

## **Hooded Plover update – Fleurieu Peninsula 21<sup>st</sup> Oct – 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2010**

### **Port Noarlunga**

- Tony Meekins (City of Onkaparinga Ranger) has been observing a nesting pair of red-capped plovers on the foredune at Port Noarlunga. Today he reported seeing 2 adults and a chick which is great news.
- Tony also observed 3 Hooded Plover adults sitting together at the edge of the Onkaparinga River mouth today. Tony said he would keep an eye on them.
- Tony and Vaughan Edwards both attended the Dog's Breakfast workshop at Port Willunga – it was fantastic to have them along. I have since attended a City of Onkaparinga Ranger's team meeting to provide an overview of Hooded Plovers and the program on the Fleurieu. It is great to have this support from Council. Nikola Vollmer (Environmental Project Officer with the City of Onkaparinga) also provided a presentation to an all-of-staff meeting. It was a great success with much interest shown by all, including the CEO of the Council.

### **Moana**

- Volunteers Sue and Ashley Read made a number of observations in mid-late November of 2 adults. They then discovered a Hooded Plover nest with 1 egg on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November at the southern end of Moana in the vehicle-free zone, south of the bollards. Sue and Ashley installed 3-4 temporary nesting signs in the area. Unfortunately the nest failed 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec (last observed on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov). There was no evidence around the nest for failure. The signs were then removed by Sue and Ashley.
- A new volunteer, David Woollard, and I observed only one adult feeding in north of the bollards on 15<sup>th</sup> Dec.
- Sue and Ashley visited the beach today and did not see any Hoodies (however a pair of red-cap plovers was observed), and found that the high tide over the weekend had reached the back of the beach, which would have washed the nest away had it still been present (it is a very flat beach). If they were to avoid the high tide they would have to nest above the pebbles, or nest in the vehicle zone.

### **Maslin Beach**

- The nest with 3 eggs discovered by Sue and Ashley on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct (fenced and signed) hatched 1 chick on 17<sup>th</sup> November (the 2 remaining eggs did not hatch). The chick was approximately 5 days of fledging when it unfortunately disappeared on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December. Temporary signs will be installed to say that the chick did not survive.

### **Port Willunga**

- A nest with 2 eggs was found by Sue and Ashley on 15<sup>th</sup> Dec on the northern bay of Port Willunga. As it is in quite an open, busy spot we thought it would be best to fence it and sign it which was done on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Dec. We were really pleased to have assistance from Karin, a new Environmental Health Officer with the City of Onkaparinga. The council Ranger staff were contacted and they very promptly offered assistance that very day. This was really appreciated not only by myself, but also Ashley and Sue who were thankful for the help with carrying the equipment to the nest site!
- Ashley and Sue visited this morning and observed the adult still incubating the nest. Fortunately the nest was safe from the high tide over the weekend due to the steep slope of the beach, and the build up of sand (almost creating a platform) at the back. Ashley observed 15 dogs off leads, at the water's edge, over a half an hour period.

### Silver Sands

- Volunteers Faye, Julie and Joyce first observed the Hoodie pair at Silver Sands on 14<sup>th</sup> Nov. A nest was found in the vehicle free zone on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> Nov. The nest (2 eggs) was observed at the back of the beach amongst the pebbles, at the southern end of the vehicle free zone. There was a really quick response from the volunteers (Faye, Joyce, Julie, Ashley and Sue) and Council staff (Nikola Vollmer and Ben Moulton) who assessed the situation and all assisted with installing a fence and signage. It was a very busy spot with people and cars parking up right against the southern bollards. Nikola and Ben spoke with the Council rangers and have requested an increase in visits to the area.
- Unfortunately the last time the adults were observed incubating the nest was Friday 26<sup>th</sup> Nov (by Trevor Woods). Any tracks that may have been present in the sand were blown away by the strong winds had over the weekend. The sand was still dry in the area of the nest so that ruled out the possibility of the nest having been washed away by the high tide. Subsequent sightings of the adults showed they were not displaying any distraction behaviours and no evidence of chicks. I removed the fence and Ben installed a sign informing the public that the nest did not survive.

