

Peel-Harvey Catchment Council

People Working Together for a Healthy Environment

2012

Peel-Yalgorup Coastal Wetlands Waterbird

Monitoring Report Card

Ramsar Site 482

The Peel-Yalgorup System is home to a lot of birds – not only our local residents, but many from distant lands, who come to feed on its productive wetlands. They are a fascinating study in their own right and have long been seen as indicators of health of the environment. The Peel-Harvey Catchment Council is always seeking ways of protecting these Ramsar Wetlands. Thanks to the many keen volunteers we have a good understanding of their numbers and their fluctuations which is necessary for proper management.



Jan Star, AM

Introduction

The Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar listed System (PYS) is internationally recognised as an important habitat for migratory and resident shorebirds.

Tens of thousands of migratory shorebirds fly here from Siberia, North China and Alaska to escape the northern hemisphere winter. When they arrive here they need to regain 75% of their body weight, lost in the 14,000km trip, before they fly home to breed. They need to feed and rest undisturbed.

Along with migratory birds a number of resident shorebirds, including the Hooded Plover and Fairy Tern, remain in Australia and nest on the Peel-Yalgorup System wetland mudflats and beaches.

All migratory, and a number of resident shorebirds, are protected under the national Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) and a number of formal and informal international agreements Australia has committed to.

Despite this global and national recognition and protection, many of these birds are still under threat from habitat loss, human activity and disturbance, pollution, domestic animals, introduced pests and development.

The 'Coastwest Peel-Yalgorup Wetlands: Waterbird monitoring and education project' has provided opportunities to monitor and evaluate the status of migratory and resident shorebirds in the PYS, raise awareness, increase capacity and support and engage volunteers, schools groups, agency staff and the wider community in training, education and on-ground activities to help protect these birds.

Together we can protect these amazing birds.



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



Red-necked Stints

Ramsar Criteria 6

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports more than 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.

The site regularly supports 1% of the population of 14 species of waterbirds

Waterbirds A: Red-necked Stints

The PYS Management Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Guide objective is:

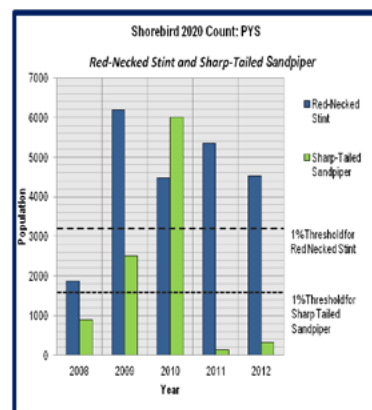
- To undertake counts of Red-necked Stints and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers annually at strategic locations across the PYS Ramsar site to assess maintenance of ecological character, with a focus on the Red-necked Stint.

Specific hypothesis:

- The PYS will support more than 1% of the Flyway population of Red-necked Stints and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at a minimum of 3 years out of 5.

Outcome:

The Red-necked Stint has reached the 1% threshold four years out of five (2008 to 2012).



Ramsar Criteria 4

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports plant and / or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

The site regularly supports species through breeding, drought refuge and moulting

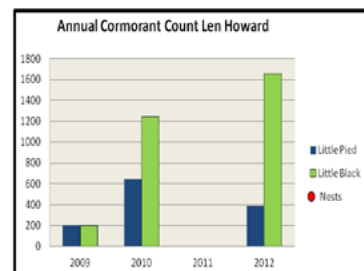
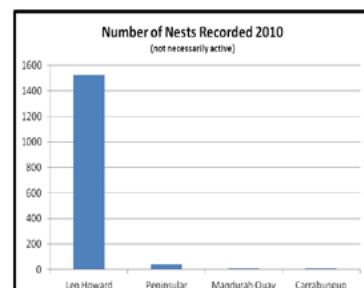
Waterbirds B: Cormorants

The PYS Management Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Guide objectives are:

- To assess the breeding status of the Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants at Carrabungup Reserve.
- To inform quantitative Limits of Acceptable Change for breeding waterbirds.

Outcome

- Based on the 2010 monitoring report the Carrabungup Reserve colony has ceased to exist.
- The new colonies do not account for the missing birds.
- Established new count at Len Howard Reserve.
- Established an open count to identify new breeding areas.



Cormorants

Hooded Plover

Ramsar Criteria 4 & 6

A wetland should be considered internationally important if:

It regularly supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

If it regularly supports more than 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.



Waterbirds C: Hooded Plover

The PYS Management Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Guide objective is:

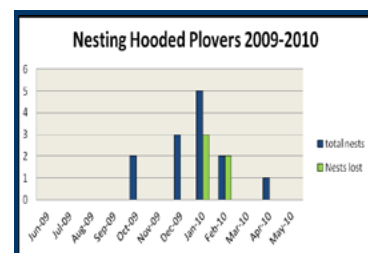
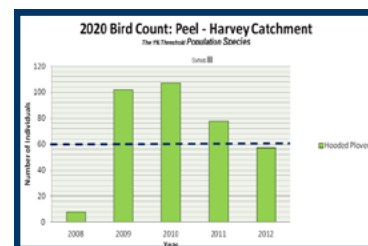
- To undertake counts of Hooded Plover quarterly at Lakes Preston and Clifton to assess maintenance of ecological character.

