

Hi Chris and good morning all
thanks for your email.

I want to provide some comments and background information to address some aspects of your thoughts and key points, based on my direct personal and professional involvement with Break O'Day Council dealing with dogs on beaches in the Municipality since May 2007 (!).

I have numbered the dot points below in case anyone wishes to query any aspect of my email.

1. In May 2007, Birds Tasmania (as we were then) was invited to participate/contribute to the formulation of Council's Dog MP, with our contribution focussed on seabirds and shorebirds on beaches. As a consequence of our involvement, I surveyed and mapped the shorebirds and terns on every beach in the BOD Municipality in 2007/08 and in 2008/09 to obtain contemporary data on the distribution and abundance of beach-nesting shorebirds and small terns between the Denison River and Mt William NP. Neither BirdLife nor I were paid for these surveys, the effort was voluntary, and all data were made available immediately to Council and PWS through Murray Luttrell and Lionel Poole in St Helens.
2. Based on these contemporary survey data, the various beaches were zoned dog on lead, dog off lead, dog prohibited etc - using the same decision protocols as we did in conjunction with Glamorgan Spring Bay Council - thus ensuring a consistent approach to dog management on all East Coast beaches between Orford and Mt William - something only possible through the involvement of BirdLife Tasmania and the open sharing of our survey/mapping data with all stakeholders - including representatives of dog owners.
3. The somewhat piece-meal fragmentation of beaches was partly due to the recognition of existing use of some areas by dog owners, and that some beaches had lost (or never had) values to protect. Several beaches on the East Coast have now lost 100% of their Hooded Plovers, some beaches have lost Little Penguins - all due to the increase in human presence on beaches. In some cases, small beaches were deemed 'sacrificial' in recognition that no change in dog owner behaviour was possible.
4. The zoning was predicated on the assumption (acknowledged to be tenuous at the time) that dog owners would respect the restrictions on some beaches in light of the certainty of access/zoning on other beaches. Easy to dismiss with hindsight as unrealistic, but the failure of many/most(?) dog owners to adhere to restrictions (and the patent failure of Council to enforce any modicum of compliance) provides us with leverage. With Hooded Plovers and Fairy Terns now listed as EPBC Vulnerable species, added protection by Council is clearly and urgently warranted.
5. All of our beach-survey/mapping data are available to Council and to PWS, as all data (with the exception of Fairy and Little Tern breeding sites due to their sensitivity) are in the public domain and available to the community and all Councils statewide via the Natural Values Atlas and the LIST.
6. BOD Council have the GPS data, as does Polly and NRM North. Council are choosing to ignore/overlook the data in the face of vociferous protests from the dog community - a statewide phenomenon. NRM N and PWS are to be congratulated for their efforts to work with BirdLife Tasmania in conserving our beach-nesting birds.
7. There has never been any query or challenge to our data or surveys - Birdlife Tasmania is seen as having expertise in coastal birds and their conservation/management throughout the state, given the wide range of State Govt agencies, all 3 NRMs, numerous Councils, industries and many community groups all engaging with us on an on-going basis.

8. Importantly, we are apolitical and independent - people may not "like" our advice but you can't argue with the extensive data sets we have (greater I believe than the State Govt). We have little confidence in the "expertise" of most consultants employed by developers - as demonstrated by their immediate requests to us for our data!
9. You all have a copy of our report to the Great Eastern Trails project, which details the spectrum of threats to beach-nesting birds. I have attached our most recent report to NRM N that provides a regional context to BOD Municipality's beaches.
10. We already know Tasmania supports perhaps half of the global Hooded Plover, Pied Oystercatcher and Sooty Oystercatcher populations. Tasmania supports c.10% of Little and Fairy Tern populations. Tasmania is now known and recognised as a refuge for these species, and our submission to Council will argue strongly for increased protection of these species on Council-managed beaches.
11. Our coastal surveys continue every Spring and Summer when the weather permits. To date, our surveys span more than 360 beaches since 2000/01, with more than 5600 data on nests, territories and colonies. To his credit, Polly is talking about a synthesis report for Glamorgan Spring Bay and Break O'Day Councils to be prepared by BirdLife Tasmania, based on survey data to 2017/18. At the moment, Polly is seeking funding to support the effort.

Hoping this information above and attached helps the discussion. BirdLife Tasmania has asked for an extension beyond 26 January. We believe it is highly offensive for the Council to expect community groups to work on submissions to Council while Council staff are on holidays, particularly over the Christmas New Year break. We will be arguing strongly for increased protection for our birds, as we have for more than a decade.

kind regards to all and best wishes for 2018

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