for insurance purposes, please fill one out if you haven't already), data sheets and guidelines on how to safely monitor hoodies, the biennial count report plus maps, media releases, reports and lastly, signs for flanking nesting and chick sites. You can also download 'A practical guide for managing beach-nesting birds in Australia' or request a copy. And lastly, there are online forms for reporting nests you've found or chicks you've spotted. If you're that way inclined, Bruce the hooded plover also has his own facebook site!

The season is now progressing into the peak of breeding and this summer, our beaches will be alive with eggs and chicks, and ever hopeful volunteers. I know the summer can be a stressful time and the problems the birds face can seem insurmountable, but I also know that we are collectively helping the birds and that some sites that seemed like lost causes are improving more and more, and we will get there. Never give up on them, they try so hard and are a wonderful, wonderful little bird.



## Victoria

### *East Gippsland*

The East Gippsland Bird Observers Club (EGBOCA) are one of those champion groups that I have always enjoyed meeting because they make you feel at home and have such a great knowledge of the birds in their area. There won't be an official friends of the hooded plover group in East Gippsland because most volunteers are EGBOCA members and thus belong to a group already, and because the birds being monitored are so far apart, from the Bunga Arm to Mallacoota!

Last season was dreadful for the hoodies in the East of the state, they were hammered by high tides and had little available nesting habitat. This season is looking better, with more nests being located early in the season (Bunga Arm, Marlo, Wingan Inlet, Shipwreck Creek Mallacoota) and new aluminium hoodie signs going in at many beaches in this area to alert beach users to their presence (thanks to the fantastic ranger, Robyn Korn). Of the nests found so far, most have already been lost to the tide (wait! I just got word of 3 tiny chicks at Bunga Arm!), so fingers crossed the summer brings calmer conditions.

On a sadder note, the beach-nesting birds' project lost a wonderful volunteer from East Gippsland in July. Ian Faulkner lived in Lakes Entrance and visited the pair of Hooded Plovers at Lake Bunga/Red Bluff since 2006. Ian together with Ken Sherring fenced off a nest at Lake Tyers one year, which would never have hatched without their efforts. I will miss Ian tremendously – not only was he dedicated and passionate about the environment, but he was such a character. I always looked forward to reading his data sheets because they would tell a story about his visit to the beach. The world is definitely a poorer place without Ian.



Above: Ian Faulkner from East Gippsland.

**South Gippsland  
Bass Coast**

When Steve agreed to be Regional Coordinator for the 'Friends of the Hooded Plover Bass Coast' group, we were overjoyed! Steve invited the group to his home for the first official meeting of the group, where he had Brian Martin from Parks Vic, Glenn Ehmke from Birds Australia and Jim and Anthea Whitelaw, with over 10 years monitoring experience from Inverloch, all present to share information about hooded plovers in the area. Since then, Steve has led various field trips to help show new volunteers how to safely monitor the birds. There have been nests galore laid between Kilcunda and Inverloch, but very little success to date. High tides, predators and strong winds have destroyed many nests. This area is usually very successful, thanks to great volunteers and wonderful rangers providing support from the Wonthaggi depo. With more volunteers onboard this season and a greater community awareness strategy planned for summer, we hope to only improve things further! The rangers are assisting by preparing noticeboards to go in at busy sites so that volunteers can update these noticeboards with information about the nesting progress of the birds – this works wonders at building local interest and awareness. We even have volunteers from NSW visiting in December to help monitor the pairs and to talk to beach users



Above: View from a nest at Kilcunda; Wilson Rd nest close up; fenced nest at Harmers Haven.

about the fragility of the nests and chicks (new chicks at Undertow Bay, Cape Paterson!). Then over the new year period, we have Laura from Britain based in the area to do more education liaison with beach users.

*Contact*

Steve Johnson, Wonthaggi: [johnsons15@bigpond.com](mailto:johnsons15@bigpond.com)

**Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, Venus Bay**

The Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula have not only helped with monitoring Hooded Plovers in past years, but have led successful coastal projects, such as fox control and raising awareness about threats to hooded plovers and other shorebirds that use the Venus Bay beaches. Jonothan Stevenson, a ranger based at Foster, provides fantastic support to volunteers and hoodies in this area, and has an amazing knowledge of shorebirds and the marine environment as a whole. Last season was so disappointing, with not a single nest recorded within the Coastal Park, despite the presence of approximately ten nesting pairs. This was because the peninsula was ravished by high tides, leaving steep eroded dune cliffs and virtually no nesting area available. This season, the beaches were looking pretty bad still, but the hoodies found a few sections where they could nest and two nests have been found so far. The first unfortunately failed during strong winds, but the



