



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

“So many great volunteers and rangers, new volunteers coming on board, all sites are monitored, even new sites being found, all nests that need management are getting it really quickly and the chick site management is brilliant now.” Glenn Ehmke, BirdLife Australia; Jan 2016



FRIENDS OF THE HOODED PLOVER NEWS

Issue Number 24

It has been an incredibly busy Hooded Plover breeding season and we are only two thirds of the way through. We are very pleased to have PV Ranger Renae as the Summer HP ranger for this season. She is on the beach everyday checking our Hooded Plovers, if you haven't met her yet I am sure you will by the end of the season.

Parks Victoria latest data shows volunteers have recorded 67 nests (41 have failed due to high tides and other unknown causes) and 34 chicks have hatched. Three sites currently have chicks aged between 7 -14 days old. No chicks have fledged yet.

But we are seeing some chicks surviving longer. Whilst we don't have a fledgling yet the improved survival rate of chicks is definitely a step forward and our efforts are worthwhile.

In November a chick at Montforts survived to 23 days despite this beach having a poor compliance record. In December three chicks at Moana survived to 23 days, Franklin Rd chick survived 10 days, Fowlers now has a 14 day-old chick on the beach and chicks at St Andrews are nearly a week old.

Our new Beach Leaders system, supported by Mark Lethlean as coordinator has seen volunteers providing morning and evening checks on chicks - this has given the chicks more support and BirdLife valuable information (if the chick goes missing we now have an idea when this happened). More equipment provided by the Australian BirdLife Environment Foundation has helped PV rangers and FoHP volunteers get fencing and signage up quickly for new nests and chicks.

New volunteers have taken on monitoring with enthusiasm and have reduced the pressure on Beach Leaders to be checking beaches daily. We only get well-trained volunteers with our more experienced members (Val Ford, Mark Lethlean, Chris Willocks, Neil Shelley and Lois Greene) offering to be mentors.

New interest in the Westernport beaches has provided new members who are checking beaches and finding nests at Flinders and Pt Leo and HP pairs

at Somers and Balnarring.

A nest at Dimmicks beach reported by a member of the public is a new territory and now officially on our list.

Local press has also been supporting our efforts. Photographers have visited some Hooded Plover beach sites, met with volunteers and heard their first hand accounts of what happens on the beaches they monitor.

We continue to send out our message via different avenues. We were invited set up a stall at the MP Pet Expo and also attended two Boneo markets over summer. We provided a workshop at 'Seal the Loop' – an event targeting primary school children and we made shelters in Hastings with the Willum



Hooded Plover family at Moana; temperature 39°C. Photo by Glenn Ehmke

Warrain Aboriginal Association Inc. Last Saturday we had a very successful Dogs Breakfast at St Andrew's Community Hall. Of course none of this would happen without the support of our volunteers and committee.

Grainne Maguire (BirdLife Australia BNB team) and I were lucky to be invited to meet with Minister Neville in early December – 'The Mornington Peninsula National Park Dog Review' is due to be released early 2016. We had enough time to discuss many HP related issues, what was happening in the National Park, problems we see occurring due to reduced PV staff at Rosebud, difficulty with dogs off-leash and lack of off-leash areas on the Mornington Peninsula were some of the topics we covered. I presented her with the Dog walking brochure we had printed last year, an analysis of the 'dog off-leash' emails sent to me by members monitoring MP beaches and a copy of the Territory maps of the MPNP.

Finally we have been very lucky to have Glenn Ehmke spend some time down on the Mornington Peninsula over the summer holiday period. His interest in Hooded Plovers goes back more than 10 years when he was part of the BirdLife Beach-nesting Bird team that started this programme. He has shared his knowledge by walking beaches with new members, helping with wardening chicks and checking other beaches for nests and taken some wonderful photos along the way.

See on the beach.

Diane Lewis

Congratulations Hannah

We have a winner! In December, we advertised a Random Draw Prize for someone who had entered their Hooded Plover sightings onto the online MyBeachBird data portal. Only entries that had threat data, including print data were eligible for entry.

The draw was conducted on Tuesday 12 January, and the name drawn from the 'random number generator' was 328 - which was Hannah Lethlean!

Hannah has the choice of one of the following:

- Limited edition Hooded Plover T-shirt from Alison Green Designs
- Pied Oystercatcher or Red-capped Plover cushion cover, generously donated by Ro Kidd of Awesome Aussie Gifts
- Simpson and Day bird field guide.

So far, there have been over 4,700 entries which is amazing, as we're still in peak season - so much more data to come!

Great work everyone and congratulations to Hannah!

Hooded Plover Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/hooded.plover.birdlife>



Although an unfortunate choice, still great camouflage courtesy of one of the equine trail rides.

Photo by Mark Lethlean

FRIENDS OF THE HOODED PLOVER (MORNINGTON PENINSULA) INC

Incorporation number: A0054904

COMMITTEE President: Diane Lewis **Vice President:** Mark Lethlean **Secretary:** Lois Greene
Treasurer: Jo Hansen **General members:** Chris Willocks, Jenny Griffiths, Sandy Brewer, Hannah Lethlean

BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS BSB: 063 891 Account No: 10127668

CONTACTING FoHP 0419 320 205 or 5986 7660, PO Box 36 Rye 3941, hploversmornpen@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER Contributions: Thank you for all the great articles, notes & photos. Please keep sharing your Hooded Plover experiences.

Send to: Val Ford, 5981 1445, fordandred@gmail.com

Deadline for next newsletter: Friday 22 April 2016

NEST MANAGEMENT

It's probably old news to you, but spending a week on the Mornington Peninsula over New Year after doing not much over the last few years (boo me!), seeing things there I realised how amazing the program is on the MP now!

So many great volunteers and rangers, new volunteers coming on board, all sites are monitored, even new sites being found, all nests that need management are getting it really quickly and the chick site management is brilliant now.

Chick fences, with banners and chicks on beach signs and shelters are really effective I think. Just look at the prints at Moana, the dune area is pristine behind the permanent fence, the upper beach also totally clear for the birds as a

refuge, perfect, so exciting to see management working! I saw chicks using shelters at, at least, three territories last week, sometimes sheltering from the near gale force easterlies or 35 degree + heat or hundreds of people walking past. It's challenging, I had to take a picture of the Moana East chicks in their shelter (great) but with some idiots who had walked past all the signs and fences and left their thongs right next to the shelters! The good and the bad all in the one pic!

