



# THE wing thing

BEACH-NESTING BIRDS



**birdlife**

AUSTRALIA

**inside:** art & nature activities  
online animation links & stories  
kids' competitions & prizes

# What's happening on the beach this



You might think black, white and red would stand out on the beach, but these little guys are masters of disguise. The Hooded Plover, or "Hoodie", spends its whole life at the beach and it's one of the most threatened birds in Australia.

Hoodies are beach-nesting birds that breed ON THE BEACH between August and March. They need to keep watch for danger in all directions. Birds of prey (called raptors - which eat young chicks) fly overhead hunting for food. Dogs race around sniffing for things to chew. Noisy people are all over the beach.

If Hoodie parents see you as a threat they will sneak away from the nest and try to get your attention by running in front of you and pretending their wing is broken. To many of their natural predators

Join BirdLife Australia's Art Extravaganza and make some art for conservation...

## Summer?

this neat little trick actually works since they appear easier to catch, and often raptors or dogs will follow them instead of finding the chicks or eggs. While the eggs are left alone they should be safe because they are camouflaged to look just like the sand, but that makes them easy to step on!

Since there are so many people on the beaches in summer the Hoodie parents spend far too long running around trying to lead us away from their nest. This is dangerous for Hoodie parents because on a hot summer day they need to sit on their eggs to keep them cool. If the egg is left for more than a few minutes the chick inside will get too hot and die.

There are lots of people who care about Hoodies and are working hard to protect them. You can help them too by keeping an eye out for signs and fences on the beach.

Visit our website to find out more about our art competitions and play the Hoodie

# animation!

**GO TO:** [WWW.BIRDSAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/BEACH](http://WWW.BIRDSAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/BEACH)

# HELP SAVE THE HOODED PLOVER



Beach-nesting birds use camouflage to keep their eggs and chicks safe. To avoid stepping on them, keep out of the dunes and avoid fenced areas. The water's edge is the safest place to walk.



On a hot summer day beach-nesting birds sit on their eggs to keep them cool. When you go down to the beach, keep an eye out for birds - if you see them, give them some space so they can stay on their eggs.



Parent Hoodies don't feed their chicks. As soon as they hatch the little chicks leave the nest to find food. So the chicks can get down to the water without a fright, don't spend time in front of fenced areas.



**LOOK OUT FOR THIS CHICK**



Dogs off the lead terrify chicks. Dogs on beaches must wear leashes!





# kids in the HOOD

Kids can really help the Hooded Plover survive. Here are a few comments from our young volunteers.



"Hi. I am Zane and I am six years old. I am from the Surf Coast, Jan Juc. I like using Dad's binoculars to search for band numbers on the Hoodies legs. The scientists put them there so they can tell which bird is which. I also like using binoculars for finding eggs in the sand. The BEST thing is trying not to step on the eggs. I have learnt a lot of things about Hoodies. Some of these things are where they live, what they do, how they survive and how I can help."



What do you like most about volunteering on the Hoodie project?

