

## Peel-Harvey Catchment Council

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*People Working Together for a Healthy Environment*

## Media release

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### Shorebird 2020 Count Critical



**Image: Bill Howard, Barbara Sing, Jaci Dimmack and Astrid Gwynne during the 2016 Shorebird 2020 Count**

**9 February 2016...** Up to 70 passionate volunteers braved the heat last weekend to take part in the nation's largest Shorebird 2020 Count.

Members of the community, tertiary institutions and agency staff recorded up to 60,000 migratory and resident shorebirds, including those that have flown from as far as Siberia.

Birdlife WA Peel Branch and the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council coordinated the count across 17 different sites, covering 26,000 hectares of the Peel Yalgorup system's Ramsar-listed Wetlands.

Andy Gulliver, chairman of the PHCC, said the count was an essential part of maintaining the globally recognised Ramsar listing of the region's Wetlands.

“The Shorebird 2020 program provides reliable data on shorebird populations. The results have showed our region is important on a global level and this led to the listing of the local Peel-Yalgorup wetlands under the Ramsar convention.

“The volunteers – many of whom have committed to the count for a number of years now - are a key component of this. The PHCC, together with Birdlife WA Peel Branch, actively recruits and trains them in standard methodology which assures the reliability of the annual count.”

Bob Paterson, convenor for the Birdlife WA Peel Branch/Mandurah Bird Observers’ Group said the 2020 Shorebird Count was one of the most critical events on the group’s annual calendar.

“We’ve been monitoring annually for a number of years and consequently are one of the very few groups who have a consistent source of data on the region’s shorebirds. This data is used by the Department of Fisheries, Parks and Wildlife and others to help develop strategies. Data from previous Shorebird 2020 counts has been used by Birdlife WA to inform the Department of Premier and Cabinet’s Perth and Peel strategic assessment process and the resulting Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan currently out for public review.”

Andy Gulliver believes we can help secure a brighter future for these remarkable shorebirds by educating stakeholders, gathering information on how and why shorebird populations are changing, and working to grow the community of people who care about shorebirds.

"As it is home to many visiting migratory shorebird species, the Peel-Yalgorup Wetlands are the perfect place to monitor any population changes. Tracking local data over time helps us to understand the effects of changed activities along the flyway.”

“The support and commitment of local volunteers makes this possible.”

As well as raising awareness of how incredible shorebirds are, the national Shorebird 2020 program conducts annual counts at over 150 key shorebird areas in order to detect national population trends and to discover what is driving any population changes. This project is supported by the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Programme.

**ENDS**

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