

Some of the most threatened birds in the world

Nesting on the beach does not sound like the smartest idea, but for seabirds like gulls and terns, and five of Australia's native shorebirds, the beach is their home.



Beaches were once a pristine place for birds to raise young. Beach-nesting birds are cleverly adapted to beaches, with highly camouflaged eggs and chicks that match the sand, protecting them against predators, like gulls and ravens.

It is only in very recent times that people started visiting beaches in droves. The decline in the number of beach-nesting birds in Australia is directly linked to people and their use of beaches. By raising awareness about these birds, it may be possible to undo some of the damage through small behavioural changes.

Nesting on the beach

Beach-nesting birds nest directly on the beach or in the dunes during late spring and summer. This is the time when beaches are most visited by people. Because the eggs and chicks of beach-nesting birds are so well camouflaged, they are extremely susceptible to being stepped on by people or driven over by vehicles.



Beach-nesting birds like to keep at least 100 - 500 m of beach between their nests and people. If people or dogs get too close, adults will come off the nest, and if there are chicks, they will run and hide. On a hot day, the eggs can bake on the sand without the parents to incubate them. Too many disturbances for the chicks can mean they spend more time hiding than feeding and can starve to death.

The number of beach-nesting birds is plummeting dramatically, mainly as a result of low breeding success. Species like the Hooded Plover are highly threatened and disappearing fast from our beaches.

Beach-nesting birds struggle to find undisturbed space on the beach to raise their chicks



BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds Project

BirdLife Australia is a non-government organisation dedicated to understanding and protecting Australia's native birds. Using science and research, BirdLife Australia embarks on conservation projects that engage communities with threatened birds, advising land managers and government on best practice management.

BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds Project has been working with community volunteers across Australia since 2006 with the following aims:

- Raising awareness among beach users about beach-nesting birds;
- Engaging and training volunteers to monitor beach-nesting birds, identify threats and improve conservation management;
- Protecting nesting sites through temporary fencing and signage, and providing artificial shelters for chicks, and;
- Researching new ways of protecting the birds and improving breeding success.
- Maintaining up to date distribution and breeding information of these species.

Volunteers are needed

There are many ways you can contribute to Beach-nesting Bird conservation:



- **Report what you see:** Contact us if you see any beach-nesting birds on beaches from August - March, any nests or chicks, a bird with coloured leg flags, or flocks in winter.
- **Join a Friends group:** There are many Friends of the Hooded Plover or Beach-nesting Bird groups; Contact us to locate your nearest group.
- **Volunteer for one day every two years:** The National Hooded Plover census occurs in mid-November every two years (even years), where volunteers walk a designated beach and count the number of birds they see.
- **Take an interest in a particular pair:** Nest monitoring involves regularly checking on your local pair of beach-nesting birds and entering the information into the online data portal.
- **Chick Guardian:** This may suit those who cannot commit to regular volunteering. It involves spending a day at the beach talking to beach users and being a guardian of the chicks.



Contact Us

If you are interested in learning more about beach-nesting birds, or want to get personally involved in conservation efforts to help them, please contact the Beach-nesting Birds team.

T (03) 9347 0757

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W www.birdlife.org.au/beach

Data Portal: <https://portal.mybeachbird.com.au>

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Images by Glenn Ehmke, Grainne Maguire, Bev Wood, Andrew Silcocks & Ian Montgomery

Australia's voice for birds since 1901

BirdLife Australia is dedicated to achieving outstanding conservation results for our native birds and their habitats. With our specialised knowledge and the commitment of an Australia-wide network of volunteers and supporters, we are creating a bright future for Australia's birds.

Add your voice

join us

volunteer

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Protecting our Beach-nesting Birds



Get involved in a
BirdLife Australia
Community Project

You *can* make a difference



birds are in our nature


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