



The South Australian Ornithological Association Incorporated trading as Birds SA

c/- South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

Mayor Mark Wasley
Adelaide Plains Council
PO Box 18
Mallala SA 5502
markw@apc.sa.gov.au

27 September 2020

Dear Mayor Wasley

Ref: The Recommendation, Item 7.1 Thompson Beach, Seasonal Closure of Beach to Vehicles

The South Australian Ornithological Association (Birds SA) is the oldest birding association in Australasia. Since 1899 we have been dedicated to the conservation and study of Australian native birds. Our membership is nearly 1,000 strong and we are affiliated with Birdlife Australia with its 10,000 members and 65,000 supporters.

Birds SA commends the Council in taking this responsible and necessary initiative to protect Thompson Beach and its precious ecology. This beach is a cornerstone of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary, which itself has international significance as a vital resting and rejuvenation ground for 27,000 migratory birds.

Please note that 111 different bird species have been recorded at Thompson Beach – see attached list.

Across the world, there are 10 species of shorebirds that are classified as Endangered, meaning they are facing a “*very high risk of extinction in the wild.*” Of these 10 species, two are found at Thompson Beach: **Great Knot** and **Far Eastern Curlew**.

Furthermore, 7 of the species found at Thompson Beach are classified as Threatened or Near Threatened, meaning that they are at, or nearly at, high risk of extinction. These species include **Curlew Sandpiper**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Red-necked Stint** and **Red Knot**.

It is so very important that these hugely threatened species are protected.

Thus it is astonishing that off-road driving is still permitted in an international bird sanctuary!

Birds SA’s position is that driving on beaches should be far better controlled and regulated in South Australia; we also wish it noted that this practice has been completely banned in Victoria for many years.

Our concerns include:

- 1) The foreshore and tidal flats being driven on are part of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary (AIBS), an internationally important coastal wetland.
- 2) AIBS is important due to
 - a) the large number (27,000) and huge variety of birds it supports, and
 - b) the fact that a number of these are globally threatened species.
- 3) The damaging impact of vehicle traffic upon the molluscs and bi-valves upon which many of the migratory birds feed.
- 4) Disturbance to migratory shorebirds from feeding areas disrupts their opportunity for weight gain. These birds need to ensure they gain sufficient weight to undergo their migratory flight to their northern hemisphere breeding grounds. Any disturbance can disrupt feeding and cause them to expend energy unnecessarily thereby compromising opportunity for successful migration.
- 5) The net effect is a significant adverse impact on the feeding and habitats of these internationally important bird populations.
- 6) Resident shorebirds are also impacted, including Oystercatchers and Red-capped Plovers which nest on the beach during the months from August to February and where the nests and chicks are vulnerable to disturbance from vehicles. We know for instance of a recent episode when a Pied Oystercatcher nest with two eggs was run over by a vehicle at Thompson Beach north – many similar incidents are sure to occur that are not tracked.

Thompson Beach is an invaluable and irreplaceable natural resource of international significance; its ecology is precious and must be protected to promote the wellbeing and ongoing viability of our birdlife.

Birds SA wholeheartedly and emphatically supports Council's efforts to instigate the seasonal closure of Thompson Beach to vehicles.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require further information.



Kind regards,

Steven Langley

Vice President

Birds SA

M: 0490 802 176

E: stevenlangley2010@gmail.com

Attached : Thompson Beach Bird List

www.birdssa.asn.au	Checklist for THOMPSON BEACH	
Black Swan	Lesser Sand Plover	White-winged Fairywren
Australian Shelduck	Greater Sand Plover	New Holland Honeyeater
Pacific Black Duck	Oriental Plover	White-fronted Chat
Grey Teal	Bar-tailed Godwit	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Chestnut Teal	Black-tailed Godwit	Red Wattlebird
Stubble Quail	Whimbrel	Singing Honeyeater
Brown Quail	Far Eastern Curlew	White-browed Scrubwren
Hoary-headed Grebe	Marsh Sandpiper	Weebill
Australian White Ibis	Common Greenshank	White-browed Babbler
Royal Spoonbill	Terek Sandpiper	Black-faced Cuckooshrike
Nankeen Night Heron	Ruddy Turnstone	Gilbert's Whistler
Eastern Great Egret (Great Egret)	Great Knot	Grey Butcherbird
White-faced Heron	Red Knot	Australian Magpie
Little Egret	Red-necked Stint	Grey Shrikethrush
Australian Pelican	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Willie Wagtail
Australasian Gannet	Curlew Sandpiper	Grey Fantail
Little Pied Cormorant	Silver Gull	Magpielark
Black-faced Cormorant	Pacific Gull	Little Raven
Little Black Cormorant	Gull-billed Tern	Australian Raven
Pied Cormorant	Caspian Tern	*Eurasian Skylark
Osprey	Greater Crested Tern	Welcome Swallow
Black-shouldered Kite	Fairy Tern	Fairy Martin
Swamp Harrier	Whiskered Tern	Tree Martin
Spotted Harrier	*Feral Pigeon	Brown Songlark
Black Kite	*Spotted Dove	Silvereye
Whistling Kite	Brush Bronzewing	*Common Starling
White-bellied Sea Eagle	Crested Pigeon	*Common Blackbird
Australian Crake	Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	*House Sparrow
Black-tailed Nativehen	Pacific Swift	Australian Pipit
Painted Buttonquail	Sacred Kingfisher	
White-headed Stilt	Nankeen Kestrel	
Banded Stilt	Australian Hobby	
Red-necked Avocet	Brown Falcon	
Pied Oystercatcher	Black Falcon	
Sooty Oystercatcher	Peregrine Falcon	
Spur-winged Plover (Masked Lapwing)	Galah	
Red-kneed Dotterel	Eastern Bluebonnet	
Pacific Golden Plover	Elegant Parrot	
Grey Plover	Blue-winged Parrot	
Red-capped Plover	Rock Parrot	
Double-banded Plover	Purple-crowned Lorikeet	