

# VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP



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NO. 1

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VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP

BULLETIN and  
ANNUAL REPORT 1979-80

NO 2

JULY 1980

I N D E X

	PAGE
1. VWSG OFFICE BEARERS	1
2. EDITORIAL by David Robertson	2
3. WADER BANDING TOTALS	3-4
4. VICTORIAN COASTAL WADER COUNT by Peter Dann	5-7
5. VISIT TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA by Julie Strudwick	8-10
6. SIGHTINGS OF COLOUR MARKED WADERS by Clive Minton	11-12
7. RECOVERIES OF BANDED BIRDS	13-17
8. A SCAN WEEKEND by Rowena Cooper	18-20
9. EQUIPMENT OFFICER by Ira Savage	20
10. NATIONAL WADER MEETING	21
11. DATES FOR VWSG FIELDWORK	21
12. NUMBERS OF WADERS PROCESSED	22
13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	23
14. FINANCIAL STATEMENT	24
15. LIST OF MEMBERS	25-26
16. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM	27

I N D E X

	PAGE
1. VWSG OFFICE BEARERS	1
2. EDITORIAL by David Robertson	2
3. WADER BANDING TOTALS	3-4
4. VICTORIAN COASTAL WADER COUNT by Peter Dann	5-7
5. VISIT TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA by Julie Strudwick	8-10

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EDITORIAL

When I am struggling through waist-deep, icy-cold water and I realise that the sea is pouring in through numerous holes in my waders, I think of the times when I have been asked (usually incredulously) 'But why on earth do you do it?'. 'Because I enjoy it', I reply confidently, 'and because it helps conserve the birds'. Later, when I peel off layers and layers of cold, wet, clothing and try to restart the circulation by igniting meths, poured over my inert limbs, I am not so sure. But generally it is enjoyable, and generally the birds do benefit, so generally I do it. And I feel that it must be that way. Since we are not paid, our motivation must be created and maintained by the feelings of pleasure and gratification we experience whilst participating in such a rewarding activity. When the joy goes, the interest drops, and the effectiveness is lost.

In this second Bulletin, which also serves as the Annual Report for the year 1979-80, the results of our work should be assessed not only in statistics but also in what it has done for us, the members.

On the statistical side we have done well: there were two overseas recoveries, one in Hong Kong and one in New Zealand, and 11 interstate movements (see pages 13-17); we have banded more than 16,000 birds of 26 species in three States from our start in 1975 up to 30 June 1980 (see pages 3-4); nearly 81,000 waders were recorded along Victoria's coastline in December 1979 (see pages 5-7); and we now have 25 full members and 18 country-interstate members in six States.

Beyond this, however, our work has fostered an interest in waders. There are now active groups in Tasmania and South Australia (see Julie Strudwick's report on pages 8-10). Nearer home, there are several people who knew little about waders until recently but who are now our knowledgeable, enthusiastic supporters. Those with formal training have been able to pass on their skills to others. We have all been required to develop the ability to go for days on end without food, rest or sleep.

And what of the future? In August there will be an inaugural meeting of wader banders and counters from all States of Australia. It is to be hoped that this will generate greater co-operation and effort, particularly in those States where there are gaps in our knowledge (we still do not know whether waders normally fly across the continent or around it).

We must encourage Asian countries to emulate Japan and initiate large-scale banding programmes. We have offered our expertise to the Asian Section of the International Council for Bird Protection to facilitate this. But above all we must never forget that no matter how much scientific information we obtain, no matter how much fun we have, we do it for the benefit of the birds. This means two things: the welfare of the birds always comes first, and we must be constantly alert for threats to the number and quality of wader habitat, for without habitat we shall have no birds, and no VWSG.

WADER BANDING DETAILSCatches in Victoria January to June 1980

	<u>NEW</u>	<u>RETRAPS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Pied Oystercatcher	39	13	52
Sooty Oystercatcher	1	-	1
Masked Lapwing	1	-	1
Grey Plover	4	-	4
Lesser Golden Plover	-	1	1
Mongolian Plover	3	-	3
Doublebanded Plover	145	-	145
Redcapped Plover	83	37	120
Ruddy Turnstone	19	-	19
Red Knot	27	2	29
Great Knot	3	-	3
Sharptailed Sandpiper	141	4	145
Rednecked Stint	1827	499	2326
Curlew Sandpiper	1072	206	1278
	<u>3365</u>	<u>762</u>	<u>4127</u>

The above birds were caught at Werribee (3209), Queenscliff (849), Altona (36), Mud Island (22) and Westernport Bay (11).

Locations of Waders caught by VWSG in Victoria to June 1980

Werribee	11083
Westernport	
Bay	1542
Corner Inlet	886
Queenscliff	849
Seaford Swamp	92
Altona	36
Mud Island	22
	<u>14510</u>



VICTORIAN COASTAL WADER COUNT

The migratory wader count carried out on 1-2 December 1979 was a success, despite the atrocious weather on Sunday (2nd). This was due to the participation and hard work of some 90 people. Four roosts that were missed on the count weekend were visited within three weeks and the totals included.

The accompanying sheet tabulates the results for each species in geographical areas. The grand total of migratory waders was nearly 81,000. Resident waders (Masked Lapwing, Red-capped Plover and Pied Oystercatcher) have been omitted from the data as they were widely dispersed for breeding and not counted adequately. Sandy beaches and rocky shores were generally not included in the count, since it concentrated on marine embayments, mudflats and estuaries, and species such as Turnstone and Sanderling were probably missed for this season. Those species which utilise freshwater habitats extensively (Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Greenshank, Marsh Sandpiper) were covered adequately in Port Phillip Bay, Westernport and on Bellarine Peninsula, but could not be counted properly elsewhere due to lack of manpower and information about wader sites. Solitary and/or rarer species (Common Sandpiper, Large Sand Plover (dotterel), Terek Sandpiper) could be easily overlooked in the larger groups of waders. So for the above-mentioned species the count data can be considered as only a bare minimum.

