



Hooded Plover

Thinornis rubricollis (Gmelin, 1789)

Other common names Hooded Dotterel or Dottrel

Conservation status

The Hooded Plover is listed as an **Endangered Species** on Schedule 1 of the New South Wales *Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995* (TSC Act). This species is also listed as a **Vulnerable Species** on Schedule 1 of the Commonwealth *Endangered Species Protection Act, 1992*.

Description (summarised from Marchant & Higgins 1993)

Length

190-230mm

Wingspan

360-440mm

Tail

61-63mm

Bill

17-19mm

Tarsus

26-27mm

Weight

90-100g

The Hooded Plover is a medium-sized, robust plover with a prominent black hood contrasting with a red bill tipped black and red ring around the eye. The upperparts are predominantly pale brownish-grey with a white collar at the base of the black hood and a black and white tail and outerwing. The underparts are completely white apart from the black neck and pale brownish-grey edges on the wings.

The species may call in flight in a deep repeated note, although when agitated the cry may be higher-pitched.

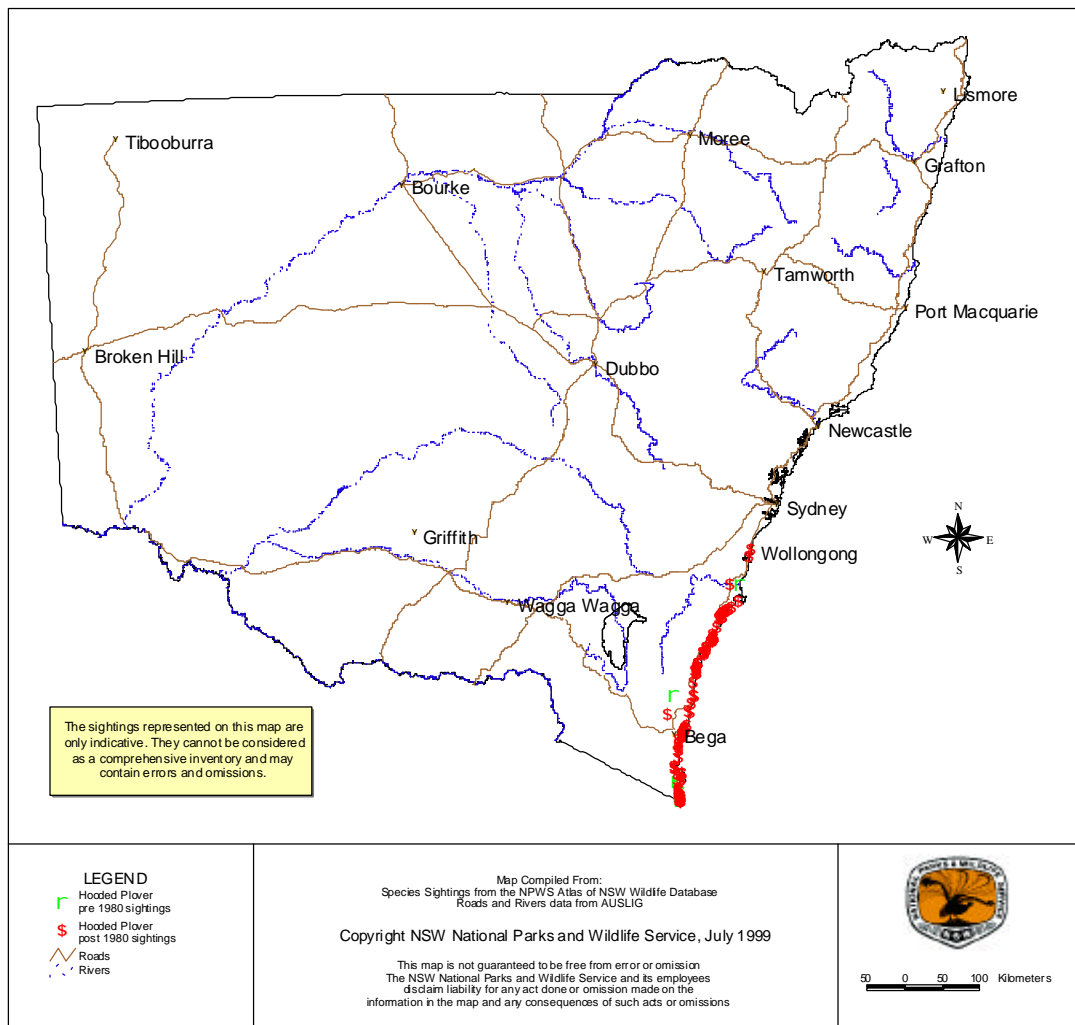
Distribution

The Hooded Plover occurs on sandy beaches and inland saltlakes of south-eastern and south-western Australia. The species occurs along the coast from Jervis Bay on the south coast of NSW to the western Eyre Peninsula in South Australia; along the coast of



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NPWS records of the Hooded Plover in NSW

Tasmania and in the Bass Strait islands; **from 30°S** on the Western Australian coast to the western edge of the Great Australian Bight (Marchant & Higgins 1993).

Within NSW, the Hooded Plover occurs along the southern coast, north to Jervis Bay. Occasional vagrants may be sighted further north at Wollongong (Gibson 1989). Historical records indicate that, within NSW, the species formerly occurred north to Port Stephens (Morris 1989). Recently, only stray birds, probably young adults or birds seeking new territories, have been observed ranging north to Sydney (Marchant & Higgins 1993).

Recorded occurrences in conservation reserves

Nadgee NR, Narrawallee Creek NR, Ben Boyd NP, Mimosa Rocks NP, Bournda NP, Eurobodalla NP, Murramarang NP (NPWS 1999).

Habitat

In south-eastern Australia, the Hooded Plover is found most often on long stretches of sandy shore, backed by tussock and creeper-covered dunes with nearby inland lakes. Preferred habitat has a wide wave-wash zone with beachcast seaweed for feeding, backed by sparsely vegetated sand-dunes for shelter and nesting (Murlis 1989).

Individuals also regularly use near-coastal saline and freshwater lakes and lagoons (Bransbury 1988).

Ecology

The Hooded Plover diet consists of marine worms, molluscs, crustaceans, insects, water plants and seeds. The species is both diurnal and nocturnal, foraging on beaches in wave-wash, lagoons and salt pans (Marchant & Higgins 1993).

Following a survey in 1988, Morris (1989) estimated that the NSW population might be as low as 62 individuals. The nesting season is from September to March with both parents incubating 2-3 eggs for a period of 28 days and sharing the care of the young (Bransbury 1988; Weston *et al.* 1998). As the breeding season is in summer, when beaches and coastal areas are utilised intensively for recreational activities, human disturbance is considered to be a severe threatening process (Garnett 1992).

Threats (summarised from Garnett 1992; Weston 1998)

- Artificially high populations of Silver Gulls around human settlements leading to increased predation

- Predation by foxes and raptors
- Loss of habitat due to development of coastal areas for housing and recreation
- Human disturbance, particularly during the breeding season, including four wheel driving along sand dunes, particularly as young shelter in wheel-ruts and are then in danger of being run over
- Destruction of nests by stock

Management (summarised from Garnett 1992)

- Research to provide a baseline of natural productivity, to measure the effects of predators and determine the success of conservation measures
- Protection and maintenance of known or potential habitat
- Education programs to highlight impacts of recreational activities to resident populations
- Active policing of illegal off-road vehicle usage in areas of known populations
- Control of introduced predators around potential habitat areas, specifically targeting foxes



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Recovery plans

A recovery plan has not been prepared for the species.

Hooded Plover chick

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