



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



FRIENDS OF THE HOODED PLOVER NEWS

Issue Number 6
July 2011

The breeding season of 2010 / 2011 has been left behind and the Friends Group is now in planning mode for next season.

Last season was reviewed with plenty of vigor at Point Nepean on Friday 29th April. This was a Statewide meeting initiated by Birds Australia and supported locally by our Friends Group. Over 60 people attended from all over Victoria. Details of the meeting were described in the latest edition of *Word about the Hood* newsletter. However, it should be noted that the meeting involved lots of swapping of notes and ideas, contacts were made and a commitment made to repeat the review process again next year.



Brendan McKay

On another front, the Management (Shorebird Conservation) Strategy Group for the Mornington Peninsula National Park has continued to meet and a draft Strategy has now been prepared for consideration by Parks Vic. We look forward to seeing this process develop to its conclusion with some significant changes adopted that will benefit the Hooded Plovers.

Towards the end of the last breeding season the Friends Group was successful in receiving \$972 under the Birds Australia VicGroup Small Grants initiative.

Planning for the next breeding season is well underway. We are currently working with Birds Australia to finalise a support program, which builds on the program initiated last season. The draft program, details on pages 6 &

7, will include the following:

- ◆ Training for setting up cameras at nest sites;
- ◆ A refresher session by Birds Australia and supported by Parks Vic aimed at members;
- ◆ A publicity event possibly at the Iron Man competition early next year; and
- ◆ Training days for new members in mid January 2012

I urge you all to consider attending our first AGM, which is scheduled for Monday 14th November.

I look forward to hearing about your adventures on the beach during the coming season and to success in increasing the number of chicks that fledge.

John Franklin, Vice President
(for Diane Lewis our President who is traveling up north)

FRIENDS OF THE HOODED PLOVER AGM

On Monday 14 November the Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc will be having their first AGM. It will be held at Parks Vic, Hinton Street Rosebud. A formal notice will be sent out to all members and interested people closer to the date of the meeting.

So that we know how many to cater for please let us know if you are attending, by emailing hploversmornpen@gmail.com or phoning Diane on 0419 320 205 or John on 5988 0439.

Proposed agenda:

- 10:00am Arrive, tea & coffee
- 10:15am AGM
- 10:45am Morning tea
- 11:00am Presentations by past and present Hooded Plover Rangers. Will include what is/was involved, changes to Hooded Plover management, challenges faced, anecdotes, etc.
- 12:30pm Lunch

REPORTING DOGS IN THE PARK & RECORDING VOLUNTEER HOURS

Park Matters

Volunteer Hours:

EOFY recording and reporting is almost complete. Of particular note was the volunteer hours tally for 10/11. In the HPHP grant submission for 10/11 an estimate of 300 hours was noted for the group. The final tally was closer to 3200 hours and I think still a little conservative, nonetheless a phenomenal effort. These hours directly reflect on the dedication and drive of the members and guests to FoHP, a massive measure of success. Could I remind all people associated with FoHP who are undertaking any activity associated with the monitoring, protection and education for HP to record and send through their hours to Diane Lewis at hploversmornpen@gmail.com

Reporting dogs in the park:

Throughout the year I often get asked "where or how do we get in touch with you when we see something wrong". The simple answer is call the Parks Victoria information centre on

131963 or email the information centre at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au and pass on the information.

If you are telephoning from the beach at the time you see something going on I realise that you will most likely want to talk directly to a ranger and circumstance dependant callers will be directed to a ranger or at least the local office, but in reality there are a few hurdles in the way. Phone service on or near the beach is poor & calls maybe lost, ranger staff maybe on days off having worked a weekend, rangers maybe on holiday or in meetings or working a split shift & may not be working the same hours that you are out walking.

By calling or emailing the information centre your call and issue will be logged and forwarded to the most appropriate person. It may seem frustrating not to have a ranger respond immediately when an issue is happening before your eyes but the information you provide does help to build intelligence of when and where issues are occurring so that patrols can be more targeted and effective. Providing infor-

mation indirectly well after the fact is not helpful.

Every person has the power and ability to help make a difference and protect our national parks and prevent anti social behaviour, so please feel empowered in the knowledge that your call, no matter how trivial you may think the issue is, does help. All I ask is that people don't put themselves at risk with either obtaining or providing information.

Compliance in the Park

A man was prosecuted in Court recently for offences related to bringing in and allowing a dog to remain in the National Park, fail to have immediate care and control of a dog and abusing an authorised officer. The man was convicted and fined \$700 receiving a lecture from the magistrate about how staff performing their duties for the public should not be abused. It was also noted by the court that the man had previously received warnings and an infringement notice for similar offences.

Martin Downs, FoHP contact ranger

RECORDING / REPORTING VOLUNTEERS HOURS: 2011 TO 2012

Martin Downs (Parks Vic) has indicated to the FoHP committee the type of volunteer information he has to report on as far as hours of activity.

He has also reminded us that "All time committed to HP activities & management should be recorded. This includes adhoc visits & observation of HP activity, collecting & storing signs, ropes etc"

Thankfully our volunteers (i.e. you) do not have to provide that level of detail. However, we do have to provide enough information for Martin to report the total hours contributed by the Friends Group each quarter broken down into a few simple activity groups.

Our President (Diane Lewis) provided data to Parks Vic on hours spent during last breeding season for four key activities, namely:

- ◆ On beach
- ◆ Meetings
- ◆ Administration
- ◆ Events

Martin Downs has indicated that this breakdown is more than adequate for his purposes. Therefore we are asking every member to keep a record of his / her hours on each of these activities such that it can be reported either every month or at end of each quarter. We think it would be a good practice to report every month.

Each of you will receive a brief email at the end of each month as a reminder. The email will look like this:

Volunteer hours are now due for July 2011. Please reply to this email after entering your relevant hours in the following table (enter data after clicking on reply):

Name:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Hours</i>
<i>On beach</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Meetings</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Administration</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Events</i>	<i>0</i>

There is no need to reply if you have nothing to report.

Alternatively those familiar with Google documents might wish to enter data directly into the master spreadsheet in Google. If so please let John Franklin know and he will arrange it (tel. no. 5088 0439).

John Franklin

MONTHLY HOODED PLOVER COUNTS

Monitoring schedule for 2011/2012:

Month	Date	Tide Time	Tide Height (m)
July 2011	Thu 21	9:28 AM	0.49
August 2011	Thu 18	8:29 AM	0.46
September 2011	Thu 15	7:30 AM	0.48
October 2011	Thu 20	11:30 AM	0.58
November 2011	Thu 17	10:37 AM	0.54
December 2011	Thu 15	9:45 AM	0.54
January 2012	Thu 12	8:47 AM	0.57
February 2012	Thu 16	12:38 PM	0.13
March 2012	Thu 15	11:35 AM	0.09
April 2012	Thu 26	8:48 AM	0.30
May 2012	Thu 24	7:42 AM	0.36
June 2012	Thu 28	11:05 AM	0.61

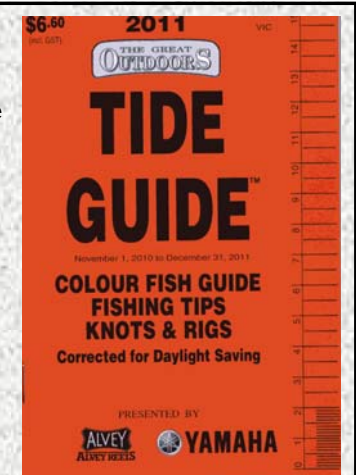
- ◆ Times have been adjusted for daylight savings: Sunday 2-Oct-11 to Sunday 1-Apr-12
- ◆ Easter: Friday 06-Apr-12 to Monday 09-Apr-12

Want to be involved?

Contact Neil Shelley, 0438 557 178; birdrock16@gmail.com

BE PREPARED

- ◆ Before heading off make sure you have checked out what the times and heights of the tides will be, by either
 - ◆ checking the Tide Guide book [which can be purchased at fishing shops & news-agents] or
 - ◆ going to <http://www.bom.gov.au/oceanography/tides/MAPS/vic.shtml#map>
- ◆ Don't go alone, be aware of tidal surges and select your route to avoid unstable cliff faces
- ◆ Wear appropriate clothing and closed toe shoes
- ◆ Take a mobile phone, first aid kit, water and sunscreen.



