

INLAND MOVEMENTS OF THE HOODED PLOVER *THINORNIS RUBRICOLLIS TREGELLASI* IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Birds Australia - Western Australia has been conducting research into the distribution and movement of the Hooded Plover *Thinornis rubricollis tregellasi* population that resides in Yalgorup National Park north of Perth (Figure 1). One of the research objectives was to investigate the movement of Hooded Plover outside the National Park. Thirty three Hooded Plover have been colour banded since February 2002 to allow tracking of their movements both within and outside the Park. Sightings of the birds within the park over the last seven years have been successful in monitoring their use of the Park however reports from outside the Park are few.

To date there have only been two sightings of colour banded birds outside Yalgorup National Park. The first was made by David Secomb on 27 January 2007 at Lake Norring one of a chain of salt lakes SSW of Wagin. Lake Norring (Lat 33° 26' 52 S, Long 117°17' 45 W, Figure 1) is about 16km from Wagin. The distance covered from Yalgorup National Park to Lake Norring is around 160 km. Lake

Norring at the time of the sighting was about half full of water. Only four lakes in the locality had enough water to attract birds, the others were dry or almost so. The colour banded Hooded Plover was still present at Lake Norring on Sunday 18 February 2007 and was sighted back in Yalgorup National Park on 28 March 2007. This Hooded Plover was banded on 3 February 2002 at Boundary Lake within the Park and would have been at least five years old.

The second observation was made by David Secomb on 3 January 2009 at Flagstaff Lake (Lat 33°30' 38 S, Long 117°15' 26 W) 25km SSW of Wagin and is the next lake south from Lake Norring. This bird was banded on 17 February 2008 at Martins Tank in Yalgorup National Park. It was last seen in Yalgorup National Park on 27 September 2008. The bird was nearly one year old, in adult plumage and in a flock of adult and immature birds when sighted at Flagstaff Lake. A further survey conducted on 17 January 2009 at Flagstaff Lake failed to locate the bird. Water levels of all the lakes near Wagin had dropped significantly over

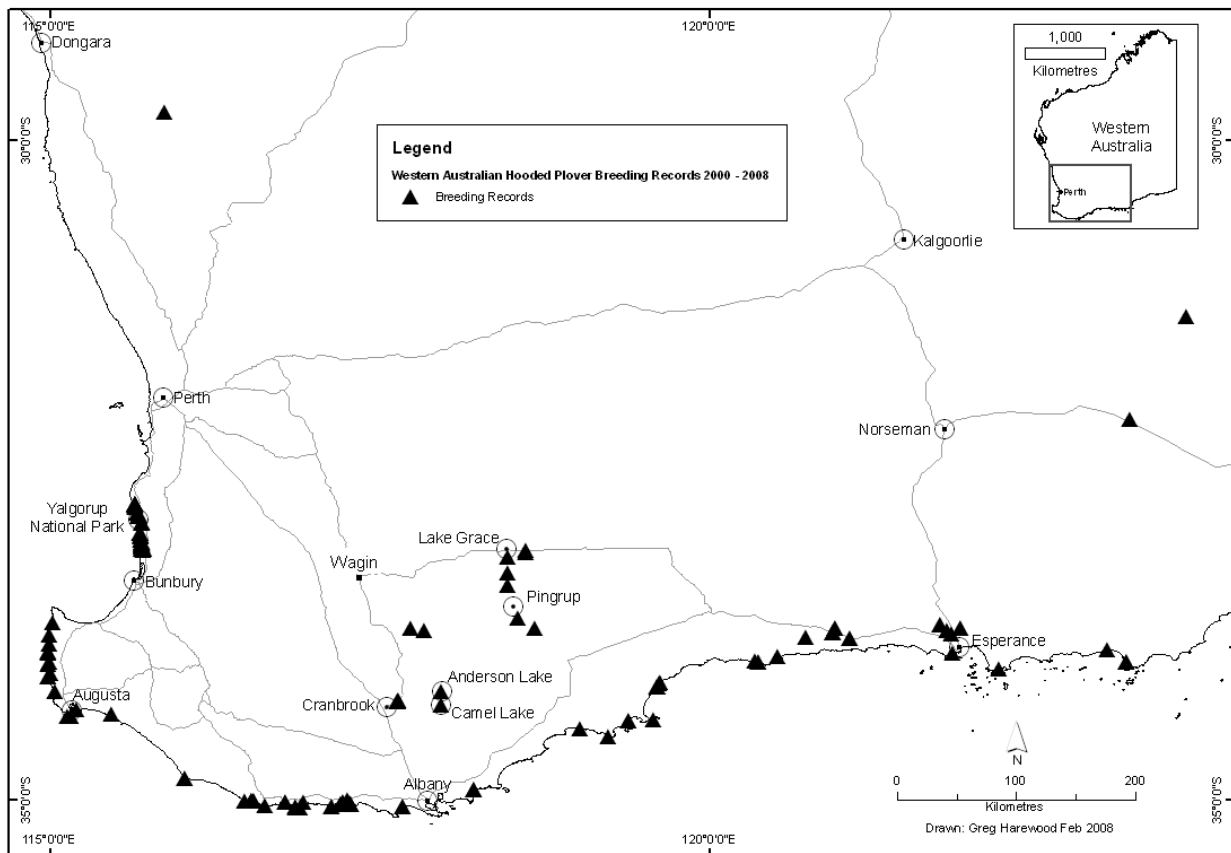


Figure 1. Map showing the location of Yalgorup National Park and Wagin (reproduced from Elson and Singor 2008).

the intervening period.

Both inland sightings were made in the summer months and both were in small flocks of Hooded Plover along with other waders in good wader numbers. Neither location was identified as a breeding location in surveys between 2006 and 2008 (Elson & Singor 2008).

These sightings confirm the migration of Hooded Plover from Yalgorup National Park inland to salt lakes to the south of Wagin. Do young birds learn this route by following older birds?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

- Elson, S. J. & M.J.C Singor. 2008. Hooded Plover *Thinornis rubricollis tregellasi* breeding data from Western Australia. Silt 53: 6-12.