First nest of the season at Venus Bay #1 beach; Dog free shorebird conservation area signage; South of Five mile track; Janet Carey from Friends of Venus Bay, Jono Stevenson from PV and Bruce Atkins from Coastcare; Homage to a duck carcass; Point Smythe.

second is still on the go. A Coast Action/Coastcare dogs breakfast is planned for Venus Bay on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January and is usually very popular with local and visiting dog owners – everyone eats a sausage or dry food (depending on the number of legs they have) and learn why the park has different regulation zones, with a dog access area and no dog access/shorebird conservation areas.

#### Contact

Jonothan Stevenson, Parks Victoria Foster,

[jstevens@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:jstevens@parks.vic.gov.au)

#### *Phillip Island Nature Park*

Phillip Island Nature Park has a brilliant set-up for monitoring and protecting Hooded Plovers on the island. The committee of management have a well-established volunteer group who count Hooded Plovers monthly on the island and assist with finding nests, and then nest and chick sit at vulnerable sites. The rangers are dedicated and hard working and take an integrated management approach, adopting a range of managements to help the wildlife on their beaches, including predator control, weed control, fencing and signing nests, education campaigns and enforcement. They also flag the chicks that are due to fledge so they can track their movements and survival – this is where we come in! If you ever spot a hoodie with colourful tags on its legs, then it is likely to have hatched at Phillip Island! Please carefully record the colours and the order of these on the left leg, then the right leg, and report these to:

Jon Fallaw, Phillip Island Nature Park:

[jfallaw@penguins.org.au](mailto:jfallaw@penguins.org.au)

We monitor close to half of Victoria's breeding pairs and also survey the entire Victorian coast every two years, so our sightings of unbanded versus flagged birds provides a valuable understanding of juvenile dispersal from the Island and will tell us how high mortality is of flagged juveniles in their first year. The research of Mike Weston, who used colour bands rather than flags (there are still a number of these banded birds remaining, but many have lost at least one band), and who tracked the movements of 194 banded hoodies for up to 9 years, revealed that survival is thought to be around 50% for juveniles. With a greater number of fledglings being flagged at Phillip Island and with volunteers on the Victorian coast reporting flagged

sightings, we'll have an even greater understanding of mortality rates – so look closely at their legs and report any tagged birds!!

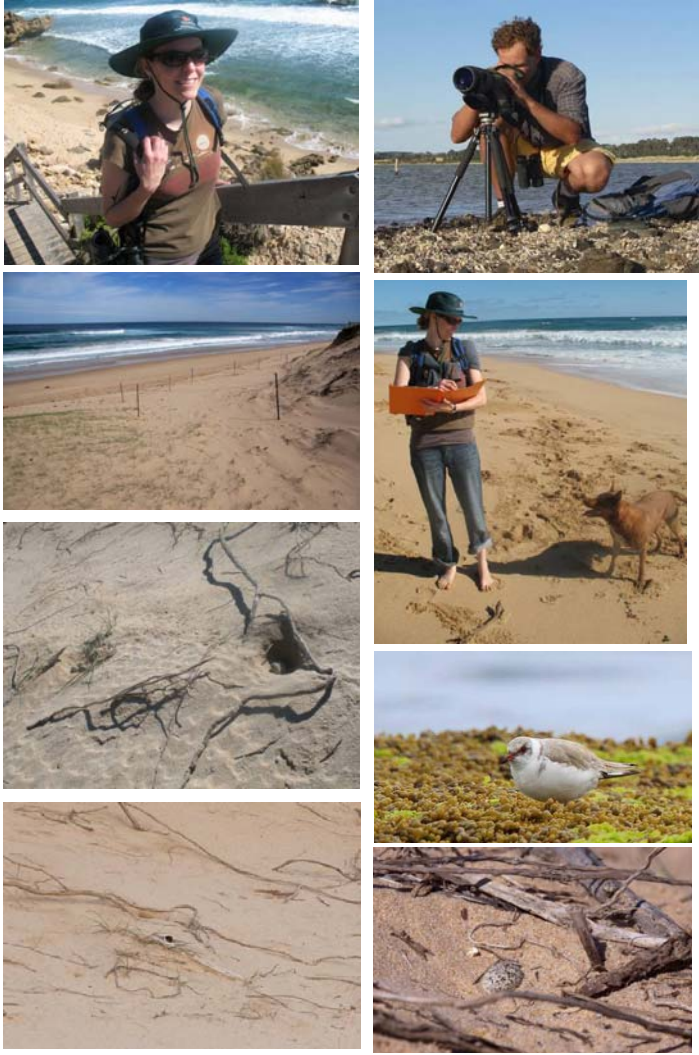


Above: A flagged hoodie in the foreground – Orange/metal on left and Blue/red on right (Glenn Ehmke); Nest signage.