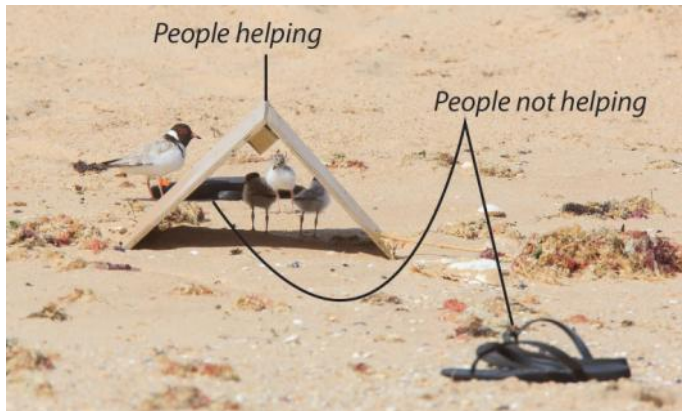
There are some fools out there, some rude abusive people and some just not paying attention, but remembering back 7-8 years ago, things are SO MUCH better now. I saw loads of people reading signs and doing the right thing keeping

clear of nests/chicks, vast majority of people I spoke to knew about hoodies which is testament to all the markets, school talks, stickers, tee-shirts, newspaper articles, access signs etc. The message is getting through, it always takes years for social change, but you guys are beginning to win!

It was really nice for me to meet so many new and enthusiastic volunteers and rangers, and to be able to spend some time watching hoodie families and not even have to lug fences/signs down with me - it was often all done!

So I got to take some pics/video which I really enjoyed. <https://youtu.be/U5Wia7X7NIw>

Glenn Ehmke



Photos by Glenn Ehmke

The Moana West territory, 11 January. These are the fences Glenn highlighted as working so well, but not today.

Entry and exit was via the dune and they had been playing/chasing within the fenced area.

The chick was not seen.

Mark Lethlean



Photo by Mark Lethlean

THE TALE OF A TERRITORY MOANA EAST, JANUARY 2016

The Moana East territory, a popular surf break near St Andrews, has been the center of serious Hoodie drama and heartbreak for some time. Originally occupied by 'KT' and unbanded partner, 'KT' disappeared after being last sighted on the territory with a nest in November 2013. Thought to have died, 'KT' was thankfully located up the coast eight months later (with a new man!). Meanwhile, 'MU' (banded as a chick at Fingal in February 2012) and her unbanded male partner conquered the Moana East territory in December 2013. Since then, the pair have had numerous nesting attempts, but unfortunately no surviving chicks.



MU showing chick around the block! Busy beaches mean the chick is constantly disturbed and using precious energy instead of feeding. Photo by Mark Lethlean

Tragedy overcame the pair last year, after the loss of two chicks, only days away from fledging. This was devastating for the parents as well as the volunteers and rangers who had dedicated days of work to give these chicks a chance at flying. A necropsy conducted later on one of the chicks bodies, showed that the cause of death had been from a dog attack.

This season, the pair have persevered and successfully hatched four chicks. Volunteers and rangers do regular

check-ups on the chicks to monitor their movements as well as educate any beach-goers about the detriment of disturbance. The first chick, from their first nesting attempt, was lost soon after hatching. Their second clutch of three eggs was far more successful and all hatched. But just as our confidence was beginning to build, we lost two of the chicks at 17 days old. All hope rested on the final chick, whom at 23 days was starting to look more like a gangly teenager! The awkward transition of fluff to feather was taking place, and everyone was counting down the days until first flight.

Unfortunately, January 12 marked the disappearance of the final chick from the Moana East territory. Being much older and wiser, it was hard not to have hoped that it would survive. Not knowing the cause of death is frustrating and shattering for the people who have invested so much time and effort, but conservation of threatened species is rarely dominated by heart-warming stories!

So I know I said it's 'not all doom and gloom' and followed it by exemplifying a Hoodie territory where, this year, all four chicks have perished.... But the success we strive for is measured in increments. Only five years ago this territory



MU's unbanded partner in flight. Photo by Hannah Lethlean



22 day-old chick at Moana East, day before death.
Photo by Mark Lethlean

was on the verge of being abandoned by scientists. The level of human disturbance was so great that nests rarely hatched, and dog regulations were blatantly ignored by the majority. Now, through various programs there is greater awareness and appreciation of the Hoodies, which means beach regulations regarding dog control and dune invasion are better adhered to. The community is gradually taking on the responsibilities of the Hoodies' plight, and joining in the journey from eggs to chick to fledging. The greater the community involvement, the closer we become to understanding the fate of the chicks. Before long, we will get those chicks to 35 days so they can fly away- and we can sleep easy knowing that they made it through.

'Optimism is a key ingredient for any successful human endeavor' - Bob Brown

Hannah Lethlean

KESTREL PREDATES ADULT HOODED PLOVER

Predation of adult Hooded Plover by Nankeen Kestrel

In relation to the recent remote camera images in the link below Glenn Ehmke and I thought it was odd that one of the sticks by the Heyfields trio nest had moved through the series of images, so we flicked through them in time sequence and looked closely at the images just preceding the stick's appearance nearer the nest. What we found was quite shocking and a first in terms of observations of Hooded Plover predation. We saw that the incubating adult had been grabbed by a kestrel that must have swooped down from the dune behind. The image shows the hoodie in the kestrel's claw, with a leg flag showing so that we can narrow down which bird it was. The images thereafter only show AZ and un-banded, so that we assume it was JB (female) that was predated. Sorry to be the bearer of bad news.

The predation happens at 58 seconds. (please ignore the time/date stamp on the image - the camera was not set correct).

<https://youtu.be/myGzyfqbU3Q>

This predation event is likely to trigger two potential responses from members of the public:

'Kill the kestrels' - we need to acknowledge that until we get more evidence to suggest that kestrels are taking a large proportion of nests and adults and chicks, that we don't believe them to be the main driver of breeding failure/mortality. There is nothing to say that kestrels have increased in abundance on the coast or that Hooded Plovers won't have the

adaptive capacity to persist with this native predator. We do know however that birds with steep dunes behind them will have greater visual barriers and be more likely to be ambushed by a bird of prey that uses this technique. Similarly, these birds when nesting in the dunes, are also more liable to fox predation, as the trends are showing in our data that it is the habitat layout that makes some more susceptible and seems correlated with adult losses. For this particular trio of birds, the habitat at Heyfields facilitates an ambush, there are three birds coming to and from the nest very frequently and when nests are in the dune, the 'path' they use to and from the nest is very obvious to avian predators.

'See it isn't dogs that are the problem' - this is a common response from dog owners who are defensive about the issue, but we can respond to this by saying there are a suite of threats these birds face, a number of these threats are natural, but it is the human modifications of habitat (weeds and access points) and predator systems (e.g. introduced foxes, superabundant ravens and gulls, feeding of magpies) and the impacts of disturbance, direct crushing and predation by domestic pets, that are tipping the balance. These are threats which are relatively 'new' in an evolutionary sense, so there has been little time to adapt - with adaptations being difficult due to habitat specialisations and strategies that help against predators, working to the opposite effect with people. It's a numbers game and if we tackle the threats we control and have added to the system, then we reset the balance.

Warning, you might find images distressing.

Grainne Maguire, Coast and Marine Program Manager, BirdLife Australia



Heyfields Hooded Plover trio at nest.



Incubating Hooded Plover predated by Nankeen Kestrel

Just to add to Grainne's note, the remaining two birds have continued to incubate after they lost JB so this nest is not lost by any means. If it hatches we're sure the remaining parents will try to raise the clutch and may again breed after that so don't give up. What a great story it would be if they were to succeed in fledging a chick!

