

**Annual BBB Beach-nesting Bird Report 2023-2024 for Shorebird Stakeholder Meeting 22/5/24**  
- written by Jan Olley and Photo Report by Reid Waters

**Points**

- ☐ Maintain on-line Spreadsheet for Nesting shorebirds at all Byron Shire Estuaries and Beaches – New SS updated for the 2024-25 season
- ☐ On-line SS also includes a page for reporting Bush Stone-curlews in the Byron Shire

Bird Nesting Report 2023-2024	
2023 – Belongil Beach	Incidents Reported from SS
Pied Oystercatcher (POC) 1 – Belongil Estuary – East Beach front -	28.626744, 153.591710
1 <sup>st</sup> nest: 13/8/23 x 1 egg	27/8/23 – eggs gone. Fox/dog and boot prints inside fence and along dune adjacent to nest. No shell remnants. Skirmishes with other POC. An indication of limited nesting spaces???
2 <sup>nd</sup> nest: 15/9/23 x 2 eggs	10/10/23 – Eggs gone. Fate of nest and eggs unknown.
No Hatchings for 2023	
POC 2 – Belongil Estuary – on island -	28.628825, 153.593030
1 <sup>st</sup> nest: 13/8/23 x 1 egg	27/8/23 – nest gone. Dog/fox & human foot prints along top of dune.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Nest: 15/9/23 x 2 eggs.	16/10/23 – no further sightings of chicks.
11/10/23 – 2 Hatchlings	Fate unknown
No Fledglings for 2023	
POC 3A – (New Pair – 2022)- West Beach-side	28.626151, 153.590182
1 <sup>st</sup> nest: 17/9/23 x 2 eggs	Harassed by POC pair 1 - protective fence erected by Elements staff. Dog issues still a problem - chick swims creek to west side.
6/10/23 – 1 hatchling	
1 x Fledgling for 2023	
Beach Stone-curlew	-28.627244, 153.591223 (Estuary site)
1 <sup>st</sup> Nest: 30/10/23 x 1 egg	
30/10/23 – 1 hatchling – remained hidden for sometime	Nesting bird frequently disturbed by illegal fisher-people & also dogs after hatching
1 x Fledgling for 2023	Seen on Clarkes Beach 31/3/24
Red-capped Plovers - Without a 24/7 presence it is difficult to determine the RCP numbers, nests, hatchlings and fledged chicks at Belongil.	
Estimated 21 eggs from 9 x nests. At least 5 hatchlings	Nest sites protected by temporary fencing & signage. Fate of nests, eggs and hatchlings often unknown.
1 x Fledgling for 2023 – possibly 2	
Terns	
Little Terns – first record for season 23/10/23	Highest No = 126 27/3/24
Crested Tern – always present	Highest No = 550 14/10/23
Common Terns first record was 13/10/21	Highest No = 180 14/4/24

Shorebirds	Sometimes seen at Clarkes Beach lagoon
Double-banded Plovers – first record for season 10/6/23	Highest No = 5 28/9/23 -
Bar-tailed Godwits- first record 30/9/23	Highest No = 11 2/10/23
Black-winged Stilts - first record 12/6/23	Highest No = 9 30/7/23
<p>Disturbances at Belongil</p> <p>As with past years the Belongil estuary roosting and nesting birds constantly disturbed by pedestrian traffic. Some evidence that people are entering the enclosed (fenced off areas). Despite being a NO DOG area dogs foot prints often observed and also possible fox foot prints. Fisher-people and kayakers are disturbing birds in the inner estuary – often going too close to nests.</p> <p>Natural disturbances include other Pied Oystercatchers as well as gulls, osprey, brush-turkeys and crows.</p> <p>Creek closure can be an issue as water levels increase. High tides, storms and high winds can also be an issue often covering eggs with sand.</p> <p>Management</p> <p>A permanent coated wire fence is permanently in place along the dune edge east side of creek, Signs, both educational and enforcement signs are permanently displayed.</p> <p>11/8/23 A work-bee is undertaken annually by NPWS and Marine Park staff as well as BBB volunteers and staff from the Elements Resort to reposition fences and replace signs when necessary. Temporary fencing and signs are put in place around nests, especially Red-capped Plover nests, as necessary. Fences are removed once chicks hatch or nest abandoned. Data and observations are recorded on an on-line spreadsheet. The spread sheet can be used by anyone who has the address.</p>	
2023 – Brunswick River Area	Incidents Reported from SS
Pied Oystercatcher (POC) N0 3 Ferry	-28.531442, 153.535945
Reserve FLEA ISLAND	
1 <sup>st</sup> Nest 16/8/23 - 2 eggs	23/8/23 - nest mound raised - new signs
Hatched 15/9/23 – 1 chick & one egg abandoned	BBB, NPWS, + Rex the Oyster farmer assisted with sandbag transport
1 x Fledgling for 2023	
POC 4 - Middle Reading Island	-28.531442 153.535945
1 <sup>st</sup> nest 12/9/23 x 3 eggs	8/10/23 – eggs gone – fate of eggs
0 x Fledgling for 2023	unknown
POC 5 – East end Reading Island	-28.53551, 153.55096
1 <sup>st</sup> nest 2/9/23 x 2 eggs	New signs erected. – Paddle boarder & dog.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Nest 11/11/23 x 2 eggs	8/10/23 – eggs gone – fate unknown
Hatched 10/12/23 – 1 x chick	Fledge date unknown but observed with parents a couple of weeks later in different location
1 x Fledgling for 2023	
POC Pair 6 - North Wall R1	-28.533431, 153.551899
1 <sup>st</sup> nest 1/9/23 – x 2 eggs	9/3/23 Eggs gone – cause unknown
2 <sup>nd</sup> Nest 23/9/23 - 2 eggs	

