

MEDIA RELEASE, 12th May 2023

Celebrating World Migratory Bird Day in the Hunter estuary

Today is World Migratory Bird Day and the Hunter Bird Observers Club are inviting you to find out more about these amazing birds right here in the Hunter estuary.

Club member Ann Lindsey said the Hunter estuary is the most important site for migratory shorebirds in NSW and each year, thousands of birds travel epic distances along the East Asian-Australasian flyway from Alaska and Siberia to arrive here in Spring.

‘Some of the species that make this annual migration include Bar-tailed Godwits, Red-necked Avocets and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. These Sandpipers are tiny birds, about 20cm in length and fly an incredible 12,000km from Arctic Siberia.’

Ms. Lindsey added ‘The birds arrive here with one key objective - to gain enough weight to sustain them on the long flight back to their breeding ground. They must eat and rest as much as possible to build up energy and strength for the long journey back home in Autumn.’

Ms. Lindsey said ‘Migratory shorebirds are one of the world’s most threatened groups of birds and are incredibly vulnerable to natural and human-induced changes to habitat. It’s crucial that we do everything we can to protect and enhance the condition of wetlands that provide safe havens for these incredible birds.’

Club member Amanda Hyde said rehabilitated wetlands at Stockton Sandspit, Ash Island and Hexham Swamp are within the Hunter Wetlands National Park. These wetlands are maintained in partnership with Hunter Bird Observers Club, National Parks and Local Land Services.

Ms Hyde said ‘Stockton Sandspit is an internationally protected wetland that has been transformed from a degraded site overgrown with weeds to high habitat value saltmarsh. This transformation over twenty years has resulted in the Sandspit now supporting the largest concentrations of shorebirds in Australia close to a major city and industry.’

Ms. Hyde said ‘Saltmarsh is extremely valuable habitat for migratory birds and mangroves encroaching into these open areas can be a problem. One of the on-ground activities carried out by the Club is removal of juvenile mangroves.’

Ms. Hyde added ‘Shorebirds of the Hunter estuary is an informative video and can viewed here <https://youtu.be/jzxFaAwgCs0>. I encourage everyone interested in the amazing migratory bird journey to contact the Club for more information. Please visit the website www.hboc.org.au

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Amanda Hyde, media officer, Hunter Bird Observers Club, 0421 769 336