I have been through the images and I think this happened sometime between the 25th and 27th - I stupidly did not set the date/time correctly so it's a bit hard, but counting the nights this is how it seems to come out and it corresponds with portal observations.

Sad as this event is, I think this shows the value of remote camera monitoring. Without this we would be scratching our heads thinking gee where did JB go? (maybe she is off with another bird now?) It's sad, but as Grainne said in her recent update about monitoring, having this information is so important and the BNB team is actively thinking about how we can figure out what is happening to chicks using technology in the near future which is our only remaining missing piece of the puzzle.

Regarding nest cameras in general, for those who might now know the policies and approaches the BNB team uses, we use them very, very carefully and under strict ethics permit conditions. We will not use another one on this beach this year - we do one per beach per year to make sure there is no risk of "training" predators. I should note that when installing this one, I was careful to smooth out any prints I made at the nest (though there were lots of other ones anyway), and there were definitely no predators around etc. We never approach a nest if a Raven or Kestrel or Magpie is around of course.

In this instance, the fact that there was a trio of birds which spent a lot of time at the nest may have contributed to the predation? The camera images reveal a very high level of nest attendance, often by all three birds and as you can see on the images, that makes for a 3x greater target for a visual predator and as Grainne mentioned, the nest position made this nest particularly vulnerable to ambush.

Actually this highlights a good point about a question we are often asked. People often say why do the birds nest in the open in seemingly "silly" spots?... well to avoid ambush predation... show them this image! I actually think these birds would rather nest on the upper beach, but can't because of the amount of foot traffic there.

I also think (just opinion though) that there may well be an interaction with disturbance here. Although a natural predator took this bird, the fact is that one of a non-incubating birds tasks is to be "on guard" for the incubator just because they are so vulnerable to predation while on the nest. If the non-incubating birds are off leading people or dogs etc. they are not there to warn the other bird. In remote beaches you often see the non-incubating birds sitting on the beach looking back towards the nest. They are then in a position to call to the incubator if a predator is approaching. I can't say this is what happened this time, but I'm convinced there is an interaction between disturbance and predation in general (especially of chicks) and this is a very busy beach of course.

Anyway, please don't despair! Losing an adult bird is extremely rare.

The camera is still on this nest recording, so if anything happens - failure or hatching, please let us know and we'll come to collect it (or you can probably take it in yourself actually if the birds are no longer at the nest - you just open it up and flick the switch to off). They are due to hatch I think around the 20th.

If you do have another pair that is failing consistently elsewhere (due to something other than tides) and you think it could be useful to have a nest camera let us know and we will work with PV and have a think about its appropriateness.

Never a dull moment at Heyfields!

Glenn Ehmke

DON'T GIVE UP

A quick message from BirdLife. It's really disheartening to hear that there have been many nest attempts so far this season, many of which have hatched successfully, but once again, that we have not had any chicks survive so far. I wanted however to say that please don't give up, what is really positive is the fact that monitoring has really ramped up and that we have many new volunteers on the ground now, becoming experienced and making excellent reports of nest finds, hatching dates and threats at sites. It is especially important to make more visits to the sites once the eggs have hatched so that:

- We can narrow down the time of disappearance – at previous end of season debriefs we have discussed that there are big knowledge gaps around what is happening to the chicks. Narrowing down if they disappear after the night is important, so making visits in late evening and again the next morning are incredibly useful – they help us determine if a nocturnal predator (fox) is the issue. At least with such a visitation regime, we could broadly divide losses into nocturnal and diurnal, each with their own suite of potential causes.

- An increased presence during the chick phase increases the likelihood that we will be there to spot a potential disturbance or dog attack etc, and be able to prevent it. I can't tell you the number of times that simply by a volunteer there at that moment that would have spelt the end for the chicks. So a greater presence and even the communication opportunities with visitors, the better.

Another update is that we are seeking funding for new technology including video surveillance cameras and radio-transmitters to determine chick fates, which remains a key knowledge gap. If we can learn more about what happens to the chicks, then we can improve our management of the birds during this phase and at least know where to extend our efforts. During this research, we'd be extra keen for helpers to give us a hand with radio-tracking!

Thanks again to everyone for their excellent monitoring efforts!

Grainne Maguire, 8 December 2015

MFC TAKE OVER BEACHES AND DUNES

It's a grand old flag
It's a high flying flag
It's....you know how it goes.

But what we didn't know was that we were going to run into the Melbourne Football Club. All of them, including coaches and trainers, in fact there were 60 of them.

It started as any other monitoring session, Koonya Dunnies at 9am, Tuesday 15 December with Val, Andy Parsons and myself. The upper car park looked like it was being used by some exercise troupe, what was going on?

We started our walk towards Montforts Beach, as we approached we came across two trainers with some huge duffle bags. "Do Parks Victoria know you are here" asked Val, "yes I think" was the reply.

We headed onto Montforts, from a distant we could see them in the dunes, I thought they looked like school children. Then we got up close and personal.

We watched speechless almost dumbfounded as they filed past us, up the stairs and off the beach, I tried to count them but I lost count at around 49. Some smiled at us, some didn't. Andy managed to ask "are you from the Melbourne Football Club", "yes" they said. Val asked "how many of you are there"; "around 60" was the reply.

On the beach the damage was extensive, but thankfully they had kept out of the dune where our Hooded Plovers were nesting. We breathed a sigh of relief.

Over on Koonya the beach was extensively trampled and dunes had been demolished.

Emails were sent, phone calls were made, Melbourne Football Club have now been informed.

Will it happen again?

Rosalba Catena



One of the dune areas damaged on Koonya beach, there was another a short distance to the left. Hooded Plovers were nesting behind the permanent fence in the right of the photo.

Photo by Andy Parsons

COASTREK EVENT

On Friday 20 November 2015 the Coastrek Team trekking challenge, was held for the first time in the Mornington Peninsula National Park. The challenge is to walk 35 - 55km (it is not promoted as a race) in teams of four to raise funds for the Fred Hollows Foundation. The event this year raised over \$1 million.

The organisation was very keen to be proactive; they contacted BirdLife and FoHP early in the year. Hooded Plover information was made available and PV organised a route onto the beach at Boags Rocks and Heyfields.

All looked well organised until a Hooded Plover nest was found the day before the walk - right beside where the walkers were to exit the beach.

Luckily three FoHP members were at the ready.

Many thanks to Lois Greene, Hannah Lethlean and Graeme Millar for getting up so early to be down at Boags by 7am to help warden the new HP nest, despite the weather.

Diane Lewis

It seemed to be a great event with the vast majority of participants jovial, interested in the environment and when told of the HP nest on the beach the comment, 'wonderful' was heard often.

The organisers seemed to bend over backwards to accommodate the Hoodies location by altering the route (at very late notice) and providing three marshals that ended up not being needed. There seemed to be little disturbance to the birds as they were busy defending their territory from another Hooded Plover. Don't think they even noticed the walkers!

There were also several photographers active. I spoke at length to the Fred Hollows ones and they all were very keen to get shots of the birds. Perhaps next time we could supply some stock photos.