Beach-washed Slender-billed Prion

23 June 2011 at east end of Gunnamatta beach, Rye: Slender-billed Prion in excellent condition, identified with the assistance of Mike Carter and others.

Three beach-washed Little Penguins were also present.

Neil Shelley



Neil Shelley

COUNTING THE KOONYA TRANSECT

The April count

Meet Chris and Alan Willocks at the Koonya carpark dunny for the April count. Don our Parks Vic volunteer vests and head off along the MPNP inland track to Montforts beach. Then a short sprint along the beach and the rock shelf to Fowlers beach. Notepad and pen out and start time, 1130, noted along with the weather. No HPs seen but other birds observed recorded.

Tis now 1136 and the counting of birds on Montforts has started. No HPs but a flock of 17 White-faced Herons are swirling around and flying over. Low tide but height too high to get around the Spray Point rocks so back along the inland track to Spray Point and Koonya.



Chris Willocks

Start counting Koonya East at 1200. Two HPs seen at the water's edge near Spray Point, GPS data for their location recorded. One of the birds was banded by Mike Weston a long time ago and it still has two bands remaining however if the light is not right they are very hard to read. A flock of 20 White-faced Herons again seen. Is it the same flock we saw at Montforts with 3 extra birds or a different flock??

Start counting Koonya West at 1218. Two HPs at the water's edge near the Keating Avenue track. One of this pair is also banded but a long time ago so it only has two difficult to read bands. Whilst most of the Hooded Plovers are flocking at this time of the year, both Koonya pairs are always on territory.

Photos taken of Chris & I and Alan with his bag of rubbish collected on the walk.

Arrive home and fill out the data sheet. Realise I had forgotten to GPS the Koonya West pair! Note that 9 people were seen, no dogs on leashes and one dog off leash. Email data sheet to Neil Shelley with a copy to Martin Downs.

Val Ford



Alan Willocks

Hooded Plover Monthly Surveying

As newcomers to the survey team, we needed a guiding hand. Val Ford has taken us under her wing over the last three surveys at Fowlers, Montforts and Koonya beaches.

After checking the designated survey time and consulting tide charts, we arm ourselves with binoculars, volunteer vests, notepad and camera and set off from Koonya car park towards Montforts and Fowlers beaches. Good conversation is interspersed with bird sightings and calls in the dune vegetation and we are grateful for Val's expertise and tips for identification.

When we arrive at the beach, sighting of hoodies, presence of their leg bands, and their GPS position are recorded. All other birds on the beaches, dunes and out at sea are also counted and recorded and the number of people and dogs are noted. Plenty of birds such as albatross, kestrels, oystercatchers, herons, gulls, terns and dead penguins have been seen. All observations happen at a leisurely pace so there is plenty of time to enjoy the birds, the scenery and continue conversation.

Learning from Val has been a fantastic introduction to bird surveys and her expertise has assisted us to learn rapidly about hoodies and other seabirds. The hour and half walk for the survey passes rapidly as it such a pleasant and interesting task. We would highly recommend other walkers to contribute to the survey.

Chris and Alan Willocks

HOODED PLOVERS AT FLINDERS

There have been two Hooded Plovers on the ocean beach at Flinders. One has an orange over green flag on the right leg and a plain OLF on the left leg. They have been on the ocean beach since last November. In 15 years I have only seen them fleetingly in the past, i.e. they might stay for a day and then often only one.

If they do manage to nest I thought I might try and get up a "guard the hoodies team" in Flinders for the busy beach days particularly. I put up a Flinders Shorebird News in the local shop 2 or 3 times a year so there is a reasonably high level of interest and dog compliance in the community.

Penny Johns



Wayne Butterworth

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT HOODED PLOVERS

Birds Australia have prepared a fact sheet to help volunteers answer questions about Hooded Plovers.
Copy this page and have it with you when on the beach!

The species

- Nationally, the hoodie is not listed as threatened because the stronghold of the species is in Western Australia where there are between 4000-5000. They can nest inland and year-round in WA so experience less human pressure - but they are thought to be a different subspecies – they even look different!
- In their Eastern range, they are highly threatened. Critically endangered in NSW (50 birds left), Vulnerable in Victoria (400-450 in population, declined from 600 in 1980s), Vulnerable in South Australia (600-800 in population) and in Tassie, about 1000 in the population.
- 1 of only 2 completely dependent beach-nesters in Australia (the other is the Beach Stone-curlew in Northern Australia).
- Hooded Plovers are threatened because their eggs and chicks have one of the lowest survival rates of any bird in the world.
- You would expect hoodies to have a naturally high rate of nest failure as they are long-lived (10-17 years) BUT humans have upset the balance and completely altered and overwhelmed their beach habitat.
- In Victoria, pairs have only a 15-20% chance of producing a chick that can fly and this is with our help!

The eggs

- Hooded Plover eggs are the colour of sand and as small as 20 cent coins.
- The nest is just a simple, shallow, bowl-like scrape.
- Nests can be anywhere above high-tide mark, on beach or dunes or rocky points behind beaches.
- Hooded Plovers are very clever when it comes to protecting their eggs and chicks from natural threats like ravens and gulls, by distancing themselves from the highly camouflaged eggs or chicks so the predator can't find them.
- Hoodies can recollect their eggs after a tide washes them out of the nest and rebuild a nest around them, and often these eggs will still hatch!
- Incubation lasts 28 days. They don't start incubating until they have finished laying.

The chicks

- The chicks don't stay in the nest. They have to feed themselves from as young as an hour old.
- The chicks need to feed mainly at the water's edge and need several hundred metres of beach to get enough food for survival.
- The chicks cannot fly for five weeks (35 days) after hatching.
- The parents pretend to have a broken wing, or flap and crouch on the ground, running like a mouse, to try and distract people away from their chicks.
- Only 50% of chicks that fledge, will then survive their first year.

Threats

- If you sit too close to a nest on a day over 35 degrees this keeps the adult off the eggs and is enough to kill the embryos inside within half an hour or less.
- Chasing and killing is not the main way that dogs impact nesting Hooded Plovers. Instead, 'disturbance' of incubating birds or feeding chicks prevents eggs from hatching or the chicks from surviving, and dogs also accidentally crush eggs.
- It only takes one person to disregard the regulations (e.g. cut through the dunes) to kill the eggs or chicks.
- On busy beaches many small disturbances can mean that chicks cannot feed for extended periods, causing them to starve.

Management

- Staying clear of signed and/or fenced areas where birds are nesting gives them a much greater chance of nesting success: nests on busy beaches fail without protection, but with fencing/signing, they have an equal chance of fledging chicks to birds on remote beaches.
- A small wooden shelter placed on the beach can give the chicks a safe hiding place and increase their chance of survival by up to 75%.

TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

August date or early Sept: Camera training by student/s for small group of people keen to assist

For volunteers to have the opportunity to learn about how nests are monitored using remote cameras (with potential to be trained to assist students setting out cameras this season or at least collecting the cameras if the students can't make it down to the area after a nest is complete; however only the very experienced volunteers are able to assist with this) and to also learn about measuring nest habitat to assist Birds Australia staff with their measurements after nests have been completed, which is something most people could assist with.

If you are interested please contact John Franklin; hploversmornpen@gmail.com or 0437 350 061 by the end of July. When date has been set we will then advise the where, when and what.

Sept 19: Training refresher

Come along for a beach walk where we will spot Hooded Plovers and use the My Hoodie guide to interpret their behaviours and work out what stage of nesting they are at. This walk is for people already volunteering to monitor hoodies or who have already been to at least one presentation/training course.

We will use the walk to talk about anything you still want to learn more about, we'll point out important features of the birds' habitat and we'll also run through data collection and which bits of information are the most critical to helping the birds.

If you can't make this session, there are more general training courses available on the 10th and 11th of January 2012, but you can also check with Birds Australia about when they will next be in the area, as their staff can train people one on one when they are making field visits.