1/11/23 – nest thought to be abandoned - parents not observed and one egg left in nest.	Nest close to walking track on North wall, Some disturbance by wind and rain, during the nesting period- also helicopter.
0 x fledgling for 2023	
Beach Stone- curlew - Enclosed Fence	-28.540207 153.555032
1 <sup>st</sup> nest 17/10/23 – 1 x egg	28/10/23 egg gone - camera shows fox x 2 took egg. 14/12/23 2 <sup>nd</sup> nest moved to higher location due to impending high tide. Many disturbances over the two nest periods – dogs inside and outside of fence, picnickers, camping, people in watercraft and high tides.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Nest 4/12/23 – nest on Xmas beach x 1 x egg	
24/12/23 – Egg gone – assumed hatched 31/12/23 – 1 x chick sighted but no further sightings after that day.	
1 x chick hatched – 0 fledgling	
Other Birds	
Grey-tailed Tattlers, Sooty Oystercatchers, Bar-tailed Godwits, Whimbrel, Eastern Curlews	
<p>Disturbances at Brunswick Heads</p> <p>Due to more isolated nest sites in the Brunswick estuary pedestrian disturbance is much less than at Belongil.</p> <p>There is some evidence that people are entering the permanent fenced off area for the Beach Stone-curlew. Despite being a NO DOG area and Nature Reserve dogs are still being brought into the area – some on boats and kayaks. There is also evidence the yabbing is occurring inside the fenced area and kayakers are disturbing birds. This year a campsite was removed and people were found picnicking inside fenced area</p> <p>Natural disturbances include other Pied Oystercatchers and brush-turkeys and possibly goannas.</p> <p>High tides remain an issue – it was necessary to move the nest on Xmas Beach to a higher position – tides height – 1.94m.</p> <p>Management</p> <p>A fence is permanently in position along the access track to Marshalls Creek and marine buoys are in place along the water edge protecting the roost and nest site of the Beach Stone-curlews. Cameras were placed in the Beach Stone-curlew enclosure this season. Two foxes were observed at the nest mound as well as a cat, wallaby and bandicoot.</p> <p>In August, the POC nest at Ferry Reserve was raised and new signs were put in place by NPWS, BBB volunteer and assisted by the oyster lease owner.</p> <p>As with Belongil, data and observations, are recorded on an on-line spreadsheet.</p>	
2023 -Tyagarah Beach Area	
POC – Pair 7 - (Nest1) Tagged J7	
1 <sup>st</sup> nest 3/11/23 – 2 eggs	23/11/23 – eggs gone
POC = pair 8 (Nest 2) – Untagged Pair	
1 <sup>st</sup> nest 19/11/23	25/11/23 Eggs gone
2023 Tallow Beach Area	
Presence of Pied Oystercatchers and Beach Stone-curlew but no nesting in 2023	
Notes of interest	
On 8/8/23 on Seven Mile Beach Reid reported a POC with QLD No 10137558	
Maximum number of POCs on Tallows = 4 and two of the birds are single legged birds	
Maximum number of Beach Stone-curlews = 2 and one with tag i3	
Disturbances include dogs, illegal camp sites and e-bikes	
There was a report of a Beach Stone-curlews nest at Glen Villa Resort with 2 fledged chicks. The two birds and a parent were killed by cars on the Byron By-pass	

Ospreys	
No detailed observations of nests were undertaken during 2023. Of the seven nests we know of 2 were active in 2023. – Fledgling numbers were not recorded. A new nest was located along Simpsons Creek but seems to now abandoned	

Summary of Nesting Results
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- Pied Oystercatcher – Belongil

Total Nest = 5; Total Eggs = 8; Total Hatched = 3; Total Fledged - 1

- ☐ Beach Stone-curlew - Belongil

Total Nest = 1; Total Eggs = 1; Total Hatched = 1; Total Fledged - 1

- ☐ Red-capped Plovers –

Total Nest = 9; Total Eggs = 21; Total Hatched = 7 but uncertain; Total Fledged - 1, maybe 2 but uncertain.

- ☐ Pied Oystercatcher – Brunswick Heads & Tyagarah

Total Nest = 10; Total Eggs = 20; Total Hatched = 4; Total Fledged = 2

- ☐ Beach Stone-curlew – Brunswick Heads

Total Nest = 2; Total Eggs = 2; Total Hatched = 1; Total Fledged = 0

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Funding – NSW Parks & Wildlife Service provided Byron Bird Buddies volunteers with funding for Threatened Species Shorebird Monitoring. The funding is to be used by BBB for shorebird monitoring activities in Tweed/Byron Regional Area for equipment, travel and other miscellaneous expenses. Any equipment purchased will remain the property of National Parks.