In the table, some localities have been combined, e.g. Mud Islands with Bellarine Peninsula; Shallow Inlet with Corner Inlet, as it is believed, at present, that these areas operate in close conjunction depending upon local conditions.

The count has provided a good indication of which areas are significant for wader conservation in Victoria. It has demonstrated that most of the entire Victorian population of some species is dependent on a single area, e.g. 90% Bar-tailed Godwits are in Corner Inlet. Such information will be extremely useful in future planning and the data can only be improved by repetition. The general consensus of opinion is that we should repeat it next summer.

Much was learnt from the last count that can be used to make the next one better. Changing the timing of the count from December to February has several advantages:

- 1) potentially more stable weather;
- 2) temporary habitat is likely to have diminished (inland swamps drying up) thus concentrating the birds for more accurate counting;
- 3) numbers are less likely to be influenced by movement as banding studies have shown that most species will still be moulting and/or putting on fat at this time.

Local knowledge of wader sites is crucial and anyone in a position to learn more about wader roosting sites could improve the accuracy of the count substantially by spending time becoming familiar with local wader areas, particularly in areas away from Melbourne.

The South Australians are conducting wader counts in various areas and in conjunction with Dr David Close from Adelaide we will combine efforts and attempt to cover from Port Augusta to Mallacoota. Another improvement in Victoria could be the inclusion of inland sites in the count and this possibility will be investigated in the future.

Finally, I should like to thank Pat Bingham, Margaret Cameron and Richard Loyn for their assistance and permission to use the data from their counts.

PETER DANN



VICTORIAN WADER COUNT 1-2 DEC 1972

	PORTLAND -PORT FAIRY	PORT PHILLIP BAY						ANDERSON'S INLET	CORNER INLET	GIPPSLAND LAKES	SNOWY RIVER -MALLACOOTA	TOTAL	%
		BELLARINE PENINSULA	WESTERN SIDE	EASTERN SIDE	WESTERN PORT	ANDERSON'S INLET	CORNER INLET						
Grey Plover	77	111	13					25				149	
Lesser Golden Plover	77	5	19				28	77			3	209	
Mongolian Plover		29					1	80				110	
Double-banded Plover							1					1	
Large Sand Plover											1	1	
Ruddy Turnstone	42	85	40				72	8	3			250	
Eastern Curlew		210	26				652	899			4	1803	2.2
Whimbrel							5	3				8	
Wood Sandpiper				2								2	
Grey-tailed Tattler	2	38	5				22	21				88	
Common Sandpiper	5		2	1								8	
Greenshank Marsh		187	153				180	42				564	0.7
Sandpiper												13	
Terek Sandpiper												1	
Black-tailed Godwit												21	
Bar-tailed Godwit		9	2									10	
Red Knot	1	352	12				229	5500				6094	7.5
Great Knot		124	85				34	1560				1834	2.3
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper		18						30				48	
Red-necked Stint	140	3255	6114	3000			293	111				13344	16.5
Curlew	457	6938	10188	106			4800	10450			36	40585	50.2
Sandpiper	9	1002	9350	15			3580	1103				15369	19.0
Sanderling	17						300	300				317	
TOTAL	750	12363	26023	3124			9898	20219				80820	
%	0.93	15.30	32.20	3.86			12.25	25.02				3.78	

VISIT TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA ON 14-17 FEB 1980

Following the success of our foray to Hobart in November 1979, an invitation was accepted to visit Adelaide and assist the wader enthusiasts there to learn the intricacies of cannon netting. Twelve members of the VWSG and one American temporarily residing in Tasmania departed from Melbourne by road to rendezvous with the South Australian group at the gates of the ICI Saltworks, St Kilda, at 12 noon on Thursday, 14 February.

After a quick check of possible areas previously selected by the South Australians, a favourable looking site was chosen for an attempted catch that afternoon. We set the nets and settled down to wait for the birds to come in to roost at high tide. Following twinkling we succeeded in getting some birds into the catching area of one net and made a catch of 95 Rednecked Stints, 1 Curlew Sandpiper and 2 Sharptailed Sandpipers. Needless to say, after we'd fired and were extracting the birds from the net many more birds came in wanting to roost where we'd had the net set.

On Friday morning, another site near the first was tried but, despite much twinkling, the birds would not oblige and we retired defeated to await the afternoon tide, or so we thought! Slave-driver Clive had other ideas. He'd picked out a beaut spot at the side of a drain which looked perfect for a catch of Banded Stilts and Avocets. Most of the group were allowed to go and have lunch while Clive took a few people to help him set the net. Back he came saying it looked good - a little bit of mud near the edge of the water but nothing to worry about - so, down we went to wait for the bids to oblige, which they did. Off went the net, down charged the team to cover the birds and immediately sank to our knees in the mud! While everyone else struggled through the mire our fearless leader simply left his wellingtons stuck in the mud and just kept running without missing a step. Nothing stops Clive! The catch resulted in 41 Rednecked Avocets, 14 Banded Stilts, 9 Pied Stilts and 37 Whiskered Terns.

Had we done enough for the day? Of course not. Next we set the nets to try again for the small waders at the evening high tide roost. On this occasion one of the Adelaide team, Kathy Shurcliff, was introduced to twinkling and found herself crawling on her stomach through the mud to persuade the birds to move up in front of the nets. Eventually she succeeded and we had a catch of 220 Rednecked Stints and 1 Curlew Sandpiper. We then set the nets again for a very early attempt at some more Banded Stilts which came to the edge of one of the lagoons around dawn but were gone again half an hour after sunrise. We finally got to our digs for the evening meal at about 10 pm.

