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Newsletter for the Asia Pacific Flyways

No 16: January 2010

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Tattler is the quarterly newsletter of the Australasian Wader Studies Group. Contributions are welcome and encouraged for all working with shorebirds and their habitats along the East Asian– Australasian Flyway. Please contact the editor for more information.

Editorial

Technology always amazes me. In an effort to make things smaller, faster, more powerful we can

now attach very small electronic devices weighing just over one gram to the legs of very small birds, have them stay on for ten months, then somehow find them again, remove the device and get data that will hopefully tell us where they have been and what they have been up to.

The increase in the number of birds with geolocators, satellite transmitters or even the humble coloured leg flag has been phenomenal and birdwatchers across the flyway are uncovering many of the secrets of migration. Gone are the days of Aristotle where birds were just thought to be hibernating in the mud or in the early 18th century where it was proposed that they wintered on the moon!

Even with technology, however, there are just as many questions that remain unanswered. Can we ensure species survival across the flyway in a changing climate? Can we balance development with conservation at a local, regional and international scale? What is the role of local communities in conservation?

National Summer Shorebird Surveys

It's that time of the year again when the migratory shorebirds return to our shores in big numbers to spend the summer. There are over 150 shorebird areas to survey with many opportunities to experience large and diverse flocks of shorebirds and beautiful coastal and wetland areas, as well as meet other like-minded people.

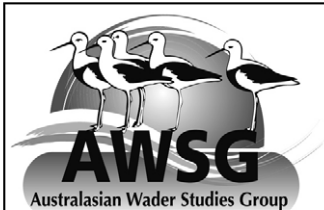
Additional counters are needed and are welcome, even those less experienced in wader identification can help out and get some practice at identifying these tricky birds! For full details see the count schedule at <http://www.shorebirds.org.au/pdfs/Shorebird-Count-schedule-summer-2009-10.pdf>. Please contact the person in your Shorebird Area listed in the Schedule if you are able to help out. Or, if you want to put your hand up to coordinate or be a contact for one of the areas where no-one is yet listed, contact shorebirds@birdsaustralia.com.au. If you would like to add an area and/or your details to the schedule [let us know](#).

Also, there are random areas spread throughout the country that we need surveys done at, and we always welcome any shorebird count data you might collect. If you are new to shorebirds, come along to one of our workshops, help scribe data on a count, or join up with locals in your area to learn about this fascinating and increasingly threatened group of birds.

You can enter, store, and edit any of your shorebird counts at <http://data.shorebirds.org.au>: just ask for a username and password to get started by contacting Jo & Rob on (03) 9347 0757 or e-mailing shorebirds@birdsaustralia.com.au.

To learn more about the Shorebirds 2020 program and to find all kinds of information on shorebirds visit www.shorebirds.org.au.

The Shorebirds 2020 team
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www.awsg.org.au



Ruddy Turnstones bring their story home to Flinders

Last March the VWSG used some relatively new technology by attaching geolocators to 8 Ruddy Turnstone; 6 of these were placed on birds captured at Flinders and 2 were placed on birds captured in the SE of South Australia. These instruments, weighing 1.1g, record light levels and when the information is downloaded, they provide a record of the spatial movements of the bird with time. It was hoped that this information would provide us with significantly more knowledge of the migration and breeding movements of these birds. However, to get this information, the bird needs to be recaptured and the instrument removed for downloading. Hence, we anxiously awaited the return of the birds to Flinders and South Australia.

One bird with a geocator was caught on 20 October 2009; unfortunately the device had malfunctioned when the bird was in the Sea of Okhosk in Far Eastern Russia, however, we did get some very useful information from it. This placed additional pressure on the group to capturing the other instrumented birds.

Through the persistence of Penny Johns who monitored the birds at Flinders so closely, it was determined that we had another 3 geocator birds back at Flinders in December 2009. However, between October 2009 and early January 2010 at least 4 attempts were made to catch these birds and on each occasion they outwitted us.

