



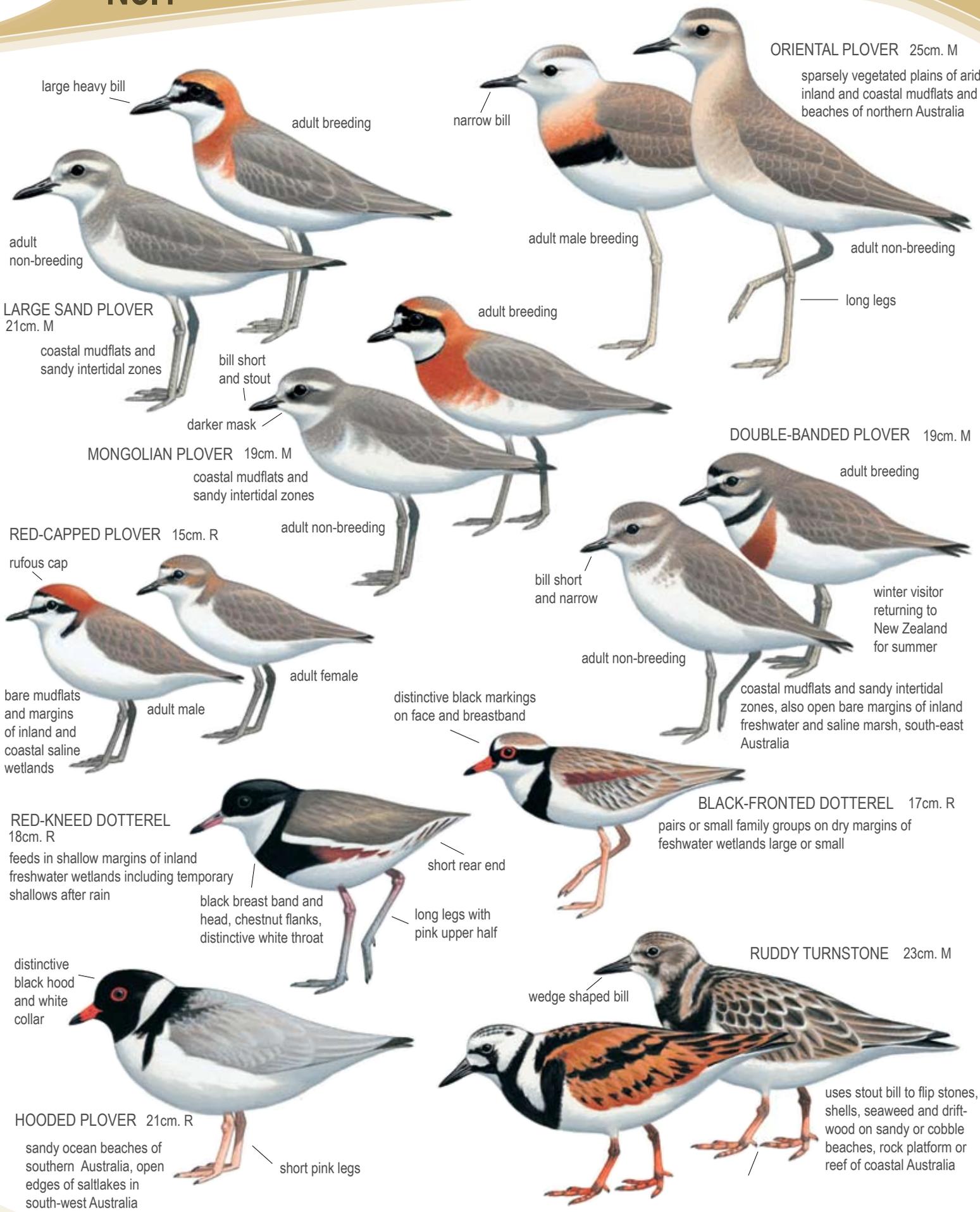
# Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet

Small Plovers and Turnstone

## No.1



**Australian Government**  
**Department of the Environment and Water Resources**



large heavy bill

adult breeding

adult non-breeding

**LARGE SAND PLOVER** 21cm. M

coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

bill short and stout

darker mask

narrow bill

adult male breeding

adult non-breeding

**ORIENTAL PLOVER** 25cm. M

sparsely vegetated plains of arid inland and coastal mudflats and beaches of northern Australia

long legs

**MONGOLIAN PLOVER** 19cm. M

coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

adult non-breeding

adult breeding

**DOUBLE-BANDED PLOVER** 19cm. M

adult breeding

adult non-breeding

bill short and narrow

winter visitor returning to New Zealand for summer

coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones, also open bare margins of inland freshwater and saline marsh, south-east Australia