The event was a good PR chance and from my part there are four hundred walkers who are now aware of the Peninsula's Hooded Plovers.

Graeme Millar



AT THE BRIARS FOR 'WHAT BIRD IS THAT'

The Briars is always a nice place to visit. There is the comfort in knowing that you can be surrounded on one side by nature and on the other by people who share with you that special joy and passion only nature itself can inspire.

So it was here on October 25 that BirdLife's Mornington Peninsula branch held the annual event 'What Bird Is That?'. Interestingly this beautiful old 230 hectare property is also home to some wonderful indigenous flora and fauna.

Our Friends of Hooded Plover display tables were nicely positioned in the corner of the Information Centre building and were well stocked with the usual array of pamphlets, displays and human support staff! Lois, Diane and Sue were on hand throughout the morning and early afternoon to engage passing enthusiasts in their proven pleasant and informative style. Without doubt these unsuspecting but lucky individuals were all destined to be made aware of the hodie story from those in the know. One cannot be sure at the time but I was confident that as a result of these exchanges a new beach monitor would be encouraged to come on board or at the very least a few more people would be in a better position to spread the word of our little protected species.



FoHP members Danny Vits, Larry Wakefield and Diane Lewis.
Photos by Rab Siddhi



David Ap-Thomas leads a birdwatching group

We also had the opportunity to join in on some of the other activities taking place which included a visual presentation of local bird species and a wander down to the bird hide with experts whose knowledge of all things bird had to be heard to be believed.

As the day drew to an end the presence of an adult emu nearby made for a special moment. It was easily visible

through the window just behind us and to me it was more than just cool. Quite simply it reminded me of that constant connection between nature and earth and why we were there doing our bit for another species. The Hooded Plover.

Andy Parsons

FOHP (MORNINGTON PENINSULA) VOLUNTEER HOURS 2015-2016

The table below shows the hours to the end of December spent by FoHP (Mornington Peninsula) volunteers caring for the Hooded Plovers along the MPNP.

Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc. Volunteer Hours 2015 / 2016																	
	Jul	Aug	Sep	1st Qtr	Oct	Nov	Dec	2nd Qtr	Jan	Feb	Mar	3rd Qtr	Apr	May	Jun	4th Qtr	Total
Beach - Monitoring	41.5	38	103.5	183	154.5	229.5	223.5	607.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	790.5
Beach - Wardening	2	10.5	0	12.5	0	1	12	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25.5
Admin	159.5	42.5	143	345	162.5	152.5	76.5	391.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	736.5
Meetings	15.5	21	36	72.5	19.5	0	19	38.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	111
Education	5.5	44.5	42	92	18.5	60.5	16.5	95.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	187.5
Training	1	1	25	27	38	4.25	6.25	48.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	75.5
Travel	10.5	15	39.5	65	31.5	46.25	32.75	110.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	175.5
Travel (km)	978	739	1278	2995	2668	2735	2106	7509	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10504
	235.5	172.5	389	797	424.5	494	386.5	1305	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2102

John Franklin, 11 January 2016

PENINSULA TEACHERS VOLUNTEER DAY

Peninsula plovers

A big thank you to the teacher volunteers from The Peninsula School, Mt Eliza, who visited peninsula ocean beaches to do a beach clean last Wednesday.

After a briefing by Parks Victoria, it was off to gather rubbish from Rye, St Andrews and Gunnamatta ocean beaches with members of Friends of the Hooded Plover.

This is territory of the endangered hooded plover, the peninsula's true local, a shorebird that desperately need our help to survive. Chick numbers are declining rapidly and suffer from many threats, such as foxes and dogs wandering loose in Mornington Peninsula National Park. Rubbish can be another threat to shorebirds.

The teachers spent all day collecting rubbish and learning about the endangered birds.

Graeme Millar, Friends of the Hooded Plover, Southern Peninsula News 22 December 2015



Parks Vic Ranger Mark Pinney, head of the Hooded Plover's PV efforts, briefing everyone prior to starting.



One of the two groups taking a rest at a gorgeous spot at Rye ocean beaches. Photos by Graeme Miller



The sum total of rubbish collected, note the car tyre and the addition to Chris Willocks attire, wow what a shirt!

HOODED PLOVERS NESTING AT DIMMICKS BEACH



Photos by Karl Bromelow

MUD ISLAND TRIP

This year's Mud Island trip was another success, the weather was kind, in fact the cooler conditions made it more bearable. Chris Willocks did an outstanding job of organising thirty-three people for the day and of course the dive boat that took us out to the island.

We had one incident where we found a stand up paddle board out near the South Channel Fort. After contacting the water police, retrieving the board and perusing the surrounding water and fort for possible missing person, we were dropped at Mud Island.

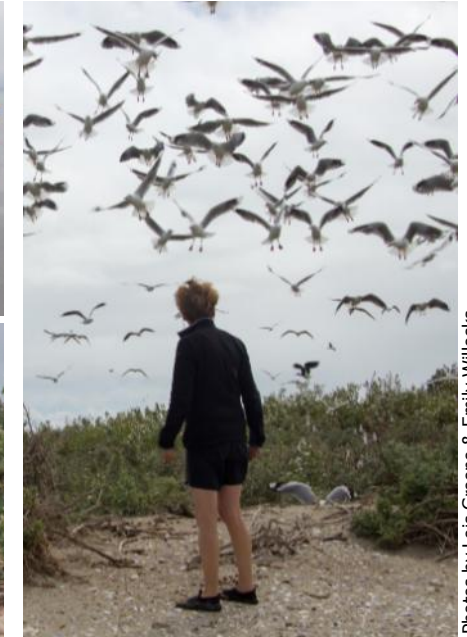
This year with tide extremely low we were able cross the lagoon and walk around the entire island. Highlights were the pelican nursery and the Caspian Terns teaching their chicks to swim. Larry Wakefield and Denis Goss had telescopes so we were able to view the tiny Red-capped Plovers and Red-necked Stints up close.

On behalf of everyone who came on this year's trip, I'd like to thank Chris for a most enjoyable day and look forward to next year's trip.

Lois Greene

South Channel Fort birdlist: Australasian Gannet, Black-faced Cormorant.

Mud Island birdlist: Black Swan, Pied Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Australian Pelican, Australian White ibis, Straw necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Swamp Harrier, Pied Oyster-catcher, Red-capped Plover, Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Whiskered Tern, Common Tern, Crested Tern, Silver Gull, Welcome Swallow.



Photos by Lois Greene & Emily Willocks

COPING WITH THE HEAT

During the peak of the recent heat wave, we went to check on the Pt Leo Hooded Plover pair who currently have a nest next to the camp ground. We were there to make sure the birds were not being kept off their eggs by beach-goers and cooking in the heat! The temperature was over 40 degrees and the beach was pretty busy, but no direct disturbance on the pair which was a relief!

