Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet

No.1

**Small Plovers and Turnstone**

**LARGE SAND PLOVER**
- **21cm. M**
- Coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones
- Adult breeding: Bill short and stout, darker mask
- Adult non-breeding: Large heavy bill

**MONGOLIAN PLOVER**
- **19cm. M**
- Coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones
- Adult breeding: Red rufous cap
- Adult non-breeding: Red rufous cap

**RED-CAPPED PLOVER**
- **15cm. R**
- Bare mudflats and margins of inland and coastal saline wetlands
- Adult breeding: Bill short and stout, distinctive black markings on face and breastband
- Adult non-breeding: Bill short and narrow

**RED-KNEED DOTTEREL**
- **18cm. R**
- Feeds in shallow margins of inland freshwater wetlands including temporary shallow after rain
- Adult breeding: Distinctive black hood and white collar
- Adult non-breeding: Black breast band and head, chestnut flanks, distinctive white throat
- Adult male: Long legs with pink upper half
- Adult female: Short rear end

**HOODED PLOVER**
- **21cm. R**
- Sandy ocean beaches of southern Australia, open edges of saltflakes in south-west Australia
- Adult male: Wedge shaped bill
- Adult female: Short pink legs

**ORIENTAL PLOVER**
- **25cm. M**
- Sparsely vegetated plains of arid inland and coastal mudflats and beaches of northern Australia
- Adult breeding: Long legs
- Adult non-breeding: Adult male breeding

**DOUBLE-BANDED PLOVER**
- **19cm. M**
- Coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones, also open bare margins of inland freshwater and saline marsh, south-east Australia
- Adult breeding: Winter visitor returning to New Zealand for summer
- Adult non-breeding: Coasts of inland

**BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL**
- **17cm. R**
- Pairs or small family groups on dry margins of freshwater wetlands large or small
- Adult breeding: Distinctive black markings on face and breastband
- Adult non-breeding: Coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

**RUDDY TURNSTONE**
- **23cm. M**
- Uses stout bill to flip stones, shells, seaweed and driftwood on sandy or cobble beaches, rock platform or reef of coastal Australia
- Adult breeding: Short pink legs

Measure in centimetres after each species name denotes length from bill tip to end of tail.

**= migratory.** 

R = resident species.

For more information visit www.shorebirds.org.au

Illustrations by Jeff Davies
Large Plovers, Lapwings, Stone-curlews and Jacana

Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet
No. 2

BUSH STONE-CURLEW 55cm. R
- large eye
- very large feet for walking on lillypads

COMB-CRESTED JACANA 21cm. R
- tropical freshwater wetlands with abundant floating aquatic vegetation
- large fleshy yellow wattle
- very noisy with a loud penetrating alarm call

BEACH STONE-CURLEW 55cm. R
- long dark bar on wing
- beaches, mudflats and small islands of northern and eastern Australia

MAKED LAPWING 34cm. R
- wide variety of short grass habitats, wetland edges, and modified urban environments
- ssp. miles (northern Australia)
- ssp. novaehollandiae (eastern Australia)

BANDED LAPWING 27cm. R
- bold black U-shaped breast band when viewed from front
- open short grasslands and semi arid rangeland, southern half of Australia

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER 25cm. M
- adult breeding
- coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones, roosting in short saltmarsh herbfield or paddocks

GREY PLOVER 29cm. M
- adult breeding
- coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

M = migratory
R = resident species.

Measure in centimetres after each species name denotes length from bill tip to end of tail.

Illustrations by Jeff Davies

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Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Water Resources
Curlews, Dowitcher and Godwits
Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet
No.3

**Curlews**
- **Eastern Curlew**
  - Adult non-breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones
  - Adult breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones, also inland freshwater and saline marsh

**Dowitchers**
- **Asian Dowitcher**
  - Adult non-breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones
  - Adult breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

**Godwits**
- **Whimbrel**
  - Adult non-breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones
  - Adult breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

- **Bar-tailed Godwit**
  - Adult non-breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones
  - Adult breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

- **Black-tailed Godwit**
  - Adult non-breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones, also inland freshwater and saline marsh
  - Adult breeding: coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones, also inland freshwater and saline marsh

**Measurements**
- M = migratory
- R = resident species

Measure in centimetres after each species name denotes length from bill tip to end of tail.