Saturday saw us in position just after dawn with the birds again unco-operative, swimming out in the lagoon rather than standing on the shore. Several attempts by one of the S.A. team in a canoe to persuade them to come within range of the net finally succeeded in getting a few Banded Stilts into the catching area and we were able to catch and band a further six.

It was then time to set the nets in another site to attempt to catch some of the large number of small waders which roosted on a large flat. The size of the area and windy conditions made things difficult for us. The birds seemed determined to roost everywhere except where we wanted them. However, we eventually managed to make useful catches in both morning and afternoon tides and again on the morning tide next day. These three catches totalled 165 Redcapped Plovers and 83 Rednecked Stints, including 1 Redcapped Plover and 3 Rednecked Stints banded earlier in the visit. These combined efforts served to show us that birds have it over people when it comes to walking on mud! This area was firm enough for the birds to walk and hardly leave a footprint but proved to have no such supportive properties for humans (especially when carrying heavy nets and hardware!) as many who sank to the tops of their thighs are ready to testify.

For our last attempt, on the Sunday, it was decided to go to the Price Saltfields (100 km north of Adelaide). Brett Lane from the Vic. team had been despatched with David Close of the S.A. team to do a reconnaissance there the previous day, while the rest of us were playing mud pies, and returned to report large numbers of several species of larger waders roosting in an area suitable for cannon netting. The nets were duly set and again the birds decided they would rather roost elsewhere. Several members of the combined team were despatched in all directions to try to oojahcapivy\* the birds into the area where the nets were set. They succeeded eventually but by then, unfortunately, the larger waders insisted on roosting at the edge of the water, outside the range of the nets. However, we were able to make a very useful catch of 104 Rednecked Stints, 46 Curlew Sandpipers, 24 Sharptailed Sandpipers and 9 Redcapped Plovers. This was the first occasion ever on which we had fired both nets together.

Totals of birds banded during the visit were:

	<u>New birds</u>	<u>Retraps</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Rednecked Stints	498	4 <sup>★</sup>	502	- Juvenile 21=4.2%
Redcapped Plovers	173	1 <sup>★</sup>	174	
Curlew Sandpipers	48	-	48	- Juveniles 2=4%
Rednecked Avocets	41	-	41	
Sharptailed Sandpipers	26	-	26	
Banded Stilts	20	-	20	
Pied Stilts	9	-	9	
	<u>815</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>820</u>	waders
Whiskered Terns	<u>37</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>37</u>	
	<u>852</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>857</u>	total birds

★ All originally banded during this visit

\* Oojahcapivying - see Glossary of Cannon Netting Terms - Bulletin No. 1 - page 14)

As in Victoria, the percentage of juvenile birds was extremely low, bearing out reports of very poor breeding success in the Arctic the previous season.

Features of the visit were: the large number of South Australians (at least 30 of them) who, under the leadership and enthusiasm of Kathy Shurcliff and David Close, turned up to participate; the mud and wind; the lunches eaten in the shade of the Casuarinas surrounding Buckland Park (the watermelon was especially popular); the opportunity, during the long break between morning and afternoon tides, to explore Buckland Park lagoon and gain good views of Wood Sandpipers, Long-toed Stints, Marsh Sandpipers, Blue-billed Dicks with young, as well as many other species; THE MUD AND WIND; evening meals around 10 pm every night; THE MUD AND WIND; one of our "buttercups"\* from Victoria which had deserted the delights of the Werribee Sewage Farm for the ICI Saltfields at Adelaide; THE MUD AND WIND; the mud and wind ...

On the Monday a tired but well satisfied team wended its way back to Melbourne leaving an equally weary S.A. team to lick its wounds and wonder what had struck it.

We are very grateful for the hospitality extended by the South Australians who billeted our contingent and wish their group every success in their future efforts.

JULIE STRUDWICK

\* Buttercup - see Glossary of Cannon Netting Terms  
- Bulletin No. 1 page 13

(Ed. Note - the mud certainly made an impression on the author (and vice versa); but no bird was muddied!)

#### THAILAND

Dr Boonsong is organising a banding programme in northern Thailand from December 1980 to April or May 1981, and has invited a keen ornithologist to join them. The accommodation and food will be provided. For further details contact David Robertson.

SIGHTINGS OF COLOUR MARKED WADERS

Between September 1979 and mid-January 1980 most of the Rednecked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Sharptailed Sandpipers caught for banding have also been marked, on their underparts, with a yellow dye (picric acid in alcohol) in order to gain additional information on movements. During the summer months information was mainly sought on local movements between different sites on Port Phillip Bay. Results, detailed below, indicate remarkably little dispersal with almost all resightings being in the original marking area.

Birds lost their colour during the moult of their body feathers between late January and early March, prior to their departure on migration to the Arctic breeding grounds. Colour marking was resumed at Werribee in early April with the objectives of aiding the studies of -

- a) the northward migration route of Rednecked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers
- b) local movements of the one year old Rednecked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers which over-winter
- c) the "catchment area" of the Redcapped Plovers which congregate in flocks during the winter. It is hoped that the colour will be retained until after birds have dispersed to their breeding areas. This will depend on the (unknown) timing of body moult. Please look out for colour dyed Redcapped Plovers during the next breeding season.
- d) the areas in New Zealand to which Double-banded Plovers wintering in Victoria return. Birds caught at all sights (including Queenscliff and Altona) have been colour-dyed and some birds have had coloured plastic leg bands added also.