I sat down at a distance for some time to see how the birds were coping in the extreme heat, and what I saw was pretty impressive! Every 5-7 minutes the pair had a seamless incubating changeover. The non-incubating bird would immediately fly (not walk/run) straight to the water's edge and cool off in the water. Soon after, the bird would fly straight back to his/her incubating partner, take over the eggs, and the other bird would fly straight to the water's edge to cool off. The timing was pretty consistent, and they continued this behaviour repeatedly for the hour we were there.

It was beautiful to see such amazing teamwork to tackle such severe conditions.

Hannah Lethlean



Pt Leo Hooded Plovers, relaxed and cool a few weeks before starting nesting. Photo by Hannah Lethlean

BORDERS OF PROTECTION FOR TROUBLED PLOVERS

They may look like balls of fluff standing on legs thinner than matchsticks, but there are many hands willing to help the endangered hooded plover.

It is a bird that nests precariously close to the ocean's edge and lays a camouflaged egg that is hard to discern from its surroundings on the sand.

Also prey to many natural enemies the odds seem stacked against the hooded plover, but as its annual nesting season gets underway concerned plover lovers are erecting fences on beaches and making wooden shelters to provide protection for the anticipated chicks.

On Monday members of the Friends of the Hooded Plover group were at Gunnamatta, driving fencing posts into the sand and unrolling wire to keep unwary or careless beachgoers away from nesting birds.

Flotsam left behind by the latest high tides show just how close the nests are to being swept away.

But year after year the plovers return to this windswept beach, albeit in ever decreasing numbers.

Although dogs are banned at Gunnamatta, the chicks and eggs are sought out morsels to foxes, cats, seagulls, magpies and ravens.

The previous Friday the Hastings-based Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association held a workshop to make shelters for the chicks.

The workshop was sponsored by the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority and involved Indigenous people and Landcare groups.

Keith Platt, Western Port News 15 December 2015



The effort to help hooded plovers breed successfully is well underway with Graeme Millar, Neil Shelley and Denis Goss constructing a protective barrier at Gunnamatta. Photo by Yanni

SHELTERS OF HOPE FOR YOUNG PLOVERS

Many hands were making light work on Friday at the Hastings-based Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association where a workshop was being held to make shelters to protect the endangered hooded plover.

The small bird lives and breeds on a few selected beaches on the Mornington Peninsula, although its numbers are

dwindling each year as fewer eggs are laid and even fewer chicks surviving.

However, there are bands of dedicated plover protectors who fence off nests and try to reduce predators.

If the chicks do manage to hatch and then leave the nest,

this year they may possibly seek shelter under some of the "chick shelter" built at the Willum Warrain workshop under the guidance of Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority and members of the Friends of the Hooded Plover group.

Western Port News 15 December 2015



Getting ready to paint



FoHP members Rosalba, Diane, Lois, Ashlee and Neil



Assembled chick shelters. Photos by Andrew Morrison

RED-CAPPED PLOVERS: BEACH USAGE AND NEST PROTECTION

Providing protection for breeding Red-capped Plovers along the beaches of Western Port Bay is a challenge. Unfortunately, the peak period for breeding also coincides with the summer increase in beach usage.

We recognise the inconvenience to beachgoers when we cordon off an area of beach for a nesting bird or newly hatched chicks. We are cognisant of minimising the impact and remove restrictions as soon as we can but unfortunately the research shows us that without this intervention there will be little or no breeding success. We have so far had three Red-capped Plover chicks successfully fledge at Point Leo.

There have been some negative experiences with the general public on the beaches since Christmas. I know the locals will blame the holiday makers but it is important that we all share the beaches responsibly. There has definitely been an increase in people disregarding dog regulations. Breaches carry heavy penalties and ignorance is no excuse.

My second experience involved a couple who read the signage about chicks on the beach but instead of abiding by its directions and walking along the waters edge, have entered the area looking for the chicks. They seemed quite surprised when asked to move on.



Red-capped Plover on nest at undisturbed site.



Sandcastle built around Red-capped Plover nest.
Photos by Mark Lethlean

But the worst example of all was a request by the Shoreham Ranger to fence a Red-capped Plover nest a camper had found. When I arrived, someone had thought it amusing to build a sandcastle around the nest. I consider this an act of vandalism and for certain protected species such as the Hooded Plover it is likely a criminal offence.

So I ask people, even if they have no interest in shorebirds, to abide by the dog regulations and the shorebird breeding signage. Please keep well clear of nests and chicks and give them a chance.

Mark Lethlean

DOGS AND HOODED PLOVERS - NOT A GOOD MIX

Penny Johns, our resident shorebirds enthusiast and expert, has reported that "the pair of Hooded Plovers on the ocean beach had laid three eggs, which were due to hatch around 14th November. This is only the second time in 20 years that they have attempted to breed on our beach. However 2 days ago, they were disturbed by people and an unleashed dog. They left the nest for too long and a raven came and ate the eggs as I watched! We are optimistic that they will re-lay, as they are still around and busy chasing off Silver Gulls."

It is most unfortunate that this happened on a beach where dogs are banned, leashed or unleashed. Most people are aware that there is a beautiful dog beach north-east of the pier at the end of Cove Lane where dogs are free to roam without restriction, i.e leash free. Even on that beach, please make sure your dogs don't interfere with the birds. The Sooty Oystercatchers, White-faced Herons and Cormorants are less often seen than even two years ago.

Peter Monie, Flinders Community Association website 4 November 2015



Hooded Plovers on Flinders ocean beach.
Photo by Susie Guthrie

People & dogs!

Just checked Koonya west at 7:30pm. Hooded Plover incubating with lookout bird next to it despite three people sitting at the nest sign and throwing a ball for a crazy border collie. They had not read the signs and said they thought dogs were allowed! They did move further down the beach and the dog continued to chase the ball.

Chris Willocks

SEAL THE LOOP

Our day at Seal the Loop with Rye Primary, grades 4-6, on 13 November, went extremely well, weather kind.

We had the usual rotation of students and this year Chris and Diane talked about our hoodies, Rosalba handed around "find the nest" photos, always a winner. Then I hid eggs on the beach, not easy as students were also doing a beach cleanup. When found the overeager students picked up the eggs which led to, "What is the first thing you do when you find eggs?"

Martin Dixon again attended and I'm sure we'll be involved again next year.

Lois Greene

Now in its third year, the Seal the Loop Action Day brings together more than 2,000 students and community groups from across Victoria to learn about ways they can help protect Victoria's marine wildlife from common threats such as fishing waste, plastics and debris often found in coastal areas.

This year Seal the Loop Action Day involved students from Rye Primary, Warrnambool East Primary, Torquay Primary, Melbourne Girls College, Padua College, Lakes Entrance Primary, Cowes Primary and Barwon Heads Primary.

FoHP was asked to be part of this event at Rye Foreshore



Rye PS students having the Hooded Plover training session. Photo by Lois Greene

after their successful presentation on Hooded Plovers last year.

Lois Greene organized the stall with the help of Chris Willocks and Rosalba Catena.

It was a busy morning; the school children were separated into groups of eight, and these groups (sixteen in all) then visited each stall for fifteen minutes.

