

Hi there Shoalhaven coastal community groups

This email is to inform you of the upcoming endangered shorebird nesting season and protection activities in your area. The National Parks and Wildlife Service's South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program has been active on your beaches and lakes since 1999, monitoring and protecting three species of threatened beach nesting birds; the endangered Little Tern, critically endangered Hooded Plover and endangered Pied Oystercatcher. Nests are often just a simple scrape in the sand, and eggs and chicks are camouflaged. Threats to the breeding success of these birds on our beaches include disturbance and trampling from people and dogs, predation from seagulls, ravens and introduced foxes and inundation from king tides, big swells and high rainfall events. Very few eggs actually hatch and make it to a fledging (flying) chick. From egg laying to chick fledging is a vulnerable 2 months on the beach for these shorebirds. We are working hard to protect the birds during this time to improve breeding success and recover local populations.

The NPWS is working with local volunteers, communities, landholders, Crown Lands and Shoalhaven City Council to reduce threats to shorebird nests by undertaking a range of actions. These include

- Installing temporary fencing and signage around identified shorebird nesting areas on the beach to reduce disturbance.
- Installing specialised nest protection inside the temporary fence to protect vulnerable nests from predation, inundation and exposure – may include nest cages, sandbags, small electric fences and/or chick shelters.
- Fox 1080 baiting – all NPWS coastal reserves are baited from July to December (also April and May if funding allows). Reserves include Seven Mile Beach National Park, Comerong Island Nature Reserve, Jervis Bay National Park, Conjola National Park, Narrawallee Creek Nature Reserve, Meroo National Park and Murramarang National Park. Domestic dogs may be affected.
- Fox trapping – soft jaw leg hold traps may be used to target foxes at active nesting sites throughout September, October and November. These traps are used on NPWS reserves and beaches (dogs prohibited) and within fenced and signed areas on approved council beaches.
- Fox shooting – night shooting operations may be used to target areas with fox activity near shorebird nesting sites. Contract shooters use a combination of spotlighting, night vision, thermal imaging, motion sensor cameras and whistles to operate safely and target these problem foxes.
- Raven/Seagull shooting – if ravens and/or seagulls begin targeting shorebird eggs and chicks, shooting may be used to remove problem birds. Local populations of these scavengers are elevated and removal of the problem individual birds keeps the numbers at an ecologically sustainable level.
- Education events – shorebird education tents at key beach access points and local markets, nest site wardening, kids activities, school workshops

I have already met with many of you, and presented on the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program at your meetings, so hopefully you already have a good understanding of this threatened species protection program. If you do have any questions, please call or email Jackson Rutter (CC'd) as he will be acting Shorebird Recovery Coordinator for the coming nesting season.

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