MyHoodie

birdlife AUSTRALIA

A guide to the amazing breeding lives of Hooded Plovers

Field companion to the website

www.myhoodie.com.au

Hooded Plovers are masters of camouflage and are well adapted to life on the beach – that is, life on the beach 100 years ago.

Today Hoodies struggle to find a bit of undisturbed space on the beach to breed. Their numbers are declining because their nesting failure rate is 90-95% and too few young are added to the population to sustain it.

Knowing if and when Hooded Plovers are breeding is the first step to helping them, and ultimately saving the whole species.

BirdLife Australia's 'Beach-nesting Birds' Project has been working to recover Eastern Hooded Plovers since 2006, engaging and educating thousands of beach users and training volunteers and land managers in monitoring and on-ground conservation.

Remember; approaching nests can have serious impacts, so it's critical you contact the beach-nesting birds team before you start actively looking for nests or chicks. We'll show you how to do it safely.

If you suspect a pair is nesting, contact BirdLife Australia immediately, and we'll liaise with local land managers and experts to get appropriate protection in place.

www.birdlife.org.au/beach - (03) 9347 0757

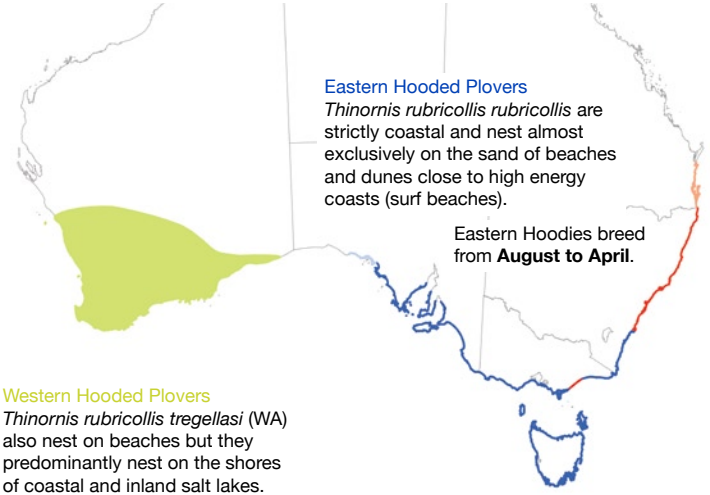
This booklet is a field companion to the MyHoodie website.

See www.myhoodie.com.au for more details; video, maps of your area and other information about the amazing lives of Hoodies.

This guide contains the key information you need to know whether Hoodies are breeding.

Written and compiled by Glenn Ehmke and Grainne Maguire, 2012

Where is MyHoodie?



Eastern Hooded Plovers
Thinornis rubricollis rubricollis are strictly coastal and nest almost exclusively on the sand of beaches and dunes close to high energy coasts (surf beaches).

Eastern Hoodies breed from **August to April**.

Western Hooded Plovers
Thinornis rubricollis tregellasi (WA) also nest on beaches but they predominantly nest on the shores of coastal and inland salt lakes.

Western Hoodies can **nest at any time of year**.

Eastern Hooded Plovers used to live throughout NSW and southern QLD. But they are now extinct in these areas.

Western Hooded Plover (Photo: Steve Elson). Note the black on the birds back.

Eastern Hooded Plover

See www.birdlife.org.au/beach for detailed maps of where hoodies breed in your local area.

Hoodie habitats

Hoodies can breed on:

- beaches *(top)*
- sandy dunes *(2nd from top)*
- rocky headlands or islands near beaches *(2nd from bottom)*
- sandy estuaries near beaches *(bottom)*
- and in WA, coastal and inland salt lake shorelines *(below).*

While Eastern Hoodies do not breed on salt lakes, they do often feed in coastal salt lakes during their non-breeding period.

Photo: Tony France

Photo: Grainne Maguire

Photo: Grainne Maguire

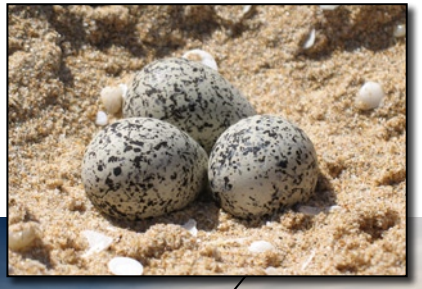
Does MyHoodie have eggs?

Hoodies have lots of predators and because they are little birds, camouflage is their best defence.

Nests themselves are nothing more than a scrape in the sand, and eggs blend in immaculately with their surroundings.

