

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP?

The signs and fences are a valuable tool for protecting the birds. Most beach goers don't mean harm to beach-nesting birds and generally only need to be made aware of possible impacts they might have. Birds Australia research shows that when highly threatened nest sites are signed or fenced off, the Hoodies have a much greater chance of raising their young (the equivalent to Hoodies living on isolated beaches).

Local school children have also made Hoodie chick shelters. These small, shady A-frames are placed on the beach within the temporary fences to provide a safe haven for the tiny chicks.

Working with the Normanville Natural Resources Centre, the NRM Board runs Dog's Breakfast information sessions for dog owners and their pets. While the dogs are treated to 'pupcakes' their owners learn about Hoodies and the importance of keeping their dogs on the leash at beaches during the Hooded Plover nesting season.

HOW CAN I HELP?

- Learn to identify Hoodies. If they are present at your local beach during spring and summer, it is likely they are nesting there.
- If you walk your dog along the beach during spring or summer, please keep them on a leash and walk at the water's edge. Hooded Plover adults warn their chicks to hide earlier for longer periods when they see an unleashed dog approaching.
- Vulnerable nests are temporarily fenced to help protect nests and chicks. Small chick shelters may be placed nearby for protection from predators and extreme temperatures. When you see fences, signs or chick shelters on the beach, please observe the following:
 - leash your dog, and walk at the water's edge
 - don't enter the fenced area or nearby sand dunes
 - don't sit or remain near the fenced or signed area.
- If you ride your horse on the beach, visit at low tide and stay close to the water's edge.
- If you are allowed to drive on a beach, try to stay as close to the water's edge at low tide as is safe and pay attention to Hooded Plover signs. Do not park next to fenced areas or signs.



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



Birds Australia
CONSERVATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

Birds of Australia and Bird Observation and Conservation Australia are merging to form a new organisation called Bird Life Australia, to be launched in 2012.

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board is working with volunteers, Birds Australia, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, local councils (City of Onkaparinga, District Council of Yankalilla, City of Victor Harbor and Alexandrina Council) and the Normanville Natural Resource Centre to monitor and conserve Hooded Plovers on the Fleurieu Peninsula, South Australia.

Photo credits: Birds Australia, Gillian Rayment – Azoic Arts (Masked Lapwing), Emma Stephens, Richard Edwards (fence, chick sheltering, adult on nest), Peter Gower Photos (Hooded Plover adult) and Sharon Gillam (Hooded Plover adult - cover).

Local contacts

Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board
205 Greenhill Road Eastwood SA 5067
Ph: 08 8273 9100
www.amlnrm.sa.gov.au

Birds Australia | www.birdsaustralia.com.au/beach

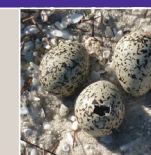
© Department of Natural Resources | December 2011 | FIS 91351

Printed on Tudor RP 100% recycled Australian-made paper

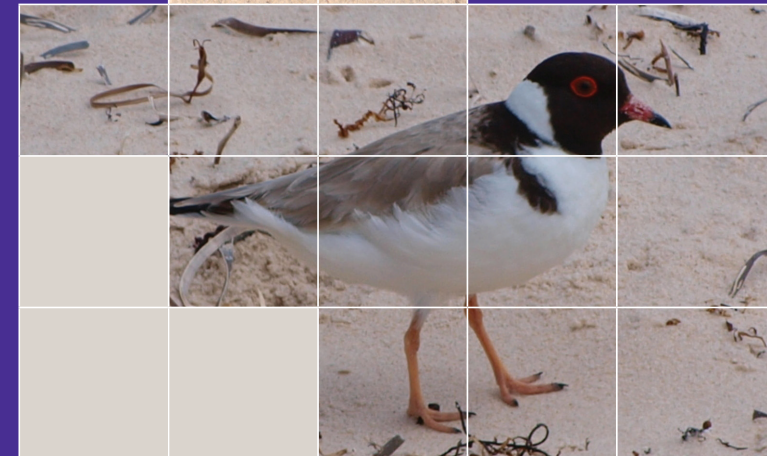


Going to the beach?

Watch out for Hoodies!



Information about Hooded Plovers for users of Fleurieu Peninsula southern ocean beaches





The Hooded Plover is a small bird found on Australia's southern ocean beaches, including the Fleurieu Peninsula.

These birds like surf beaches and like to nest where we like to walk, between the high-water mark and in the sand dunes. Hoodies live on our beaches year round, but make their nests on the sand from August to March.