We had great fun with the Hooded Plover model and lots of



Chris working with Rye PS students on "Find the nest" activity on the Tyrone foreshore. Photo by Lois Greene



Representative from Zoos Australia addressing the group. Photo by Diane Lewis

photos. The kids never tire of trying to find the camouflaged Hooded Plover nests and chicks in our enlarged photos. For fun we hid three plastic Hooded Plover eggs on the beach and challenged each group to find the nest. Some were amazed how difficult the nest was to find.

It was an interesting morning, well organized by Zoos Australia.

Diane Lewis

BR SEARCHING FOR A TERRITORY

BR was seen at the Powlett River East Bank with four other birds in October 2015. He certainly seems to be getting around a bit. Maybe he is looking for a wife!

BR (male) was the only chick to fledge on the Mornington Peninsula during the 2013/14 season, from Boags Rocks (along St Andrews beach). So it's good to know where he's been! He's certainly been covering some ground!

During the 2014/15 season BR was sighted:

St Andrews Boags Rocks	Mornington Peninsula	27.8.2014
St. Andrews car park east	Mornington Peninsula	24.9.2014
St Andrews carpark west	Mornington Peninsula	29.9.2014
St. Andrews car park east	Mornington Peninsula	6.10.2014

St Andrews carpark west	Mornington Peninsula	13.10.2014
St Andrews Boags Rocks	Mornington Peninsula	22.10.2014
St Andrews carpark west	Mornington Peninsula	29.10.2014
Miami drive east access	Mornington Peninsula	2.12.2014
Bore Beach	Bass Coast	29.12.2014
St Andrews Boags Rocks	Mornington Peninsula	7.1.2015
Gunnamatta Pair 4 (BJ & LS)	Mornington Peninsula	8.1.2015
Magiclands	Phillip Island	12.2.2015

Renee Mead & Steve Blume, per Diane Lewis

SPREADING THE WORD

The third Saturday in November signals market time for many FoHP members.

Lois loads up her car with, marquee, trestles, badge maker, pencils, brochures, books about local birdlife, Hoodie pins and cards then, with Noel's assistance sets up our stall at the Boneo market.

She has already sent out an email to FoHP members so there are plenty of helpers to answer questions from the public, explain what a Hooded Plover is and why they need space on the beach, help children make badges, or be a silent ear to the occasional grump who wants to convince everyone we have it wrong; "dogs are not the problem on our surf beaches". This is always balanced by others walking past and stopping to ask for the latest update at their beach. They see the signs and the Hooded Plovers and often give a donation in support.

November's treat was Graeme Millar standing beside our stall with his dog on-leash handing out our "Where can I walk my dog?" brochure.

We usually set up our stall Nov – Jan to cover the holiday period, but when December 20 had temperatures of 40+ predicted and was a

'Total Fire Ban' day we decided to cancel.

Our stall in January was positioned opposite an entrance to the market so there were lots of visitors. Being placed beside Matt McKay - a FoHP member and local photographer - who was selling his beautiful calendars (you may have seen them in the local shops) was also a draw card.

It's always a fun morning. Firstly you never know who you will meet and secondly we can each take a turn around the market and come back with, coffees, delicious food, fresh berries, vegies and many plants. Some have been known to arrive back with cushions.

A very big thank you to Lois for all the time she gives to making sure this is a successful event. Also to everyone who came to help especially Jan and Peter Metherell - they drive down from Melbourne each month.

You all make the day special and rewarding and the message continues to be spread.

Diane Lewis

"We have Hooded Plovers on our beach".
Photo by Diane Lewis



VNPA NEED SUPPORT TO HELP HOODED PLOVERS

An extract from an appeal enews sent out by VNPA

The little Hooded Plover chick is dressed to blend in with his surroundings, but while his camouflage might keep him safe from dangerous predators now it will be useless against the impacts of climate change.

Right now his biggest threats come from foxes, dogs, cats and larger birds like eagles, but in the longer term his descendants may face a future where rising sea levels wipe out their entire habitat in the sandy dunes at the edge of our beaches.

The Andrews Government has promised a statewide strategy to 'protect our habitats for future generations'. But without strong community understanding and support, the government might not commit to the action that's needed!

Our Hooded Plovers are not alone in facing an uncertain future, a similar fate awaits the Mountain Pygmy Possum. The last 2000 of these tiny marsupials could be gone within

a decade unless we take action now.

The Hooded Plover and the Mountain Pygmy Possum are just two of the hundreds of species destined to be devastated by climate change. That's why we need your help today.

[Will you give a donation to help build resilience against climate change impacts into our finest natural areas?](#)

Let's build momentum

Building strong community understanding and support is critical to government action. But it's a big job, and that's why we joined forces with the Royal Society of Victoria and the University of Melbourne to bring some of the best climate scientists and ecologists together with land managers and community representatives at a Biodiversity under Climate Change symposium in October.

They were asked to recommend the best practical ways to

deal with a host of problems climate change will bring to our natural areas: fire, floods, drought, sea level rises and drying wetlands.

Once we've sifted through the findings we'll share them with you on the new [VicNature2050 website](#).

Our plan

With your help we can hold the Victorian Government to its promise of instituting a statewide biodiversity strategy and help local environment groups monitor, protect and campaign for local species (like protecting the Hooded Plovers at Venus Bay).

Every gift helps us do more – run a media campaign, advise local environment groups, carry out extra research or follow up with a government minister.

Chris Smyth,
VNPA Acting Executive Director

BREAMLEA HOODIE NEWS

Farewell my Lovely

This season has been tinged with sadness. Like a character from a Raymond Chandler novel, our beautiful old bird, KE has just disappeared. Was she 'done in' and do we need Philip Marlowe on the case? She was last sighted early in the season with long time partner, CP and an unbanded bird at 47W, Breamlea Beach. The reality is that she simply died of old age. Banded as a juvenile at Breamlea on 1 April, 1996 (white/black Left leg; metal on Right leg), band number 05157959) by Mike Weston, and then recaptured and flagged at Breamlea on 9 March, 2011, she was therefore 20 years of age.

We tend to refer to KE as a 'she' although there is no hard evidence for this and perhaps CP will prove us wrong in the future, should 'he' pair up again. This was a very productive partnership, where these birds replaced themselves many times over but the last few seasons were tough, with nests lost to tide inundation and predation.

We'd like to think, as Elvis fans do, that KE has 'not left the building' but has flown off to enjoy her own company in her twilight years. She's had a fine innings, in anyone's estimation. To quote Humphrey Bogart's immortal words in *Casablanca* - "here's looking at you, kid"!



KE at 46W Bancoora Beach. Photo by Geoff Gates

Black Rock's Veil of Secrecy

If any hoodies want to learn the art of concealment, they should check out Black Rock. We suspected that a nest

existed but it wasn't until we were visiting the site with Rebecca from the City of Greater Geelong and Local Laws staff David, Libby and Hugh that things became clearer. David was excited to see the female adult, BK, followed by the unbanded male, coming out from the permanently fenced nesting area. Suspicion grew and subsequent investigation by super-sleuth, Geoff Gates, revealed a very deep scrape against a tree root, half way up the dune ridge on the far side of the dune swale.