#### *Mornington Peninsula*

Glenn Ehmke, a colleague from Birds Australia who filled in for Grainne when she was on maternity leave and who has been actively monitoring hoodies in his local patch, the Mornington Peninsula, in a voluntary capacity for years, has truly become a champion for hoodies in this area. He spends his days off, walking miles of coastline, finding and signing and fencing nests. Not only this, but he takes amazing photographs, and now video footage, of the birds, their nests and chicks. His photos and footage help us with awareness raising; it is really special to be able to show people shots of recently hatched chicks as these are such a rare sight.

The hoodies have a new ranger watching over them on the Mornington Peninsula, Martin Downs. Martin has taken over from Darren Mitchell, who has been promoted to Team Leader after acting in the role for the past 18 months. Darren did an amazing job looking after the hoodies and will still have involvement; at the moment he is filling in for Martin. Martin has had experience learning about the hoodies over the past two years, but is sure to need our help with the twenty breeding pairs in this area, especially when they all nest at once! Fires often take the rangers out of the park during peak breeding time, so this further highlights the importance of volunteers and the summer rangers who remain in the park. Jennie Hellyer will be the summer ranger devoted to hoodies on the peninsula this year. The rangers developed a good system last season of sending out a weekly update to all staff in the park letting them know which beaches had nests or new chicks, so that they could better target enforcement and visits to sites.



Above: Meg Cullen at Monforts; Glenn Ehmke famous photographer!; Fenced nest site Rye; Meg keeping a roaming dog occupied and away from a nest site (while its owner surfed); a bizarre double nest with 3 eggs and 2 eggs; Juvenile hoodie from last season; incubating hoodie; a buried egg (nest failure).

Malcolm Brown is a passionate volunteer and member of the Friends group on the Mornington Peninsula who set up a Myspace page for the Hooded Plover and a 'you tube' video to try and recruit volunteers to participate in 'chick-sitting' – that is watching over the chicks on busy beaches for each of the 5 weekends before they fledge to educate beach users and make sure the chicks have enough undisturbed space to feed. Wardening or chick-sitting is highly effective and really boosts chick survival. Already a range of volunteers from peninsula locals to overseas visitors, have sat for hours on end watching over the Koonya chicks, but sadly, we think nature played too great a role here, and either predators or freak waves (this site is renowned for rough and unpredictable surf) took the chicks. We have had a number of nests hatch on the peninsula so

far, with two sets of chicks currently at Gunnamatta beach – they have a strong chance of survival as this is a less visited section of beach. We hope we can get a few fledglings produced before the summer masses of beach goers; for twenty breeding pairs, we expect to maintain previous rates of at least 6 fledglings as our goal.

#### Contact

Kasun Ekanayake, Birds Australia:

[k.ekanayake@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:k.ekanayake@birdsaustralia.com.au)

Martin Downs, Ranger, Parks Victoria:

[mtdowns@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:mtdowns@parks.vic.gov.au)

Darren Mitchell, Team Leader Natural Values, Parks Victoria: [dmitchel@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:dmitchel@parks.vic.gov.au)

Malcolm Brown, Friends of the Hooded Plover

Mornington Peninsula: [seawish@aapt.net.au](mailto:seawish@aapt.net.au)

#### Bellarine Peninsula

We've had 8 nests reported from this area so far, with 4 failures (2=tide and 2=ravens), 1 successful fledging of a chick (from the earliest nesting pair that we know of, first of August!), 2 nests still with eggs, and one pair with 2 chicks still alive. Three pairs haven't even attempted nesting yet. The hoodies on the Bellarine are mostly dune nesters, although there have been a few beach nests so far, particularly when predators take a dune nest, the birds often switch to the beach for their next attempt. We got a grant a few years back to fence four of the main nesting dunes which has helped reduce pedestrian and dog traffic through these sites.