Another attempt was made on 8 January 2010. We set the net on Thursday evening with the usual debate of where the tides might be at dawn and after a sleepless night of 'will the nets be flooded out etc' our small team was on the beach at 5.40am – the net was OK albeit further from the tide than we would have liked. We had the usual problems of aggressive Sooty Oystercatchers, birds too far from the net, disturbances etc. We lost the tide very quickly and it seemed that we were facing yet another blank day. Suddenly the turnstones attitude changed to feeding and up the beach they came to

feed in the weed. We could only see a third of the flock but on a risk assessment thought that at least one 'wanted' bird would be in the group. We fired and to our surprise we actually caught 14 birds including 3 with geolocators!! Penny and I did a dance on the beach in jubilation!!

All birds were safely placed in keeping cages and our first task was the removal of the precious geolocators. This happened without a problem with all of the team participating. There were also 22 Stints in the catch, although they were very much of secondary interest at the time.

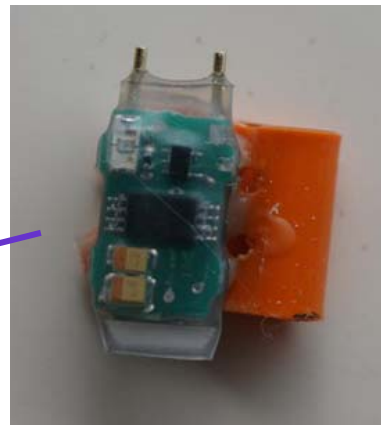
Thus we have retrieved 4 out of a total of 6 instruments placed on these birds at Flinders – a remarkable outcome. These geolocators have been sent to Cambridge where they will be downloaded and we eagerly await the story that they tell of the incredible journey that these birds have made.

Thanks are due to the large number of people who have helped with this project. In particular Penny Johns who so persistently monitored the birds on Flinders beach. I would really like to acknowledge and thank the whole of the team – I have rarely participated in a catch where absolutely everyone had a vital part to play in its success. We owe so much to Penny for her persistence and for the important information she regularly provided. Others in the team were Meg Macmillan and her son Ian and grandson Hamish, Dave Cropley, Sue Quirk, Doris Graham, Carlene Gosbell and a new starter, Rob Patrick (who had a baptism of fire and pressed the firing button!!). There were so many others who helped on almost all of previous attempts, Graham and Margaret Rowe, Roger Richards and others. It was unfortunate that Clive was not with us, as he and Pat were on a cruise to the Antarctic, but I am sure he will have a smile on his face when he gets this news! His enormous efforts and enthusiasm must also be acknowledged.

Ken Gosbell



*Geocator on a Ruddy Turnstone at Flinders
(Photo: Nicole Brooker)*



*Geocator Mk10 1.1g
(Photo: Ken Gosbell)*

Symposium on Wetlands and Waterbirds in Taiwan, December, 2009

I was invited to make a presentation on behalf of the AWSG to the 'International Symposium on Wetlands and Waterbirds Conservation' in Taiwan 1 – 3 December 2009. This Symposium was hosted by the Endemic Species Research Institute and sponsored by a number of government and academic agencies as well as NGO's such as the Wild Bird Federation. The meeting was held at the Research Institute in Tainan which is an important reserve for the threatened Black-faced Spoonbill.

The Symposium had the following themes:

- Conservation promotion for Migratory birds,
- Global warming and Changes in Coastal wetlands,
- Population dynamics and habitat conservation of migratory waterbirds and,
- Ecotourism and sustainable use of coastal wetlands.

Expert speakers came from Hong Kong, Korea, Birdlife International, USA (Maine and Alaska) as well as several from Taiwan.

The first day was devoted to waterbirds with an emphasis on the threatened Black-faced Spoonbill together with the impacts of habitat change. The second day was devoted to population dynamics with an emphasis on shorebirds as well as ecotourism. A colleague from Alaska, Dr Rick Lanctot gave an interesting dissertation on the use of stable isotopes and genetics to understand the connectivity of the various Dunlin subspecies. In my presentation I outlined the activities of the AWSG and other groups in Australia and their importance in gathering data on population abundance, movements, and survival rates etc which were important to the objective of the conservation of shorebirds throughout the Flyway. I also highlighted the critical issues currently being faced in the East Asian Australasian Flyway, particularly in stopover areas where development was competing with available tidal flat resources.

