

Hooded Plover

Thinornis rubricollis



Map courtesy of Mapping Unit, Customer and Commercial Services.

Map is not intended to indicate spatial distribution of the species, only the bioregions in which the species is found.

Hooded Plovers are small-to-medium sized coastal shorebirds. They can be active during the day and night time, and are non-migratory. Also known as the Hooded Dotterels, these plovers bob their heads continually when alert and standing still. A distinctive black hood and throat give them their name; they also have a red ring around their eyes, a black-tipped orange bill and orange legs.

Pairs of Hooded Plovers establish territories to live and breed in, that they defend from other plovers. When approached by humans they run or fly away and are quite vocal as they do so! They will only leave these areas if they are persistently disturbed.

Diet

They forage on the beach and can usually be seen in pairs or small groups finding food at the waters edge as the waves recede. Some Hooded Plovers also forage around salt water lagoons, salt pans and coastal lakes. They feed on insects, small bivalves, crustaceans, marine worms, water plants and seeds.

Breeding

Hooded Plovers breed from August to March in eastern Australia on wide, sandy, seaweed strewn beaches. They make their nests in small scrapes on the beach between the high tide line and the sand dunes during spring and summer. They line these nests with pebbles, seaweed or other materials they find on the beach. An average clutch size is one to three eggs, and these are incubated by both parents for around 28 days. There is a very low success rate for chicks hatching and making it to maturity.

Habitat

These birds are found along the southern sandy coasts of Australia.

Threats

Coastal development and increased human activity on the coasts is a major threat to the Hooded Plovers, especially as they nest in summer when people like to visit the beach. Vehicles on the beach destroy nests, eggs and chicks. Dogs kill chicks and destroy nests as well as chasing adults away from their nests. This often leads to the death of the chicks. Disturbance and trampling by humans and stock, and predation by foxes are other threats these birds face. Unfortunately, only 700–800 of these birds remain in SA. Nationally, it has been estimated that a population of around 7,000 Hooded Plovers are alive today.



Although they move around during the non-breeding season and sometimes flock with other birds, Hooded Plovers usually return to the same breeding area with the same partner to lay their eggs each year.

Conservation

You can help the Hooded Plover by:

- preferably keeping your dog on a leash (at least) when at the beach - especially during spring and summer
- only walking within the intertidal zone during the nesting season
- refraining from driving on the beach or dune areas
- moving away quietly when you see Hooded Plovers – parents will abandon their nests if they feel threatened.



Photo by Paul Wainwright

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For further information

Public enquiries

For more local information on any of the species in this resource please contact your nearest Natural Resource Centre office on:

Eastwood: (08) 8273 9100

Gawler: (08) 8523 7700

Lobethal: (08) 8389 5900

Willunga: (08) 8550 3400

Education enquiries

For teachers wanting more information about environmental education resources and opportunities please contact the relevant NRM Education sub regional team on:

Northern Adelaide: (08) 8406 8289

Barossa: (08) 8563 8436

Central Adelaide: (08) 8234 7255

Southern Adelaide: (08) 8384 0176

Southern Fleurieu: (08) 8551 0524



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