If you are interested, contact Kasun Ekanayake, k.ekanayake@birdsaustralia.com.au
If you want to attend, RSVP to Friends of the Hooded Plover, hploversmornpen@gmail.com

September 21: Education for the Future!

Are you involved in environmental education, or interested in being so? Then come along to the Hooded Plover Professional Development Day for Teachers and local volunteers. Try out the hands-on education activities that we have run at schools all along the Victoria coast and discussing ways in which the Hooded Plover and birds in general, can be included into schools.

This event will be held on the 21st of September (tbc) and is a FREE event.

For more information please email Meg Cullen, Project Officer, Beach-Nesting Birds Project at m.cullen@birdsaustralia.com.au

October 30: What Bird is That at The Briars

Penboc invites you to join them for a morning of bird and habitat displays. Bring the kids and they can learn about and see our beautiful Mornington Peninsula bird life.

Date: Sunday 30th October; 9am to 1pm

Venue: The Briars Visitor Centre, Nepean Highway Mt Martha

Displays & activities include: Theatre presentation, bird walks, information table, free morning tea, display by Friends of the Hooded Plover, and a chance to speak to bird experts. If you have binoculars please bring them.

All Welcome. For more information contact Max Burrows on 9789 0224.

The Friends of the Hooded Plover will be setting up an information stall to raise the profile of the plight of the Hooded Plover and to seek new members to assist Parks Vic and BA during the coming breeding season along the coast of the Mornington Peninsula NP.

We are seeking the assistance of members by volunteering to spend a few hours at the stall. If you wish to assist, or just need more information, please contact FoHP, hploversmornpen@gmail.com or ring Neil on 0438 557 178 or Diane on 0419 320 205

November 6: Up close and personal with the Hooded Plover

A beach walk run by Birds Australia project officer Tanya Pyk, is planned for November 6, the Sunday following What bird is that at The Briars. Details will be available at The Briars on October 30 and from Friends of the Hooded Plover.

Please let FoHP, hploversmornpen@gmail.com know if you are interested.



January 8: Ironman

This event is still to be confirmed. If it goes ahead the aim will be to provide a visible presence on the fringe of the event on the beach with information on the Hoodies and possibly the opportunity to observe some birds and chicks. More details will be available at a later date.

Volunteers will be required to:

- ◆ warden nesting birds or chicks (if present at that time)
- ◆ help answer questions about Hooded Plovers (see fact sheet on page 5)

Please let us know at hploversmornpen@gmail.com if you would like to be involved.

January 10: Training workshop St Andrews January 11: Training workshop Sorrento

For new members of FoHP and interested members of the public. Let us know which day you would like to attend.

Understanding Hooded Plover Behaviour A Presentation and Practical Guide by Birds Australia

On January 10 and 11, 2012 Birds Australia will present a slideshow with lots of photographs and video footage to help you understand all the quirky behaviours of Hooded Plovers and what they mean. Bobbing, false pecking, leading, broken wing displays - what are the birds doing and why? How can you help improve their breeding success on such busy beaches but not be a disturbance yourself?

We will go through in detail, ways to safely monitor the birds, interpret their behaviour and for those keen to learn, how to safely locate nests. We will give helpful hints on how to observe the chicks before the parents send them into hiding.

After the presentation, we will head out to the beach to go for a walk and point out habitat features of importance and hopefully see some hoodies! We will show you how to fill out a data form and explain why this information is important. Please come along, even if you can't commit to being a regular monitor, you are welcome to come along if you are interested in the birds and may be able to help on one-off occasions.

Those who attended one of last year's training days should consider coming again this year for a refresher course - it is easy to forget the things we learnt last year.

It is anticipated that the presentation session will be at St Andrews community hall on the 10th and at Sorrento community centre on the 11th [venues to be confirmed] and commence at 10:00am with an introduction and morning tea. After the presentation by Birds Australia and lunch we will all head for the beach.

- ◆ 10:00am Arrival and Morning Tea
- ◆ 10:30am Presentation by BA
- ◆ 12:00pm Lunch
- ◆ 1:00pm Maybe earlier, assemble at beach car park (beach locations to be decided closer to the date)
- ◆ 2:30pm Finish

It would assist the Friends of Hooded Plover in planning if those interested in attending could send an email reply to hploversmornpen@gmail.com or phone Diane Lewis on 0419 320 205.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Aug or Sept:	Remote camera training	November 14:	FoHP AGM
September 19:	Training refresher	January 8:	Ironman
September 21:	Education for the Future!	January 10:	Training workshop
October 30:	What bird is that at The Briars	January 11:	Training workshop
November 6:	Hooded Plover beach walk		

WHAT MESSAGES DID I COME AWAY WITH AT THE END OF SEASON MEETING?

- ◆ That the "US Fish and Wildlife service is proposing to double the amount of West Coast beaches protected for a threatened shorebird in anticipation that sea levels will be rising. This sounds to me like a project we could push here on the Mornington Peninsula.

FEDS WANT TO DOUBLE NESTING AREAS FOR SHOREBIRD

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to double the amount of West Coast beaches protected for a threatened shorebird in anticipation that sea levels will be rising due to global warming.

The proposal announced Monday would expand critical habitat designations for the western snowy plover in California, Oregon and Washington to a total of 68 units covering more than 28,000 acres.

Biologists estimate the snowy plover numbers no more than 2,270 individuals. Its numbers have declined as the bare sandy dunes where it lays its eggs were developed and covered with European beach grass, which makes the nests more vulnerable to predators.

The proposal also calls for expanding protected beaches to give the birds room to move into new nesting areas.

The Seattle Times, March 21, 2011

- ◆ Loved the sense of solidarity and the message of hope generated by meeting with others who battle with the same problems and some who have come up with creative and successful strategies. The lobbying of Shire and State governments has evidently been effective in some areas. A call to action for us?
- ◆ Loved the walk on the beach and through the woodland with Gidja Walker - always so stimulating and educational.
- ◆ Funding for a Remote camera project might be worth pursuing.
- ◆ Enlisting help of uni students over summer especially, would be useful.
- ◆ Dogs could be banned altogether during breeding season - might be a stepping stone to total ban! Certainly it would be good to have an Aust-wide uniform regulation - they are National Parks after all.

Jan Dwyer

JUST A LITTLE BIT BATTY

National Volunteers Week was celebrated by Parks Victoria at Yarra Bend, Kew on Thursday 12th May.

The invitation invited volunteers to explore the Yarra River at the Bellbird Picnic Area, go canoeing and view the Grey-headed Flying-fox colony. There was also a bike ride from Federation square to Yarra Bend for those who wanted a bit more exercise (two brave souls rode). A great ride I've done many times – but not in the rain.

Rob and I live 5 minutes away, so this was an invitation we couldn't refuse.

As it had rained all the previous night and it continued into the morning, we drove down to the picnic area to see how many people had braved the weather.

To our delight the rain stopped, and about forty people were sitting under cover eating a spit-roast dinner – perfect on such a cold, wet, day.

There were volunteers from all over Melbourne and the coast was represented too. There were many gardeners, who care for communal gardens from Glen Waverly to Dromana, replanting bush areas, collecting seeds and advising on what to plant and where.

Bernice Dowling (Parks Victoria) welcomed us all and later I was introduced to Chris Hardman, Park Victoria's Regional Manager, Melbourne region. He was very interested and supportive in what our FoHP group has been doing and very aware of the issues we face. He accepted an invitation to come for a stroll along our beaches next summer.

Hopefully we'll have chicks on the beach when he comes.

Once we had eaten, Bernice invited those who wished to go for a paddle to make their way down to the river. It's quite low at the moment as Dights Falls is being improved (so native fish can make their way up the river once again) and the weir has a hole in it.

After being kitted up with helmets and life jackets and some basic training, we gently climbed into our canoes and set off up the river. As an ex-rower I love the Yarra and paddling up once more with the beautiful gums on either side was a treat although a bit noisy as we passed the Fruit Bat colony trying to "sleep".

The crew from Barwon Heads who organised our canoeing adventure were bright, and informative. I learnt how to manoeuvre a canoe with ease, turn on sixpence and use my paddle as a rudder.