### Myponga Beach

- The adult pair were observed using the area near the creek/bridge from the 29<sup>th</sup> November by volunteers Linda and Mike. They were then observed incubating a nest (3 eggs) as of the 4/5<sup>th</sup> December. On 8<sup>th</sup> Dec Mike, Jim and I fenced the nest and put up signs, including one at the base of the boat ramp (please see photo below).
- The adults must have been incubating the nest for about a week earlier than expected as 3 chicks hatched today (22<sup>nd</sup> Dec). The chicks are using the northern end of the beach, so Linda has offered to rope the area and install a sign to encourage people to walk down at the water's edge. Three chick signs will also be installed encouraging people to leash their dogs. It is encouraging to hear that people are reading the signs and leashing their dogs as a result.
- The juvenile (which we presume was the one that fledged from Myponga Beach in late October) was observed on the 19<sup>th</sup> Dec by Mike.





### **Carrickalinga/Normanville/Lady Bay**

- Carrickalinga North - Lauren visited the site twice in early and mid November and found 2 adults preparing scrapes. A nest with 3 eggs was subsequently discovered by Jack at Carrickalinga North, which he positioned the 3 signs around on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov. Lauren's visit on the 30<sup>th</sup> November the adults were not observed near the nest or on the Carrickalinga North bay. It is presumed that the nest unfortunately failed.
- Carrickalinga - Nest with 3 eggs was discovered by volunteer Wendy approx 40m north of the access from the toilets north of the Carrickalinga creek, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> Dec. Fortunately the nest was still there (despite a fair bit of activity in the area) on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Dec, and was fenced and signed by Corey and Wendy. Wendy has since observed the adult incubating the nest this week.
- Normanville North:
  - Nest discovered at Carrickalinga Sands on 18<sup>th</sup> October and fenced/signed on 19<sup>th</sup> October was presumed to have failed on 26<sup>th</sup> October. There were no tracks (other than HP) leading up to the nest area, and the eggs were completely gone. As a result it was thought there could be a chance that the eggs had hatched, but subsequent observations of the adult pair showed relaxed behaviour (i.e. unlikely that chicks were present).

- Jack discovered a second nest (3 eggs) 100m south of the Carrickalinga Creek at the back of the beach near the dunes (13<sup>th</sup> Nov). Jack installed signs around the nest. Unfortunately the nest failed on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov, Jack found evidence of raven and what looked like fox tracks around the nest site.
- A nest with 1 egg initially (a total of 3 were laid) found by volunteer Jack on the edge of the Carrickalinga Creek on the 27<sup>th</sup> Nov. Jack fenced and signed the nest, unfortunately the adults were not observed incubating and the eggs were gone on Tuesday evening last week (14<sup>th</sup> Dec). They were last seen by Wendy on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December incubating the nest. On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> night, a combination of westerly winds and a high tide washed the nest area away.
- Lady Bay north - A nest with 3 eggs was found by volunteers Colin and Pia south of the Normanville jetty on 8<sup>th</sup> Dec. The nest was approximately 700m south of the jetty. The nest was fenced and signed by Pia, Colin and Glen from DC Yankalilla. Unfortunately the nest had failed on the 13<sup>th</sup> Dec (dog or fox tracks were observed up to the nest and the eggs were gone). Fences and signs were removed by Corey and I on Wednesday last week (15<sup>th</sup> Dec).
- Lady Bay south (monument site) – on the first in November (9<sup>th</sup> Nov) no adults were observed, but on the subsequent two visits (14<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Nov) 2 adults were observed on both occasions. However they did not show any breeding behaviour and there were no scrapes etc. Two vehicle tracks were observed weaving through the upper beach on the 30<sup>th</sup> Nov visit.