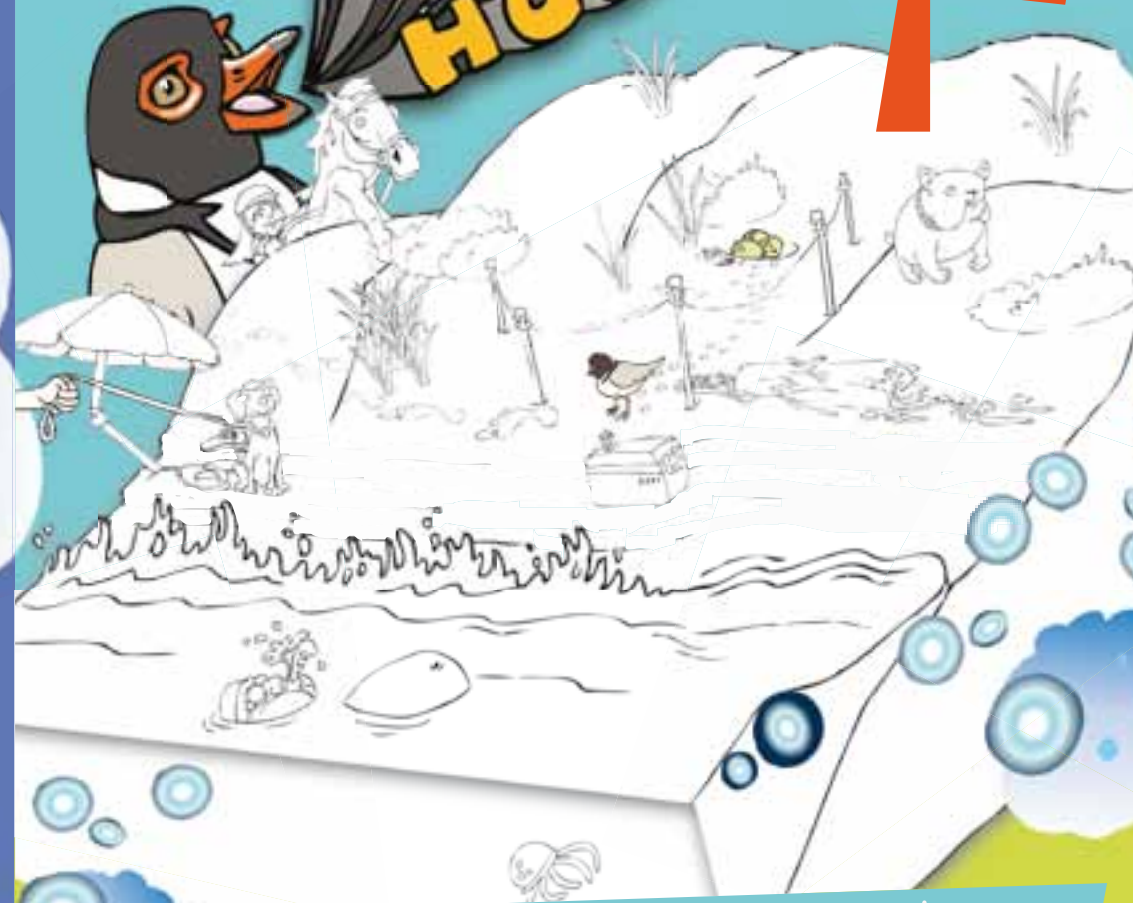
"We like feeling the excitement of seeing one. We like watching them scurrying along the beach, always on the lookout. Also we like knowing that we can help Hooded Plovers survive. If they were gone we wouldn't have the joy of looking out for hoodies on the beach. Its awesome how fluffy they are." Mitchell, Cassie and Harriet Fallaw.



"At school we made posters of the Hoodies life cycle. We also built shelters for the chicks. These shelters are placed on the beach and the birds use them to shelter from the sun. We have become aware of how we can be more careful playing and running at the beach. We hope we can make a difference now we know how we can protect the eggs and chicks." Holly, Meaghan & Dino, grade 6 Rye Primary School.

You can join this growing team by contacting [thewingthing@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:thewingthing@birdsaustralia.com.au)

## LIFE IN THE HOOD



-  Walk along the water's edge, not in the dunes.
-  Don't enter or play near fenced areas.
-  Keep your dog on a leash.

In the beach scene above the Hoodie is keen to sit on its eggs but there are some dangers lurking nearby.

## COLOUR IN

all the good things about this scene and cross out the dangers so the parent bird can return to its nest. It spends 28 days protecting its eggs before the chicks hatch.