There are very few pairs of hoodies on the Bellarine Peninsula but the ones that remain are some of our best chick producers. It seems hard to believe that the Breamlea and Point Impossible hoodies so consistently produce young when off-leash dogs are in the highest abundance at these sites compared to records for any other site along our coast. We suspect this has a lot to do with the configuration of habitat; lots of basalt rocks available as cover for chicks and intact dune blowouts where the birds consistently nest. Furthermore, some of the birds are banded and they are very mature, which probably accounts for clever parenting helping the chicks dodge the dogs and people – the birds at the estuary lead their chicks to the quietest part of the river where the stinky seaweed keeps people away! And last but not least, many of the residents of Breamlea are

tuned into when the birds are nesting and many will walk their dogs in a different direction or only as far as a certain point to give the birds a bit of undisturbed beach. They also approach other dog owners to ask them to leash their dogs when passing by nesting sites. While the birds currently manage to produce young, unless council takes the situation more seriously and addresses the off-leash dog issue, the future production of young is uncertain, especially when the older birds die and are replaced by inexperienced birds. Pairs at Point Lonsdale have not had any success for at least five years that we know of and with the current number of off-leash dogs and habitat providing less escape options than Breamlea sites, it is unlikely they will ever improve. We hope that City of Greater Geelong will take the conservation of the seven remaining pairs of Hooded Plovers on the Bellarine more seriously and come onboard as have the local Committees of Management and other coastal councils like Surf Coast Shire.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, we held our first 'Friends of the Hooded Plover Bellarine' meeting. These meetings are always a good opportunity for volunteers to voice what they think needs to improve for hooded plovers on their local coast and for us to brainstorm new ways of raising awareness and getting the community more involved in their protection. There was a fantastic mix of volunteers, land managers and other government agencies, such as Parks Victoria and Coast Action/Coastcare.

*Contact*

Maddie Glynn: [maddie@barwoncoast.com.au](mailto:maddie@barwoncoast.com.au)



Above: nest at Black Rock; hoodie on its nest (Glenn Ehmke); First Friends group meeting!

*Point Roadknight, Anglesea*

The good old reliable pair at the tip of Point Roadknight became the second monitored pair to have chicks successfully fledge this breeding season, after their first nest attempt was swallowed by a high tide! The second pair at Point Roadknight, just west of the tip, were a little slower to begin nesting and only just have eggs this November. We have a very enthusiastic group of monitors in this area, including staff from the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) who check on the birds twice a week, so that overall the birds are checked every second day. Great work guys!

We were also very lucky to have Mike Bodsworth (GORCC Coastal Project Officer) taking on the role as Regional Coordinator for the 'Friends of the Hooded Plover Point Roadknight' group. A new regularly updated sign (see below) has also been erected by GORCC at the beach entrance and a regular update on the Hoodies is being supplied via twitter (<http://twitter.com/prploverandco>) – Check it out!

A Hooded Plover information stall was set up by Coastcare at the ANGAIR wildflower show in September and BA set up the scope at Point Roadknight over that weekend as well. BA in conjunction with Coast Action/Coastcare's Summer by the Sea program will run a Coastal Discovery walk, between 10-11:30am on the 8<sup>th</sup> January at Point Roadknight.

*Contact*

Mike Bodsworth, Coastal Project Officer, GORCC: [mike.b@gorcc.com.au](mailto:mike.b@gorcc.com.au)



Above: GORCC noticeboard at Point Roadknight (M Bodsworth); nest at the tip of the point (Meg Cullen); last season's fledglings taking refuge near their nest site (Glenn Ehmke).

### *Apollo Bay and Otway coast*

With a wonderful monitoring group made up of some new volunteers and some more experienced, it looks like the Hooded Plovers around Apollo Bay should be well monitored this season. The Wild Dog beach pair have already had a number of attempts at nesting, but to no avail, and the birds at Barham River mouth having only one nesting attempt, found and then lost within days. This year we also have some new sites being monitored along the Otway Coast, such as Point Franklin, that will be monitored by Lizzie and Shayne from the Cape Otway Centre for Conservation Ecology.

Gary McPike, from the Otway Coast Committee, is the Regional Coordinator for the 'Friends of the Hooded Plover Otway Coast' group and has been very involved in monitoring and managing the Hooded Plovers in the past. Birds Australia in conjunction with Coast Action/Coastcare's Summer by the Sea program will run a Coastal Discovery walk on the 9<sup>th</sup> January at Pirates Cove carpark, Wild Dog Creek.

#### *Contact*

Gary McPike, General Manager, Otway Coast Committee: [gmcpike@vicnet.net.au](mailto:gmcpike@vicnet.net.au)



Above: Apollo volunteers, Judi, Lizzie and Tess, next to the Hooded Plover sign at Wild dog Beach; fenced and signed nesting area at Wild dog beach.