Illustrations by Jeff Davies
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Australian Government Department of the Environment and Water Resources
Oystercatchers, Avocet, Stilts, Pratincoles and Snipe

**PIED OYSTER Catcher** 46cm. R  
Mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

**SOOTY OYSTER Catcher** 46cm. R  
Coastal rock platforms and rocky islets

**RED-NECKED AVOCET** 44cm. R  
Typically found on saline lakes and salt pans but also a variety of freshwater wetlands and coastal intertidal zones

**BANDED STILT** 39cm. R  
Large dense flocks on saline lakes and salt pans

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** 37cm. R  
A variety of inland saline and freshwater marsh, also coastal intertidal zones

**ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE** 24cm. M  
Open grasslands and floodplains of northern Australia

**AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLE** 21cm. R  
Open grasslands and gibber plains of the arid interior

**AUSTRALIAN PAINTED SNIPE** 27cm. R  
Shallow freshwater swamps, erupts from cover with fast zig-zagging flight, eastern Australia

**LATHAM’S SNIPE** 31cm. M  
Shallow freshwater swamps, erupts from cover with fast zig-zagging flight, eastern Australia

*Measure in centimetres after each species name denotes length from bill tip to end of tail*

M = migratory  
R = resident species.
Large Sandpipers

Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet

No.5

Measure in centimetres after each species name denotes length from bill tip to end of tail

RED KNOT 24cm. M
mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

feathers of back, wing and crown
plain grey with fine dark centre line

WANDERING TATTLER 25cm. M
rocky coasts and reefs, mainly Queensland and northern NSW

GREY-TAILED TATTLER 25cm. M
mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

MARSH SANDPIPER 24cm. M
coastal intertidal zones and inland saline and freshwater marshes

GREAT KNOT 27cm. M
mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

adult breeding

longish bill

head, neck, breast and flanks streaked, feathers of back and wings with diffuse dark centres

COMMON REDSHANK 28cm. M
mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

adult non-breeding

base of bill red

orange-red legs

COMMON GREENSHANK 33cm. M
coastal intertidal zones and inland saline and freshwater marshes

adult breeding

robust slightly upturned bill

thin needle bill

adult non-breeding

adult breeding

adult non-breeding

adult non-breeding

illustrations by Jeff Davies

for more information visit www.shorebirds.org.au

M = migratory
R = resident species.
**WOOD SANDPIPER** 21cm. M
shallow freshwater marshes with abundant aquatic vegetation

**COMMON SANDPIPER** 20cm. M
white patch between wing and breast band
found singly on rocky or sloped muddy margins of coastal or inland wetlands, also drains, channels and dams
flies low with wings bowed down, bold white wing bar

**TEREK SANDPIPER** 23cm. M
intertidal mudflats
upturned bill with orange base
bobs long tail

**BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER** 17cm. M
intertidal mudflats
drooped tip
broad bill for entire length

**SANDELING** 21cm. M
exposed sandy ocean beaches
where tight feeding groups run quickly along edge of surf, also sandbars and mudflats
pale face
dark shoulder patch contrasts with very pale silver grey body

**SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** 20cm. M
coastal intertidal zones and inland saline and freshwater marsh
yellowish bill base
streaked breast ends abruptly

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** 21cm. M
coastal and inland saline or freshwater marsh

**LITTLE TERN**
juvenile
white with grey back
juvenile
white with grey back

**LARGE TERN**
juvenile
white with grey back
juvenile
white with grey back

**BREEDING SANDPIPER**
juvenile
white with grey back
juvenile
white with grey back

**RED-NECKED STINT**
15cm. M
coastal intertidal zones and inland saline and freshwater marsh
yellowish legs
blackish legs

**LONG-TOED STINT**
14cm. M
adult breeding
muddy edges of well vegetated freshwater and brackish wetlands

**BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER** 17cm. M
adult breeding
muddy edges of well vegetated freshwater and brackish wetlands

**SANDELING** 21cm. M
adult breeding
muddy edges of well vegetated freshwater and brackish wetlands

**MATERIALS**

- M = migratory
- R = resident species.

Measure in centimetres after each species name denotes length from bill tip to end of tail