At the conclusion of the Symposium there was a desire to make a strong statement expressing concern at the critical decline in many species of shorebirds in this Flyway. Accordingly the following statement was formulated:

Recommendations for actions and collaboration in the East Asian- Australasian Flyway

With the widespread and critical decline in shorebird populations in the East Asian- Australasian Flyway there is an urgent need to promote collaboration among governmental conservation decision-makers



Banding workshop in Taiwan (Photo Ken Gosbell)

and practitioners across the Flyway. We therefore URGE governments at all levels to help facilitate protection, research and monitoring aimed at the preservation of waterbirds and shorebirds and to prepare management plans accordingly; AND to encourage communication and collaboration within the Flyway with particular emphasis on the north Asia region. SPECIFICALLY we seek the restriction of further reclamation and destruction of tidal flat habitat and other coastal ecosystems, particularly those of known international importance for shorebird migration. FURTHERMORE we advocate the restoration of those coastal ecosystems within areas of known importance for migratory birds that have been previously modified or destroyed.

While in Taiwan I was able to participate in several mist netting sessions including one which was a workshop undertaken as part of the Symposium. At this workshop it was encouraging to see so many young people keen to learn more about banding and shorebirds in general. The Taiwan Wader Study Group under ChungYu Chiang undertakes some very useful studies and is vital in providing information back to Australia on sightings and movements of birds on migration.

The short time I spent in Taiwan was both enjoyable and a learning experience. It was encouraging to see such a wide interest from government, academia and local communities in migratory birds and I hope that this can translate into strong conservation actions. Thanks to the Endemic Species Research Institute for sponsoring my attendance and to ChungYu Chiang and Chih-hao Chen for being such wonderful hosts.

Ken Gosbell

Chairman, AWSG



Breeding Season 2009: Preliminary results and conclusions of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper survey in Kamchatka and Chukotka 2009

Karaginsky Bay coasts, NE Kamchatka, June-July 2009.

An International expedition of British, German, Russian and Swedish participants under the lead of Evgeny Syroechkovsky (Russian Academy of Sciences and ArcCona Cambridge) explored suitable coastal areas as potential breeding sites for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper (SBS) on the southern most edge of the known breeding range in North-East Kamchatka in Karaginsky Bay. Previous records from the area dated from the 1970s. Suitable habitats south and north of the area were checked and surveyed as appropriate. A total of about 400km of coastline was covered in June-July 2009 by two field teams of four people each. Twelve of 15 potential breeding sites of SBS (crowberry spits and lagoon coasts) identified by satellite imagery interpretation were covered by approximately 370km of field surveys.

Preliminary Results

Only one probable breeding Spoon-billed Sandpiper was found within the most southern part of the species breeding range in Kamchatka. It was supposed to have 5-50 breeding pairs (Syroechkovsky, 2005) so this survey cut the evaluation of total numbers considerably.



Territorial male, displaying briefly at Ilpyrsky spit, June 2009 (Photo: Phil Palmer)

Two breeding locations known from ornithological literature and one more breeding area identified through local knowledge were no longer occupied and had no breeding pairs left.

The breeding habitats of the species are changing and many locations are becoming less suitable for the species, most likely due to climate related changes in vegetation. In Kayum spit, where a SBS brood was recorded in 1972 hardly any good habitat was left.

In contrast to Chukotka, most of the spits with potential good habitats for SBS are permanently disturbed by humans in June-July, the peak salmon fishing time. The intensification and modernisation of salmon fishing in the late 1990s–2000s by private investors has coincided with the period of most rapid decline of SBS.

The tradition of shooting waders in local villages (quite distinct from Chukotka) makes the killing of SBS in flocks during spring migration more likely and a regular event: 30% of 60 hunters knew SBS and records of shot birds are known even as recent as 2008 and 2009. The areas of traditional spring hunting at the spits are the areas of important regional spring stopover of SBS and probably the whole world population of SBS congregates here on spring migration on the snow free mudflat areas. Therefore local hunting pressure at this time may play significant role in species decline.