### *Shipwreck coast*

Similar to East Gippsland, there will be no official Friends of the Hooded Plover group for this area because the Friends of the Bay of Islands Coastal Park are a well established group which the hoodie volunteers belong to. There are fewer pairs of Hooded Plovers in this part of the coast but where the habitat is suitable and not purely backed by cliff, you usually find a pair. There has been one report of a chick at

London Bridge, a site which has great success as it is not accessible to the public. Unfortunately so far, our other hopeful site at Crofts Bay is very eroded and as yet has had no nesting activity.

#### *Contact*

Richard Stevens, Friends of the Bay of Islands: [randjstevens@bigpond.com](mailto:randjstevens@bigpond.com)

### *Far Western Victoria*

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November we had our first 'Friends of the Hooded Plover Far West Victoria' meeting and the volunteer turnout was tremendous, with people coming from all the different areas, as far away as Narrawong. I really love this part of the coast as it is rugged and beautiful, and has genuine and lovely community members. The issues that the hoodies face down here largely stem from a lack of regulations but we're finding that the community are very interested in the birds and willing to adjust their behaviour when they pass nesting areas, so it is just a matter of getting the information out there and some support networks built between volunteers and management staff.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of November, we ran two beach walks, one at Port Fairy and one at Killarney, and had 20 and 15 people attending each respectively. Kasun was able to show everyone active nesting sites, with a telescope set up on the incubating bird from a distance, so people could see the bird up close without disturbing it from the nest. At one site, a nest had failed that day and so the message of how hard the birds have it was conveyed with a real life example; further on though, Kasun was able to show people recently hatched chicks, which is a rare and really special sight!

There have been an abundance of nests found in far west Victoria: 2 at Logans beach Warrnambool, 2 at Levys beach Warrnambool, 7 between Rutledges and Killarney boat ramp, 2 at Port Fairy and 2 at Yambuk. Plus 4 additional pairs making nest scrapes! Of the nests with eggs so far, 8 have failed, 6 still have eggs and 1 has hatched; two of the 3 chicks are persisting, we just hope they make it (18<sup>th</sup> Dec is their fledging date!). We've also found other beach nests in this area, 2 for the red-capped plover (Hopkins mouth and The Basin) and 3 Pied Oystercatcher nests, 1 has failed already and 1 has hatched, while the other is just very

recent! Far west Victoria is certainly a beach-nesting bird hot spot on our coast.

Future plans for this area include an awareness raising stint by Laura, our British volunteer, in January, plus Coast Action/Coastcare dogs breakfast and beach walk events, and we have made information packs and horse riding induction kits for horse riding groups in the area. We were lucky to have a Melbourne sign company (Signex displays) donate their offcuts of corflute to us, and the students of Port Fairy Consolidated primary school are making giant traced and hand-painted signs of hooded plovers. These will be used for horse riders who can't read the smaller signs, so they can recognise these as nest site markers. This will be the first big step we take towards trying to manage horse riding on hooded plover beaches but will be something that we will need to assess to see whether the two can coexist, so will depend on compliance by horse riders and also will depend on the nature of the beach, that is, whether it is wide enough and with good chick hiding places, to accommodate horse riders. Again, this is why data collection is really important for us to be able to determine which managements are working and how we can improve things for the birds.

#### Contact

Andrew Fawcett, Warrnambool: [tap04@bigpond.com](mailto:tap04@bigpond.com)  
Ben Hammond, Ranger-in-charge, Warrnambool: [bhammond@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:bhammond@parks.vic.gov.au)



Below left: First Friends group meeting; Showing Chris Metcalf and Dan Ierodionou habitat being impacted by rising tides!; Andrew Fawcett and Chris Metcalf at Levys; Pied Oystercatcher nest at Mills Reef; Eroding dunes at Levys west. Above: Rangers, Grainne and Kai and Rundells Riding school after visiting a Hooded Plover nest at Killarney; Hoodie nest at Mills

## New South Wales

The Hooded Plover in NSW has been uplisted to 'Critically Endangered' according to State legislation, with approximately only 50 birds remaining in the population. With a diminishing population, the two NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) Shorebird Recovery Officers manage both human and natural threats to breeding success. They have particular problems with predators, in particular Ravens. It is worth visiting their website: [www.southcoastshorebirds.com.au](http://www.southcoastshorebirds.com.au) and looking at the photos and video footage in their galleries.