Results

A) Colour dyed Sept 1979 to mid-January 1980

Number of birds colour dyed

- 608 Rednecked Stint
- 279 Curlew Sandpiper
- 194 Sharptailed Sandpiper
- 12 Rednecked Avocet (under wing only)
- 2 Red Knot
- 2 Redcapped Plover

Sightings (all single birds) away from Werribee

- Rednecked Stint - 17 Feb, Adelaide saltfields (650 km WNW)
- 24 Feb, Andersons Inlet, Inveloch (130 km SE)
- Curlew Sandpiper - 20 Jan, Queenscliff (25 km SSE)
- 3 Feb, Altona Saltworks (25 km NE)
- Sharptailed Sandpiper - Nov, L. Connewarre (25 km SSW)

There were many local sightings of colour marked Rednecked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers (but few Sharptailed Sandpipers) in the Werribee area. Both of the Red Knot and the Redcapped Plovers, and some of the Rednecked Avocets, were also seen again after marking.

B) Colour dyed April to June 1980

Number of birds colour dyed

-	591	Rednecked Stint
	142	Doublebanded Plover (Queenscliff & Altona)
	118	Redcapped Plover
	4	Curlew Sandpiper
	1	Mongolian Plover

Sightings away from marking area -

Rednecked Stint	- 20 April, 4 at L. Murdaduke	(55 km WSW)
	- 20 April, 1 at Queenscliff	(25 km SSE)
	- 25 April, 3 at L. Murdaduke	(55 km WSW)
	- 25 April, 3 at L. Connewarre	(25 km SSW)
	- end May, 1 at Black Rock	(45 km ENE)

Redcapped Plover- end May/early June, 1 at Queenscliff  
(25 km SSE)

There have been many local sightings of colour marked Redcapped Plovers in May/June at Werribee.

CLIVE MINTON

RECOVERIES OF BANDED BIRDS

The original banding details are on the top line and the recovery details on the lower line. Local retraps and recoveries are not included.

WADERS BANDED AND/OR RECOVERED IN VICTORIA BY VWSGPied Oystercatcher

100-81163	Juvenile	28.4.79	The Spit, Werribee	
	Recaptured	1.3.80	Rhyll, Phillip Island	80 km SE
100-81166	Juvenile	28.4.79	The Spit, Werribee	
	Recaptured	1.3.80	Rhyll, Phillip Island	80 km SE

Double-banded Plover

New Zealand B-11826 (also colour banded)	Adult Female (breeding)	26.11.77	Lake Tekapo, New Zealand (Central Region-Sth Island)	
	(a) Seen breeding (with chicks)	11.11.78 to 27.11.78	where banded	Local
	(b) Seen wintering	17.6.79	Point Wilson, Werribee	2000 kmWN
	(c) Seen in flock	21.7.79 to 21.8.79	where banded	2000 kmESI
	(d) Seen breeding	9.9.79 onwards	where banded	Local

The bird was recognised by coloured leg bands (individual combination).

Red Knot

051-08005	Juvenile	24.2.79	The Spit, Werribee	
	Recaptured	28.1.80	Queenscliff	25 km SSI
061-31435	Juvenile	27.1.79	The Spit, Werribee	
	Recaptured	2.3.80	Kaipara Harbour, Auckland, New Zealand	2600 km E
061-31442	Juvenile	27.1.79	The Spit, Werribee	
	Dead under wires	9.3.80	Queenscliff	25 km SSE

The last two birds were banded together yet recovered 2600 km apart on almost the same date.

Red-necked Stint

030-27944	Free flying Recaptured	28.12.76 12.11.77	Newcastle, NSW The Spit, Werribee 850 km SW
031-66251	Free flying Recaptured	28.12.76 10.3.79	Newcastle, NSW The Spit, Werribee 850 km SW
032-14781	Adult Recaptured	6.11.78 22.11.79	The Spit, Werribee Hobart, Tasmania 610 km SSE
032-19340	Juvenile Recaptured	13.4.79 22.12.79	The Spit, Werribee Yallock Creek, Westernport Bay 85 km ESE
032-18962	Adult Recaptured	13.4.79 15.2.80	The Spit, Werribee Georgetown, Tasmania 390 km SSE
032-17546	Adult Recaptured	11.3.79 10.3.80	The Spit, Werribee Queenscliff 25 km SSE
032-19956	1st year (1 yr old) Recaptured	22.9.79 15.3.80	The Spit, Werribee Hobart, Tasmania 610 km SSE
032-21236	Adult Recaptured	22.12.79 14.6.80	Yallock Creek, Westernport Bay Queenscliff 75 km W
032-28370	Juvenile Recaptured	17.2.80 14.6.80	Hobart, Tasmania Queenscliff 590 km NNW

Three of the above concern birds on passage through Werribee to/from Tasmania. There appear to be remarkably few movements between sites in Victoria judging by the low number of recaptures in sizeable samples which have now been caught away from Werribee at Queenscliff (563), Westernport Bay (773) and Corner Inlet (617).

Curlew Sandpiper

Malaysia M-12903	Free flying Recaptured	9.10.76 3.3.78	Singapore The Spit, Werribee 7100 km SE
040-94221	Adult Recaptured	27.12.78 3.3.79	The Spit, Werribee Newcastle, NSW 850 km NE
040-94218	Juvenile Found shot	27.12.78 13.3.79	The Spit, Werribee L. Connewarre, Geelong 32 km SW
040-95399	Juvenile Recaptured	11.3.79 30.11.79	The Spit, Werribee Newcastle, NSW 850 km NE
040-35192	Free flying Recaptured	12.1.74 22.12.79	Newcastle, NSW Yallock Creek, Westernport Bay 810 km SW



040-91695	Freeflying Recaptured	11.12.76 22.12.79	Newcastle, NSW Yallock Creek, Westernport Bay 810 km SW
040-93339	Adult Recaptured	7.10.78 26.1.80	Newcastle, NSW The Spit, Werribee 850 km SW
040-95458	Adult Recaptured	24.3.79 11.4.80	The Spit, Werribee Hong Kong 7200 km NNW

Of the four movements to/from Newcastle, NSW, two relate to birds which appear to have changed their summering grounds from Newcastle to Westernport Bay. The recovery in Hong Kong is the furthest movement so far of a bird banded by the VWSG.