Once the canoes were back on the bank, John Lynch, our Lower Yarra Parks ranger and fruit bat guide, took us up to one of the lookouts overlooking the Yarra and the bats and gave us an interesting and informative talk.

Some of the things I learnt:-

- ◆ They are also endangered
- ◆ Originally they lived much further north but as their habitat decreased they moved south to Victoria.
- ◆ Yarra bend has one of the largest colonies in Victoria and almost 10% of the world's grey-headed fruit bats
- ◆ They play an important role in pollinating and spreading native vegetation, their principle diet is pollen not fruit.
- ◆ They can travel up to 80 km a night to find food.
- ◆ Fruit bats breed once a year; they carry their young on the nightly search for food. When their young get too heavy they leave them in crèches (all hanging in the same tree) until they can fly.
- ◆ Fruit bats like to roost in the same tree.

It was great afternoon and as we got in the car to come home the rain started.

Diane Lewis



Kate Churven



Kate Churven

70 YEAR OLD PLOVER GRACES OUR SHORELINE

Friends of the Hooded Plover members, Stuart and Sandra of Bay Fish N Trips, own a 42 foot boat called Plover. She was originally built during WWII (1942) as a support vessel for the Australian Army. Since that time she has had several lives but last year she was purchased, painted and fully refitted with modern equipment, to begin her new life as a platform for fishing or entertaining people on Port Phillip.

Bay Fish N Trips have decided to lend support to the plight of the Hooded Plover via the best means at their disposal – education. On the starboard pier side window of their vessel they have placed a poster advertising the Friends of the Hooded Plover group. In the wheelhouse they carry an information folder (of newsletters and flyers about the endangered bird for interested parties) and stickers for children. The reaction from this has been very positive. A representative from Parks was most impressed and comments have been heard from locals about sightings of the Hooded Plover in flight, so the poster and other information has started to raise awareness by getting people looking, thinking and talking to others.



Bay Fish N Trips would like to thank Glenn Ehmke for permission to use his wonderful photos. When the refurbished Mornington Pier reopens in July this year, over 700 000 people per annum will have the opportunity to see the poster when the Plover is moored and possibly raise even more interest in the magnificent Hooded Plover.

Sandra Watt
Bay Fish N Trips
M: 0418 439 364

W: www.bayfishntrips.com.au



AFTERNOON TEA AT THE BRIARS Environment Week thank you

As a follow-up to presentations and displays at The Briars, Mt Martha, during Environment Week, the organisers hosted an afternoon tea and awards presentation at Josephines restaurant, on The Briars property, on Thursday 12th May.

All groups and individuals who contributed were recognised with a certificate and thanked, with special mentions going to long-term contributors such as local environmentalist Gidja Walker and to local schools' senior students who helped considerably during the week. The Briars management and staff, organisers and support services such as St John Ambulance were thanked and praised. Special mention was made of the two ladies who come all the way from country Victoria every year to provide meals for contributors and presenters. They received enthusiastic applause!

It was apparent that the approximately fifty attendees made good use, not only of the sustaining afternoon tea of sausage rolls and Devonshire tea, but also of the chance to renew friendships and to network - always a productive activity.

Jan Dwyer

HOODED PLOVER BANDING - 2010/2011 BREEDING SEASON

Information recorded when the birds are banded

Extracting 'our birds' from Grainne Maguire's banding records shows that the following information has been recorded. [A total 72 birds along the coast were given these orange engraved flags; 6 of them recaptures of Mike Weston's previously banded birds].

ID	Date	Zone	Location	Exact location	Age	Flag ID	Right tarsus	Left tarsus	Right tibia	Left tibia	Notes on breeding status	Partner or parent	Chick age
18	30/12/2010	MPNP	Portsea	London Bridge	Adult	BS	metal		BS		current nest, incubating bird	unbanded	
19	30/12/2010	MPNP	Portsea	Franklin Rd East	Juvenile	DT	metal			DT	in a flock with 3 adults		
20	30/12/2010	MPNP	Portsea	Franklin Rd East	Adult	CU	metal		CU		in a flock of 4 adults and Juvenile DT		
21	30/12/2010	MPNP	Portsea	Franklin Rd Access	Adult	MB	metal			MB	in a flock of 3 adults incl CU plus 1 juv DT		
23	11/01/2011	MPNP	Rye	Heyfields	Adult	AZ	metal		AZ		1 of 3 birds from nest with 2 eggs	unbanded	
24	11/01/2011	MPNP	Rye	Heyfields	Adult	none	metal				1 of pair with scrape no eggs		
44	25/02/2011	MPNP	Portsea	London Bridge	Chick	EC	metal		EC		only survivor in brood	parent is BS plus one unb	around 27 days old
45	25/02/2011	Point Nepean NP	Observatory Point	The Bend	Chick	BB		metal		BB	only survivor in brood	unb parents	hatched around 29/1/11
53	18/03/2011	MPNP	St Andrews	Moana Court East	Adult	DU	metal		DU		in a flock of 27 birds which included 1 juvenile		
54	18/03/2011	MPNP	Portsea	Franklin Rd West	Chick	HC	metal		HC		from nest at Franklin rd access, just west	parent is BH, other unb	
55	18/03/2011	MPNP	Portsea	Franklin Rd West	Adult	BH	metal		BH		with chick	parent of HC, partner unb	

Information recorded when a flagged bird is sighted

Reporting method	Observer	Method obsv	Beach	specific location	GPS	Date	Time	Group size
Grainne email	Rob Cowdell	Photograph	13th Beach	Blue Rocks		31/07/2010	14:00	5A+5J

identity other birds	Behaviour	Breeding?	Bird ID	Leg	Bird age	photos?
unb	Flocking	N	NK	right	A	Y

HC SIGHTED AT ANGLESEA

Grainne emailed 8/6/11 "Little HC has popped up at Point Roadknight at Anglesea! How exciting to track this movement from Portsea Franklin Rd West across to Anglesea. The Bellarine/surf coast and MP seem to frequently exchange individuals, very exciting!"



Geoff Gates

HONOURS PROJECT: CONDITIONED TASTE AVERSION AS A TOOL FOR MANAGING PREDATION ON EGGS OF BEACH NESTING BIRDS BY FOXES

Can you help Aimie?

If you would like to assist with the research project or accommodation [Parks Vic have offered free accommodation at Highfield (near Cape Schanck)] please contact Aimie, aimiecribbin@gmail.com or 0432906149 and Cc: Friends of the Hooded Plover at hploversmornpen@gmail.com

Dear Val Ford,

My name is Aimie Cribbin, and I am currently undertaking my Honours year at Deakin University, supervised by Mike Weston (Deakin University) and Grainne Maguire (Birds Australia). Grainne and Mike suggested that I contacted you for several reasons:

1. To tell you a little about my Honours project. To that end I have included a brief summary, but would be pleased to send you the full ethics application should you wish. The latter provides a more detailed description of the project. A key point I would like to make is that this project will not seek any changes to fox control programs, and is being conducted in an attempt to see if a unique approach may confer better protection to the threatened Hooded Plover.

2. To initiate contact. I hold a research permit to conduct the research (10005847), and would like to learn of who could be my key contact from your office, both to inform of pending field trips (a condition of my permit) and also to provide feedback on the study and its results. I intend to be in the field from the start of September through to the middle or end of November, moving along the coast from the South Australian border down to Warrnambool, in addition to sections of the Bellarine Peninsula and Bass Coast. In certain circumstances, I might also like to discuss access and possible modest logistical support, such as information on any available free or cheap accommodation, and in a few instances, information on access to certain beaches. Additionally I would really appreciate any information on potential volunteers who may be keen to help out with Hooded Plover conservation work.

If possible, I would welcome the opportunity to chat with you about some of these points.

My contact number details are aimiecribbin@gmail.com and 0432906149. My field work will occur from mid 2011 to mid 2012. You would also be most welcome to contact my supervisors (Mike, mweston@deakin.edu.au & Grainne, g.maguire@birdsaustralia.com.au) with any questions, though I would be pleased to help also. Hopefully this project might suggest an additional tool to reduce Hooded Plover nest predation by foxes!

I greatly appreciate your time and look forward to catching up. If you have a preferred time, date and number for me to call, please let me know.