The eggs are small (less than the size of a 20c coin) and speckled.

Hoodies lay 1-3 eggs (occasionally 4).



The best way for a nest to stay hidden is actually for birds to be nowhere near it. This way the inconspicuous eggs have the best chance of blending into their surroundings.

But because Hoodies get on and off their nest so often in response to disturbances, there are often lots of their footprints around their nests.

Keeping an eye out for Hoodies' prints can be the best way to find their nest... once you get close enough to see it.

Typical Hoodie nest with 2 eggs. Note the prints leading to and from the nest

Because nests are so well camouflaged it's almost impossible to get close enough to see a nest without observing the behaviour of adult birds first.

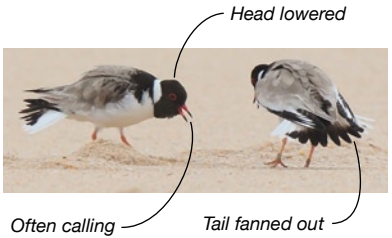
The following pages outline the behaviours you need to look out for to tell whether Hoodies have a nest (with eggs).

Remember, it's not a good idea to look for nests without being trained. Nests are so well hidden there's a big chance you could accidentally step on one! Contact us for details on how to monitor nests safely.

www.birdlife.org.au/beach - (03) 9347 0757

Bowing

Bowing is a common **aggressive** behaviour birds use when establishing or defending territories. Bowing might indicate active nesting (eggs or chicks), but birds also act aggressively when establishing territories (i.e. before nesting).



Bowing can culminate in a territorial dispute with Hoodies chasing and swooping one another.

Courting/mating

You may see a bird with its **tail in the air**, trying to get the attention of its partner. This behaviour is often used in courtship. If you're lucky you may even see the pair mate (which involves the male literally climbing on top of the female). Eggs should soon be on their way.

Scrape building

Look for a bird sitting low (as if incubating) with tail in the air, kicking out sand and **shuffling** down to make a scrape in the sand. A pair often make several scrapes before they choose one to lay eggs in.

Leading

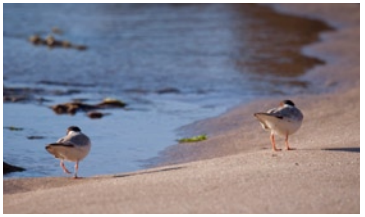
In leading, birds **run or walk in front of you,** trying to lure you away from their nest. They keep a close eye on you (though they will rarely look straight at you) and will stop periodically to let you catch up.

Leading is a subtle behaviour, you may need to look for the birds. They will not approach you to get your attention.

Leading is very common during the nesting phase; but can also indicate that a pair has chicks.

Hoodies will always lead away from their nest, often at the water's edge.

Often, just one bird will lead you, but sometimes the incubating bird will leave the nest and both birds will lead.



Watch for a bird coming off the nest on the upper beach or dunes.

Hoodies will lead until they're satisfied that you are far enough from their nest or chicks. This can be a long way; several hundred metres or more!

Then they are likely to return to their nest to resume incubating or parenting chicks. To get a clue where their nest may be, look back to see if the leading bird(s) return to a particular area.

False Brooding

When leading, birds may also **crouch on the sand** or sit in footprints, pretending to brood or incubate. False brooding looks very different to real brooding of chicks (see p. 14) - false brooding birds are much less "puffed up".

Incubating

Hoodies are difficult to see when incubating; they sit low in nest scrapes with most of their white plumage hidden, but their **black hood** can be conspicuous.

Hoodies are very cautious around nests (often **head bobbing**).

Birds swap incubation duties frequently, but rarely in the presence of disturbance (including observers). Birds straddle the eggs, lift their feathers, exposing their brood patch and **shuffle** down over their eggs with a "wiggle".

Hoodies don't need to incubate their eggs all the time and can spend **a lot of time off their nests** - particularly during their laying sequence (which takes 2-4 days).

So just because you see a pair of Hoodies sitting on the beach, this doesn't mean they don't have a nest!

There are times when Hoodies must sit tight on their eggs. During **windy** conditions, eggs can get buried, and in **hot weather** they can "cook" within minutes. In extreme heat, Hoodies often "**shade**" their eggs by sitting just above them while panting to cool themselves (above).

Bobbing

Rapid up & down head movement, or "bobbing", indicates that Hoodies are feeling threatened, e.g. because they have a nest or chicks nearby.

If accompanied by calling, this usually means they are telling chicks to remain hidden.

Vigilance

Usually a single "lookout" bird standing guard on the beach, looking alert, while the other incubates.

