



## Volunteers in action

Every second year, in conjunction with hundreds of volunteers across Australia, a local team of volunteers survey all suitable hooded plover habitats across the Yorke Peninsula coastline as part of the national Biennial Count coordinated by BirdLife Australia. All volunteers receive training, volunteer registration, guidelines to monitoring, datasheets and instructions. This giant coordinated effort delivers the most accurate estimate of the total hoodie population, and a reliable assessment of the health of their habitat as well as the threats they face.

Keen to help? Follow *Friends of Hooded Plovers, Yorke Peninsula* on Facebook, where you'll connect with the regional volunteer coordinator and a group of volunteers who are passionate about hooded plover conservation.



## 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.
- Keep your dog on a leash and walk at the water's edge.
- When you see signs, fences, 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 must drive on the beach, pay attention to signs, and only drive on beaches where vehicle access is permitted. Never drive on beaches during high tide, always stay close to the water's edge and never drive on the upper beach or in dunes.
- Volunteers are always needed and you can commit to as much or as little involvement as you'd like.
  - Volunteer for one day every two years to walk a designated beach and count the number of birds.
  - 'Adopt a beach' and regularly monitor a particular pair of hoodies throughout the breeding season.



## For more information

Northern and Yorke Landscape Board

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facebook.com/NYLandscapeSA

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### Marna Banggara



Hooded plovers are one of the locally iconic species being protected by Marna Banggara, an ambitious project that aims to return some of Australia's threatened native wildlife and reinvigorate the bushland on southern Yorke Peninsula.

[www.marnabanggara.com.au](http://www.marnabanggara.com.au)

This project is jointly funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.

### BirdLife Australia



The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board is working with volunteers, BirdLife Australia and local councils to monitor and conserve hooded plovers on the Yorke Peninsula. To learn more about the program, visit

<http://birdlife.org.au/beach>

# Hooded plovers

on Yorke Peninsula beaches





The hooded plover is a threatened shorebird that lives on our beaches. More than a third of South Australia's population live on Yorke Peninsula.

These birds like sandy beaches and 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 cucullatus*)  
**Family:** Charadriidae  
**Other Names:** Hooded Dotterel or Dotterel, (colloquially) hoodie  
 Vulnerable in South Australia where there are around 800 birds; approx. 300 hooded plovers are found on Yorke 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 parents and find their own food and cannot fly for 5 weeks.

### How many hoodies?

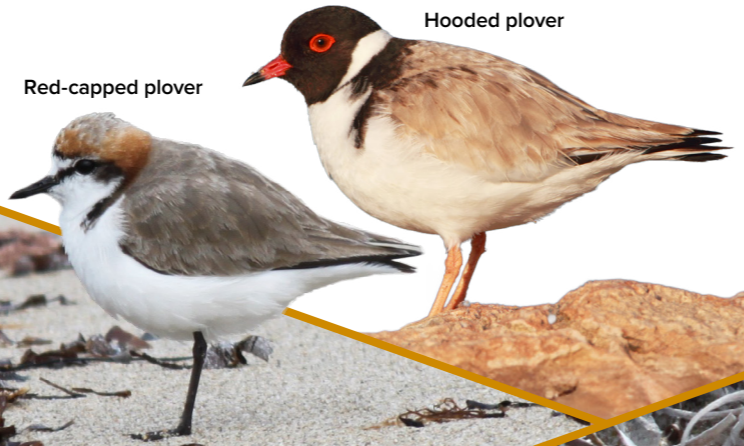
There are not that many hooded plovers in Australia. In eastern Australia (including South Australia) there are estimates of 3,000 birds, with a similar number recorded in the west. In South Australia, there are thought to be between 700 to 800 hoodies.

The hooded plover is listed as vulnerable in South Australia under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* and at a national level under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. This means the birds are facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

It is estimated that there are about 300 hooded plovers left on Yorke Peninsula. A survey in 2022 found 292 adults and 18 juveniles.

### Is it a hoodie?

Adult hooded plovers are about 10 cm 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 their neck distinguishes them. Another plover found on Yorke Peninsula is the red-capped plover (*Charadrius ruficapillus*). It also lives and nests on sandy beaches. Red-capped plovers are slightly smaller than hoodies. The male red-capped plover has a bright reddish crown and nape, and a black short bill and legs. The female is duller in colour.



### Why live on the beach?

The sea washes up algae, seagrasses 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. The fluffy, flightless chicks then hatch and need to feed themselves to grow to full size in 35 days. 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 of 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.

### What is being done to help?

The Northern and Yorke Landscape Board in conjunction with BirdLife Australia coordinates a network of volunteers to observe hooded plover activity on Yorke Peninsula beaches. This trained and dedicated 'hoodie team' monitors beaches and reports on nesting activity. The volunteers are trained to enter their observations directly into a data program for collection of information. This information helps to identify threats and improve conservation management.

Based on nesting activity reports, the Board works with local councils and the community 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 encourages beach goers to be aware and stay clear of nests to give the birds and their chicks a better chance of survival.

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.

BirdLife 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).