#### OTHER WADER RECOVERIES RELATING TO VICTORIA

Details kindly provided from CSIRO Banding Scheme records by David Purchase.

##### Pied Oystercatcher

100-26702	Chick Found dead(?)	19.12.59 c.7.12.61	Geelong South Werrribee 48 KM ENE
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##### Sooty Oystercatcher

160-21001	Chick Found dead	10.1.71 22.7.73	Seal Rocks, Phillip Island Point Nepean 48 km WNW
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##### Masked Lapwing

080-69928	Chick Found dead	2.10.60 24.8.62	Cowes, Phillip Island Eildon Weir 150 km NE
080-89959	Chick Found dying	7.9.62 10.3.63	Warragul Morwell 42 km ESE
080-98803	Chick Found dead	17.11.62 6.12.62	Cowes, Phillip Island Wonthaggi 35 km SE
081-01946	Chick Found dead	10.10.64 June/July 1965	Belmont, Geelong Lismore 93 km WNW
081-11018	Adult Dead on rail- way line	21.1.64 14.11.68	L. Cowal North, NSW between Benalla and Baddaginnie 147 km SSW

These recoveries indicate that Masked Lapwings may move around quite widely for distances up to 150 km.

Banded Lapwing

060-40333	Chick Shot	21.10.63 March 1964	Marcus Anakie	50 km NW
060-26545	Chick Shot	26.3.63 6.4.65	Leopold Laverton	50 km NE
060-20082	Chick Shot	22.8.62 25.4.66	Curlewis Laverton	42 km NNE
060-26534	Chick Shot	17.3.63 1.8.65	Queenscliff Willowmavin	115 km NNE

All the above birds had been banded by J R Wheeler.

Blackwinged Stilt

070-52305	Chick Found dying	11.12.62 22.11.66	Fisherman's Bend, Penshurst	Melbourne 245 km W
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Rednecked Avocet

080-85713	Chick Found dead	8.1.64 July 1965	Willaura Skipton	70 km ESE
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Japanese Snipe

060-77076	Adult Shot	6.1.73 14.12.74	Windsor, NSW Modewarre	772 km SW
Japan 060-81207	Free Flying Shot	14.8.77 30.11.77	Gamon, Seniu-shi, Warrnambool	Miyagi Pref. Japan (38°15'N, 141°01'E) 9000 km S
Japan 060-81234	Adult Shot	20.8.78 mid 11.78	Gamou, Sendai-shi, Pakenham	Miyagi Pref. Japan 9000 km S
Japan 060-82259	Adult Shot	14.8.79 late 11.79	Shyunkunitai, Kilcunda	Nemuro-shi, Hokkaido, Japan (43°16'N, 145°28'E) 9500 km S

These recoveries illustrate the importance of Victoria for Japanese Snipe.

Rednecked Stint

032-10058	Free flying Shot	30.10.73 16.3.75	Perth, WA French I., Westernport Bay	2850 km ESE
032-11759	Free flying Shot	12.12.74 10.9.77	Stockyard Point, L.Tareii, Borzja, Chita, USSR	Westernport Bay (50°19'N, 116°23'E) 10,500 kmNNW

The latter bird is the longest movement of any wader banded in Victoria.

NON-WADERS BANDED AND/OR RECOVERED IN VICTORIA BY VWSGCrested Tern

071-34817	Chick	14.12.75	Coorong, SA	
	Recaptured	24.2.79	The Spit, Werribee	530 km ESE
071-40758	Juvenile	24.2.79	The Spit, Werribee	
	Found			
	dead	3.11.79	Peterborough	157 km WSW
070-57993	Chick	28.12.63	Beachport, SA	
	Found	13.12.79	Little River, Werribee	
	dead			410 km E
071-30275	Chick	11.12.76	Coorong, SA	
	Recaptured	22.3.80	Queenscliff	510 km ESE

The third bird in the above list lived for 16 years. The movements probably all relate to coastal migrations of South Australian breeding/bred birds.

Fairy Tern

040-28370	Chick	28.1.66	Geelong	
	Found			
	alive	5.2.78	The Spit, Werribee	13 km NE

This bird was 12 years old when recovered.

Grey Teal

091-04313	Adult	23.6.79	The Spit, Werribee	
	Shot	1.3.80	Bool Lagoon, SA	360 kmWNW

Chestnut Teal

091-04304	Adult	27.1.79	The Spit, Werribee	
	Shot	4.3.79	French Island	78 kmESE

A SCAN WEEKEND

by Rowena Cooper

(Ed. Note: Rowena spent three months in Australia in 1979 and took part actively in VWSG fieldwork. In this article she reports on a typical wader banding weekend back in the UK.)

The Shropshire, Conway and Anglesey wader study group (SCAN) was formed by a group of Midlanders wanting to operate in North Wales. SCAN was born as a splinter group of the Wash Wader Ringing Group (WWRG) with an initial donation from the Shrewsbury Ornithological Society. The group has expanded and now has members in North Wales, an obvious advantage with regard to planning and recces prior to catches.

At the University College of North Wales there are Bill Sutherland (doing a PhD study on Oystercatcher predation on cockles), Jeff Kew and myself. There are also non-SCAN members in the University's Bird Group who join us fairly regularly. Extra-university members are Derek Stanyard - head of our activities, Dave Thomas and Dorian Moss. With various other people who join us from time to time we are able to operate more often than the Midlanders can join us, but we also have occasional visits from WWRG, Mersey Ringing Group and South Wales.