The lookout bird will call its partner off the nest if a threat gets too close. Watch the upper beach or dunes to see if an incubating bird comes **running down off its nest**.

The unexpected?

While the previous tips will often serve you well, don't assume things are always the way they seem.

A Hoodie **on its own,** sitting seemingly relaxed during the breeding season could have a partner on a nest that is out of view.

A **group of Hoodies** (3+) might seem like a non-breeding flock. But sometimes the partner of the bird on a nest will sit with the neighbours or with intruders and just keep an eye on them.

If a pair of Hoodies is consistently **in the same area** over time, they may be holding territory and will probably nest there at some time.

If you **flush** a Hoodie (make it fly or run off suddenly) as you pass and they return quickly to where they first were, or are in that spot on your return, something is probably happening - perhaps they have a nest or chicks.

Chicks on the beach?

Things to remember:

- Chicks are mobile immediately after hatching and must feed themselves.
- Families can move a long way from where they nest (kms).
- Chicks are extremely well camouflaged and very good at hiding.
- It takes 5 weeks for chicks to grow enough to fledge (reach flying age).

This can make finding chicks even harder than finding nests, but there are a few signs that reveal chicks may have hatched.

Feeding (chicks)

Chicks need to feed lots! While parents do not feed chicks, they are always close by, watching for danger and warning them into hiding.

Chicks spend most of their undisturbed time feeding at the **water's edge**, on **rock platforms** (if available) and **among seaweed** along the high-tide mark.

Hoodies feed visually, so chicks often have their **heads down** looking for small "bugs" on the sand.

Distraction displays

Adults sometimes **feign injury** (e.g. broken wing) in front of you or other danger (often while leading as well), trying to divert attention away from chicks.

This can occur when nesting but is much more common with young chicks.

If you see this **YOU ARE VERY CLOSE** to the chicks! It is best to follow the adult birds who **will always lead you away** from their chicks. Be extremely careful where you step!

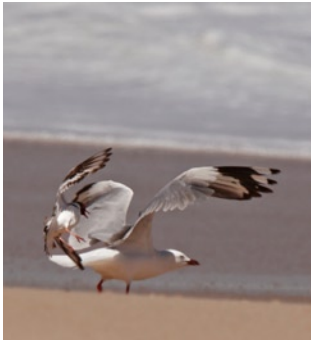
Predator leading

Leading of potential predators (gulls, magpies, ravens etc).

This is basically a passive distraction display involving subtle tactics such as false feeding to attract the predators away from nests or chicks.

Predator aggression

Adults **charge or fly at** potential predators. Generally, smaller predators are targeted, in particular Silver Gulls.



Chicks usually hide during the attack. The other parent usually watches over the chicks, but in extreme cases both parents may be involved, leaving the chicks by themselves.

Hoodies may chase predators while nesting, but this behaviour is highly suggestive that chicks are around.

Brooding

Adults **puffed up** (unlike false brooding).

Being brooded is critical for chicks. Newborn chicks cannot regulate their temperature and can easily die in the heat or cold.

In very hot conditions, chicks often need to be brooded **on the cooler beach sand** rather than the upper beach or dunes where it can be >50C.

Adults can brood up to 3 chicks at once, and chicks are brooded until around 10 days old, at which stage they are better able to regulate their own body temperature, and are too big to fit under Mum or Dad.

Chick aggression

The “bad guys” are generally predators like other birds or foxes, but sometimes Hoodies can be extremely aggressive to their own kind.

When territories are close together or an intruder is trying to break a pair up, Hoodies can attack and even kill another pair’s chick! Not surprisingly, parents defend their chicks very aggressively.

This aggression can be difficult to differentiate from territorial aggression because chicks are generally sent into hiding, but the aggressive behaviour here is much more charged!

Hiding/taking cover

Chicks are highly adept at staying out of sight and spend lots of time hidden.

Chicks can hide by simply **crouching** in the open but often prefer **cover**.

Cover can be anything on the beach - e.g. cuttlebones, a bit of seaweed or driftwood. Chicks often run to the upper beach or into dune vegetation to hide. They also use the artificial “chick shelters” we provide.

Hiding is controlled by parents who call chicks into and out of hiding. If parents are absent, chicks are likely to remain still at all costs.

Parents often signal chicks into or out of hiding by **calling**. Calls are often inaudible (to us) under the noise of crashing waves.

Triggers for hiding vary with age. When very young, chicks will hide from almost all disturbances and may remain motionless for long periods (up to several hours).

How old is MyHoodie?