Chick banner at Black Rock. Photo by Steve Smithyman

Hiding chicks is also this pair's speciality. Currently they have one chick and we believe their second chick was sadly taken by a fox. Julie has occasionally seen the chick being ushered up the dune face by a parent but monitoring is often a matter of guesswork - are the parents still guarding or leading? We've seen some dramatic displays of broken wing, too. We trust they will continue to keep their special little charge safe until fledging, due around the 5 February.

The loneliness of the long distant runner

AY from Bancoora Beach is not your cool, calm and collected type. He is like the rebellious youth in the 1962 film and short story *The loneliness of the long distant runner* by Alan Stillitoe, who, after an early life as a juvenile offender, finds solace in running.

AY and his now ex-partner, PC, (see the 42W story in the



AY and PC running in happier times. Photo by Geoff Gates

Bellarine Hoodie News) earned a reputation as the notorious hoodlums, 'Bonny and Clyde' but they settled down and he became father to a fledgling, XS last season.

Well known by local hoodie volunteers as 'skittish' and now alone, he likes to spend his time running and flying the length of the beach, with occasional incursions into other territory. His one 'fling' with nudist, EJ, ended with a failed nest (she returned to JM at Pt Impossible) so he is desperately seeking another willing partner. Maybe he should register online with RSVP or E Harmony?

Egg-xactly What Were They Thinking?

With only two days until their hatch date, Julie was devastated to discover the 3 eggs of the 50W - Point Impossible pair sitting along a shrub root in the dunes, approximately 3 metres above the empty scrape. No doubt the equally anguished parents had searched for them, probably earlier in the day, and then given up. It was likely not malicious, just thoughtless ignorance on the part of the human who happened on them in the scrape. Perhaps they thought the eggs had fallen out of a "nest"? Perhaps they thought they made a pretty picture? Maybe someone was just trying to be a Good Egg? Mind you, to find them, the perpetrator had ignored the plentiful beach signage and walked up into the dunes. It's clear, we still have a ways to go to educate the public.

SURF COAST SNIPPETS

There are chicks on the Surf Coast right now!

Three chicks have just hatched at Point Roadknight Tip (95W) and one chick has been doing well at Guvvos beach.

Nudist pair, JM and EJ have two 15 day old chicks, which are busily foraging at the Nudist Beach/Whites Beach site. Bellarine and Breamlea volunteers have been assisting the Surf Coast volunteers and GORCC with wardening and have recognised that this beach has some 'special features'. The nesting site was located on 'dogs off leash' Whites Beach but the parents immediately moved their then three chicks to within Point Impossible's nudist section. Unfortunately, one chick disappeared, most likely taken by a magpie or raven.

Some unusual interactions with nudists have occurred - a suggestion to a warden that she might like "a session" and a nudist with dog off leash, mistaking our telescope for a camera, asking if we'd like to take his photo. Mostly though,

they just sunbake and parade along the beach or in the shallows. Our collective view is to avert our gaze and not to engage unless they are doing the wrong thing such as a dog off leash, or settling in or near the temporary fencing. The Surf Coast Shire's 'Save the Hoodie' campaign is in full swing, with signage and letterbox drops of fliers clearly having an impact. The brightly coloured sign at the Whites Beach end depicts 'Hamish the Hoodie' asking dogs to tell their owners to turn back. Wardens have observed that most dog walkers do exactly that!

BREAKING NEWS!!

More chicks at Point Roadknight - this time at West Beach (96W). Two chicks hatched on 21 January with parents still incubating the third egg later that morning. First time mom and dad, LY and LM are very close to the hearts of volunteers on the Bellarine and at Breamlea. LY was a fledgling in season 2013/14 at Point Lonsdale and LM (Lonely Male) fledged from Black Rock in season 2010/11. We wish them



Eggs in a row at 50W - Pt Impossible. Photo by Julie Riley

every success!

Julie Riley and Jennie Turner, Friends of the Hooded Plover, Breamlea

BELLARINE HOODIE NEWS

Historically, I've never allowed myself to get my hopes up whenever there are chicks at 42W. Invariably, they last a maximum of two weeks before succumbing to one of the threats from the smorgasbord of threats present here. Threats including errant horses, dogs, motor bikes and wind assisted buggies as well as the usual array of avian threats (this location is magpie and raven central!)



42W chick 3 December 2015. Photo: anon

When they'd gone from three chicks to just one in a week, I was preparing for the worst. Can you imagine my dismay on one of my visits when I observed a bird photographer perched way too close for comfort to the chick! This man assured me he was a member of a local bird group and loved the hoodies. I suggested he reacquaint himself with the BirdLife Australia bird photography protocols! (Nonetheless, he did provide me with this photo of the remaining chick at 12 days!)

When the two week mark had come and gone and there was still one chick, I was becoming quietly optimistic. The parents PC, (the mother of XS with AY at Bancoora last season) and EH, first time Dad proved to have just the right mix of parenting qualities. I'd go to their beach each day and each time was rewarded with the sight of a thriving chick.

On walking back to my car from one of my chick checks I observed a cat in the dunes. A quick call to Barwon Coast and there was a cat trap set up the next day. To my relief, five days later he was safely trapped and off to Geelong Animal Welfare.

With Christmas Day, the expected fledge date, approaching



Feral cat from 42W. Photo by Brett Diehm

I was over the moon to receive a text message on the 23rd from Barwon Coast's Brett Diehm letting me know that our chick had lift off! This chick has the honour of being the first fledgling along this stretch of Barwon Coast since January 2007, quite an achievement for the Barwon Coast team! Their ongoing fox control and their excellent signage and fencing has finally paid dividends!



42W fledgling 28 December 2016. Photo by Andrea Dennett

I continued my visits and was pleased that our fledgling survived the 40C heat of Christmas Day followed by the 13C chill, gales and downpours of Boxing Day.

On a visit shortly after I observed an interloper engaging in some argy-bargy with PC and EH. I observed them for some time before the interloper was sent packing.

It was none other than AY!! who after coming to his senses and realising what a great bird in PC he'd let slip through his feathers attempted to woo her back to Bancoora. EH wasn't about to let that happen and a few days later, they commenced their next clutch which is due in early February.



John's signs 7 January 2016. Photo by Steve Smithyman

In other news about the Bellarine...

At Point Lonsdale:

HY & unbanded hatched two chicks on the morning of the Rip to River run. The third chick hatched the next day but less than a week later they were down to two. They have passed the halfway mark now and we're hoping they'll emulate the success of their sisters from 2013-14, LY & WY, in two weeks time.

We still have an ongoing saga with a sign vandal at Point Lonsdale and this has received some good coverage in local media.

<http://images.online.bellarinetimes.com.au/rvimageserver/Surf%20Coast%20Times/Bellarine%20Times/14-Jan-2016/page0000011.jpg?type=1&width=1092&quality=90&v=v1>

Fortunately, some of the signage has been found in the dunes, relatively undamaged. As far as the large City of Greater Geelong signs (see pic) they have vanished into thin air!!