Friday, 19 October

6.15 pm Several members of the team met at Penrhyn Docks on the outskirts of Bangor. The SCAN trailer is kept in one of the sheds in the dockyard. We distributed the equipment amongst the vehicles and proceeded to Wig. This stretch of shore lies a few miles to the east of Bangor and faces north into Conway Bay. The shore is long, straight, shingly, and slopes gently seawards. Farmland extends back from the coast to the foothills of the Carnedd Mountains. Frequently, the fields lying close to the shore have water lying on them and are favoured as high tide roosting sites and feeding grounds for many waders, especially Curlews, Redshanks and Lapwings.

Towards the eastern end there is a small bay with a promontory extending towards the Lavan Sands, an extensive area of mudflats lying between the North Wales coast and Anglesey. This area of the shore is the principal roosting site for Oystercatchers (1,500-2,000) and Redshanks (up to 1,000).

We set three nets, end to end, towards the eastern end of the shore. The evening became increasingly clear and sharp after what had been a typically wet, grey, Bangor day! We left Wig at 11.30 pm.

Saturday, 20 October

A larger team met at Wig at 7 am. We collected seaweed to extend the grot line - it certainly fooled the humans viewing the catching area from the hide! It presumably fooled the birds too! Everyone took up their positions.

I was sent beyond the catching area as a twinkler. As such, I proved to be virtually unnecessary, so obliging were the birds. The considerable wait for high tide allowed for some birdwatching; five Grey Plovers in the vicinity were not, unfortunately, amongst our catch. When I started to twinkle, I soon came upon a Redshank which refused to fly but ran over the rocks to the water where I managed to scoop it up. Net One was fired only about five minutes after high tide. I walked (not if Clive Minton was there! Ed.) towards the catching area, bird in hand, to see a string of people kneeling down just above the water's edge, all heads towards the mountains. Could this be a new cult?

They estimated to have fired on about 300 Redshanks and had nearly fired two nets to be on the safe side. All the birds were in the front of the net. Soon it became evident that we had considerably more than 300 birds as the keeping cages became filled to capacity. A "Ring and Fling" team had to be set up. Meanwhile, extraction continued - 500 Redshank altogether.

Once extraction was completed the nets were spread out to dry and a processing team was established: Jeff - ringing; Derek - ageing, moult, and wing length; Bill - bill length; Rob Wilson (visiting member of WWRG) - weighing; and me - scribe. There was some debate on ageing Redshanks. The ringing team were nearly confused by the 'special' bird which they were first to notice - a Spotted Redshank. This bird and 252 Redshank were processed fully: that is, about half the catch. The weather was fine, although for a while the leaden skies over the mountains loomed threateningly.

#### Sunday, 21 October

A different venue and an early start. We all met at Jeff's hall of residence at 4 am and proceeded to Braint Estuary on the southwest coast of the Isle of Anglesey. The aim was to catch a sample of Oystercatchers, to colour ring them as an aid to Bill's studies.

It was still dark when we started the tramp with equipment to the small island on which we were going to set the net. A muddy channel separated the island from the mainland at low tide. One net was set on the western shore of the island. All except Derek and one of his trainees stayed on the eastern end of the island keeping low under covering material. Derek was stationed on the mainland in view of the catching area and in radio contact with us.

It was cold and damp at first under a lovely starlit sky, but the sunrise was splendid and after sun-up it became increasingly warm. There were superb views of the North Wales mountains. The Oystercatchers refused to co-operate (as had been the case on our previous visit when we had set on the mainland), but a few Curlews landed. Not wanting to miss the opportunity, Derek directed the firing of the net but the Curlews were too far in front of the catching area so all we caught were the two Oystercatcher decoys!

Still, the warm sunshine was some compensation as we cleared up and started ferrying the equipment across the by now considerably deepened channel. In fact we had to wait awhile before we could return to the mainland. We all returned to Penrhyn Dock and loaded the trailer ready for Rhos and the Purple Sandpipers on 10 November.

#### EQUIPMENT OFFICER

My initial involvement in the study of wading birds came about by the announcement by Margaret Cameron at a meeting of the Geelong Field Naturalists Club that a Dr Clive Minton was looking for volunteers to help him with cannon and mist netting. I am now addicted, by the sheer fascination of the unexpected, and by the enthusiasm shown by our leaders and fellow members in gaining more information about wading birds.

The day of our first mist net repairing (and sumptuous feast) lulled my normally alert senses in to being coerced into the position of Equipment Officer. To be driven to the point of exhaustion by our Perpetual Motion Leader Clive Minton on our numerous excursions is enough in itself (some people are easily satisfied! Ed.). To try and find extra time and energy as the Equipment Officer I thought impossible, but our Leader has claimed (and proved) that nothing is impossible whilst one remains vertical. And, might I add, you try getting horizontal in his Lordship's presence when there is work to be done! We, at home, have every reason to have our phone disconnected.

My first effort in making an improved version of the Minton keeping cage for waders is an example of how one can really get caught up with one's work. Whilst making good progress with stitching the hessian covering the steel frame, which was suspended by many ropes from the garage roof, the phone began to ring and it was obvious that I was the only person to have heard it. I jumped up and raced to the phone, realising seconds too late that my trouser leg was firmly stitched to the keeping cage. You can guess the rest.

Some time later, after many unuttered unprintable curses my finished product emerged. To my surprise and gratification it passed the scrutiny of my fellow VWSG members with the result that our Illustrious Leader requested/demanded that many more cages be produced. They have been fully utilised in our many expeditions.