Yours Sincerely,
Aimie Cribbin

Project description: Conditioned taste aversion as a tool for managing predation on eggs of beach nesting birds by foxes.

My project aims to determine the feasibility of “conditioned taste aversion” (CTA) as a management tool to reduce fox predation on Hooded Plover nests. Conditioned taste aversion develops when an animal associates a particular food with illness, and avoids consuming that food in subsequent encounters. This aversion however is not always permanent and the effect of the conditioning may fade with time. Conditioned aversion has been used for foxes overseas, and the typical delivery involves regular reinforcement in the lead up to the target prey species becoming available (i.e. the breeding season for egg availability), referred to as the “training period” for this study. We aim to determine whether this approach (“traditional conditioned aversion”) works, and whether a more practical, hitherto untested approach (“saturation conditioned aversion”) may be meritorious. Additionally we aim to determine whether a prolonged aversion to the food item may be produced by extending the training period.

The study will take place along various sections of the Victorian coastline and will consist of three treatments; a 28 day traditional conditioned aversion training period, a 56 day traditional conditioned aversion training period and a 28 day saturation conditioned aversion.

During training periods false nests will be made using quail eggs to mimic Hooded Plover nests. The quail eggs will contain sodium carbonate – a substance that makes foxes sick when consumed. False nests will be monitored using motion sensor cameras, allowing for determination of conditioning events by foxes.

If CTA is proven to work on Victorian coastlines, it may potentially provide an additional method of reducing the high proportion of egg losses of Hooded Plovers to foxes. CTA would provide a powerful tool to aid in pest management which can easily be implemented alongside fox baiting programs.

LIFE'S A BEACH - ESPECIALLY FOR REDHEADS

Alan Scrymgeour's Bedtime Story



Life began for me on 1st December 2010 a little before dawn. By the 19th I had broken free of my shell. My older brother was already snuggled into our sand-hollow nest on Mogareeka Beach.

When the morning sun flooded the beach, mum called me to follow her across the sand towards a new and sheltered beach nest away from the

driving wind. "Come," she said, "follow me!" The wind was gusting and the sand blew across the beach. Still she waited for me to follow her call.

Without warning the wind blew me over and over and over. The whole world was spinning. I could see waves rushing toward me as ocean eyes watch on.



"My God, please help me!" I cried.



A hand reached from the sky and gathered me up in a basket of sand. My mother turned to watch. I opened my eyes to find myself being placed in a pile of driftwood.

Through frightened eyes I could make out a green jacket, a fawn shirt, some sort of badge. And a green hat! A coloured patch stood out on the arm of the jacket.

All that afternoon I sat in my new-found driftwood nest with my mum and thought about what all this meant to a tiny bird Suddenly it came to me!

A bird in the hand is safe from the winds of misfortune!!!!

The wind blew itself away and we all lived happily ever after.

**Far South Coast Birdwatchers Inc.
Newsletter March/April 2011**

*Photos: Simon Allen (Red-capped Plover on eggs),
Liz Allen (Mother and chick) and Lyn Scrymgeour*



BEACH-WASHED ALBATROSSES

Shy Albatross:

28 Feb 2011 at the west end of Koonya Beach, Sorrento: Banded shy albatross in excellent condition other than eaten in the belly area. The band was sent to ABBBS (Australian Bird and Bat banding Scheme). Information returned showed that it was 9 years 5 months and 3 days since banding at Albatross Island, Tasmania.



Buller's Albatross:

11 April 2011 at Diamond Bay, Sorrento: Unbanded Buller's Albatross in poor condition but could be identified from the head. Reported to Birds Australia Bird Atlas.



Chris Willocks

SUMMARY OF HONOURS THESIS BY STACEY HENRY "Dogs on Beaches: Barriers to compliance with dog regulations on Victorian beaches with regard to beach-nesting bird conservation".

Anne Ballard

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

In 1996, Stacey Henry undertook this study for Birds Australia (BA), who are promoting a policy of co-existence between beach recreationists & beach-nesting birds (BNB's). With this in mind, Henry aimed to investigate some reasons for beach-users' non-compliance with dog regulations.

Her investigation studied the Hooded Plover, & it was hoped to apply the findings to other SNB species eventually. Following studies (eg Schultz, 1992; Weston, 2003), the initial premise of Henry's research was that '...humans & dogs pose a major threat...to shorebirds by disrupting...breeding activity... (p7).

However, human or non-human disturbance is not necessarily believed to be threatening (eg Serpell, 1995; Frid & Dree, 2002).

Whilst natural threats include storm, tidal, temperatures, Weston (ibid) detailed eight threats. These include vehicles, people, dogs, other animals (eg horses), introduced & native predators including scavengers, pollution & habitat modification.

He categorized threats to BNB's as either direct, such as crushing of eggs, & indirect disturbance, which forces parents to abandon eggs/chicks & exposes them to predators & other threats (Taylor et al, 2005).

Lord et al (1992) found that increased beach usage was associated with decreases in shore bird populations.

Whilst coastal parks & beaches are important areas for people to exercise & enjoy their companion dogs, dogs can have serious consequences for wildlife '...if not properly restrained or controlled'. (Lenth et al, 2006).

Weston (ibid) wrote that a human with a dog, especially unleashed, is a greater threat to birds & chicks than a human without a dog.

This investigation studied some influences or factors which may encourage or discourage dog owner behaviour, such as compliance with regulations. The factors can form barriers to behaviour & are either internal to a person (ie within the person's control), or external to, & outside the person's control.

Stern's (2000, 2005) Value Belief Norm theory of environmentalism proposes that a person's behaviour can impact on the environment. Such ways of behaving are termed 'environmentally significant behaviour' (ESB). The above external & internal factors can form barriers to ESB.

INTERNAL BARRIERS

1. **Values** are '...abstract dispositions ..(re) what is good, right or desirable' (p12).

An environmental concern values system (Stein & Deitz, 1994) was used in this study. The three value orientations which relate to environmental intent are

- A. Egoistic (people want to protect aspects of the environment which affect them personally).
- B. Altruistic to humans (concern for the welfare of society & others).
- C. Biospheric (concern for other species or ecosystems).

2. **Beliefs** are peoples' assumptions re people, ideas or the world. They include beliefs about norms & personal control over situations.

3. **Personal & social norms** act to reduce a threat to those things which the person values.

These norms include

- A. Descriptive norms (a person's perceptions re what is commonly done).
- B. Injunctive norms (behaviours which are seen as being approved / disapproved of by others. Gialdini et al (1990) found that observing others putting litter in a bin or littering, tended to produce the same behaviour in the person observing).

4. **Attitudes** are concerned with specific people & objects.

EXTERNAL BARRIERS

1. **Laws & Regulations.** It has been found that effective regulation increases pro-environmental behaviour (Stern, ibid). Gramman et al (1995) also found that 'somewhat stronger' intent to 'obey rules based on a fear appeal, rather than from an awareness of consequences message. However, this group showed stronger intent than a group who received no information.

2. **Social Norms & Expectations.** Peoples' expectations of others' expectations/standards influence behaviour by acting as an informal law.

3. **Available Resources.** Resources include information about the consequences of behaviour & the provision of suitable areas for recreation.

It is proposed that external provision of information is nec-

essary for the development of internal beliefs, as it can be 'impossible to discern from personal experience... .. links between behaviour & its environmental effects...' (Gardner & Stern, 1996). Awareness of the consequences of our behaviour is also necessary.

Positive intent towards pro-environmental behaviour is not reflected in behaviour if there are insufficient resources (Gardner & Stern, ibid). In this case, resources include the provision of adequate areas for recreation.

METHODOLOGY

A survey study was undertaken in June & July 2006, with 709 subjects (S's) in order to compare the responses of 3 groups of individuals with differing dog ownership status.

Group 1: S did not own a dog.

Group 2: S's walked their dog(s) on the beach.

Group 3: S owned a dog(s) but did not walk it at the beach. The target population for the study was people who walk their dogs on the beach.

