



Photo credits: Emma Stephens, far left; Birds Australia, two middle images and far right.

# Hooded Plover update

Late December 2011 – Mid January 2012

## Fleurieu Peninsula

Hi all,

Welcome to the latest Hooded Plover update.

Thanks to the volunteers for keeping such a regular eye on your pairs/beaches – and for sending in those datasheets – it is really appreciated!

Please see the latest update below on nests and chicks observed on the Fleurieu since the 23rd December.

The Dog's Breakfast information sessions and kid's activity sessions have been going well so far. When the weather has been good, we've been speaking up to nearly 50 people in a morning. We've had a couple of very cold, windy days though! Unfortunately we had to finish up early at Carrickalinga, and postpone the Inman River dog's breakfast to another (warmer!) day. Thanks to all those volunteers who've been able to assist Wendy and I during these events.

Cheers,

Emma

*Coast, Estuary & Marine Officer, Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board*

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## Maslin Beach

The two chicks successfully fledged and were first observed flying on the 1 January by Sue and Ashley. The adults and chicks were observed flying into the fenced area, they then walked around to the creek and began feeding. Each chick then swam across the creek to the other side! They have been spending a lot of time in the creek area as it provides a safe foraging area away from the crowds.

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## Port Willunga

The two chicks were last seen on Tuesday 20 December. It is not too surprising considering that one of the parents had died and this would have made it very difficult for the remaining adult to protect the chicks.

Ashley noted that "A second adult HP has been present since Tuesday (when it was several hundred metres away from the other adult and chick) and is probably the extra one seen at Maslin Beach on Monday (19/11). Over the past 2 days (since the disappearance of the chicks), the 2 adults have been staying in the same vicinity and yesterday and today they were in close company with each other, moving around together and showing no sign of aggressive behaviour towards each other".

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## Carrickalinga

A nest with 3 eggs was discovered on Tuesday 10 January. The nest is about 30m north of the previously fenced nest at Carrickalinga. Corey and Wendy fenced the nest on Thursday 12 January.

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## Normanville South

A nest with 3 eggs was found on the 20 December, about 50m south of the boat ramp at the mouth of the Bungala River. This was fenced by Corey and Colin. Unfortunately the nest had failed by the 24 December, and it was suspected that someone actually went in there and smashed the eggs as there was a large rock and deep hole where the nest had been. Also footprints right where the rock had been left. The Hoodies haven't been seen there since by Pia and Colin.

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## Shelly Beach

Lauren visited the beach on 1 January and had a very interesting reaction from the Hoodies...please see Lauren's comments below:

"Very hot day and VERY distressed adults, not leaving nest site for long and showing very strong distraction display. Had a quick look, could see lots of tracks and one broken egg shell - didn't persist longer than 30 secs because the adult ran toward me, fluffing and broken wing display - I had clear message to clear off! (never had such a strong reaction from adults - maybe about to hatch or maybe eggs about to cook it was so hot! The bird immediately returned to nest when I walked away. Decided it was too hot to bother the birds with fencing but decided to visit early next morning for a more thorough check. Noticed footprints going right through general area of suspect nest. Both shacks on beach were in use with two tents as well."

On 2 January there was no evidence of eggs or shells, and again one of the adults did the broken wing and distraction displays – and as a result it was suspected the other adult may have been hiding with chicks.

Unfortunately on 10 January there were no signs of the chicks and the adults were acting in a relaxed way, not

interested in Lauren's presence so we suspect the chicks had disappeared. Let's hope they try again!

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## Sheepies Beach

Dean visited again on 23 December and to his surprise he found a third chick present! Dean mentioned that it must prefer to stay hidden as it was only visible for a minute. By now they should all be flying (being a week old on 27 November). Sheepies beach is a small bay west of Parsons Beach accessed by the Heysen trail.

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## Inman River outlet

The nest with 3 eggs that was discovered on 6 December unfortunately failed on 3 January – just when it was due to hatch. I have included Ross' comments below:

### **8am, 3 January**

"Upon nearing nest area the incubating bird got up and led along the dry sand. The other put on the distraction display within this same area. At the nest I noticed one chick was  $\frac{3}{4}$  out of the egg and the other 2 eggs were cracked and mis-shaped. I could see evidence of chicks in each of these eggs. Assuming they were in the process of hatching, I therefore quickly left. One adult returned to the nest and ran around near it pecking/false feeding. The other returned nearby and stood watch."

### **7.45pm, 3 January**

"Upon nearing nest area the incubating bird got up and was joined by the other nearby bird - they then led along the dry sand. I checked the nest to find that the previously exposed chick was gone and no evidence of that egg/shell. The other 2 eggs were not a lot different to earlier in the day and I now think they were probably crushed not actually hatching. As I left one adult returned to the nest and sat and the other went foraging at the water's edge. Three masked lapwings approached near the nest and were chased off by the foraging bird. The incubating bird stayed on the nest."

### **7.50pm, 4 January**

"Both birds were mid beach – dry sand, resting. As I approached the nest area the birds moved east along the dry sand, no great urgency. The nest was still visible but empty. No evidence of eggs, chicks or shell."

However on Wednesday 18 January Ross and Janette found a new nest with 1 egg, on the eastern side of the river mouth, approximately 10m further east than the nest earlier this season. Once the Hooded Plover has finished laying its eggs, we will fence the nest.

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## Watsons Gap

The chick has successfully fledged at this site! Great news as it has been a long time since we've had any success here. The adults and chick have been observed often as far as Chiton Rocks by Ann.

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## Bashams Beach

A nest with 2 chicks was first observed on the 26 December, approximately 200m west of the Bashams Beach Road car park. It is on a very steep dune and could possibly be buried from sand falling from above. However it is still present and should be due to hatch towards the end of this week or into next. Win has since installed signage approximately 100m either side of the nest. Unfortunately the tide is coming too high up the beach to make fencing possible.

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Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges  
Natural Resources Management Board

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