Much more could be written but I will let this suffice for now.

IRA SAVAGE

PROPOSED NATIONAL MEETING OF WADER COUNTERS  
AND BANDERS

The RAOU is planning to bring together co-ordinators of wader counting and banding from each State, and from Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, for a meeting in Melbourne on Friday, 22 August. The objective of the meeting is to exchange information on current wader research programmes and study techniques, and to ensure that appropriate liaison and co-ordination takes place in the future. Finance is currently being sought to cover the travel costs of participants. The VWSG will be represented by David Robertson (banding) and Peter Dann (counting), with Clive Minton (RAOU representative) also in attendance. It is hoped that VWSG members will help with accommodation for participants wishing to stay overnight, and will arrange wader banding/watching for those staying on for the weekend.

DATES FOR VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP FIELD WORK

July 5	Annual General Meeting at 19 Mary St., Beaumaris 3193 (1600 hrs)
	Preceded by equipment maintenance (1030 hrs) and followed by slide/film evening
July 12-13	Werribee
August 9-10	Werribee
Sept 6-7	Werribee
Oct 4-5	Werribee
Nov 8-9	Werribee

Werribee weekends will generally include both cannon netting and mist netting. The "shearing sheds" on Beach Rd (just past turn off for Grills Rd) will be the Group's base for all operations and will in future be the usual meeting place. On some weekends, especially when there is an early tide on the Saturday morning, the team will assemble on the Friday evening.

Please phone Clive Minton (99 1135 - home; 267 5800 - office) or David Robertson (45 4481 - home) two or three days before a weekend to let them know whether you are available and to check on final assembly details.

Additional visits to Werribee or to other locations may be arranged, in which case you will be contacted by phone by one of the group organisers.

NUMBERS OF WADERS "PROCESSED" BY VWSG IN VICTORIA IN EACH MONTH TO JUNE 1980

"Processing" includes measuring wing length, bill length (where appropriate) and weight; also recording full details of primary wing feather moult (if any). Additional wing moult data has been gathered on some birds which were not fully processed. Only species of which more than 100 have been caught in Victoria are included in the table. The table below will be used to plan fieldwork, with the objective of obtaining usable samples (preferably on at least 50 birds) of data for each month of the year for all the main study species.

	<u>J</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Pied Oystercatcher	1	-	51	28	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	99
Doublebanded Plover	-	-	3	3	-	226	-	-	-	-	-	-	232
Redcapped Plover	-	5	4	69	65	28	27	-	2	-	4	1	205
Bartailed Godwit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	186	200
Red Knot	18	21	45	2	-	-	-	-	-	6	28	26	146
Sharptailed Sandpiper	285	83	11	-	-	-	-	-	89	10	98	62	638
Rednecked Stint	280	232	1563	1283	24	113	120	20	180	122	339	715	4991
Curlew Sandpiper	312	164	335	31	-	3	2	1	22	5	126	305	1306
													<u>7817</u>

A further 164 birds of 17 species have also been processed. The majority of the birds caught in Tasmania (Nov 1979) and South Australia (Feb 1980) were also processed.



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The VWSG is greatly indebted to many individuals and organisations for generous help and assistance in a variety of ways. These include -

- A) the provision of netting and rope for two cannon nets - one by the Victorian Fisheries & Wildlife Department (Sid Cowling) and the other by the Australian Bird Banding Scheme of the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research in Canberra (David Purchase). Richard Burbury, Vic F & W, kindly also assisted by expertly joining up the lengths of netting to make a larger net of the required size.
- B) the manufacture of 8 cannons, 9 projectiles and 16 cartridges by the Yorkshire Fittings Division of IMI Australia Operations ( Gary Coates);
- C) the donation by the Victorian Ornithological Research Group (VORG) of \$150 for the purchase of three small 'walkie talkie' CB radios;
- D) the supply of safety electric fuses (detonators) by the Nobel Division of ICI Australia (Don Knox) and of "black powder" by the ELEY Ammunition Division of IMI Australia (Jeff Kilgour);
- F) permission to catch/<sup>and</sup> band waders on the MMBW Farm at Werribee and to use the shearing sheds on Beach Road at Werribee for storing equipment and as a base (the "Werribee Hilton") for fieldwork (Mr McPherson and Mr Pearce).

ICI Australia are also thanked for permission to go on to their property at Point Wilson.

Many other persons loaned equipment to the Group (especially boats/motors) on a temporary basis. Without this financial and practical help the Group would not have been able to operate - certainly not in the effective way which has been possible as a result of the kind assistance detailed above.

The Group is also fortunate in having such an enthusiastic core of members who participate in fieldwork and support activities in many ways. Thanks are due to everyone and especially to those who have so assiduously worked on behalf of the Group behind the scenes such as Julie Strudwick (who looks after our finances and acts as general secretary), Ira Savage (who made the keeping cages and looks after the maintenance of all equipment), Peter Dann (who organised the Statewide wader count on 1-2 December 1979) and Brenda Murliss (who made all the 'bird bags'). David Robertson, Brett Lane and Clive Minton have mainly been responsible for the preparation of the Bulletins (and what is effectively the "Annual Report" contained in the present issue). Renate Lipovas has very kindly typed the Bulletins and Margaret Cameron arranged the reproduction at Deakin University, Geelong.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Membership Fees:	\$	Cheque Book/Bank Fees	14.48
Full	260.00	Stationery/Printing/ Postage (incl. first Bulletin)	45.95
Student/Assoc/ Country/Interstate	85.00	Equipment *	330.92
1980-81 in advance - interstate	5.00	Repairs **	44.50
	<u>350.00</u>		<u>435.85</u>
Donations	173.95	Cash in Bank	54.70
Sale of Bulletins	8.00	Cash in Hand	41.40
	<u>\$ 531.95</u>		<u>\$ 531.95</u>