**RED-CAPPED PLOVER** 15cm. R

rufous cap

adult male

adult female

bare mudflats and margins of inland and coastal saline wetlands

**RED-KNEED DOTTEREL** 18cm. R

feeds in shallow margins of inland freshwater wetlands including temporary shallows after rain

black breast band and head, chestnut flanks, distinctive white throat

short rear end

long legs with pink upper half

distinctive black markings on face and breastband

**BLACK-FRONTED DOTTEREL** 17cm. R

pairs or small family groups on dry margins of freshwater wetlands large or small

distinctive black hood and white collar

**HOODED PLOVER** 21cm. R

sandy ocean beaches of southern Australia, open edges of saltlakes in south-west Australia

short pink legs

wedge shaped bill

**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



# Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet

Large Plovers, Lapwings, Stone-curlews and Jacana

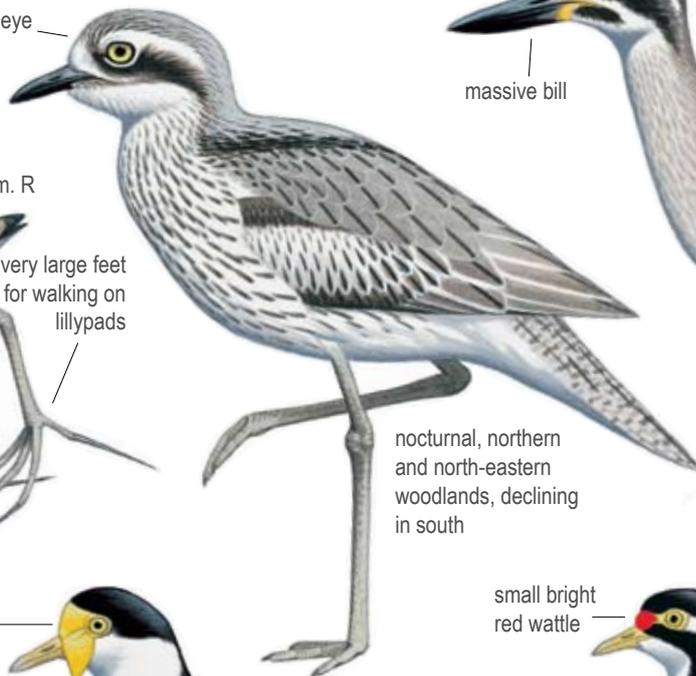
## No.2



Australian Government  
Department of the Environment  
and Water Resources

BUSH STONE-CURLEW 55cm. R

large eye



nocturnal, northern and north-eastern woodlands, declining in south

BEACH STONE-CURLEW 55cm. R

massive bill

long dark bar on wing

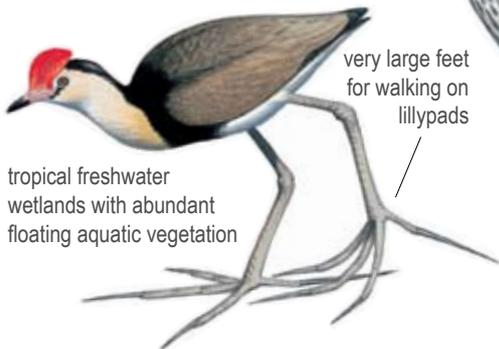


beaches, mudflats and small islands of northern and eastern Australia

COMB-CRESTED JACANA 21cm. R

very large feet for walking on lily pads

tropical freshwater wetlands with abundant floating aquatic vegetation



large fleshy yellow wattle

very noisy with a loud penetrating alarm call

*ssp. miles* (northern Australia)

MASKED LAPWING 34cm. R

wide variety of short grass habitats, wetland edges, and modified urban environments



adult non-breeding

coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones, roosting in short saltmarsh herbfield or paddocks

small bright red wattle

*ssp. novaehollandiae* (eastern Australia)

BANDED LAPWING 27cm. R

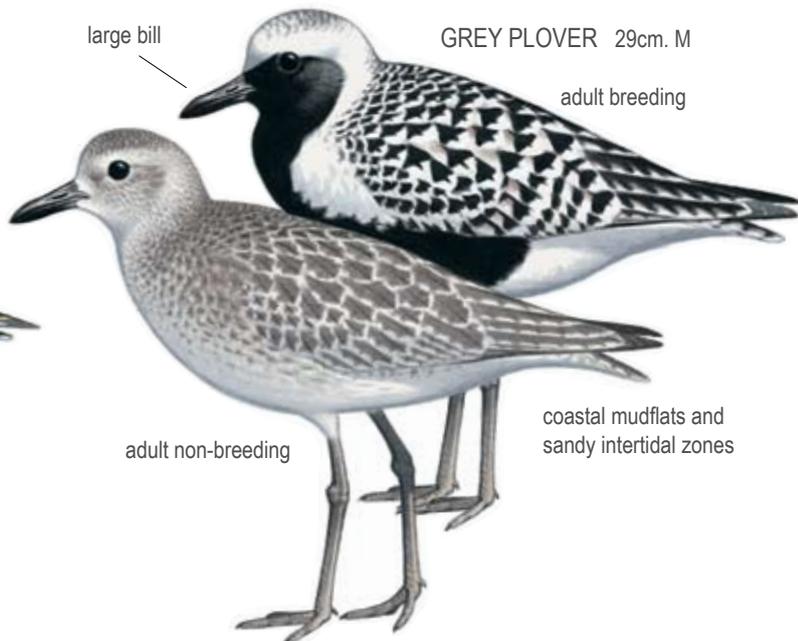
open short grasslands and semi arid rangeland, southern half of Australia