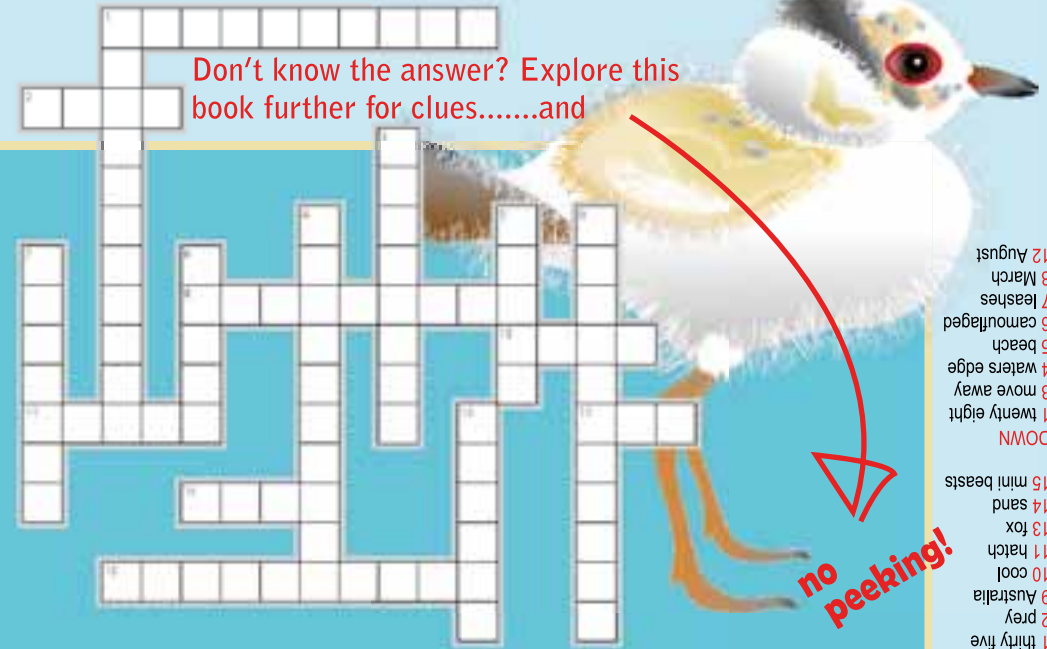
# Crossword

## Across

1. After hatching, Hoodie chicks have how many days to survive before they can fly? (6,4)
2. A group of birds who particularly like eating Hoodie chicks are called birds of \_ (4)
9. In which country do Hooded Plovers live? (9)
10. On really hot days parent Hoodies sit on their eggs to keep them \_ (4)
11. Hoodie chicks start feeding themselves as soon as they \_ (5)
13. Which feral animal might eat Hoodie eggs or chicks? (3)
14. Hoodie eggs are speckled to match the \_ (4)
15. Hoodies search the beach to feast on \_\_ (4,6)

## Down

1. It takes how many days for a Hoodie egg to hatch? (6,5)
3. If you see a signed or fenced area what should you do? (4,4)
4. If you're going for a walk on the beach, the safest place to walk is at the \_ (5,4)
5. Most birds nest in trees but Hooded Plovers nest on the \_ (5)
6. Eggs are so hard to see in the dry sand because they are \_ (11)
7. Dogs on beaches must wear \_ (7)
8. You need to keep an eye out for Hoodies all through summer until which month when most have finished breeding? (5)
12. Hoodies start laying their eggs in which month?(6)



ACROSS  
1 thirty five  
2 prey  
9 Australia  
10 cool  
11 hatch  
13 fox  
14 sand  
15 mini beasts  
DOWN  
1 twenty eight  
3 move away  
4 waters edge  
5 beach  
6 camouflaged  
7 leashes  
8 March  
12 August

# Comic



Does a Hoodie parent really make drawings of monsters in the sand to scare away birds of prey?  
Do Hoodie chicks really eat worms that have been sitting in front of a cosy fire place beneath the sand?

Draw your own comic based on what Hoodies do to survive. Check out the website for details on how to enter your comic strip in the art competition at [www.birdsaustralia.com.au/beach](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/beach)



YOU'RE A HOODIE CHICK AND HAVE TO SURVIVE ON THE BEACH FOR 35 DAYS BEFORE YOU CAN FLY. GOOD LUCK!

