



Hunter Bird
Observers Club

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc
PO Box 24, New Lambton, NSW 2305
www.hboc.org.au
ABN 62 415 889 446

Shorebird Habitat Restoration in the Hunter Estuary

2018 Report (summary)

Since 2003, members of Hunter Bird Observers Club (HBOC) have maintained a constant volunteer effort with various restoration works in the Hunter Estuary. These projects all focus on shorebird habitat and the project sites have been chosen for their strategic importance to the birds.

Project sites exist at Stockton Sandspit, Ash Island (Milham Pond, Phoenix Flats, Wader West, Wader Pond and Swan Pond) and a collection of remote sites (Smith Island, Sandy Island, Fullerton Cove Beach and Dyke Pond #4) within the estuary.

Currently the combined projects cover 150 hectares of the Hunter Wetlands National Park and since early 2003, more than 9,500 hours of volunteer effort has been accrued in these endeavours. We will surely break the 10,000hour mark in another twelve months.

The combined volunteer effort in 2018 across all the projects amounted to just over 500 hours of willing contribution.

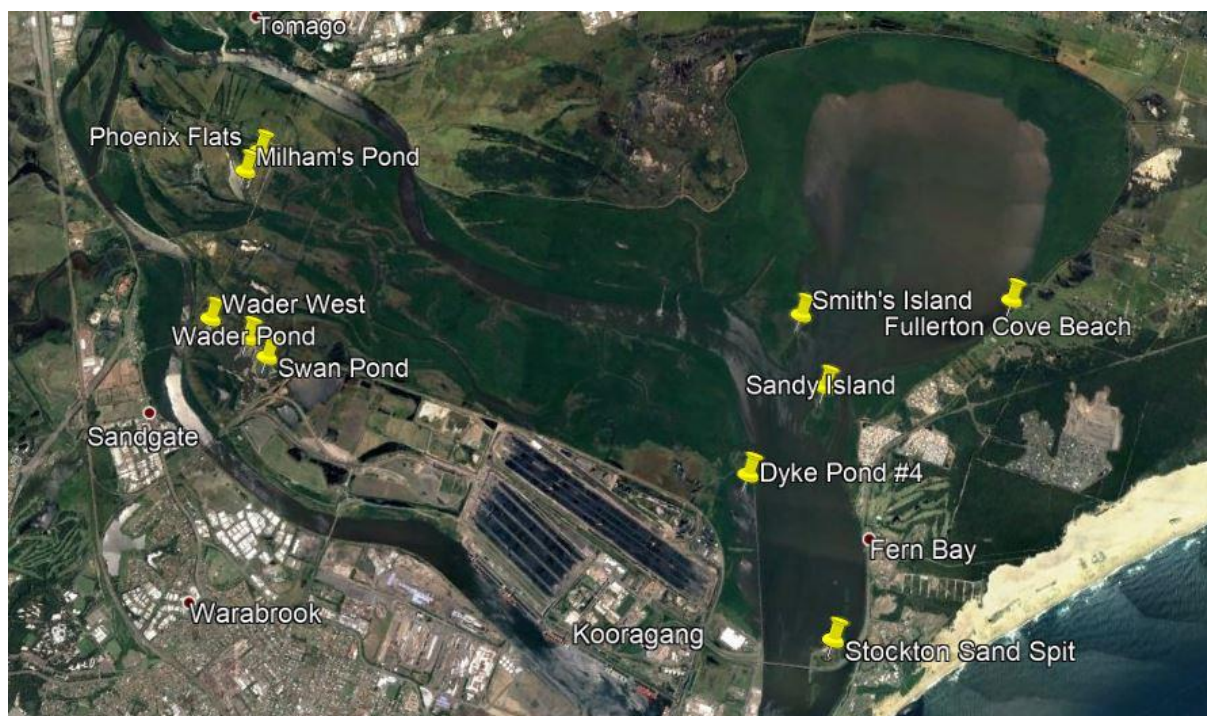


Figure 1. Restoration of shorebird habitats at strategic sites over the breadth of the Hunter Wetlands National Park

Remote Sites

Previously reported as Threatened Species Recovery Fund (TSRF 06) project, this area of endeavour continues to be serviced as an ongoing volunteer program. The funded component of this project was successfully completed by June.

Project hours to end of May 2018			
Effort	Hours	In-kind equivalent (rounded)	Funded costs
Volunteer	477.5	\$24,830	
NPWS	42.8	\$2,225	
NPWS services (boat/equipment hire)		\$1,540	
Contractor (Toolijooa, Kayak hire)	331.7		\$20,281.20
Purchased items			\$1,180.75
Totals	852	\$28,595	\$21,461.95

Since the completion of the funded section, regular visits to Sandy and Smith Islands have occurred to attend to the remote camera and carry out high tide roost surveys.

Fullerton Cove Beach

This small beach has been a significant shorebird roost for many years but was suffering from late invasion of mangroves and was not attracting great numbers of birds. It was successfully argued that this area be added to the schedule. A single visit on 29th January was all that was necessary to clear the beach of mangroves. 1.5 hours work using a brush cutter proved very efficient.

Ash Island

The main focus over the Ash Island sites is the treatment of mangrove seedlings. Since all the primary felling of the trees several years ago it is solely the detailed picking of each subsequent season's seedlings that form the bulk of the work. The combined aggregate of almost 114 hectares was covered this year in the astoundingly short time of 46.8 hours across 5 visits.

Stockton Sandspit

This site is the most visible to the general public and probably one of the most visited. Restoration work at this site takes on several facets but the underlying focus is that of maintaining a shorebird

roost. The volunteer effort here over the past twelve months amounted to 293 hours on this 4ha site.

Acknowledgements

These estuary projects continue to succeed because of the input of many people with a common interest in estuary health and shorebird habitat restoration.

All the works planning and implementation are the result of enduring partnerships that provide the organisational structure to make it all happen. The contributions of NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hunter Local Land Services and Hunter Bird Observers Club are ceaseless and much appreciated.

Many thanks to all those individuals that have volunteered their time and effort in the field and gone home with a feeling of achievement and some sense of the issues confronting our shorebirds. Your efforts are certainly appreciated by those dear creatures that require safe roosting opportunities.

Particular acknowledgement is due to Boyd Carney (NPWS) for his constant availability and interest in the estuary. The in-kind service provided by NPWS through his support has proved to be crucial at times.

Tom Clarke

Project Coordinator HBOC

January 2019