## Details of Equipment/Repair items:

\* EQUIPMENT

Cord for bird bags	6.50
Mist nets	92.00
Materials for keeping cages	31.00
Ropes, electric wiring etc. for new cannon net	51.12
Walkie talkie radios	148.50
Sundry	1.80
	<u>\$ 330.92</u>

\*\* REPAIRS

Cord, mending twine for net repairs	20.20
Replacement elastic for jump ropes	12.30
Repairs to propeller	12.00
	<u>\$ 44.50</u>

JULIE STRUDWICK  
TREASURER

LIST OF MEMBERS - VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP

<u>VICTORIA</u>	<u>TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP</u>
Kevin BARTRAM, 33 McBryde Street, Fawkner 3060	Full
Pat BINGHAM, 2/27 Russell St., Surrey Hills 3127	Full
Margaret BLAKERS, c/- R.A.O.U., 21 Gladstone St., Moonee Ponds 3039	Full
John BOWDEN-PERRY, 130 Ormond Rd., Geelong 3219	Full
Allan BURBIDGE, Warden, Rotamah Is. Bird Observatory, P.O. Box Paynesville 3880	Country
Gordon CAMERON, 10 Sevenoaks Rd., Balwyn 3103	Full
Margaret CAMERON, 32 Cuthbertson Drive, Ocean Grove 3226	Full
Charles COMPTON, Old Forest Rd., The Basin 3154	Full
Peter DANN, 395 Canning St., Nth Carlton 3054	Full
John DAWSON, 13 Allambi Court, Mt Eliza 3930	Full
Geoff DEASON, 1/9 Rowland St., Mont Albert 3127	Associate
Berrice FOREST, 79 Rosslyn Ave., Seaford 3198	Full
Dave GERARD, 8 Ross Ave., The Basin 3154	Full
Ron HEDLEY, 9/11 Rockley Rd., South Yarra 3141	Full
Peter HERMANS, 14 Station St., Cranbourne 3977	Full
Peter KASPER, Newman College, Parkville 3052	Student
Ralph & Daffi KELLER, 5 Shaw St., Ivanhoe 3079	Full
Brett LANE, 518 Malvern Road, Prahran 3181	Full
Kim LOWE, c/- Dept of Zoology, Melbourne Uni., Parkville 3052	Full
Richard LOYN, Lot 22, Monbulk Rd., Emerald 3782	Full
Clive & Pat MINTON, 19 Mary St., Beaumaris 3193	Full
Brenda MURLIS, 34 Centre Rd., Vermont 3133	Full
Michael & Joy PAGON, 1585 Main Rd., Research 3095	Full
Warren & Lois PLATT, 7 Shirley Court, Boronia 3155	Full
David & Minnie ROBERTSON, 36 Jacka Street, Macleod 3085	Full
Ira SAVAGE, 42 Heytesbury St., Herne Hill, Geelong 3218	Full
SOUTH GIPPSLAND CONSERVATION SOC., c/- David Legg, P.O. Box 92, Inverlock 3996	Full
Julie STRUDWICK, c/- R.A.O.U., 21 Gladstone St., Moonee Ponds 3039	Full
Ailsa SWAN, 28 The Ridge, Canterbury 3126	Associate
<u>N.S.W.</u>	
S.G. (Bill) LANE, 65 Wood St., Lane Cove 2066	I/state
Alan LEISHMAN, Aust. Bird Study Assocn. P.O. Box A313, Sydney South 2000	I/state
Michael ROWE, Hawks Nest Lodge, Booner St., Hawks Nest 2824	I/state
<u>A.C.T.</u>	
David PURCHASE, C.S.I.R.O. Div. Wildlife Research, P.O. Box 84 Lyneham 2602	I/state

TYPE OF  
MEMBERSHIPQUEENSLAND

Alf FINCH, 49 Cassandra St., Chapel Hill 4069	I/state
Frank MORRIS, Stanton Rd., (P.O. Box 158) Smithfield 4871	I/state
Anita SMYTH, Brisbane	I/state
Peter WOODALL, Dept of Veterinary Anatomy, Uni of Queensland, St Lucia 4067	I/state

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

David CLOSE, 30 Diosima Drive, Coromandel Valley 5051	I/state
Kathy SHURCLIFF, Salisbury College of Advanced Education, Salisbury East 5109	I/state

TASMANIA

David & Barbara HENDERSON, P.O. Box 29, LEGANA 7251	I/state
TASMANIAN WADER STUDY GROUP, c/- Mike Newman, 58 Sinclair Ave., West Moonah 7009	I/state

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Tony HERTOOG, C.S.I.R.O. Div Wildlife Research, P.M. Bag 44, Winnellie 5789	I/state
John McKEAN, C.S.I.R.O. Div Wildlife Research, P.O. Bag 44, Winnellie 5789	I/state

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

Miss J. Strudwick  
Treasurer  
Victorian Wader Study Group  
C/- R.A.O.U.  
21 Gladstone Street,  
MOONEE PONDS. Vic. 3039

I would like to join/renew membership of the Victorian Wader Study Group as a  
\* Full/Country/Associate/Interstate/Student member. Enclosed is cheque/money  
order for \$..... in payment of membership fee for the year ended 30th  
June, 1981.

Full membership	\$ 10 per annum	)	1st July to 30th June
		)	
Country, Interstate, Student,		)	
Associate membership	\$ 5 per annum	)	

\* Cross out whichever is not applicable.

NAME.....  
(please use black letters)

ADDRESS.....

.....Post Code.....

TELEPHONE.....  
(please include STD prefix)

SIGNATURE.....