**START**

**1** you're so excited to be out of that egg, hop ahead one day **2**

**3** it's so very hot and you're so very tiny, stagger back one day **4**

**5** this dog is on a leash so you're safe to make a dash to day 19 **6**

to win the game you need to roll the dice and land on **35!** otherwise bounce back.

you were nearly trodden on and had a terrible fright! go back to day 3

**12** you found some sand hoppers to eat. feast on them to day 14 **11** the tide was very high today & you had to stay in the dunes, miss a turn **10**

**9** you found a trail of mini beasts to eat so gobble them up to day 18 **8**

**19** you spent all day trying to avoid humans and didn't get to feed so wander back hungry to day 14 **20**

**15** a car nearly ran over you! return lucky to be alive to day 13 **16**

**25** you were chased by some curious kids, flee back to day 10 **24**

**27** this is the most delicious mollusc you have ever eaten. hop ahead one day **28**

**26** you're trying to get to the water's edge to eat but the humans won't move away miss a turn **25**

**23** your home is protected by signs and fences skip free & easy to day 31 **22**

**22** you see a fox in the distance and run for your life back to day 5 **21**

**29** a sea eagle tried to catch you but your parents led it away, skip ahead 1 day **30**

**30** some fenced areas also have chick shelters so the birds can rest in the shade. **BE HAPPY** **31**

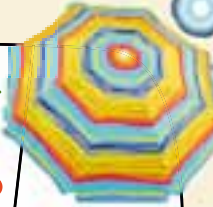
**32** this big dog has no leash and chased you back to day 28 quick hide! **33**

**34** this little dog has no leash and yap yap yaps at you all the way back to the start! **34**

only **30%** of Hooded Plover chicks survive to flying age when they can be safe from most dangers, but you did it! **CONGRATULATIONS!** **35!**

you will need: dice, counters and some friends to play with. to play: roll the dice and run.

**HELP HOODIES!**



\*because Australia's beaches are now so busy only 3 out of 10 chicks hatch out of their eggs to then have a chance to grow and fly.

YOU'RE NOW FREE AS A BIRD!



# YOU SHARE THE BEACH WITH BIRDS & BEASTS!

Hooded Plovers share the beaches with many curious creatures including you! If you're going to the beach this summer take some binoculars and zoom in on the birds' world. Never EVER walk up to the birds to check them out, that would terrify them. Stay at least 50 metres away and use your binoculars. They may be feeding on mini beasts which you can see in this picture circling the Hoodies.

Get a close up look at the mini beasts on this page and in the sand by using a magnifying glass. Many birds like to eat these "beasts". Some of the birds on this page live in Australia all year round but others have flown great distances to arrive in spring for the feast found in the sand. Check out the next page for more details on who eats what; you may be surprised by what you find out.



## KEY:

These beach-nesting birds are shorebirds, named this because they feed along the shore. As soon as the chicks hatch they must find their own food on the beach!

These beach-nesting birds are seabirds, named this because they feed out at sea. Since the chicks can't yet fly, they hide safely on their nest until the parents return with food.



Hooded Plovers live and feed on the beaches of Australia all year round...

...WITH MANY OTHER BIRDS YOU MAY RECOGNISE.

**Ravens** will eat any beach-nesting birds' eggs, chicks and even parent birds.

**Magpies** pick up Hoodie eggs and roll them out of nests.

**Gulls** will eat pretty much anything that's handy, including Hoodie chicks when they're small.

Small raptors like the **Nankeen Kestrel** will cruise the dunes and prey on chicks if they spot them on the beach.

Larger birds of prey like the **White-bellied Sea-Eagle** have "bigger fish to fry". Sea-Eagles will eat large fish and eels more than a metre long. They are also known to hunt something as big as an adult Oystercatcher!

**Plovers** are the smallest of the beach-nesters. You will typically see their plump bodies moving across the sand atop tiny, rapidly moving legs, where they will pause and peck sand fleas, worms and crustaceans from amongst seaweed, wet sand and rock platforms.

**Terns** prefer fish to bugs. They spot small fish in shallow water and dive bomb them, plunging their heads underneath the water to catch a snack.

**Oystercatchers** eat all kinds of bugs, worms and shellfish. Their bills are strong enough to chisel tough shellfish from rocks but are also so sensitive they feel worms in the soft sand.

**Beach Stone-curlews** have been seen striking at crabs for a feed. They have strong beaks and will hammer at their prey before swallowing. They are shy birds and frighten easily so if you see one, stay well away.

