

Further Information for Minister Jaensch following meeting with Birdlife Tasmania and the North East Bioregional Network on 9 August 2022.

Principles of Effective Shorebird Management.

These principles are based on elements of Tasmanian and mainland examples of effective shorebird management.

Science

- Shorebird management is driven by science-based evidence of shorebird locations, populations and factors causing disturbance and decline.
- Community groups and volunteers are supported to contribute meaningful citizen science that complements and is connected to research provided by conservation organisations like Birdlife Tasmania and that of Government agencies.
- Standardised methodology is used, and data is submitted to state/national databases to support informed management decisions.

Government

- Authorities (Environment Agencies & Councils) with legislative responsibility for protecting species are committed to shorebird conservation.
- Government funding is provided to undertake/support research and facilitate necessary management planning and action including education, compliance and enforcement.
- Data is compiled at a state/national level and adequate resources directed to areas of need and threat.
- Land managers receive training and advice, and access to a network of land managers and scientists who can share their shorebird experiences.

Community

- Interested community groups and residents are supported and able to participate in the shorebird conservation but not expected to be the key drivers.
- Community including conservation groups as well as beach user groups such as fishing, boardriders and surfing clubs are enabled by authorities to play a role in developing a culture of ownership and regard for shorebirds and seabirds that depend on the beach.

Planning and Implementation

Authorities and conservation group/s develop shorebird management plans with key objectives including:

- Collaborative and strategic approaches towards shorebird conservation
- Coordinate multiple land management agencies toward specific local, state and national objectives
- Support ongoing scientific programs that collect population data, monitor breeding success and identify threats and responses
- Raise awareness about beach nesting birds through strategic and considered communication
- Allow community consultation and input to planning and implementation

Other key planning elements:

- Scientific outcomes guide management arrangements and responses
- Support and enhance community participation and ownership
- Provide a range of communications including clear signage to specify limitations and explain restrictions and reasoning
- Address inappropriate and illegal behaviours on beaches that cause disturbance
- Demonstrate a commitment from authorities to shorebird protection through regular and targeted compliance actions
- Allocate the necessary resources to undertake identified actions

- Allow for dog zonings and recreational vehicle access to change if required to protect the birds
- Provide funding to support implementation of plan actions

Communication and Information

- Communication channels (education and awareness raising) are diverse in terms of shorebird conservation messaging and are regular and focussed and include social media, local papers and newsletters, web sites, information to registered dog owners, stalls at local events such as community markets, education programs in local schools, etc.
- Identify main beach user groups and direct information and events to those audiences.
- Volunteers are supported to provide informal education and awareness raising and messaging to beach users.
- Building awareness, sympathy, and an emphasis on coexistence is important. Shifting coastal communities toward appreciation of shorebird conservation is required.
- Select a few regions to start with for example the Tasmanian east coast, establish, then extend the program - target the most important and disturbance prone areas first.

Compliance

- Illegal and off-road vehicle access is addressed with access points being closed and legal access points for example beach launching boat access appropriately managed. Unnecessary vehicle access onto beaches restricted in line with population data and threat mitigation.
- Compliance activities are resourced so that a level of presence by authorities is exercised that demonstrates their commitment to shorebird protection, minimises disturbance regimes and acts as a deterrent that incurring an infringement is likely if rules are ignored.
- Compliance needs to be undertaken in the breeding and non-breeding season to protect wintering bird sites and ensure appropriate behaviours are reinforced.
- Compliance is undertaken in a strategic manner to ensure serial offenders and out of hours illegal activities are addressed.
- Compliance actions are well planned and a mix of local staff and state-based staff are used in a targeted, strategic and effective manner.

Departmental and political support

- Executive staff of authorities are well briefed of issues and actions being undertaken with a view to achieving higher level program support.
- Ministers with associated responsibilities are briefed on shorebird programs and their roles to fund and support efforts as well as supporting hard decisions if greater protection is required.

Examples of Areas where programs are being conducted effectively?

1. Mornington Peninsula National Park

<https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Your-Property/Animals-Pets/Pet-Owner-Info/Dogs-on-Beaches>

Critical beaches closed to dogs to ensure greater chance of beach nesting bird breeding success.

2. City of Greater Geelong

<https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/hpcap/article/item/8d70156d885b5df.aspx>

This Council has adopted a Hooded Plover Conservation Action Plan setting out a series of key priorities, targets and actions.

3. Bass Coast Council

<https://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/services/pets-animals/where-can-i-walk-my-dog>

Provide clear directions to dog owners and undertake compliance actions.

4. *Tasmania LIST map*

Tasmania LIST map layer, “*Bird breeding habitat and access recommendations*” provides an abundance of information available to agencies, community groups etc on the sensitivity of the Tasmanian coast.

<https://maps.thelist.tas.gov.au/listmap/app/list/map?bookmarkId=695879>

Recommendation

The Minister consider supporting a ½ day workshop, hosted by NRE Tasmania to develop a state-wide beach-nesting bird strategy that will address the conservation and management of these species, and initiating an agreed approach by key agencies and conservation groups.

Invitees to such a workshop could include key Parks coastal managers, wildlife officers, compliance officers, interpretation and education officers and representatives from BirdLife Tasmania, relevant Councils, NRM regions and key community conservation groups involved with shorebird protection.

The Minister and the Department could then initiate and drive the strategy in coming years providing greater protection for these sensitive and vulnerable birds, and in so doing, fulfilling threatened species legislative responsibilities and community expectations.