They have had a super start to their breeding season in NSW, with 7 chicks fledging in the Southern range by October. Contact the shorebird officers to be on the mailing list to receive their shorebird newsletter.

Contact details for NSW (October-March each year):  
Far South Coast Region (based at Narooma):  
Amy Harris, [Amy.Harris@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Amy.Harris@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
Ph: 0244762888  
South Coast Region (based at Ulladulla):  
Jodie Dunn, [jodie.dunn@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jodie.dunn@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
Ph: 02 4454950

## South Australia

### Limestone Coast, South East SA

The 'Friends of Shorebirds SE' is a very active group who collect valuable information on migratory shorebirds, help the AWSG with canon-netting and flagging of shorebirds, and take part in important projects to protect shorebirds and their habitat locally. In August



2007, they put out a report about shorebird sites and quantified disturbance to these sites on the Limestone Coast. The group recently received a Caring for our Country grant collaborating with the DEH to bait foxes along an enormous stretch of coast, and to compare the survival rates of artificial nests in baited versus unbaited areas. Maureen Christie is the contact for the group and you can request to receive their newsletter, or join the Shorebirds-Australia Yahoo group to receive this.

In September 2009, Grainne visited the group and held a workshop at Southend with 23 attendees. After a presentation and some of Glenn's amazing photos to visualize the different Hooded Plover nesting behaviours, we were led on a field trip by Iain Stewart, who knows the hoodies along this coast like the back of his hand. Funnily enough, Iain said that the way he initially decided to find out more about Hooded Plovers was because he was concerned about losing vehicle access to beaches! We were lucky enough to encounter pairs in almost every stage of breeding; one pair doing nothing much except foraging; one pair making a nest scrape and 'leading' us away from that area, and; one pair on the day of hatching, with one bird brooding a chick and the other bird incubating the remaining, soon to hatch, eggs! It was very exciting, and really special for the group to get to see all these breeding stages. I got a lot out of the visit and what really stood out was the difference in nesting habitat available, with massive natural dune systems, where the birds can nest kilometres away from the beach. Discovery Bay would probably be the most similar environment we have in Victoria, with the rest of our dunes invaded by Marram grass or with development directly behind. For every pair visited though, I was able to identify our equivalent, with similarities to Spray point Koonya, Black Rock and Shipwreck coast pairs. Sometimes the birds nested in places that didn't make much sense, such as a rocky dune with only a 20 metre section of beach available for the flightless chicks once they hatch; hard to believe they could get enough food from this area, but then you wouldn't think the birds would choose a spot that couldn't sustain chicks – and wouldn't continue making that choice if they didn't have success at least historically?

Contact

Maureen Christie, [twinpeppers@icisp.net.au](mailto:twinpeppers@icisp.net.au)

Glenn Jackway, DEH, [Glenn.Jackway@sa.gov.au](mailto:Glenn.Jackway@sa.gov.au)



Above: SE SA workshop field trip in Canunda National Park.

### *Fleurieu Peninsula*

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR) NRM Board are amazing and are at the forefront of coastal management. They have recognized the value of conserving resident shorebirds and of tackling the suite of coastal issues that these birds encompass. They have taken on monitoring and management at 5 sites on the Fleurieu Peninsula, led by Tony Flaherty and the two Coast, Estuary and Marine Officers in those areas, one of whom, Emma Stephens, has a long history of working with Hooded Plovers. Emma did her honours project on the birds and then was hooked! She led, mostly in a voluntary capacity, a monitoring project in the 2006 -2007 season. This report is downloadable

from our website. The same methods are used for collecting data on the Fleurieu, so that we will be able to make comparisons with the Victorian population, and also be able to have an even greater understanding of the threats and breeding success of hoodies on the East coast.

#### *Update from Emma Stephens*

The Hooded Plover is listed as vulnerable under the National Parks and Wildlife Act in SA. Only 750-800 birds remain in SA, with less than 70 on the Fleurieu coast. In 2006/07 14 breeding pairs were observed on the Fleurieu with just 26% of eggs hatching successfully from 24 nests.

Eight pairs are being monitored regularly by dedicated volunteers on the Fleurieu Peninsula this breeding season. During the breeding season, these pairs reside at Port Elliot (Watsons Gap and Bashams Beach), Victor Harbor (Hindmarsh and Inman River outlets), Newland Head Conservation Park (Parsons Beach), Port Willunga and Maslin Beach. Hooded Plovers are also being monitored by keen members of the community at Myponga, Normanville, Carrickalinga and Aldinga Beach.

