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BOOK REVIEW

Hooded Plover Report No. 2. 1996-1999.

Supplement to Western Australian Bird Notes, Issue 90, June 1999.

Marcus Singor, 1999. Birds Australia (WA Group).

This report is the second on Hooded Plovers produced by the Western Australian group of Birds Australia and provides an overview of results from their ongoing research into the important foraging and breeding sites of this species in Western Australia. In particular it summarizes the results of two surveys conducted in 1998 that investigated the dispersal patterns of this species in both summer and winter and then relates the distributional data to rainfall patterns.

The first section of the report provides a brief overview of the Hooded Plover project, the previous report published in 1996 and the priorities of the research programme. The next two sections detail the two surveys conducted in 1998; one, conducted in February, that covered sites in south-western Western Australia where it was likely that Hooded Plovers would be present; and the second, conducted in September, that investigated the breeding distribution of the species, with a particular concentration of effort in the area to the north of Esperance. The summer survey highlighted the movement of individuals to coastal areas. Of particular note was the discovery of a large number of birds at Yalgorup National Park, making this a new area of international importance for this species. The later survey indicated that significant numbers of individuals had moved to inland lake systems.

The results section of the report also includes a review of all observations of this species in south-western Western Australia since 1994, providing insight into its distributional patterns and how they change through the year. As with the 1998 surveys, these data show that the species is primarily coastal over summer, with movements inland in autumn. There are inland records through until mid-spring, at which time the inland lakes dry out and the birds move back to the coast. In addition, the results section includes all records of breeding found during the two 1998 surveys and comments on any threats to populations evident during the surveys; such threats included dogs, cats, foxes and off-road vehicles. It also includes comments on the possible

importance of food, in particular *Coxiella* gastropods, in determining suitable habitat for Hooded Plovers.

The final section of the report includes a discussion of the distributional data in relation to rainfall. The large scale movement inland was concluded to be a response to the first good autumn rains, usually occurring in April. A proportion of the birds remain at these inland sites throughout summer, although in drought years, when all the inland lakes dry out, all the birds move to the coast; it is suggested that such years provide a good time to conduct a thorough census of the population. There is also discussion of the characteristics of the inland sites at which the birds congregate as well as of Yalgorup National Park, an important reserve for Hooded Plovers.

Such a compilation of up-to-date distributional data for this species provides a good basis for further work. It also highlights the gaps in current knowledge, such as a paucity of data on the winter distribution of this species. This report provides a list of recommendations for future work, such as the need for a banding/flagging programme to help reveal precise movement patterns, an examination of the importance of *Coxiella* as a factor controlling the distribution of Hooded Plovers and the need for an action plan for the management of this species and to increase awareness of its management needs. The information contained in this report will greatly assist such research.

It would have been useful if the author had included a map of south-western Western Australia that contained the place names mentioned in the text. Some of the formatting of figures could also have been better. However, overall this is a well written report which clearly presents the latest knowledge on the distribution of this species in Western Australia.

Copies of this report can be obtained by contacting the Birds Australia (WA Group) at 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat, Western Australia 6014 or birdswa@starwon.com.au.

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