Following a pilot study, a structured questionnaire survey was conducted over 10 days by Henry & BA volunteers. It was a quantitative study, using ordinal & dichotomous data, & non-parametric methods of analysis. The surveys were pre-coded. 3000 questionnaires & return envelope were delivered to dog-owners & non dog owners 'in those streets closest to the beach in selected areas. Near Melbourne, questionnaires were hand-delivered. Further away, they were delivered by Australia Post. Reminders to return mail the questionnaire & outlining the aims & nature of the project were carried in the local papers in 4-5 areas surveyed.

This was expected to take 10 minutes to complete & to produce a 30% return rate.

The questionnaire was designed to assess possible barriers to S's pro-environmental behaviour, particularly in relation to dog-leashing laws.

The types of questions were :

- A. Demographic – for classification (eg residence, dog ownership status)
- B. Factual – to assess knowledge (eg of dog regulations)
- C. Opinion – to elicit information re S's values, attitudes, beliefs & perceptions. These questions included rating scales indicating level of agreement on a scale of 1 – 7, Yes-No questions, &

'Tick the box which... ..agrees with your own view' questions.

100 anonymous interview surveys, which took 10 minutes to complete, were also conducted over 5 weekends between 7.30am & 6pm using each dog walker who was walking their dog(s) on the selected beaches at that time. Within each of the CMA zones, 20±2 interviews, taking about 10 minutes to complete were to be conducted by 2 interviewers over 2 days. The regions selected for the survey were several coastal towns/ villages with their residents & visitors during June & July 2006. Selection was based on Victorian Catchment Management Clusters, as the towns needed to have sufficiently large populations for the survey.

The beaches selected were based on advice from local information centres regarding popular dog-walking beaches in the area.

The survey sites were as follows.

INTERVIEW	POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE
Lakes Entrance (surf beach)	Lakes Entrance
Inverloch (foreshore reserve)	Inverloch
Cape Paterson (foreshore reserve)	Cape Paterson
Mornington (foreshore reserve)	Mornington
Mt Martha (foreshore reserve)	Dromana
	Mt Eliza
Torquay (White's Beach)	Apollo Bay
	Torquay
Portland (Nunn's Beach)	Portland
Warrnambool (Lady Bay Beach)	Port Fairy

Predictions

It was predicted that

1. Personal norms/ standards will be a barrier to compliance with dog-leashing laws if S does not feel obliged to leash their dog.
2. If S values wildlife, they will tend to promote wildlife conservation. If S values human/dog recreation, they will tend to report that access to suitable beaches will be seen as more important. There are also tradeoffs amongst these values.
3. If S's attitude to specific dog laws is negative, they may disregard particular regulations.
4. If S does not believe that dogs are a threat to BNB's, they are unlikely to believe that dogs need to be leashed. If S considers unleashed exercise beneficial for dogs at the beach, they are unlikely to leash their dog.
5. If S believes that regulations will not be enforced, there is no pressure to comply with dog-leashing laws. Lack of awareness of relevant regulation may form another barrier to compliance.
6. S's may have a high regard for wildlife conservation, but if they are not aware that birds nest on beaches, or aware of

alternative off-leash areas, they will be less likely to comply. If there are no local off-leash areas, S's will be less likely to comply.

7. If dog owners believe that others do not consider compliance with dog-leashing as important, or do not leash their dog themselves, others will be less likely to comply. But if others who are important to S express concern re dog threat to wildlife/ humans, S will be more likely to leash their dog.

The limitations placed upon the results were considered to be lack of time & resources and, in retrospect, the loss of 600 questionnaires in the mail.

Also, the timing of the study in June & July meant that the sample was not very representative, as the birds were not nesting & there were few holiday makers or visitors.

It was thought that the future use of unstructured interviews in studies might provide more insight into S's behaviour.

RESULTS

709 S's were included in the results: 623 questionnaires & 86 interviews. However the rate of returns from the areas varied. Excluding Apollo Bay & Portland (where 600 questionnaires were lost by Australia Post & not available for analysis), rate of return ranged from 12% at Dromana to 35.1% at Inverloch. (For details, refer p29-30 of thesis).

20 ± 2 interviews were conducted in each CMA area except for Corangamite, where there were 7 interviews.

82.8% of S's were > 40 years of age. 38% were male.

The vast majority were permanent residents & they reported that they walked their dog(s) on the beach.

INTERNAL BARRIERS

1. Personal Norms about Dog Leashing

51% of S's who walk their dog on the beach feel obliged to leash their dog compared with 86.5% of dog owners who do not walk their dog on the beach. But as the latter do not walk their dog on the beach, the latter result is hypothetical only.

2. Values re wildlife, recreation & dog access to beaches

There were no differences between any of the 3 dog ownership groups in their level of regard for wildlife or human recreation. 39% saw both as equally important.

There were significant differences (p<0.05) between the groups re the importance of dog access to beaches. Those who walk their dog on the beach expressed significantly stronger agreement on a scale of 1-7 that dog access was important, compared with dog owners who do not walk their dog on the beach. Also, 83% of those who walk their dog on the beach agreed

with the statement.

All groups considered wildlife conservation & human recreation to be more important than dog recreation (p<0.05).

Values towards the Beach as Habitat

The groups did not differ in the importance placed upon forest or beach as habitat.

3. Beliefs about Threats Posed by (Unleashed) Dogs to BNB

Those who walk their dog on the beach showed significantly less agreement that their unleashed dog poses a threat to BNB than those who do not walk their dog on the beach. (p<0.05. (See Q 24 & 5).

But 62% of those who walk their dog on the beach cf 23% of dog owners who do not walk their dog on the beach agree that their unleashed dog would pose a threat to BNB. (Q13-14).

Dog owners' Perceptions of their Own Dog's Threat to BNB compared with Humans

Dog owners perceived the degree of threat to BNB & humans by their dog as different. (p<0.05).

Only about 35% & 18% agreed that their dog would pose a threat to BNB or humans, respectively.

Dog Owners Perception of the Threat of Dogs in General to BNB compared with People on Beaches

Dog owners showed significantly stronger agreement that dogs, in general, pose a threat to BNB compared with beach recreationists – 63% cf 45%.

Dog Owner's Perception of Threats to BNB from Their Own Dog

Overall, S's agreed more strongly that unleashed dogs in general pose a greater threat than their own unleashed dog (p<0.05).

Among the dog owners, S's own dog is seen as less of a threat to BNB & humans on the beach than dogs in general.

Beliefs re the Benefits of Unleashed Exercise for Dogs

Non-dog owners & dog owners not walking their dog on the beach had varied opinions, but overall, most (66%) agreed on the benefits of unleashed exercise.

Most dog owners who walk their dog on the beach (83%) agree that unleashed exercise is beneficial. This differed significantly from the other 2 groups.

Beliefs re Types of Dog Behaviour which will have a Negative Impact on BNB

S's were asked to indicate any of 4 hypothetical scenarios which they believed would have a lasting negative impact on BNB. These were - chasing (but not catching), barking at, dog within

50m & dog within 200m.

Results showed a decreasing trend of concern, from 80% – 90% overall, to 22% for dogs within 200m. There were possible differences amongst the groups for the last 3 scenarios – eg for barking, those who walked their dog on the beach reported 62.6% agreement that it would have a lasting impact compared with 64.9% for dogs not walked on beaches & 71% for non-dog owners. (Refer to p 41 for detailed results).

S's response to scenarios 3 & 4 was significantly related to dog ownership category. ($P < 0.05\%$). For the scenarios of dog within 50m or 200m, for S's who walk their dog on the beach, differed significantly in their level of belief that dog presence would be likely to have a lasting negative impact.

4. Attitudes towards Regulations

Regarding recreation on beaches, Overall, S's strongly agreed it should be regulated during bird breeding. There were no differences between the groups in their agreement with the idea of control or exclusion of human recreational activity 'on some beaches' for the protection of wildlife.

Regulation of Dogs on Beaches.

Significant differences between groups were found in their attitudes to prohibiting dogs from some beaches during breeding ($p < 0.05$) with S's walking their dogs on the beach expressing less agreement. 40% of S's walking their dog on the beach agreed whereas a higher proportion (76% & 68%) agreed with the idea for owners of dogs not walked on the beach & non-dog owners, respectively.