So far this breeding season, there have been a total of 12 nests, 30 eggs and 13 chicks. Two of the 13 chicks have fledged, and 4 chicks have just recently hatched (1 at Port Willunga, 3 at Watsons Gap – a fenced nest).

Volunteers are instrumental in caring for hooded plovers and work with AMLR NRM Board and council staff to erect temporary signage and fence nests where possible. One of the local schools is looking to make chick shelters to be placed within the temporary fencing to provide a safe haven for the tiny flightless chicks.

A Dog's Breakfast workshop has already been held this season at Carrickalinga hosted by the Normanville Natural Resources Centre and the AMLR NRM Board. This was very successful with 25 attendees and 15 dogs! The NRM Board will also be hosting a number of Dog's Breakfast events at other local beaches on the Fleurieu.

The AMLR NRM Board has been working closely with Councils and DEH to organise equipment and signage needs throughout the region. A Council Response Plan

has also been developed to provide a clear set of directions to all groups involved (contact Emma for a copy if interested).

A Hooded Plover monitoring and management workshop provided by Grainne Maguire of Birds Australia, and hosted by the NRM Board, was held in June this year. Hooded Plover volunteers, University, DEH, Council and NRM staff and community members were provided with a very interesting and comprehensive overview of the research and on-ground management action taken in Victoria. This information, including the Beach Nesting Birds Manual, assists greatly with monitoring and management of Hooded Plovers on the Fleurieu.

The Board has appointed three Coast, Estuary and Marine Officers - Corey Jackson (Southern Fleurieu), Emma Stephens (metropolitan) and Aleisa Lamanna (northern). The coastal officers' role is to support coastal community groups, local government and coastal managers to address coast and estuary conservation management issues. They will also assist with the implementation of the priority on-ground activities listed in the Metropolitan Adelaide and Northern Coastal Action Plan (MANCAP). The coastal officers are also key in the implementation of the Hooded Plover monitoring and management program on the Fleurieu.

#### *Contact:*

Tony Flaherty, Manager Coast and Marine Services, AMLR NRM Board,  
[tony.flaherty@adelaide.nrm.sa.gov.au](mailto:tony.flaherty@adelaide.nrm.sa.gov.au)

Coast, Estuary and Marine Officers:  
Emma Stephens, City of Holdfast Bay,  
[EMStephens@holdfast.sa.gov.au](mailto:EMStephens@holdfast.sa.gov.au)  
Corey Jackson, DC of Yankalilla,  
[coreyj@yankalilla.sa.gov.au](mailto:coreyj@yankalilla.sa.gov.au)  
Aleisa Lamanna, [AleisaL@Mallala.sa.gov.au](mailto:AleisaL@Mallala.sa.gov.au)





Previous page: Installing chick signage at Maslin beach (Emma Stephens); fence at Port Willunga (Emma Stephens)  
 Above: Hoodie on nest at Port Willunga (Sharon Gillam); Fenced nest at Watsons Gap (Emma Stephens).

### *Eyre Peninsula*

Jane Cooper is a wonderful, passionate person who Grainne had the pleasure of meeting in July. Jane has a wealth of knowledge about shorebirds on Eyre, having monitored them around Streaky Bay from 1979. Jane is the driving force behind the project 'Scoping the Shoreline' on the Eyre Peninsula, coordinating the monitoring of resident shorebirds and threats at 51 sites on Eyre, from Streaky Bay to Lipson over 3 years from 2006. Scoping the Shoreline was a collaborative project between Birds Australia ('Bird monitoring in NRM regions' project; Mark Antos and Chris Sanderson), DEH, Eyre Peninsula NRM, Southern Eyre Birds group and several friends of parks groups. A Caring for our Country grant was obtained by Jane Cooper with sponsorship from the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board and additional support from DEH Eyre West Region of staff and vehicle support, to investigate the breeding success of Hooded Plovers and Pied Oystercatchers and to hold workshops to share knowledge and skills in monitoring breeding pairs beginning in 2009. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, Grainne and Jane held a workshop at the Lincoln Marine Science Centre with close to 50 attendees. In mid November, Glenn Ehmke and Jo Oldland from Birds Australia ran a joint workshop providing approximately 40 volunteers training in identification and monitoring of migratory shorebirds, plus training in nest locating and monitoring for resident beach-nesting shorebirds. Just as on the Fleurieu, having comparative data for Eyre and Victoria, will enable us to have a better understanding of the status of the hoodies in their Eastern range.