Total Received

\$1180

Total Spent

\$713.00 – for binoculars

\$200 – petrol Vouchers

Balance - 21/5/24

\$267.00 - money to be spent as necessary during the 2024/2025 breeding season.

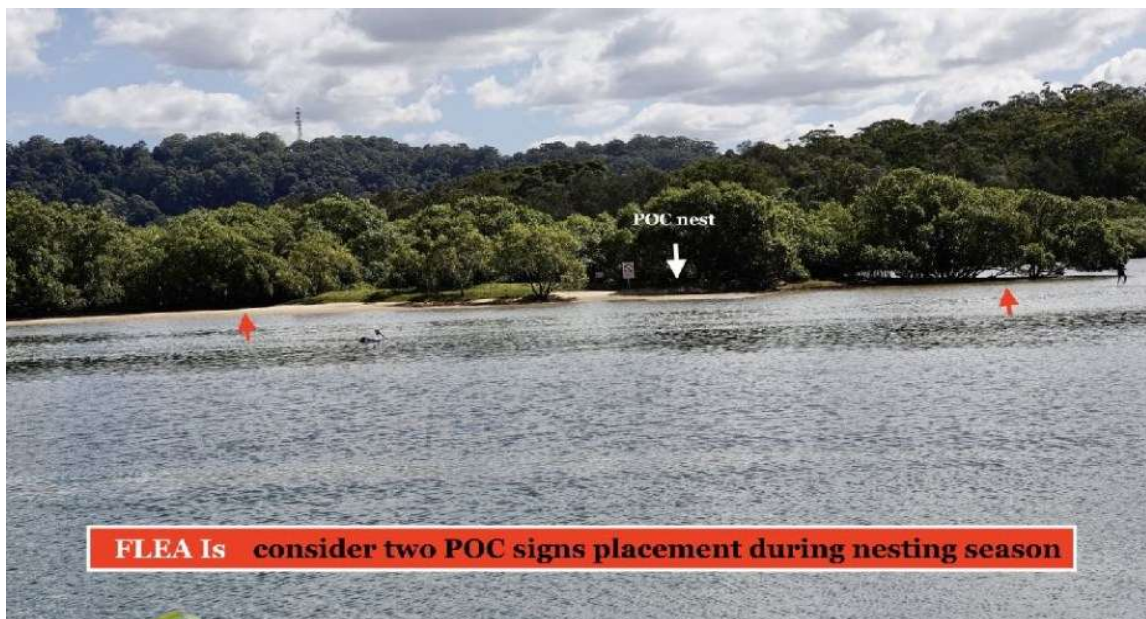
## Cape Byron Marine Park (CBMP) 2023-2024 BIRD BREEDING SEASON ANTICIPATED LOGISTIC REQUIRMENTS



### BRUNSWICK RIVER POCS & BEACH STONE-CURLEWS

**Flea Island POC PAIR (100-96132- silver tag)** - male bird  
21 years old and have been the most consistent and  
successful breeding pair on the river.

**Earliest nesting 13.8.2015**



#### Action

- **Provide Reflections Ferry Reserve** office with an **A4 Flea Island POC** nest advice **printout** for guests at check- in.
- **Marshalls Creek POCS D7, J7 & R1** Unsure at this time where these three pair may lay. Have posts/signs and sandbags on hand (if necessary)
- **Marshall Creek BSC**...if, after future observations warrant top up nest/mound. **Earliest Nesting 26.8.2013**



# BELONGIL ESTUARY 2023/2024 BREEDING SEASON

## ANTICIPATED NEST SITES



- POC PAIR 1 earliest nesting – 2/8/2016
- POC PAIR 2 earliest nesting – 30/8/2015
- POC PAIR 3 earliest nesting – 20/9/2022
- BSC earliest nesting – 4/10/2022
- RCP earliest nesting 28/7/2022

### Action

- TOP UP BSC ISLAND NEST/MOUND IF REQUIRED
- Provide Elements Resort with a classy informative A4 Belongil bird information sheet to pass on to guests at check-in

## BUSH STONE-CURLEWS in Byron Shire

These charismatic birds need all the protection we can give them.  
Byron & Tweed Shire Councils are collaborating on a combined Bush Stone-curlew program.





## TALLOWS CK ONGOING BSC ROOST eBIKE DISTURBANCE





# Belongil BIG Swim

(The saga of a 2-day old Pied Oystercatcher chick)





Belongil POC Pair 3 Hatched 6.10.23



..... always mindful and alert for potential attack by other  
bird species. parent sits tight on chick



..... way too close!





parents weigh their options... 'stay or go'



..... the Plan...swim chick to mum waiting on the other side



don't worry dear one...we will guide you



after several false starts... cold feet (literally or otherwise). Chick swam five meters out and quickly turned back a couple of times... eventually parents saved the day and guided her/he over





Don't worry I'm with you



Thanks Mum and Dad