EXTERNAL BARRIERS

1. Legal & regulatory requirements

All groups responded to Yes / No questionnaires regarding general awareness of regulations. Only dog owners also responded to questions re dog leashing signs enforcement officers & awareness of consequences.

Awareness of Regulations

Significantly more dog owners of dogs walked on beaches said that they were aware of local dog regulations than S's who did not walk their dog on the beach ($p < 0.05$). Overall, most dog owners reported that they were aware of the regulations.

Observation of Signs, Enforcement Officers & awareness of Consequences

Both dog owner groups reported the same high level of awareness that they had observed leashing signs at points of beach access where they walk their dog.

There was no difference between these groups in the low proportion of S's who had observed by-laws officers (29% for dog owners who walk their dog on the beach & 13.5% for S's who

do not walk their dog on the beach).

These groups did not differ ($p < 0.05\%$) in their extremely high awareness (between 90% & 95%) of penalties for non-compliance.

2. Social Norms

Expectations re Leashing Dogs at the beach

Compared with other groups, S's who walk their dogs on the beach express significantly weaker agreement that others expect dogs to be leashed on the beach ($p < 0.05$); ie less than 60% for S's walking their dog on the beach, 70% for S's who don't walk their dog on the beach & 81% of the non-dog owners agreed with the statement re expectations.

Beliefs re Others' perceptions that Beaches are a Good Place for Dogs to Run Around Unleashed

There were significantly different views between the groups ($p < 0.05$) re whether the beaches are a good place for dogs to run unleashed. ($p < 0.05$). About 73% of those who walk their dog on the beach agreed (cf 66% for the other 2 groups combined).

Overall, there was a relatively high proportion of agreement with the social norms expressed in the both headings above.

3. Availability of Information & Access

Provision of Information re threats to BNB by dogs

In all groups, most reported that they had received no information regarding the threat of dogs to BNB. Any information source was generally magazine/newspaper. Few had been informed by a ranger, brochure, friend or 'other'.

Access to Off-leash Areas

There were no differences between groups in their knowledge of off-leash beach areas. 42% were 'unsure' if there were any such areas.

This seemed to be associated with the CMA area. Those in the eastern CMA areas seemed to be least aware.

Whilst around 60% of S's in each of the other groups thought that off-leash areas were a good idea, significantly more (92% of owners who walk their dog on the beach) thought it was a good idea.

DISCUSSION

Internal Barriers

1. Personal Norms

Whilst S's valued wildlife conservation on beaches & acknowledged that unleashed dogs pose a threat to BNB, many did not feel obliged to leash their dog. Hence personal norms are a significant barrier to compliance with dog regulations on Victorian beaches.

Perhaps S's are not fully aware of possible consequences (ie extinction). Greater awareness may increase biospheric values & produce a greater sense of obligation to comply.

2. Values

S's valued wildlife conservation & human recreation on the beach equally. Dog owners who walk their dog on the beach also valued dog access to the beach but to a lesser extent. It seems that S's may have several value orientations amongst which there are trade-offs influencing compliance. They may have a strong concern for non-human species & value wildlife & dogs equally. S's may also have a strong concern for human welfare & value the right of others to beach recreation. In addition, they may also have an egoistic concern for their own welfare.

Management implications: As biospheric values are already high, it is preferable to design education & information re BNB around the 3 values orientations.

3. Beliefs re Consequences

Beliefs re Threats Dogs pose to BNB

S's generally believed that dogs were a threat to BNB. Hence, beliefs re unleashed dogs (in general) are not a barrier to compliance if S's act to protect what they value. However, S's do not see their own dog as a threat, despite holding high biospheric values. If S tries to resolve two conflicting thoughts, it is possible that S may rationalize their valued position of walking their unleashed dog, attribute the problem to other peoples' dogs or see their dog as different (eg "My dog wouldn't hurt a fly"). In this way people may come to believe what they want.

As most believe that unleashed exercise & dog access to beaches is important, S's did not resolve this conflict about the threat of dogs to BNB & taking their dog to the beach by disregarding the information. Rather than this, they explained non-compliance by 'developing' their ideas about their own dog not being a threat (p56).

Beliefs re the Type of Dog Behaviour producing a Lasting Negative Impact on BNB

The result that most S's did not believe that the presence of a dog at 50/200m would have a lasting negative impact conflicts with findings from other studies. However, most S's did believe that a dog chasing or barking at BNB would have a lasting impact.

Dog owners who walk their dog on the beach compared with other groups seem to believe to a greater extent that BNB are tolerant of disturbance. The reasons for this are not known. It may be because other groups have more negative attitudes

towards dogs, or have more information re their impact on BNB. It may also be because dog owners who walk their dog on the beach are rationalizing their beliefs more than other groups.

Beliefs re the Benefits of Unleashed Exercise for Dogs

It is widely acknowledged that adequate exercise is beneficial for dog health. This belief is likely to be a barrier to compliance as S's may then let their dog to run unleashed, despite regulations. People living near the beach are likely to see the beach as the best place for this type of exercise.

It is not known why significantly fewer dog owners who do not walk their dog on the beach believe that unleashed exercise is beneficial.

Management implications: Given these S's strong values about recreation, dog access & exercise, convincing them to comply with leashing laws will be 'complicated', as information provided re dog threats to BNB may conflict with other beliefs.

4. Attitudes towards Regulations

As S's generally had positive attitudes to regulation for both humans & dogs during the BNB breeding season, this was not a barrier to compliance. Thus, the relationship between attitude & behaviour remains to be clarified.

As S's did not distinguish between human & dog exclusion, this may be a barrier to compliance as BNB are more sensitive to dogs than humans. Many people see their dog as part of the family with similar rights & regulations.

Management implications: As S's are unlikely to demote their companion pet, raising awareness that dogs are a greater threat to BNB than humans is unlikely to be effective. It may be beneficial to make human regulations on beaches stricter, but this would be very unpopular.

EXTERNAL FACTORS (CONTEXTUAL)

This study is considerably limited by using self report to measure external barriers.

1. Laws & Regulatory Factors

State law says that a dog must be under (effective) control. Council dog regulations, especially seasonal bans are often vague, open to interpretation & even confusing (Weston, 2003). This also makes the situation difficult to manage (Bayside City Council, 2006).

Awareness of Regulations

Whilst 'actual awareness' is a better measure of awareness, this study was limited to 'claimed awareness', which was not found to be a barrier to compliance, as most S's claimed to be aware.

Enforcement of Regulations

If S's believe that dog regulations will be enforced through fines or sanctions this is likely to be an effective deterrent. Currently, lack of enforcement is a barrier to compliance.

Management implications: If we can assume that reported awareness matches actual awareness, it can be concluded that current dog signage is effective.

The authorities do not promote compliance, which is left to Council by-laws officers

An approach which provides dog owners with 'awareness of consequences' information re the threat of dogs to BNB, followed by an enforcement blitz may be useful.

2. Social Norms & Expectations

The results suggest that people believe that others expect dogs to be leashed on beaches (ie general approval/disapproval). However, they also perceive that others think that beaches are a good place for dogs to run unleashed (through observation of others' behaviour).

This contradiction is a barrier to compliance. Moreover the expected or observed behaviour of other dog owners will influencing the dog owner, especially if the other dog owner(s) are seen as 'good' pet owners (eg by giving their dog opportunity to exercise unleashed).

Future research about what pet owners see as a 'good' dog owner is needed.

It is possible that dog owners who walk their dog on the beach & other beach-users have conflicting interests which affect peoples' expectations about desirable beach behaviour.

Management implications: Local Melbourne experience (eg Bayside City Council, *ibid*) suggests that strong community involvement/ commitment at a particular site is associated with higher compliance re picking up dog droppings.

To reduce barriers associated with social norms, it is suggested to work with dog owners to establish new norms through the formation of 'responsible dog owner' groups, whose responsible behaviour is seen by other dog owners as socially acceptable. This may increase compliance through fear of being seen as behaving in a socially unacceptable manner.

3. Availability of Information & Access

Provision of Information re Threats that Dogs Pose to BNB

If S's are not aware of the BNB or threats posed by dogs, they are unlikely to see a problem for wildlife with unleashed dogs on the beach. As this study found that few S's had information, internal factors under S's control may have done little to increase compliance. Further research could be conducted to see if information provision improves compliance.

