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THE DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE OF PALEARCTIC AND AUSTRALASIAN WADERS *(Charadrii)* IN COASTAL VICTORIA

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A survey of the distribution and numbers of waders in coastal Victoria was carried out in December, 1979. Of the 88 246 waders recorded, 97 per cent were of Palearctic origin and 3 per cent Australasian. The survey concentrated on bays, mudflats and estuaries where most Palearctic migrants are found. Relatively few Australasian waders were encountered as most were dispersed for breeding at this time. Three species of calidridine wader made up 85 per cent of the total number. The most numerous species was the Red-necked Stint which comprised 52 per cent of the total. The majority of the Palearctic (84%) and Australasian (70%) waders were found in Port Phillip Bay, Corner Inlet and Western Port. Generally the areas with the highest numbers also had higher species diversity. The total abundance of Palearctic waders was positively correlated with the estimated area of intertidal and shallow freshwater wetland in each region if one highly-eutrophic area (Werribee Sewerage Farm, Western side of Port Phillip Bay) was excluded from the data. The numbers of only one species, the Eastern Curlew, were correlated with wetland area.