HOODIE FACTS

Hooded Plover *Thinornis rubricollis*

Family: Charadriidae

Other Names: Hooded Dotterel or Dotterel, (colloquially) Hoodie

Vulnerable in South Australia where there are around 600 birds; fewer than 70 Hooded Plovers are found on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Length: 19–23 cm, **Height:** 10 cm

Wingspan: 36–44 cm, **Weight:** 90–100 g

Birds lay 1–3 white or yellowish-grey eggs with blackish-brown and inky grey spots. They incubate them for about 28 days. Once hatched, chicks follow the parents about and find their own food and cannot fly for 5 weeks.

HOW MANY HOODIES?

There are not that many Hooded Plovers in Australia. In eastern Australia (including South Australia) there are estimates of <3,000 birds and <4,000 in the west. In South Australia, there are thought to be between 500 to 800 Hoodies.

In South Australia the Hooded Plover is listed under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* as vulnerable. That means it is considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

It is estimated that there are **less than 70 Hooded Plovers left on the Fleurieu Peninsula**. A national survey in 2010 found 37 adults and one juvenile on the Fleurieu Peninsula, but there are a few inaccessible beaches where birds may live.

IS IT A HOODIE?

Adult Hooded plovers are about 10cm high and can be identified by their black hood, red circle around their eye, red bill tipped with black and orange stalk-like legs. The neck is black with a white band along the back. The young birds can be confused with some other shorebirds, but the white band along the back of the neck distinguishes them from other birds.

There are a few types of plovers. Hooded Plovers live and nest on the beach. A larger type of plover, the Masked Lapwing (*Vanellus miles*) or Spurwing Plover is often seen nesting on ovals, roundabouts, driveways and other sites and may swoop you if come near its nest or chicks. Masked Lapwings do not nest on the beach.

The more common and swooping Masked Lapwing or Spur-winged Plover.



WHY LIVE ON THE BEACH?

The sea washes up seagrasses and algae and other 'beach-wrack' that insects, sand-hoppers and other small critters feed on. Living and nesting right on the beach, the plovers and their chicks don't have far to go for a feast.

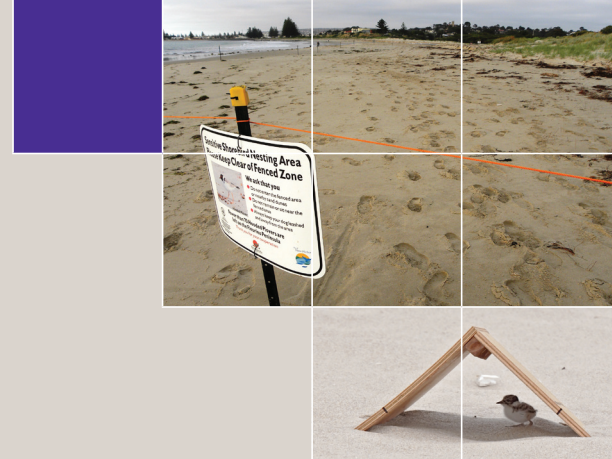
Sitting on the beach, you might think these birds would be easy to find. But their colours blend in well with the sand, making them hard to spot.

Hoodies lay up to three eggs directly on the sand in a simple, shallow nest scrape. Both parents help look after the nest and keep watch for predators for 28 days until the eggs hatch. Then the fluffy, flightless chicks hatch and need to feed themselves to grow full size in 35 days. Young Hoodies can fly after five weeks. When disturbed the chicks stay still and hide.

CRUNCH!!!

Being well camouflaged and not moving means people, dogs, vehicles or horses on the beach can step, drive or ride right on the eggs or chicks. If people or dogs stay near the nest they can keep the parents away from the nest. That means the eggs are left in the sun to bake or are at risk being taken by natural predators such as gulls, ravens and kestrels. If the chicks are always running away or hiding, they won't be feeding and may starve.

Keeping your dog on a leash at the beach will help these birds.



WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP?

A South Australian Recovery Plan for the Hooded Plover was prepared in 2006. Actions from the Recovery Plan have been incorporated into the Southern Fleurieu Coastal Action Plan (2007). The Coastal Action Plan helps set priorities for coastal conservation for the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board, local councils and Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Nationally, Birds Australia, has developed a range of practical measures to reduce the threats to beach-nesting birds, including Hooded Plover. These have been closely monitored and trialed.

Working with researchers, the NRM Board has developed a Beach Response Plan with local councils and volunteers.

The Board coordinates a network of volunteers to observe Hooded Plover activity on our Fleurieu beaches. This trained and dedicated 'Hoodie team' monitor beaches and report on nesting activity. All volunteers receive training, volunteer registration, guidelines to monitoring, datasheet and instructions.

Based on nesting activity reports, the NRM Board works with local councils and Department of Environment and Natural Resources to decide if there is a need to protect the nest. This is done by putting up temporary signs and fences to identify nest areas to beach-goers. This allows beach goers to be aware of nests and stay clear to give the birds and their chicks a better chance.