1-10 days old

Chicks **tiny**, (<7cm), very **fluffy** with large legs relative to their body.

Chicks at this age:

- spend lots of time hiding from danger (which at this age is pretty much everything!);

- must feed lots and almost always at the water's edge or high-tide mark;

- are often brooded.

Young chicks often crouch from danger in the open rather than running all the way back to the dunes when disturbed from feeding.

However, at other times, parents can keep very young chicks hidden on the upper beach or dunes for extended periods (many hours) with no sign that chicks are present.

11-20 days old

Chicks approx. **half adult size** and less "fluffy" - although downy feathers still present.

Bill more prominent and noticeably dark.

Chicks are more mobile and agile on their feet at this age.

They are no longer brooded but are still very reactive to danger and still hide in reaction to most disturbances.

3-5 weeks

Chicks **3/4 to full** adult size. **No "fluffy" down** remaining. Back, wings and head feathers **light brown/grey** and strongly **scalloped**.

Bill dark, **legs pale** compared to adult birds. **Orange eye ring** now apparent.

Towards five weeks of age, they will do a lot of wing stretching and will flap their wings, strengthening their muscles for flight.

Chicks are now very mobile, often spending more time in the open and no longer taking cover from minor disturbances. They are still highly vulnerable however, as they **cannot yet fly**.

Flying young *(>35 days)*

Often referred to as "juveniles". Birds are now **full size**, their feather **scalloping** is gone and wing feathers are now **grey**.

Juveniles have a totally **grey head** with no black present (unlike sub-adults - overleaf). There is little or **no black** on their **back or shoulders** yet.

Bill dark and **legs pale** compared to adults. **Eye ring orange** compared to redder eye ring of adults.

After 35 days, Hoodies **can fly** and their survival chances increase.

Birds may stay with their parents for a short time after they reach flying age, but more often they leave their natal territory quickly.

Often observed in flocks with other non-breeding birds.

Sub-adult *(up to 1 year old)*

Older than juvenile birds but not yet adult, sub-adult birds have variable “salt & pepper” **grey/ black head** plumage that eventually becomes totally black.

Eye ring red (not orange) & **bill red** with well defined **black tip**.

Legs vary from dull (when younger) to stronger **pink/ orange** colouring of adults.

Amount of black on back/shoulder also increases with age.

Variable amount of black on back/shoulder

Adult *(1 year +)*

Distinctive fully **black head** or ‘hood’.

Red bill with **black tip** and **red eye ring**.

Legs stronger **pink/orange** (compared to juveniles/chicks) and **more black on back/shoulders**.

Well developed black back/shoulder plumage

Similar shorebirds

Double-banded Plover

Non-breeding migrant from New Zealand, present in autumn and winter only.

No black hood. Can be confused with juvenile Hooded Plover but has **no white nape**.

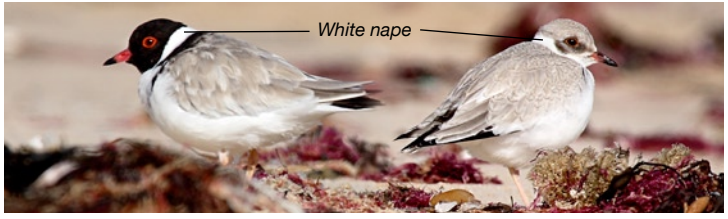
Red-capped Plover

Endemic Australian shorebird that breeds on shores, including beaches.

No black hood and smaller, but female and juveniles can be confused with juvenile Hooded Plovers, but **no white nape** present.

Hooded Plover

All ages of Hoodies have a **white nape**. This distinguishes Hooded Plovers from all other shorebirds.



Who is MyHoodie?

Types of bands

There are three main methods of marking Hoodies. The aim of all three is the same - to identify individual birds.

All banded birds have a metal band around their lower leg.

Colour bands

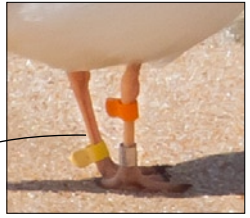
Colour bands are simple plastic “rings” that sit around the bird’s tarsus (i.e. below the knee).

There can be up to three colour bands (in addition to a metal band) in total on a given bird. The birds are identified by the different combinations of their colour bands.

White over light green bands lower right / metal band lower left.

Colour flags

Colour flags are basically the same as colour bands but with a flat protrusion, or “flag”, sticking out from them to aid identification. There can be up to three colour flags on an individual bird, in addition to it’s metal band.



Orange flag over metal band lower right / yellow flag lower left.