### **Morgans Beach**

- Volunteer Bill Page did not see any Hooded Plovers during his visit as part of the biennial count on 14<sup>th</sup> Nov.
- A new volunteer David Woollard will now take over the duties at Morgans Beach which means that Bill can focus on Lands End beach.



Photo: Morgans Beach

### **Lands End**

- Grainne and I visited the beach on 25<sup>th</sup> October and we found an adult pair, and a shell fragment on the beach on the wet sand. There were no chicks observed with the adults (and they were not displaying any behaviour which would indicate they had chicks). Grainne

thought that the marking on the edge of the shell may have been from a large beak breaking the shell.

- There were no adults present during Bill's visit to Lands End (19<sup>th</sup> Nov), although a sooty oystercatcher was observed at the northern end of the beach.

### **Tunkalilla**

- I surveyed Tunkalilla as part of the biennial count on 21<sup>st</sup> November. 3 pairs were found, one at the western end of the beach with a nest (3 eggs) (please see photo below), one pair in approximately the middle of the beach, and a third pair approximately 2/3 of the way along the beach (towards the eastern end) – this pair had prepared what looked like a scrape. It is approximately 5.5km long beach – so room enough for 3 pairs! Vehicle tracks were observed along the back of the beach (dry sand), fortunately not near the nest. Vehicles don't usually have access, but sections of the fence are currently broken.



### **Coolawang Beach** (second bay west of Parsons Beach)

- Brenton Lush (surrounding land owner) visited the beach on 23<sup>rd</sup> October and did not observe any Hoodies or tracks. Although Brenton mentioned that he visited after a high tide and any tracks could have been washed away as it went up to the base of the dunes.
- There were no Hoodies present during Julie and Faye's visit to the site as part of the Biennial count on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov.

### **Sheepies** (first bay west of Parsons Beach)

- Dean visited Sheepies on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov as part of the biennial count. There weren't any Hoodies present but there were small bird tracks seen in one area of the beach.

### **Parsons**

- Dean visited Parsons on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct , 15<sup>th</sup> Nov and 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec and on each visit observed a pair at the western end of the beach. Adults were not exhibiting any behaviour which would indicate nesting activity etc.

### **Waitpinga**

- Terry surveyed on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov and found a pair with a nest (2 eggs) just west of the Waitpinga Creek outlet (the first nest sighted on Waitpinga for many years).

- Dean surveyed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec and observed the adults initially at the far western end, and then between the western end and the estuary. No nest was observed however, and the pair were observed preening for about 10mins.
- Terry surveyed on 17<sup>th</sup> dec, and walked 500m either side of the estuary but there was no sign of the adults or nest.

#### **Inman River estuary**

- The nest with 3 eggs (in seaweed) first observed on 14<sup>th</sup> October by Verle, unfortunately failed somewhere between 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Oct. No evidence for failure was found.
- A new nest (3 eggs) was observed by Verle on 14<sup>th</sup> Nov, and again by Terry on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov. Terry and Corey installed 2 nest signs at key access points. 2 chicks were then observed by Richard on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec – please see the fantastic photo below. Unfortunately the 2 chicks were not observed again. Detailed surveys by Verle, Ross and Terry were made in mid December but there were no further observations of the chicks, and the adults showed no sign of distraction behaviour. Terry visited very early (5.45am!) to ensure there were no other people/dogs on the beach, and did not see any chicks or chick tracks, and the adults were showing no sign of distraction behaviour.



Photo: Richard Edwards

#### **Hindmarsh River estuary**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> nest (first egg detected on 10/10/10) found by volunteer Andrew Jeffery on the western side of the outlet. The nest was going to be fenced, but unfortunately failed in late October (the day before we planned to fence). There were silver gull tracks observed going right up to the nest area. There was also a lot of activity in the area (school visits).
- A nest with 3 eggs was found on the eastern side of the Hindmarsh River outlet on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November by Andrew. Corey Jackson, volunteers Richard Edwards and David Thorn and I fenced the nest and installed 3 signs (please see photo below). The nest was in a good spot, just up on the foredune. It was the week before schoolies so we contacted Adare Caravan Park (where many of the schoolies kids stay) and provided them with some info. They were

more than happy to help out and offered to inform every person that registered at the caravan park.

