

STATUS AND TRENDS OF SHOREBIRDS IN TASMANIA

ERIC J WOehler

Work on this project is still ongoing. Paper unavailable.

ABSTRACT

Tasmania supports nationally- and internationally-significant breeding populations of beach-nesting shorebirds and small terns. These populations have been surveyed since the early 1980s, and since 2000/01, a concerted effort has been made to map nesting territories and colonies on sandy beaches around the Tasmanian coastline. As of October 2013, more than 3500 nesting territories and colonies have been mapped from 250 beaches.

These surveys allow assessments of current breeding populations, trends in populations and a preliminary assessment of the potential impacts arising from projected sea level rise and the loss of suitable breeding habitat for these species. Focal species are Hooded and Red-capped Plovers, Pied Oystercatchers and Little and Fairy Terns. These species all nest on sandy beaches and are subject to high levels of human disturbance each summer.

Concerted efforts to protect key nesting sites rely largely on community efforts supporting Parks and Wildlife field staff. The study demonstrates the critical role of contemporary scientific data to support on-ground conservation efforts and in the formulation of appropriate coastal management strategies.

Eric Woehler has worked on shorebirds for more than 35 years, conducting research and supervising higher-degree students' research projects in Tasmania. He has been actively involved in coastal conservation efforts, and has long been actively involved in coastal advocacy efforts based on scientific data and analyses. Councils, NRM agencies and community groups are increasing their coastal conservation efforts to protect resident shorebirds as a result of these research and advocacy efforts.