Engraved flags

Engraved flags are similar to colour flags but larger. These flags sit on the tibia (above the knee) and have a combination of **two letters and/or numbers** engraved on them.

There is only ever one engraved flag per bird which can be any colour (often relates to the state where they were banded).

Orange flag PP upper left. Photo: Geoff Gates.

There will also be a metal band on one of the bird’s lower legs.

Reporting what you’ve seen

When reporting your observation, please include:

- Your contact information.
- Location of bird(s) - longitude/latitude or a description.
- Time and date.
- Type of band or flag.
- Colour of the band/flag and the letters if an engraved flag on upper leg.
- Position of band/flag - above or below the knee (upper or lower leg).
- Which leg they’re on and particularly what order they are in (e.g. white over green).
- The number of birds the banded bird is with (and whether they are unbanded or banded).

Read the bands/flags from top to bottom e.g. “Red flag over metal band” and note carefully whether it is the bird’s right or left leg.

Be aware that colours may fade or become tinted and birds may lose bands or flags.

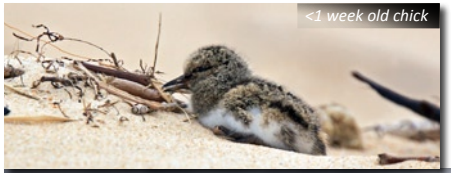
Other beach-nesting birds

Pied Oystercatcher

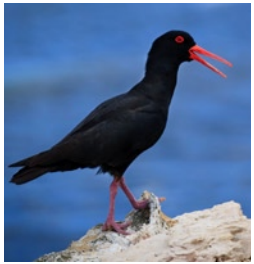
Often breed on island beaches or estuarine sand spits around river mouths. Often take to the air and fly around you with a characteristic sharp “piping” call when you are near a nest.

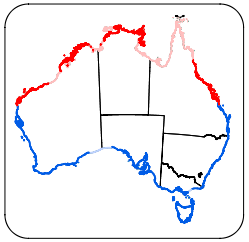
Eggs are laid on bare ground, usually in the open on sandy areas (much like Hoodies) but eggs much larger than Hoodies’ (~60mm).

Juvenile birds have shorter, paler bills, pale legs and a less obvious eye ring compared to adults.



Sooty Oystercatcher





Two subspecies. Usually breed on small rocky islands, but also nest on beaches. Often feed on intertidal rock platforms. Although Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers sometimes feed their chicks, the chicks mostly feed themselves.

Chicks are difficult to observe, and eggs are usually well hidden in rocky habitats. Adults will take to the air and call when a nest is approached.

Juvenile birds (right) have shorter, paler bills, pale legs and a less obvious eye ring compared to adults (above).

Red-capped Plover


Male. Photo: Chris Tzaros


Juvenile (female similar)
Photo: Dean Ingwersen

The smallest of the resident shorebirds; found all over Australia.

This energetic little bird feeds and nests on high and low-energy beaches, but more commonly on the shores of saline or freshwater wetlands and lakes.

They also nest on gravel roads, saltpans and on vegetation such as pigface, and will nest under cover or out in the open.

They strongly defend their nests, giving energetic distraction displays and sometimes become aggressive.

Chicks are sent into hiding well in advance of approach and parents provide more rigorous distraction displays at this stage.


Photo: Ash Herrod

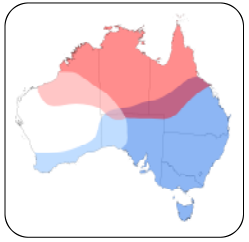

Photo: Ash Herrod

Masked Lapwing


Photo: Ash Herrod

Common and abundant around wetlands, farms, ovals and carparks.

Occasionally nest on beaches and estuaries. Northern Masked Lapwings have larger wattles and a larger mask than Southern Masked Lapwings, which also have a distinctive black “collar”.



Aggressively defend nests and chicks from all predators, including us!


<1 week old chick


Photo: Ash Herrod

Beach-stone Curlew

Large prehistoric-looking bird. Very shy; avoid areas heavily used by people.

Nest exclusively on coasts (sheltered or surf beaches) and offshore islands or estuaries. Avoid cliffs and large stands of mangroves.


Photo: Ian Montgomery

Lay a single egg in the open or beside cover. Hatch after a month and adults are very reluctant to leave the nest. They may charge at intruders.

The chick takes up to 11 weeks to fledge.