- The nest survived schoolies (!) and 3 chicks hatched on 7<sup>th</sup> Dec, however only 2 were observed on 8<sup>th</sup> December (please see photo). Unfortunately the 2 chicks were observed for the last time on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> Dec, and on many subsequent visits by volunteers, they have not been observed since. Numerous fox tracks were observed approximately 20m behind where the nest was located.
- The pair look as though they may nest again in a similar area.
- Volunteers had made nearly all local dog-walkers aware of the nest and chicks and the majority were more than happy to help out.
- Many thanks to Brian Doman of City of Victor Harbor for all his support with the program.



Hi Emma,  
Only seen two Chicks today well outside the the fenced area.  
Regards David Thorn



Photos: David Thorn

#### **Watsons Gap**

- Nest with 1 egg found on approx 2/10/10, monitored by Ann Turner and Kerri Bartley. Unfortunately the nest was buried by sand during storm on 6/10/10. Unfortunately the adult pair have not been observed along Watsons Gap during visits made by Ann and Kerri.

#### **Bashams Beach**

- Nest with 1 egg (first detected on 19/9/10) on foredune found by volunteer Win Syson, Grainne Maguire and I. Nest sign installed. Eggs were due to hatch on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct – on Win's visit he observed the adult birds resting very close to the nest site. After 20 mins of observations, there were no sign of chicks. There were no sign of eggs or shells in scrape and Win observed what he thought were fox prints right up to and in front of the nest site. On



subsequent visits chicks were not observed and adults were not displaying distraction behaviours.

- Second nest with (3 eggs) was found by Win on 25<sup>th</sup> Nov, and was fenced and signed by Win and John Turner on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. The nest was approximately 1-200m north of the previous nesting site, right at the back of the beach in front of a tall dune (widest spot on the beach). A chick was observed by Win on 20<sup>th</sup> Dec and is still present which is great news. Strong winds and high tides washed 5 out of the 8 fence stardroppers over, and blew a sign down the beach. It took Win and John 1.5 hours to re-install everything!
- Peter Lake (Compliance/Authorised Officer with DC Alexandrina) attended the Dog's Breakfast workshop at Bashams Beach. Peter suggested installing signage to encourage people to use the pathway behind the beach, rather than walking in front of the nest. Paul Barnes very promptly printed the sign below onto corflute and Win installed the sign at the beach. Seaweed was piled high on the beach, forcing people to walk closer to the nest and resulting in the adult coming off the nest each time. Observations have been made of people reading the sign, and opting to use the path behind the beach. The beach can still be accessed either side of the fenced area. We really appreciate this fantastic support from Peter and Paul at DC Alexandrina.

## Sensitive Hooded Plover Nesting Area

### PLEASE KEEP CLEAR OF FENCED ZONE



Less than 70 Hooded Plovers are left on the Fleurieu Peninsula

Only four breeding pairs remain on the Victor Harbor and Port Elliot coast – **one pair breeds on this beach!**

### How you can help:

- **Do not enter** the fenced area or nearby sand dunes (**please use the footpath behind the beach**. The beach can be accessed on either side of the fenced area via the footpath and access points onto the beach).
- **Always keep your dog leashed** and away from the area.
- **Do not remain or sit** near the fenced area.



Government of South Australia  
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges  
Natural Resources Management Board



### Middleton Beach

- Hooded Plovers have not been observed along this stretch and appears to perhaps not be suitable habitat. Michelle Foster has done a number of surveys, including a survey with Grainne and myself in September, and again for the Biennial survey and Hoodies have not been observed.

**Sir Richard Peninsula**

- Win visited Sir Richard Peninsula on 25<sup>th</sup> Nov (for other shorebird work) and did not observe any Hoodies.