Our findings in Kamchatka show some quite high hunting pressure on waders and Spoon-billed Sandpiper and were surprising and contrary to the observation from Chukotka, where hardly any hunting pressure exists.

This is the first time in the last 10 years of work within breeding range of the species that we recorded such a high percentage (30%) of hunters who recognise SBS. In Chukotka the number of people who have reliably seen SBS was never higher than 3-5% of hunters interviewed. It could be explained by the fact that Chukotka hunters nearly never shoot small waders and that in Chukotka SBS are wide spread in the breeding habitats and are not concentrated on migration in spring on limited snow free areas near to mudflats, which are at the same time best hunting grounds in spring for local hunters.

The Karaginsky Region of Kamchatka has around 600 active hunters. Most of them regularly shoot waders, including small ones. None of the hunters have ever heard that the bird is protected. Sampling of interviewed hunters was not scientifically planned but we think it was close to random as we had been requesting all adult men villagers who were sober and willing to communicate. We can't be sure if our results can be extrapolated but it is clear that several SBS (probably 3 to 10 birds) could be shot each year by hunters of Karaginsky region only.

As it is likely that most of global population is migrating in spring and autumn through Karaginsky region on their way to Chukotka and on return, the threat to the global population of SBS from local hunters is real. Education work with hunters and schoolchildren is needed in this region. Further



Kayum spit 11 June 2009 (Photo: Christoph Zöckler)

surveys may clarify other coastal area of Kamchatka with high pressure of hunting of small waders. Within the area of migration of SBS in Kamchatka estimated numbers of active hunters in the South-West coasts and North-East coasts of Kamchatka peninsula is around 4000 individuals.

Neither hunters nor decision makers in Game Management and Environment Protection in Kamchatka are aware of the critically endangered status of SBS. Awareness raising and education is a crucial element of future conservation efforts in the region but also beyond in the Russian Far East. It needs to be focused and targeted to selected audiences, first of all hunters and schoolchildren regularly shooting waders by catapults, but also include increasingly Game Keeper Associations and Hunting Inspectors and authorities.

Potential hunting pressure in the southern parts of Russian Far East should be evaluated as there was a recently shot SBS near the Vladivostok (individually marked in Meinypilgyno in 2005 the adult bird was shot in August 2007 and stuffed for taxidermy collection near Vladivostok). This is the only known record but considering mass wader hunting in several locations of Prymorie and Sakhalin it may add to the mortality of the species. Estimated numbers of hunters in coastal areas of southern Russian Far East is around 80,000 individuals. It is likely only a small portion of them may influence small wader numbers but there are no data available for any more speculations on the subject.

Meinypilgyno (Chukotka)

The survey team of Pavel Tomkovich and Vladimir Arkhipov started work in this area in early June 2009. Only 4 nests, 5 broods and probably 5 more breeding pairs in the outer spits were found (see table below for the decline of the population over the last 7 years). Three of the four nests had been predated and it also was a very rainy and cold (+4C) early in July so the survival of any broods is highly questionable.

Three previous flagged birds were resighted. Interestingly, one was ringed as female in 2003 and was observed breeding in 2009 only few hundred

Table 1: Breeding population trend of the core breeding area of Meinypilgyno, South Chukotka

	2003	2004*	2005	2007*	2008	2009
Nests	23	14	15	10	6	4
Add. broods	16	11	11	5	-	5
Additional territories	21	11	6	6	9	5
Total	60	36*	32	21*	15	14

*incomplete survey

meters from the ringing site, confirming the high site fidelity of the species, but also the extremely low return of birds to the breeding area, about 50% (Zöckler & Syroechkovsky in prep.). This female has reached at least an age of 7 (more likely 8 or more years, as the adults return to the breeding grounds in general in the second year). The second flagged bird was ringed in 2007 and the third was ringed as juvenile, one of more than 250 ringed that survived in the breeding area.