Specific Hypothesis:

- The PYS will support more than 60 Hooded Plovers in a minimum of 3 out of 5 years.
- The PYS will support successful breeding of Hooded Plovers in a minimum of 3 years out of 5.

Outcomes:

- The PYS supported more than 60 Hooded Plovers in a minimum of 3 years out of 5.
- Nesting data is incomplete.



Ramsar Criteria 5

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.

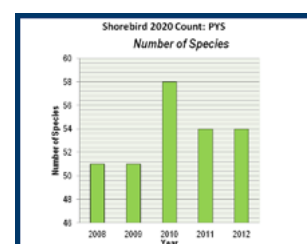
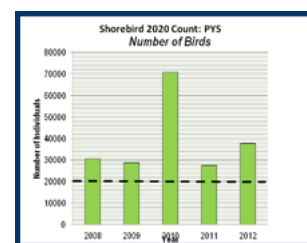
Shorebird 2020 counts
2008 - 31,742 waterbirds
2009 - 28,733 waterbirds
2010 - 71,148 waterbirds
2011 - 27,508 waterbirds
2012 - 37,939 waterbirds

Waterbirds D: Coordination

The PYS Management Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Guide objectives are:

- To collate existing waterbird usage and monitoring data from the PYS Ramsar site and store in a dedicated database (Peel-Yalgorup Waterbird Database).
- To coordinate the collection of future waterbird monitoring data for input to the database.
- To analyse the waterbird data from the newly developed Database to detect trends, refine LAC and inform ongoing management of the site.
- To oversee provision of new monitoring data to external users including Birdlife Australia and liaise on common tasks (such as reporting) to ensure effective use of resources.

Outcomes: go to www.peel-harvey.org.au



Coordination

The Ramsar Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation"

At the workshops ...

"What a fantastic course. I was surprised to learn how much I enjoyed it and want to continue with birding. Can't wait to learn more"

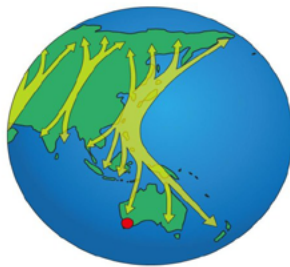
Did you know?

That the Re-necked Stint weighs the same as a box of matches (30g), is only 13 to 17cm in length, breeds in the Arctic then flies approximately 11,500km to feed on the Ramsar listed Peel-Yalgorup System wetlands.



The East Asian-Australasian Flyway

The route along which migratory shorebirds travel to and from Australia is called the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. This Flyway stretches from Siberia, through East Asia and down to Australia and New Zealand, including the south-west of W. A.



THANK YOU TO

Our Partners

- The West Australian Planning Commission (Coastwest)
- Birdlife Australia Peel (Mandurah Bird Observers Group)
- The City of Mandurah
- The Department of Environment and Conservation

Key Stakeholders

- Bill Rutherford (Ornithological Technical Services)
- Birdlife Australia
- Birdlife WA
- Local and state government agencies
- Local volunteers

Stakeholders

- Myalup Bird Group
- Alcoa

Since 2008, the PHCC has proudly supported the delivery of the community Shorebird Identification Workshops to raise the profile and knowledge of migratory and resident shorebirds and the significance of the Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar listed wetlands.

In 2011/2012 the Waterbird Monitoring and Education Project :

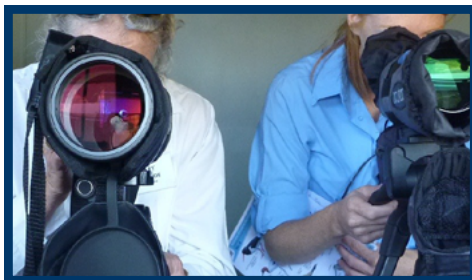
- Delivered 3 four-day shorebird ID workshops - training 48 volunteers including Fairbridge Indigenous and Bridging the Gap Landcare Trainees.
- Produced a "Shorebird ID handbook" for workshop participants.
- In partnership with Birdlife Australia produced a Shorebird ID Guide for the south west of WA.
- Supported the largest national Shorebird 2020 count in Australia covering 26,000 hectares involving more than 67 volunteers.
- Educated 198 school students and 25 TAFE students on the PYS migratory and resident shorebirds.
- In partnership with other agencies and volunteers, established a Fairy Tern working group.
- In partnership with local volunteers, established an open count for monitoring Fairy Terns.
- Produced a Conservation Action Plan for migratory and resident shorebirds of the PYS.
- Supported the local Mandurah Bird Observers Group in delivering a number of bird counts as per the Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar Site Management Plan.

f - Like us on Facebook to keep up with news and events.

www.peel-harvey.org.au

PP - Visit the Photo Post trail at Lake Clifton

www.youtube.com/PeelHarveyCC



Love where you live

This project is supported by Coastwest (Western Australian Planning Commission) in partnership with the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

Peel-Harvey Catchment Council
PO Box 3450, Mandurah East, Western Australia 6210
(08) 9583 5128



www.peel-harvey.org.au