Monitoring MyHoodie

Searching for a new nest

- Do not search for a nest if you aren't confident and trained.
- Keep an eye on the birds when searching - watch their behaviours as they may not have eggs but chicks instead!
- Identify landmarks as references when searching.
- Do not search in wind that is moving the sand around; extreme heat or cold; heavy rain.
- Do not exceed 35 minutes near a nest in good conditions.
- Do not climb up a steep or crumbling dune as it leaves prints and could destabilise dune – approach from the side or from behind, using binoculars to see eggs.
- Do not search with predators present (ravens, gulls, people, dogs).
- Scan the ground ahead of every step you take to see that your foot is not going to step on eggs or chicks.
- Leave a marker to find the nest again (nothing obvious to other people or predators) or draw a detailed picture of landscape features.
- Never get closer than 2 metres to a nest.
- Try to leave as few footprints as possible.

Checking on a known nest

- Avoid extreme heat and cold, strong winds, heavy rain.
- Avoid times of high tide.
- Stay below the high-tide mark, close to water's edge.
- No need to approach nest, just check if a bird is on the nest from a distance.
- If birds aren't on nest, do they react to your presence?
- Any nesting behaviour? If yes, wait and see if they return to the nest, or come back another day.
- Are you sure it hasn't hatched? What are the pair doing?
- No nesting behaviour? Possible nest failure – use tips above to approach nest to see if it has failed.

Minimising disturbance to chicks

- Try to see them before they see you!
- Approach along water's edge.
- Walk past the family until you are far away enough for them to relax, hide and wait for the chicks to come out of hiding.
- Hide yourself and wait.
- Never approach the family. Keep as far away as possible.

Talking to the public

- Remember that most people have no idea of their impact.
- Your role is to inform, not to enforce regulations.
- You may be the first and only experience people have with the birds, so make it a positive one!
- Example of approach: 'Hi, ahead on the beach within the signed area there are tiny flightless chicks of an endangered bird. It would be great if you could….keep to the water's edge' or '…put your dog on a leash as you pass and keep to the water's edge'.
- If conflict begins, walk away and maintain control of your temper.
- Ring relevant authority to report any threatening behaviours.
- It's an advantage to be distanced from the birds so there is time for dogs to be leashed ahead of entering area.
- Know some of the key facts about birds so you can answer queries.

Placing Chick Shelters

- Avoid times of high tide.
- Look out for predators; do not enter upper beach if predators about.
- Locate the family – make sure you know where chicks are hidden.
- Move from one area to next along water's edge.
- Keep an eye on the birds to make sure they don't move the chicks to an area you are about to head to.
- Place 3 or 4 A-frame shelters along the beach the birds are using.
- Dig them in at least 10-15cms deep, halfway between dune and high-tide mark, with openings facing sea.

Weeds

Known distributions shown.

Marram Grass
Ammophila arenaria

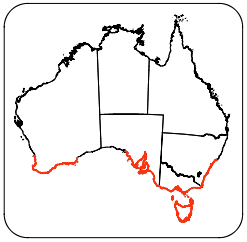
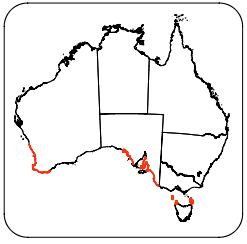


Photo: Grainne Maguire

Pyp Grass
Ehrharta villosa



A perrenial grass that spreads underground forming dense, smothering carpets - just like Marram. Can grow up to 90cm tall.

Photo: Emma Stephens

Sea Rocket
Cakile maritima

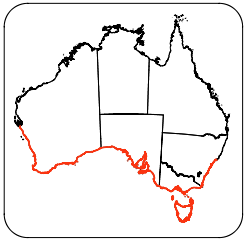


Photo: Grainne Maguire

Sea Spurge
Euphorbia paralias

Photo: Grainne Maguire

Sea Wheat Grass
Thinopyrum junceiforme

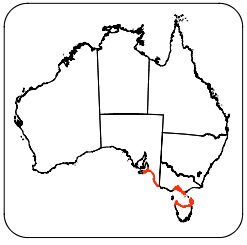
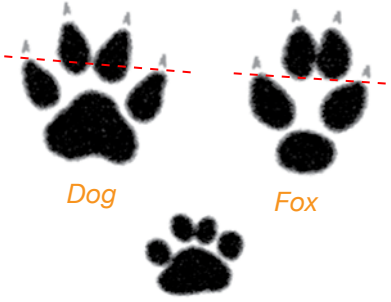


Photo: Grainne Maguire

Prints and tracks

Dog and fox prints are similar in size and general appearance, but there are key differences (see below); cat prints are more distinctive.