Belyaka Spit, Chukotsky Peninsula

Pavel Tomkovich received very sad news in late in autumn when researcher Alexei Dondua returned from Chukotka. He spent the 2009 summer season on Belyaka Spit, northern Chukotka, which is one of the two key breeding sites known for the Spoon-billed Sandpiper. It is the area, where Pavel's main studies of this species were undertaken in 1986-1988 (ca. 50 males were breeding there) and in 2002 (22-24 males). During the whole breeding season of 2009 in the very same area Alexei was able to find about 100 nests of waders and ringed 202 chicks and adults, but did not have a single record of Spoon-billed Sandpiper. This means that one of the two largest local breeding populations of this species is now extinct. Considering the large decline of the local population in Meinypilgyno, Chukotka, it shows the critical state of this species. Pavel is becoming more and more pessimistic about future of this species, and thinks it is really very close to the brink of extinction.

For more details contact Pavel S. Tomkovich (pst@zmmu.msu.ru) or Evgeny Syroechkovsky (ees_jr@yahoo.co.uk)

Evgeny E. Syroechkovsky & Christoph Zöckler

First records from this autumn include 9 birds from Korea, 5 birds in Pak Thale, Thailand and three birds in Sonadia, Bangladesh. Six of the birds in Korea and all three birds in Bangladesh are most likely juveniles, which is promising and gives hope that some birds still have bred successfully.

From Spoonbill Sandpiper Recovery Team News Bulletin No. 3, Dec 2009





Interim Report on Socio-economic alternatives to trapping birds, Nan Thar Island, Myanmar

With Ren Nou Sou we could secure a partner at site who implemented our initiative to stop the trapping. This was not an easy task. Ren, who also founded the Sittwe Bird Lovers (SBL) could arrange a deal with various influential local stakeholders to secure the hunting rights to catch birds on the island. During several visits on the island which is not far from the Bangladeshi border he also interviewed the local people and found out that still in March 4-5 hunters from adjacent villages were active on Nan Thar. Even in September he could see that trapping was conducted.



*Bird Trapping and selling at Nan Thar, 21 Sep 2009
Photos Ren Nou Sou*

During one catch/night more than 100 waders and terns may be caught with only a fraction (1/3) surviving. The others suffocate or drown in the upcoming tide during the night. Those that are not wanted, either too small or not tasty, are released often injured and perish shortly after. In the summer there were still waders. Among them

Greater and Lesser Sandplover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey Plover, Knot and Turnstone and Terek Sandpiper, but no Spoon-Billed sandpiper.

Ren informed the people about the conservation aspects and most people reacted positive. Nobody relies entirely on bird trapping but they appreciate the diversity in food. There are still 5 trappers active in neighbouring villages (Aung Dai und Don Byin) catching birds at approximately 10 nights around spring tide. The trade with birds is very common and valued high to secure a certain income. Trapping birds is also easier and also promising higher yields than fishing. However fishing in itself is sufficient for survival. Often the women sell the birds in the markets. They get between 400 und 500 kyats/bird depending on species and size. Catching and trading of birds is not legal but it is also not enforced.

Together with ArcCona, Ren is developing ecotourism on the island. A first trip with foreign tourists is arranged for the coming January. Ren will also follow up and visit the island regularly.

For further details contact: cz@arccona.com

This project is sponsored by the Lighthouse Foundation.

From Spoonbill Sandpiper Recovery Team News Bulletin No. 3, Dec 2009

Shorebird migration in Kamchatka with Explore Kamchatka, 16-28 May and 22 May—1 June 2010

You are invited to witness one of the most important spring migrations on the East Asian–Australasian flyway. Kamchatka is a crucial staging and breeding area with 50 species of *Charadriidae* having been recorded here. Join Dr. Gerasimov in surveying the 2010 spring migration of shorebirds at the Moroshechnaya River on the West Coast of Kamchatka. Dr. Gerasimov and his colleagues have been monitoring this migration since 1990.

