

WHAT WE CAN DO IN GLAMORGAN SPRING BAY TO HELP DURING BREEDING SEASON

- Be aware that shorebirds will be nesting directly on the dry upper beach in the warmer months. Give them space and be careful when walking to not trample their eggs or chicks.
- Walk along the water's edge, follow the Dog Rules* at every beach. Beach-nesting birds perceive dogs as a great threat regardless of the individual dog.
- Obey the temporary installed signs and fences and be an example to other beach users to do the same.
- Restrict stock access to the beach during shorebird breeding season.
- Beach-nesting bird numbers are in decline as they struggle to find undisturbed space on beaches to raise a family. If too many birds fail to produce young, they will soon become extinct. We can play a part by being considerate of the birds during this crucial time in their life cycle – breeding season September to March.

* The council Dog Management Policy can be found at:
<http://www.gsbctas.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Draft_Two_-_Declared_Dog_Areas.PDF>



Hooded Plover eggs on beach. Inset: Hooded Plovers on beach
© Pricilla Park

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Artwork by Diane Bricknell

www.gsbctas.gov.au Phone: 03 6256 4777

Front cover photo: Terns © Eric Woehler, BirdLife Tasmania



THREATS TO BEACH-NESTING BIRDS

► **DISTURBANCE** – human recreational activities, off-road vehicles, dogs, stock
weeds, urban development
► **PREDATION** – native predators, dogs, cats

HABITAT REQUIREMENTS FOR BEACH-NESTING BIRDS

► **FEEDING AREAS** – where birds can forage on a variety of invertebrates such as worms and crustaceans. Feeding areas are usually intertidal flats, estuaries and beaches that are generally only available at low tide.

► **ROOSTING SITES** – where birds can rest at high tide, when feeding areas are unavailable. The birds can sometimes congregate in flocks when roosting.

► **BREEDING SITES** – which are predominately beaches, where resident shorebirds and terns lay their eggs in scrapes in the sand. Their young, called 'chicks', are flightless for up to a month. Hooded plover chicks have to feed themselves from day one!

Glamorgan Spring Bay

SHOREBIRD STATUS REPORT

2012/13

BEACH NESTING BIRDS

THE AIM OF THIS FACT SHEET IS TO PROTECT AND MANAGE OUR SHOREBIRD
POPULATION ON OUR BEACHES

Birdlife Tasmania continued its annual shorebird and tern surveys and population monitoring during the 2012/13 breeding season, with extensive surveys undertaken throughout the state.

Many populations of these species are decreasing and the Birdlife Tasmania surveys and long-term monitoring provide Councils, Parks and Wildlife Service and community groups with the information they need to undertake coastal activities without impacting on nesting birds.

Surveys in the Glamorgan Spring Bay Municipality focussed on the beaches on Maria Island, Rheban Beach and Saltworks (Little Swanport).

MARIA ISLAND

The focus on Maria Island was two-fold: the beaches on Maria Island have been surveyed since the 1980s, so Birdlife Tasmania has collected long-term data. Second was the potential threat to nesting shorebirds following the introduction of a breeding population of Tasmanian Devils as an insurance population.

Recent surveys of shorebirds (2008 to 2013) on Maria Island have shown that the population of **Pied Oystercatchers** has remained at around **20 pairs** on seven beaches around the island.

The **Hooded Plover** population on Maria Island has been much more variable since

2008/09, with the current breeding population estimated at **9 pairs**. This is higher than in 2010/11 (**4 pairs**) and in 2008/09 (**6 pairs**) but lower than during the 1980s and 1990s.

The reasons for this highly variable number of breeding Hooded Plovers on Maria

Island is presently unknown.



Hooded Plover pair
(*Thalassidroma rubricollis*)
© Alan Fletcher

Red-capped Plover & chick
(*Charadrius ruficapillus*)
© Alan Fletcher

Pied Oystercatchers
(*Haematopus longirostris*)
© Alan Fletcher

Fairy Tern
(*Sterna nereis*)
© Alan Fletcher

Little Tern
(*Sterna albibrons*)
© Oystercatcher

STOCK ON

BEACHES DURING

BREEDING SEASON

(SHEEP / CATTLE /

HORSES)

In some parts of the coast stock have unrestricted access to beaches and during breeding season this is highly detrimental to beach-nesting birds.

Animals crush and

trample nests, eggs and flightless chicks on the

beach. Stock create deep depressions in the sand

that chicks can fall into and be unable to escape

from. Once sand has been compacted it is hard for

small birds to source food.

RHEBAN BEACH

Rheban is another site regularly surveyed and monitored for nesting shorebirds and terns by Birdlife Tasmania. Sandspit Point is also an important feeding area for migratory shorebirds such as Red-necked Stints from Siberia, and Fairy Terns nested there in 2010/11.

Hooded Plover numbers continue to decrease at Rheban and Sandspit, with just **4 breeding**

pairs observed in 2012/13, compared to more than **10 pairs** in 1982/83.

High levels of dogs and vehicles on the beach from the boat launching facility to the mouth of Earllham Lagoon, and from the Lagoon entrance southward are the primary causes of

disturbance to nesting shorebirds.

SALTWORKS (Little Swanport)

The beaches between Saltworks and Mayfield Conservation Area are critical beaches for nesting shorebirds and terns, and amongst the more important beaches in the Municipality.

One of the beaches is used for nesting by both Fairy and Little Terns, and the beaches support breeding Hooded and Red-capped Plovers and Pied Oystercatchers.

Hooded Plover numbers have steadily decreased since the 1980s. Boat launching and beach activities at Saltworks from September to March when shorebirds are attempting to breed, indicating that decreased breeding success is a result of increased disturbances.



Sheep on beach © Eric Woehler & Valeria Kuoppolo, Birdlife Tasmania