In the field, prints often lose detail and can be difficult to identify.

Where prints are difficult to identify individually, such as in dry sand or when they are old, the “gait” (or pattern of movement) can be helpful.

Typical Dog gait

Dogs tend to move unpredictably - chasing balls, sniffing things and generally exploring.

Foxes, on the other hand, tend to move more directly from point A to point B.

So fox prints are often in a straight line (often on the upper beach) whereas a dog’s gait can be more random.

Typical Fox gait

Passerines, or perching birds such as magpies and ravens, have three forward-facing claw prints but can be distinguished from the tracks of other birds tracks by the presence of a single rear facing claw print.

Gull and **tern** prints comprise three forward-facing claws, but are distinguished by the lines between their claws left by their webbed feet (although this line can be hard to see).

Plover prints

Hoodie tracks (like all shorebirds) appear as 3 simple lines in the sand.

Hoodie tracks are small compared to most other birds and the prints Hoodies leave are often very close together as they scurry around the beach.

In dry sand, Hoodie prints can lose definition and appear as diffuse triangles (below).

There can be lots and lots of Hoodie prints on the beach, particularly around nests as birds constantly come and go in response to disturbance (see pages 6-7) or around flocks of birds.

HOODED PLOVER TERRITORY MONITORING SHEET

UPON ARRIVAL – Location, Observer, Date/Time and Weather details

Beach/site name: Point Roadnight west				
Location of birds: Edge of fenced area				
Observer name/s: Grainne Maguire				
Date: 10/12/08	**Time start:** 2:30	**AM / (PM)**	**Time finish:** 3:15	**AM / (PM)**
Temperature ºC: 29	**Tide height:** low / (mid) / high		**Wind:** light / (medium) / heavy	

UPON SIGHTING A HOODED PLOVER – Your observations

Number adults	1	**Bands:** flags - Red over Green R, Red over metal L.		
Other shorebirds				
Habitat	Rocky platform	Beach - wet sand	(Beach - dry sand)	Dune
Adult Behaviour	(Leading)	Calling	Distraction displays	Territorial or aggressive
	(Incubating)	Brooding	Foraging	Resting
Nesting stage:	suspect nest	scrape no eggs	(eggs)	chicks
Nest Habitat:	Beach	Foredune/face	Dune	Estuary/spit
Nest Lat/Long:		**Describe vegetation or debris near nest:**		
Management:	Signs access	(Signs around nest)	(Fence)	Shelters
# eggs	unchecked	1	2	(3)
# chicks	not seen	1	2	3
Chick description	1/3 adult size, fluffy	1/2 adult size, fluffy	2/3 adult size, mottled grey	Adult size, mottled grey
Chick behaviour	Hiding	Running away	Foraging	Using shelter

Notes:

Adult agitated by sunbaker sitting in front of nest - adult returned to nest and incubated after person left area.

NEST FAILURE

Is there evidence of nest failure?		YES / (NO)		***Date failed:***		
a. Nest	Gone	Deserted		Flooded	Damaged	
b. Eggs	Gone	Broken		Rolled out	Abandoned	
c. Chicks	Gone	Injured		Dead in nest	Dead near nest	
Suspected cause of failure	Tide	Egg roll-out	Abandoned	Crushed	Fox	Dog
	Person	Horse	Gull Raven	Other predator	Vehicle	Unknown
Circle nearest footprints to nest and *estimate distance (cm)*	Fox =	Dog =	Person =	Gull =	Raven =	_____ =

HOODED PLOVER TERRITORY MONITORING SHEET

This threat assessment should apply to the area being used by the birds (e.g. 50 m in each direction of birds or nest site). If you do not see the birds, fill this in for their general area used. If your nest site is signed/fenced, please differentiate between the inside and the equivalent area outside the signs/fence.

DID YOU ASSESS THREATS (tick)? ☐ **Yes** / ☐ **No**

Threat type	**Habitat Type**			
	Water's edge (wet sand)	**Beach (dry sand)**	**Inside signs/ fence**	**Dune**
Exact Numbers (please do not write yes/no, many/few, etc):				
Walkers/Joggers	2	3		
People sunbaking / sitting			1	
Surfers / Swimmers	1			
People fishing				
Dog walkers	2	1		
Dogs on leash (# dogs)		1		
Dogs off leash (# dogs)		3	1	
Horses				
Vehicles				
Ravens				
Silver gulls			2	
___Nankeen Kestrel_____				1

Circle if present: Light (1-30%), **M**oderate (31-60%) or **H**eavy (61-100%)

	Water's edge (wet sand)	**Beach (dry sand)**	**Inside signs/ fence**	**Dune**
Human footprints	(L) M H	(L) M H	L M H	L M H
Dog prints	L M (H)	L (M) H	(L) M H	L M H
Fox prints	L M H	L M H	L M H	(L) M H
Vehicle tracks	L M H	L M H	L M H	L M H
Horse prints	L M H	L M H	L M H	L M H

Spoke to public?