If you want to know where these birds live go to [www.birdsinbackyards.net/finder](http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/finder)

Two million migratory shorebirds fly here every year!

THE MIGRATING CHICKS ARE ONLY 8 WEEKS OLD WHEN THEY SET OFF FROM THE TOP OF THE PLANET. THEY LEAVE FROM COUNTRIES SUCH AS SIBERIA, ALASKA AND MONGOLIA.

DURING THEIR LIFETIME SHOREBIRDS MIGRATE THE SAME DISTANCE AS BETWEEN THE EARTH AND THE MOON 400,000 KM

The **Red-necked Stint**

weighs as much as this mag and can fly 12,500 km.

The **Ruddy Turnstone**

flicks over pebbles and seaweed looking for bugs to eat.

The **Eastern Curlew**

has a long curved bill which it uses to get right down into the deep sand where other birds cannot reach.

**Double-banded Plovers**

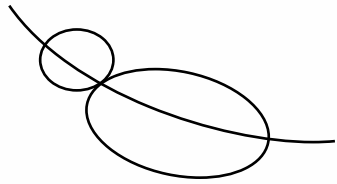
breed in New Zealand and are the only migratory bird to visit Australia during our winter.

You might be lucky enough to see some of these **incredible birds** on the beach this summer. Use some binoculars to get a good look. Go to [www.birdsinbackyards.net/finder](http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/finder) to find out what bird it is and where it has flown from and all sorts of interesting birdy facts!

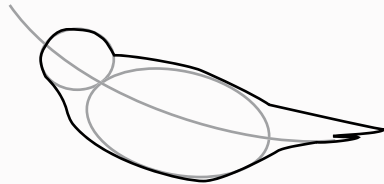


# HOW TO DRAW A HOODIE

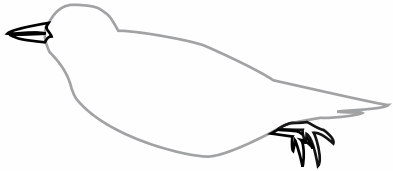
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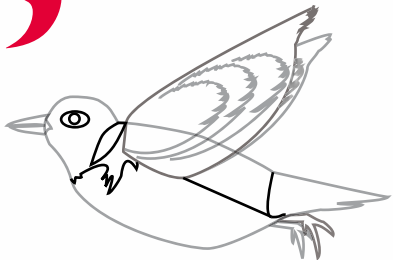
3



4



5



6



# NOW PAINT IT!

**PAINT THE HOODED PLOVERS ON THEIR HOME TURF, THE BEACH. PAINT WHAT THEY LIKE TO EAT OR WHERE THEY HIDE OR HOW WE CAN HELP THEM SURVIVE A BUSY SUMMER.....**



Natalia Scully, age 13



Stephanie Lay, age 7



Rebecca Grey, age 13



Stanley Aaron, age 13



Isabella Woinarski, age 11



Liliana Fau, age 8

**GO TO [WWW.BIRDSAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/BEACH](http://WWW.BIRDSAUSTRALIA.COM.AU/BEACH) TO FIND OUT HOW TO ENTER THE BIRD ART COMPETITION. THERE ARE LOTS OF PAINTINGS TO SEE ON THE WEBSITE AS WELL AS A HOODIE ANIMATION TO PLAY!**

**JUST FOLLOW THE CHICK ON THE ASTEROID.....**



BirdLife Australia's beach-nesting birds project is funded by the Australian Government's Caring For Our Country and the Victorian Government's Investment Framework. To find out more about the project visit [www.birdsaustralia.com.au/beach](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/beach) or email [hoodedplover@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:hoodedplover@birdsaustralia.com.au)



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FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY

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\*NOTE by submitting your art work for any competition in the wing thing you give BirdLife Australia permission to publish it both online and in print. All entries will have the artist acknowledged.



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BirdLife Australia is dedicated to achieving outstanding conservation results for our native birds and their habitats. With our specialised knowledge and the commitment of an Australia-wide network of volunteers and supporters, we are creating a bright future for Australia's birds.

Add your voice



[birdlife.org.au](http://birdlife.org.au)