

# Hooded Plover *Thinornis cucullatus*

## Overwintering surveys

### Description

The Hooded Plover (*Thinornis cucullatus*), is a medium-size shorebird listed as a threatened species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). They can be identified by their distinct black head or hood and white collar, which distinguish Hooded Plovers from all other shorebirds. Hooded Plovers have a red bill with a black tip and distinctive red eye ring. This species is predominantly found on high energy ocean beaches with plentiful seaweed and jetsam; dune systems; weedy rock shelves; and tidal flats. Hooded Plover nests are typically located on beaches above the high tide mark. This can make nests hard to spot and vulnerable to a range of disturbances including vehicle and human traffic, predators such as gulls and foxes; and tidal inundation.

At times during the non-breeding season (winter), the Hooded Plover has been observed on inland salt lakes. On the Eyre Peninsula, there are recorded sightings at inland salt lakes over the past 30 years, which suggests that these areas may be important for Hooded Plovers during the winter months.

### Overwintering surveys

The purpose of the overwintering surveys is to help provide a clearer understanding of Hooded Plover behaviour and distribution during the non-breeding season across the Eyre Peninsula region. This is the first time surveys dedicated to non-breeding season counts at inland salt lakes have occurred on the Eyre Peninsula.

Surveys will take place on-foot and in vehicles; and will follow the perimeter of inland salt lakes, scoping at coordinates of historical sightings and areas of potential presence of Hooded Plovers. Access restrictions and heavy vegetation may limit the ability to cover all lengths of lake edges, however site access points and coordinates will be documented to improve surveys throughout the life of the four year project.



Birdlife Australia's Biennial Count shorebird survey methodology will be used to document the presence of Hooded Plovers and additional information including threats and suitable habitat.

### Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) Project

The overwintering surveys are a part of Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board's Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery Project. In 2019, the Board received funding for four years from the Australian Government National Landcare Program. The funding is being used to:

- Reduce threats to priority threatened coastal saltmarsh environments,
- Improve threatened shorebird recovery and raise public awareness and,
- Rehabilitate coastal saltmarsh environments.

These actions are all aimed at improving the health and function of these ecologically and economically important wildlife-rich threatened ecosystems.



**Image source:** Pizzey, Graham (Graham Martin), *The field guide to the birds of Australia* / Graham Pizzey; Frank Knight, illustrator; Sarah Pizzey, editor, 9<sup>th</sup> edition.

## More information

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