Type of beach user: 1. Dog Walker 2. Sun baker

Their reaction: 1. positive, hadn't realised dog regulations changed. Leashed dog and and headed west instead of east. 2. Unhappy about moving out of fenced area but complied.

Hoodie FAQ's

How many Hoodies are there?

There are around 2800 Eastern Hooded Plovers; 550 in Victoria; <50 in sthn. NSW; 600-800 in SA; & 1000-1500 in Tas. Eastern Hoodies are extinct in Qld. & ntn. NSW. There are around 2000 Western Hooded Plovers.

Are Hoodies threatened?

Yes - the IUCN lists both Eastern and Western Hoodies as vulnerable to extinction. State Governments in Victoria and South Australia recognise their populations as Vulnerable, and NSW as Critically Endangered.

When do Hoodies nest?

In the east Hoodies nest any time from August to April, but it often depends on the weather and tides. Some pairs will start breeding early on in the season and others will wait until the conditions are right on their beach. In WA, nesting has been recorded in every month of the year.

Are Hoodies bad parents because they don't feed their chicks?

No! Chicks need to learn how to find food for themselves so they can survive when they fledge. Hoodies guard their chicks very closely chasing away the predators they can and distracting and confusing bigger predators and people.

Parents often spend so much time protecting their chicks they go without food themselves!

How many Hoodie nests survive?

Not many. In the east only around 40% of nests hatch, and - even worse - <25% of chicks survive when they are lucky enough to hatch!

But, when people help (fence nests, put out chick shelters etc.) and Hoodies get some space to breed, their nest survival goes up by 400%!

How long do Hoodies live?

Hoodies live a long time for such a little bird. Some banded birds have been found to live for >15 years. They are very good at looking after themselves once they can fly, their problem is getting to that age.

Do Hoodies move around much?

Yes and no... Hoodies are good flyers and often move around in the non-breeding season finding the best places to feed. But they love their home beaches, and often return to exactly the same spot to breed year after year.

What do Hoodies eat?

Hoodies eat things such as small crustaceans and amphipods that are washed up on the sand or rocks. They love feeding around seaweed because there's always abundant food washed up with it.

What are the threats to Hoodies' survival?

There are lots. Not all threats operate at once, and some places are better than others, but the main things that hurt Hoodies are:

- People, dogs, horses, stock and vehicles trampling eggs or chicks.
- Foxes, dogs, cats, magpies, ravens, raptors or gulls eating eggs and chicks.
- Chicks starving because they don't get enough undisturbed time to feed.
- Eggs overheating or freezing because the parents are too busy responding to disturbance to incubate them.
- Eggs getting washed away by tides and storms.
- Chicks dying from exposure in harsh temperatures because parents spend too much time responding to disturbance.

What is disturbance?

Because nests and chicks are so vulnerable, Hoodies have to react to all potential threats. This means that any person dog, fox, bird, vehicle or horse in a nesting territory will disturb Hoodies.

While a single disturbance may not directly kill a chick or destroy a nest, prolonged and frequent disturbances do. It's often the overall (cumulative) impact, many small disturbances, that add up to too much time off the eggs or for a chick, too much energy spent running to cover and not feeding.

A family of Hoodies can experience hundreds of disturbances in a day.

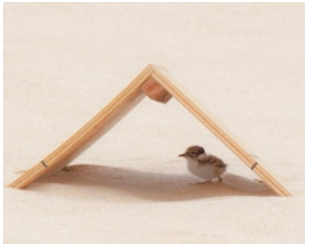
How far away do I need to be to avoid disturbing Hoodies?

It varies, but Hoodies will generally be drawn off a nest or away from chicks (or the chicks disturbed themselves) when people are within 50-100m of them.

Managing MyHoodie

Not all breeding Hoodies need our help, but those who live on busy beaches certainly do.

For a comprehensive toolkit and lots of other management resources go to www.birdlife.org.au/beach.



www.myhoodie.com.au

Visit myhoodie.com.au for more detailed information, video, local contacts and other info. about the amazing lives of Hooded Plovers...

... and, most importantly report any breeding activity as soon as you see it!

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