On 13th Beach:

NK & XU are the proud parents of a single chick. Their breeding territory, between accesses 36W & 40W at 13th Beach is within the designated 'horse beach' and also dogs 'under effective control' (aka off-lead) beach. Their territory



New COGG sign 13 January 2016. Photo by Steve Smithyman



Article in Bellarine Times. Image supplied by Andrea Dennett

is signed and fenced and they have great views East and West plus a few good hiding spots along the dunes....so fingers crossed that in a month's time Barwon Coast will have their second fledgling in nine years. Thanks for the photo and all your good work Brett!!



NK and chick, 20 January 2016. Photo by Brett Diehm

Andrea Dennett, Friends of the Hooded Plover, Bellarine

NEVER DULL AT KOONYA

I just poked my head in at Koonya beach this afternoon, 30 December, and was greeted by three police cars and two ambulances. A guy got taken way out to sea and had to be rescued by a few boogie-boarders.

They did a good job and the guy seemed fine in the end - unfortunately they happened to come in right next to the chicks on the beach signs at Koonya East!

Never dull at Koonya!

Glenn Ehmke



Photo by Glenn Ehmke

BLAIRGOWRIE RESCUE: TRIO SAVE SWIMMER CAUGHT DRIFTING OFF MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Three young men heroically ventured half a kilometre out to sea to save a swimmer who was caught in rough conditions off the Mornington Peninsula on Wednesday.

The man, from Hampton Park, disappeared while swimming at Koonya Beach at Blairgowrie about 4.15pm on Wednesday and was then spotted drifting about 500 metres off-shore.

Alastair Firth, 27, was bodyboarding when the alarm was raised and ventured out into the Bass Strait with diving equipment and a buoy when the alarm was raised.

Mr Firth said he reached the man along with Jack O'Sullivan and Liam Grigg, both 25, who had been playing soccer and hastily borrowed bodyboards from other beachgoers to use in the rescue effort.

"He was just too tired to hold on to the board and was getting flipped at every break," Mr Firth said.

"We were just trying to keep the waves off of his face and at one point I was clamping my hand over his face, because I'd rather have him holding his breath than sucking in breaking waves."

Mr Firth said the man was exhausted and barely staying afloat, but the trio was eventually able to start towing him to shore.

"If the other boys hadn't got their first, he might not have been there," he said.

After a nearly two hour ordeal at sea, the four men navigated through the rough break and onto the beach.

"We only thought we were out there for half an hour to an hour, so we were surprised to hear it was that long," Mr Grigg told radio station 3AW.

Mr Firth, an IT professional who splits his time between Melbourne and Rosebud, said he had been swimming at Koonya Beach for nearly 25 years and didn't feel he was putting himself in any danger by helping the man.

He did, however, say it could be a dangerous spot for those unfamiliar with its rips, rocks and reefs.

"That beach at low-tide with not much swell is a beautiful place... [but] I've personally seen two people go out in that riff," he said.



Jack O'Sullivan, Liam Grigg and Alastair Firth at Koonya Beach, where they saved a man from drowning on Wednesday.
Photo by Simon O'Dwyer

Victoria Police said the three men were heroes who had acted courageously.

The Age Online December 31 2015

NEW PEREGRINE NEST NEAR BAY OF ISLANDS

During late winter and early spring I had observed a Peregrine Falcon cruising the dunes and woodlands in the Diamond Bay to Koonya area on several occasions and I assumed it had travelled some distance.

Over the Cup weekend I had more time to walk the clifftops and had a view of a Peregrine with leg bands on a rocky outcrop near Bay of Islands that stayed quite still while I watched him for about ten minutes. I was convinced there was a nest nearby. By my third day of walking and alerted by screeching and amazing flying displays by two adult Peregrines I found the nest with three fluffy chicks on a shelf in the high cliffs. I retreated from the area very quickly as I was concerned about the disturbance that I had caused.

By visiting the nest site discretely, I have had the privilege to watch the development of the chicks and the adult parental behaviour. The male is regularly on lookout duty and screeches when he sees me a long way from the nest. I have seen the female return to the nest with a pigeon, carefully pluck the feathers and then feed portions to her three small chicks. On other occasions the adults have not been present and the chicks stay almost still in a fluffy pile waiting for their next meal. The chicks have grown rapidly and now have their mature feathers. There is little



Feeding three hungry chicks. Photo by Chris Willocks

disturbance by walkers in this area and consequently the parents have been able to concentrate on their parenting duties.

Peregrines have not nested at this site in my lifetime so I contacted Victor Hurley from the Victorian Peregrine Project. He visited the site and spent several hours reading the leg bands. Both adults are young birds banded as nestlings by Victor abseiling down the cliff.

The male is three years old and was banded at Dromana Quarry. The female is also three years old and has come from Phillip Island. Both birds had not been seen since banding so Victor was excited by this new pairing and nest site.

Only three Peregrine Falcon nesting sites have been previously recorded on the Mornington Peninsula - Dromana Quarry, The Divide and Point Nepean. The pair from The Divide has not nested at the site for a couple of years. Only 250 Peregrine nest sites have been recorded in Victoria since 1975.

Victor would be very interested in Peregrine Falcon nest sightings and in particular photos that can identify Peregrine leg bands for his research. Victor.Hurley@delwp.vic.gov.au

Chris Willocks

NOT EXTRAORDINARY, BUT NOT COMMON FOR MORNINGTON PENINSULA

On 31 October 2015 I sighted a Sanderling on the Rye ocean beach near Alison Avenue. On 21 November I observed one Ruddy Turnstone and three Pied Oystercatchers at St Andrews Beach near Moana. Court. I understand that the Pied Oystercatchers have been

observed by Hannah and Mark Lethlean for the previous few weeks.

Glenn Ehmke



Sanderling



Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers and a Ruddy Turnstone



Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers

Photos by Glenn Ehmke



Application for Membership

I, (Print full name)
 Of (Address)
 Phone: Mobile: (Occupation)

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

I attach my payment of \$10/ person or \$20/ family (select one) 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 money 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:

- (a) post to my above address (b) email to
 I request the Association to adopt any one of the above alternatives at its complete discretion.

I would like to assist in some of these activities: (please select one or more by placing **X** in the front of the statement)

Preferred activities:

Hooded plover biennial count	Monitoring breeding birds	Writing media articles
Helping locate new nests	Distributing information brochures	Helping put up fences/signs
Wardening busy sites	Activities to raise community awareness	Constructing chick shelters

Previous experience:

Observing birds/animals	Bird/animal population surveys	Bird Identification
Monitoring nests	Data collection	Public education

(Optional) DONATION: I would like to donate to the Association and attach my cheque, or have used internet banking, for: \$.....

Signature of Applicant: Date: / /

Please send completed form to Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc. PO Box 36, Rye 3941

Payment Options:

- Cheque, made payable to Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc, posted to PO Box 36, Rye 3941
- Internet banking - Account Name: Friends of Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc BSB No. 063 891 Account No. 10127668 (Please identify the payer, and also notify the Treasurer, by emailing hbloversmornpen@gmail.com of the transaction).

Official use only:

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: / /