Designated Off-leash Areas

Socialization & adequate exercise are important for responsible pet ownership (RSPCA website). In this study, S's supported off-leash areas, but many were unaware of them. Whether this is a general lack of awareness in certain towns or an actual lack of availability would be established by a future study.

Management implications: It is important to reduce this barrier by increased provision of information re the conservation status of BNB & the threats posed by dogs. But as this may provoke conflicting beliefs/attitudes, it may be helpful to target the general public concerning the effects of both people & dogs. If scientific evidence is provided 'people may find it difficult to rationalize....' that dogs are not a threat (p64).

As (many) of dog owners disregard access & leashing regulations, there is a need for greater compliance. To avoid enforcement problems (eg lack of resources), it may be useful to integrate/ trial some off-leash areas where they are currently lacking. This may be effective in meeting the needs of beach recreationists & their dogs, whilst maintaining wildlife conservation. These areas should be free from wildlife habitats & breeding sites.

CONCLUSION

Increasing beach recreationist numbers & their dogs, especially during the breeding season, are a threat to the persistence of BNB in Victoria. Compliance with dog regulations, especially re leashing, is low.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Internal Barriers

- ◆ Many dog owners do not feel obliged to leash their dog(s) on the beach.
- ◆ Conflicting values (wildlife conservation, human beach recreation, dog access) are likely to influence compliance & lead to values trade-offs.
- ◆ Dogs (in general) are seen as a threat. But as most owners believe that unleashed exercise is beneficial for dog health, it is unlikely that they will adjust their beliefs re the threats that dogs pose, as their own dog is not generally seen as a threat.
- ◆ S's did not distinguish between human & dog regulation, & many dog owners see dogs as no more of a threat than humans. This reflects the status that many dogs have in society today. But, as studies indicate that dogs are a greater threat to BNB than humans, dog regulations need to be stricter.

External Barriers

- ◆ There was a high level of claimed awareness of signs, dog regulations & penalties at local beach areas. It is doubtful that this matches actual awareness.

- ◆ Few had observed by-law enforcement officers. Despite awareness of regulations, low enforcement will affect compliance.
- ◆ S's reported conflicting social norms between other's leashing expectations & perceptions of others' views re beaches a good places for unleashed dogs. In this context, the behaviour of other dog owners will affect S's decision to leash their dog.
- ◆ Most reported that they had not been provided with information re the threats dogs pose to BNB (eg dog presence within 200m of BNB). If S's are unaware of the conservation status of BNB, this will act as a barrier, so awareness of adverse consequences will decrease the barrier.
- ◆ Most dog owners agree that off-leash areas are a good idea, but a large number were unaware if there were any in the local beach area.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Internal Factors

- ◆ Information needs to appeal to all value orientations – wildlife conservation, human recreation & dog access.
- ◆ Do not present dog owners with very much information which is likely to conflict with their existing values.
- ◆ Do not distinguish between human & dog regulations, as many dogs have a 'close to human' status; for example, in some significant beach areas, restrict beach access for both humans & dogs.

External Factors

- ◆ Increase enforcement.
- ◆ Establish 'responsible dog owner'/community groups to exert social pressure to comply.
- ◆ Improve & increase information to develop awareness & understanding re the conservation status of BNB & the threats to them from dogs. In particular, draw attention to the different types of dog behaviour that will be likely to impact on BNB.
- ◆ Increase awareness of existing off-leash areas.
- ◆ Integrate/trial additional off-leash areas at new locations.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could investigate the following:

- ◆ The views of the different dog owner groups re their beliefs about the threat that their dog poses to BNB.
- ◆ A comparison of claimed & actual awareness in order to determine if awareness is a barrier to compliance.
- ◆ The provision of information re the conservation status of & threats to BNB together with the extent of compliance with dog leashing laws using covert observational methods.
- ◆ A follow-up study during BNB summer breeding using a more representative sample.
- ◆ A more in-depth qualitative study using open-ended questions would provide a better insight into these matters.

'STUMPY' - THE HOODED PLOVER THAT HAS INSPIRED ALL...

Parks Victoria Wonthaggi works closely with the Friends of the Bass Coast Hooded Plover group in conducting a regular census of the Hooded Plover in areas around Inverloch and the sand islands of Andersons Inlet. This particular census program has proven to be one of great interest, due to the discovery of 'Stumpy' the tiny, yet brave Hooded Plover.

At the beginning of the census program (November 2010), Mr Steve Johnson, Coordinator of the local Hooded Plover Friends Group noticed an unbanded Hooded Plover with fishing line caught around both its legs at Point Norman, near Inverloch.

"We undertook a number of visits during November to monitor the distressed bird, as we were alarmed that both of its feet were now swelling up from the constricting finishing line", said Mr Johnson.

As the census program continued into 2011, Parks Victoria ranger Brian Martin assisted the Friends group by undertaking a series of visits to the sand islands around Anderson Inlet.

"With discomfort restricting its mobility and feeding capability, combined with numerous failed sightings during the census, we thought the little Hooded Plover had perished", said Mr Martin.

However, Jonathon Stevenson from Parks Victoria's Foster office had a stroke of luck in early January when he observed a Hooded Plover without feet on Point Smythe at Venus Bay and passed on his findings to the Friends Group.

Mr Johnson was determined to locate this distressed bird with no feet during the monitoring visits, and it wasn't until late February that he saw two birds- one banded and the other, a fluffed up bird sitting quite low in the sand within the sand islands around Anderson Inlet. The bird had no feet and from that moment became affectionately known as 'Stumpy'.

"Whilst 'Stumpy's' feeding efficiency was reduced by lack of leg speed across the sand, it appeared to be showing no signs of discomfort. We observed it peck feeding and flying about the island with its faithful and loyal partner who remained throughout the ordeal. The tiny stump holes it leaves in the sand as footprints are a statement of 'Stumpy's' determination to survive" said Mr Johnson.

"It is moments like these that make you appreciate your job. To share in this discovery and be able to see how well 'Stumpy' has adapted to its new way of life is a great experience and shows the resilience of the Hooded Plover breed", said Mr Martin.

Parks Vic media release, 18 March 2011

FRIENDS OF THE HOODED PLOVER (MORNINGTON PENINSULA) INC

Incorporation number: A0054904Y

COMMITTEE

President: Diane Lewis **Vice President:** John Franklin **Secretary:** Val Ford **Treasurer:** Virginia Franklin

General members: Malcolm Brown, Neil Shelley, Jan Dwyer

CONTACTING FOHP

Phone: 0419 320 205, 5984 0039 or 5988 0439 **Email:** hploversmornpen@gmail.com **Post:** PO Box 36 Rye 3941

NEWSLETTER

Contributions: Are welcome as emails, word documents, typed or hand written articles, photos & sketches. Please send photos as separate attachments, not embedded in word documents.

Send to: Val Ford [5984 0039] at hploversmornpen@gmail.com or PO Box 36 Rye 3941.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF
FRIENDS OF HOODED PLOVER (MORNINGTON PENINSULA) INC.**

PO Box 36 Rye 3941

I, (Print full name)

Of(address)

Phone:.....Mob :.....(occupation).....

apply to become a member of Friends Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc.

I attach my payment of \$5.00 for my initial Annual Subscription Fee. I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association as from time to time in force, if I am admitted as a member. If my application is rejected the \$5.00 is to be refunded to my postal address above.

For the purpose of any Notices under the rules or otherwise, I request these be sent to me either by:

post to my above address;

by facsimile to :.....

by email to :.....

I request the Association to adopt any one of the above alternatives at its complete discretion.

I have the following skills, interests and time to commit to the objects of the Association:

Skills:

Interests:.....

Time(s) available:.....

My particular interest in Hooded Plovers is:.....

(Optional) DONATION: I would like to donate to the Association and attach my cheque payable to Friends Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc. for: \$.....

Signature of Applicant :.....(usual signature)

Date:...../...../.....

I,..... (Print name), a member of the Association,

nominate the applicant, who is personally known to me, for membership of the Association.

Signature of Proposer:.....dated:/...../.....

Signature of Seconder:.....dated:/...../.....