Contact details:

Jane Cooper, [gerygone43@bigpond.com](mailto:gerygone43@bigpond.com)



Above: Hoodie habitat on Eyre Peninsula; Jane Cooper, Grainne and Kai.

### Tasmania

The AWSG's 7<sup>th</sup> Australasian Shorebird Conference was held in Hobart on the 4-6 September, with the theme for this conference being *Resident and Migratory Shorebirds – Managing Their Future*. Mike Weston (Deakin University) gave a brilliant keynote speech about the importance of understanding people in order to manage shorebirds, and Eric Woehler (Birds Tasmania/University of Tasmania) shocked the audience with statistics on the decline of resident beach-nesting shorebirds and seabirds in Tasmania. Prior to the conference, Grainne, Eric and Jo Oldland (Shorebirds 2020) held a joint workshop about shorebirds with about 50 attendees from NRM Boards, Tasmanian Parks, local government plus birding groups and University students. There was great interest generated for active management and education regarding resident shorebirds.

On the 9-10 January 2010, Jo Oldland, Eric Woehler and Grainne will be holding a joint workshop and field trips on Flinders Island to raise awareness about the significance of the island for migratory and resident shorebirds. We will also be surveying the island to complete Eric's past surveys of the distribution of

shorebirds and to further our knowledge about the size of the Tasmanian Hooded Plover population.

Contact: Eric Woehler, Birds Tasmania,  
[eric\\_woe@iprimus.com.au](mailto:eric_woe@iprimus.com.au)

## School Visits

To begin term 3 we joined up with the Marine Discovery Centre in Queenscliff, who run a dune rehabilitation program with secondary school students. When students were on a break from brush matting the dunes, I had the perfect opportunity to spread the word about Hooded Plovers.

During term 3 and 4 of this year we have also been busy with a number of school visits, including Rye, Sorrento and Hastings (Mornington Peninsula), Bellbrae and Anglesea (Bellarine Peninsula) and Knox School (Students spend a week on Phillip Island). It has been great to see the enthusiasm of the students when they learn about the Hooded Plovers and their local environment. We have had some schools opt to be a part of further activities, such as Anglesea Primary School who have formed a 'Plover Lovers' group to undertake activities such as creating chick shelters and information posters.



Above: 'I Sea, I Care' workshops – Bruce (Coastcare), Meg (BA) and Ben (DRI) demonstrating shelter construction at Gippsland; Gippsland student ambassadors making chick shelters; South west student ambassadors with their finished chick shelters.

We have also been lucky to work with the Dolphin Research Institute and contribute to their 'I Sea, I Care' program with workshops in Melbourne, south west Victoria (Bellbrae) and Gippsland (Woodside). Each workshop includes a collection of student ambassadors from schools in the surrounding region who come together and learn more about their coastal and marine environment. The focus of these workshops was the Hooded Plover and together we made over 20 chick shelters to be used along the Victoria coast.

## Student Research Projects

Chris Metcalf, Honours (supervisors Daniel Ierodionou, Deakin Warrnambool & Mike Weston, Deakin Burwood): Chris will be investigating habitat suitability for Hooded Plovers using data from the recent Future Coasts Lidar mapping project and aerial maps of beach and dune habitats. He will look for important habitat features that predict the presence of hooded plovers, using presence/absence data from the far west of Victoria. If we had a better understanding of the habitat features that hooded plovers are selective of, we could then assess the carrying capacity our coast as well as the impacts of climate change on availability of habitat. With a clearer knowledge of carrying capacity, we could then calculate how many fledglings were needed each year to keep the population at a viable size – giving managers clear numbers to aim for.

James Rimmer and Luke Remy, Gordon Institute of TAFE, Geelong: James and Luke took an interest in carrying out a Hooded Plover project for their course and contacted Grainne to find out what they could do that would be useful. This was just brilliant to hear and together with Grainne, James and Luke developed a 6 page questionnaire for beach goers that will ask them about their knowledge of Hooded Plovers and their thoughts on each of the managements that are currently in use for protecting nesting sites, including what they think of different sign designs. James and Luke are focusing on the Bellarine Peninsula and volunteers in South Gippsland are helping carry out surveys so we can boost the number completed. We are hoping to get a better insight into people's general knowledge and attitudes so that we can adapt our educational resources and also so we can understand the reasons behind low or non-compliance with some managements.



Above: The reason we try so hard; a chick taking flight for the first time (Glenn Ehmke).