

Dogs love going to the beach, but they can disturb and kill endangered shorebirds.

Shorebirds feed, roost or nest along the shore. Some are local. Many are migratory, travelling thousands of kilometres each season. Migratory shorebirds use the sandy shoreline as a refuge after their long journey. If they don't get enough rest or food, these birds are unlikely to survive their journey.

Shorebirds are limited by the tide for space to feed and roost. If chased by dogs during these critical times, they may be too exhausted to migrate for their mating season.

In spring and summer, our native shorebirds nest on the beaches and estuaries of the northern rivers of NSW. There are few coastal areas where shorebirds can find a refuge from people and dogs. For this reason many shorebirds are now threatened with extinction.

Please ... keep your dogs well away from shorebirds.



Further information: www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

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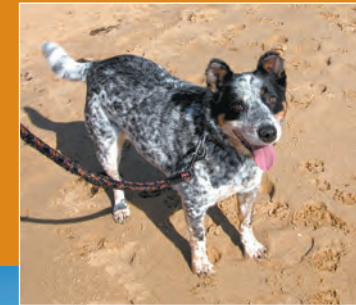
How can you help protect beach-nesting birds?

Familiarise yourself with the current regulations for dogs on beaches in your local area. In many areas dogs are prohibited or must be on leashes. If there are no signs at beach access points, contact your local council to find out where you are allowed to exercise dogs on the beach.

- ◆ Keep your dog out of national parks, nature reserves and other areas where dogs are prohibited.
- ◆ Use a leash on beaches where leashes are compulsory.
- ◆ If you are walking your dog along the beach, keep near the waters edge – this poses less risk to nesting birds and turtles which nest above the high-tide mark.
- ◆ In spring and summer, if you see Pied Oystercatchers, Little Terns or Beach Stone-curlews on the beach, keep well away because they are likely to have a nest nearby and are sensitive to disturbance from you and your dog.



Dogs and Leashes Birds and Beaches



Little Tern



Pied Oystercatcher



Beach Stone-curlew

Help protect Australia's beach-nesting birds by being a responsible dog owner.



Because beach-nesting birds have such poor breeding success, their numbers are declining. If, over time, too many birds fail to produce young, their species becomes faced with the threat of extinction.

They are in desperate need of a helping hand.

Small changes in your behaviour can have a huge positive impact on their survival.

Nests of beach-nesting birds are very well camouflaged against the sand.



"My dog wouldn't harm the birds!"

Once a dog detects a nesting bird, its natural curiosity can lead it straight to the vulnerable eggs and chicks. No matter how well trained your dog is, accidental crushing of eggs and chicks can occur when a dog runs around on the beach.

Adult birds that are incubating eggs or brooding chicks are easily disturbed by dogs on the beach, so while there might be no intention to do harm, the impacts can be severe.



Nests are commonly located on ocean beaches above the high-tide mark.



Soon after hatching, the Pied Oystercatcher chicks will need to take to their feet and find food for themselves.



What are the threats facing beach-nesting birds?

In Northern NSW there are three unique and highly threatened birds that depend on our beaches for survival. They no longer have undisturbed beaches on which to breed and raise their young, so the chicks struggle to survive and their numbers are declining. They are fearful of us and are highly sensitive to dogs. If you own a dog, you can help recover these birds from the brink of extinction.

The parent birds will leave the nest to keep it hidden and will not return until that disturbance ends.

If this is for a long period, eggs and chicks can overheat, over cool or be eaten by predators. Chicks are also easily frightened by people and dogs on beaches, and if they spend more time in hiding than feeding, they will starve to death.

"My dog is only having a bit of fun chasing the birds"

It is critical that nesting birds are left to sit on their eggs and that their chicks are able to feed on the beach. Disturbance can lead to eggs failing to hatch, or chicks starving or being predated in the absence of their parents.