Explore Kamchatka is collaborating with Dr. Yuri N. Gerasimov to conduct 2 expeditions to the mouth of the Moroshechnaya River on Kamchatka's northwest coast, 16-26 May and 22 May-1 June 2010. These trips are a chance to help scientists research migrating and breeding waterbirds at one of the most important staging spots for migrating birds on the East Asian–Australasian flyway.

Spring migration at the mouth of the Moroshechnaya River offers a chance to see Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other shorebirds. According to studies by Dr. Gerasimov and others, the west coast

of Kamchatka is a springtime staging area for approximately 200,000 shorebirds of at least 15 species as well as half a million ducks, more than 100,000 gulls, over 10,000 Loons and many others.

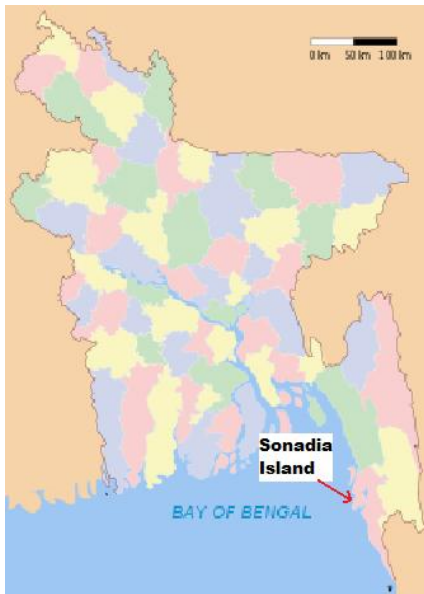
The study area is a remote and uninhabited area containing a broad expanse of tidal flats and a 1.5km wide sandy spit. The area is particularly important to monitor as it is near planned oil and gas developments. Explore Kamchatka hopes to support Dr. Gerasimov's research by visiting the area annually, either in spring or autumn to help monitor bird migrations. In recent years transportation costs by helicopter to get to this remote site have become so expensive that it is rarely possible for scientists to monitor migrations. We hope that this partnership can help Dr. Gerasimov and others to continue their work.

For more information about these trips please contact info@explorekamchatka.com or visit www.explorekamchatka.com.

Martha Madsen

Bangladesh's proposed deep-sea port at Sonadia Island: another alarm bell rings in South Asia

The Bangladesh Government is considering to establish a deep water sea-port at Sonadia Island, in Cox's Bazar, a biodiversity hotspot that is currently free from anthropogenic impacts such as development and tourism. Its pristine sandy beach, mudflats, near shore sandbars, high dunes and mangrove formations are unique – serving as an important habitat for endangered sea turtles and wintering shorebirds.



Lying within the East Asian - Australasian Flyway, Sonadia is used by migratory birds as a stopover during their long migration further south. In January 2009, in the area where the deep-sea port has been proposed, we counted eight individual Spoonbill Sandpipers – one of the

rarest migratory birds in the world with a population of just 300-350 pairs in the wild (Zöckler, 2006). Sonadia is considered ecologically important by the government and in 1999 was declared as an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) under Environmental Act of 1995.

A Japanese consultancy firm named Pacific Consultant International (PCI) conducted a feasibility survey for the construction of the deep-water seaport. The proposed port would have 58 jetties, with a total length of 11 kilometres. The plan is to build the port in three phases, with an expenditure of US \$8.6 billion. The Bangladesh government will seek project funding from international donors. The first phase would be completed by 2016 and the full development finished by 2055.

If constructed, the port would drastically change the habitats important for sea turtles, shorebirds and cetaceans, but it would also threaten mangroves and overall marine resources in an area where hundreds of thousands of community people from the whole of Moheskhal, Kutubdia and even Chittagong depend for their daily livelihood. According to some estimates, 700-800 fishing boats

are engaged in fishing in Sonadia's near shore and offshore waters, depending on the season.



Proposed deep water sea port at the southern end of Sonadia Island, Bangladesh

PCI selected the Sonadia site in the Cox's Bazar district, with a second suitable site option (of similar depth) about 20 km north at Kutubdia Island. This alternative site is less important for biodiversity as compared to Sonadia Island, and would leave a sufficient buffer zone between the two. Sonadia's selection is backed by people with financial motivations, who appear not to have any environmental consciousness. One has to question whether a full environmental assessment was even carried out during the feasibility study.

It is sad that none of the government departments responsible for these issues, nor the international conservation organisations in the country, have raised questions publically about the deep seaport proposal. It is our request to all concerned people, scientists and environmentalists – nationally and internationally – to advocate and raise these issues and try to convince the Bangladesh Government to relocate the deep-sea port site away from this biodiversity hotspot.

The Spoonbill Sandpiper Recovery Team is thinking to launch a major international campaign soon. Please support us on this campaign to prevent the project.

For further details and also moral support write to Zahirul: marinelife_al@yahoo.com

Zahirul Islam

MarineLife Alliance

From Spoonbill Sandpiper Recovery Team News Bulletin No. 3, Dec 2009





Bushfire recovery

Dear Penny and AWSG team,

We had a lovely surprise over Christmas, when a cheque for \$1140 came in the post from the Rogers family appeal. It is hugely appreciated, both for the money itself and for the very kind thought. It will go a long way towards getting our libraries and software back into shape so that we can start working productively on waders again.

All is going well in the Rogers household, and I think we have bounced back well from the bushfires. The rebuilding process has been somewhat tortuous, and so far all we have at Nink's Road is a septic tank! However we have a builder lined up and have bought a kit home, and we are now on the verge of getting all of our planning permissions and approvals. We think we will have a new home to move into this autumn.

Nink's Road is also recovering from the bushfires, and I have been doing regular bird surveys there to monitor the changes. The first ones were fairly depressing, as I found that some 95% of birds in the area had been killed by the fires (though it was heartening to find that there were some survivors,

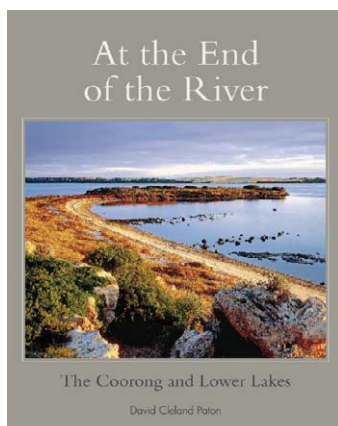
including most of the Lyrebirds and our resident pair of Peregrine Falcons). But now it is getting better, and regrowth has been good with all the spring rain. Many bird species have been completely lost from the area, mostly wet forest specialists, but we have picked up quite a lot of new species for the area.

The gullies and lower slopes are a kind of woodland habitat with lots of epicormic growth on the eucalypts, and a grassy or mossy understorey (the upper slopes and ridges were burned very intensively and are still very bleak) and we have a woodland kind of avifauna there now: additions to the Nink's Road list have included Flame Robin (the most common species through winter, and it bred there this spring), Weebill, Red-capped Robin (two territorial pairs! Amazing), Rufous Songlark, Painted Button-quail, White-winged Triller... At the moment the most common species in the valley is White-browed Woodswallow, formerly a species that we only saw there when flying high overhead, but now nesting on all the ridges.

All the very best to you all for 2010.

Danny, Ken and Annie

Coorong book launch



A book about the Coorong 'At the end of the River: The Coorong and Lower Lakes' will be launched in late February.

The book is based on some of the work that Earthwatch volunteers and people in other capacities have contributed to while being in the Coorong.

The book is a natural history of the region and includes both terrestrial and aquatic systems. Its primary purpose is to provide in one place a firm baseline of the conditions of the region at the start of the 21st century with some historical perspective given as well. The book is illustrated with many fantastic colour photographs. The publishers (ATF Press) are offering a slightly cheaper pre-publication price if you are interested in purchasing a copy.

For further details of the book please go to the ATF Press web site—<http://www.atfpress.com/>

David C. Paton

Associate Professor at the University of Adelaide



Australasian Wader Studies Group

Membership of the Australasian Wader Studies Group is open to anyone interested in the conservation and research of waders (shorebirds) in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Members receive the twice yearly journal *Stilt*, and a quarterly newsletter, *Tattler*. Visit www.awsg.org.au for more information.

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