bold black U-shaped breast band when viewed from front

large bill

GREY PLOVER 29cm. M

adult breeding



adult non-breeding

coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones



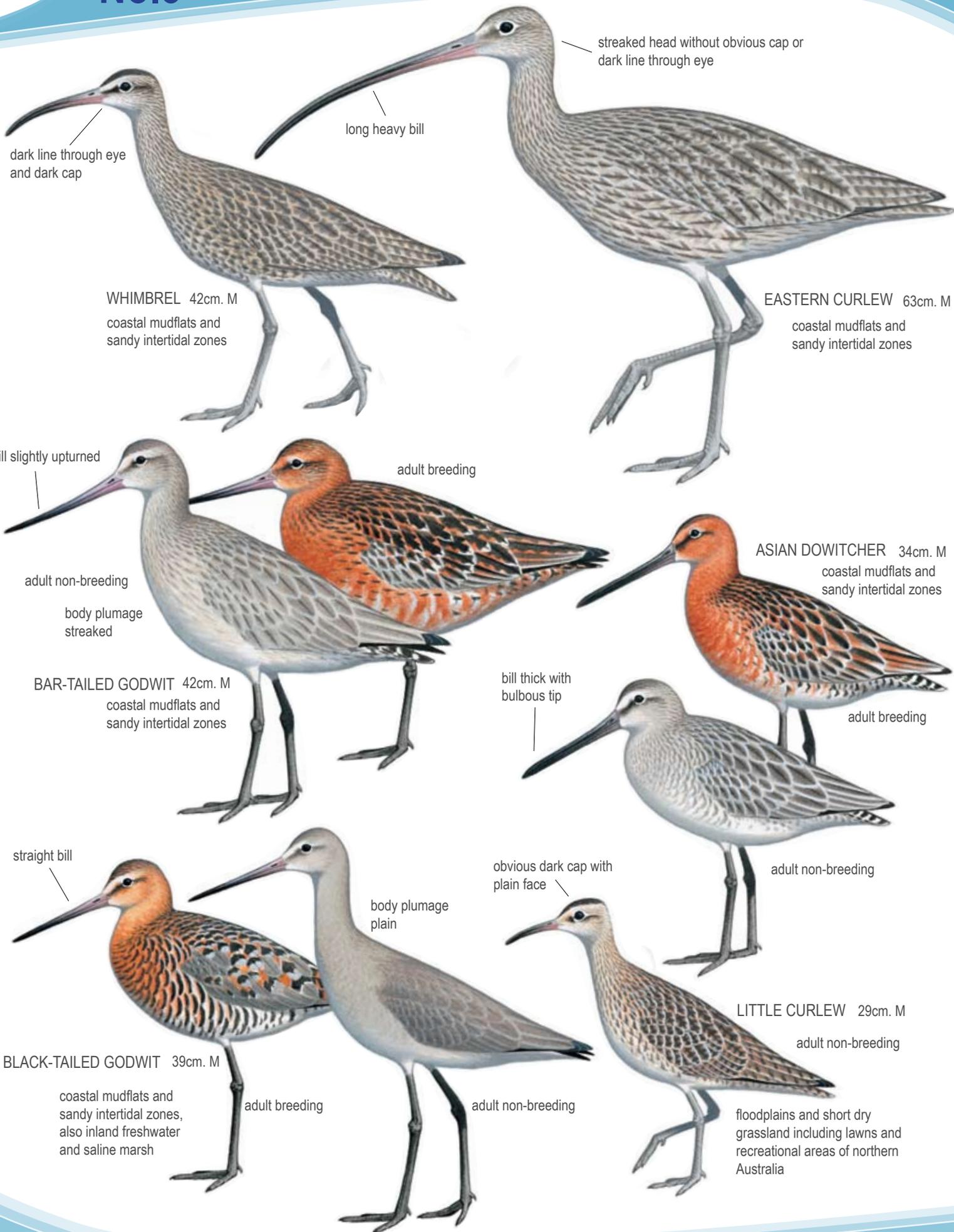
# Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet

Curlews, Dowitcher and Godwits

## No.3



Australian Government  
Department of the Environment  
and Water Resources



dark line through eye and dark cap

**WHIMBREL** 42cm. M  
coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

long heavy bill

streaked head without obvious cap or dark line through eye

**EASTERN CURLEW** 63cm. M  
coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

bill slightly upturned

adult breeding

adult non-breeding

body plumage streaked

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** 42cm. M  
coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

bill thick with bulbous tip

**ASIAN DOWITCHER** 34cm. M  
coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

adult breeding

straight bill

body plumage plain

obvious dark cap with plain face

adult non-breeding

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** 39cm. M

coastal mudflats and sandy intertidal zones, also inland freshwater and saline marsh

adult breeding

adult non-breeding

**LITTLE CURLEW** 29cm. M  
adult non-breeding

floodplains and short dry grassland including lawns and recreational areas of northern Australia

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  
for more information visit [www.shorebirds.org.au](http://www.shorebirds.org.au)



# Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet

Oystercatchers, Avocet, Stilts, Pratincoles and Snipe

## No.4



Australian Government

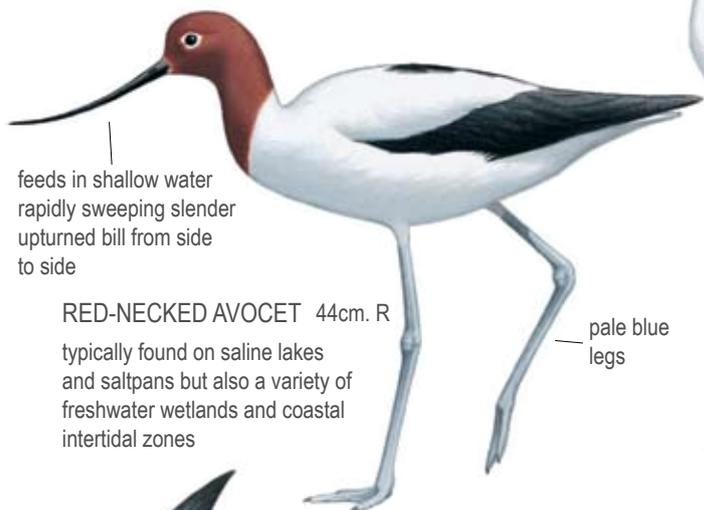
Department of the Environment and Water Resources



**PIED OYSTERCATCHER** 46cm. R  
mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

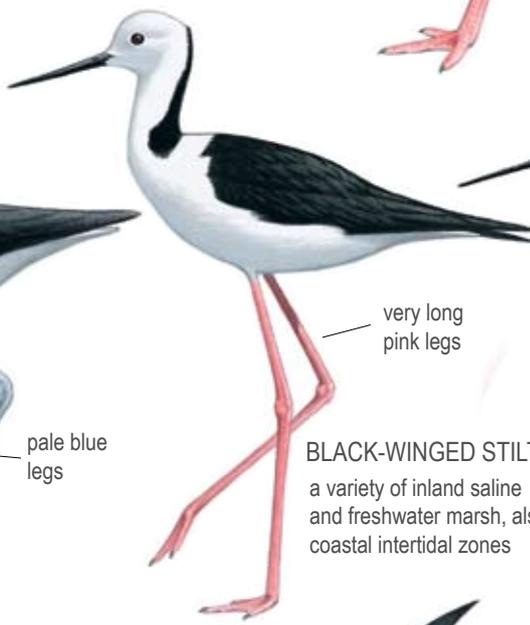


**SOOTY OYSTERCATCHER** 46cm. R  
coastal rock platforms and rocky islets



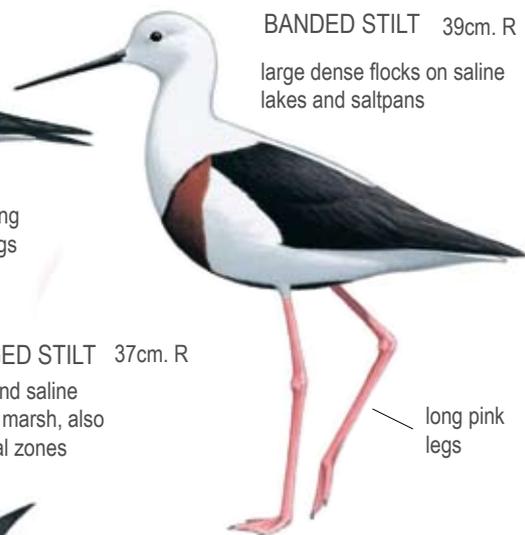
feeds in shallow water rapidly sweeping slender upturned bill from side to side

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



very long pink legs

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



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

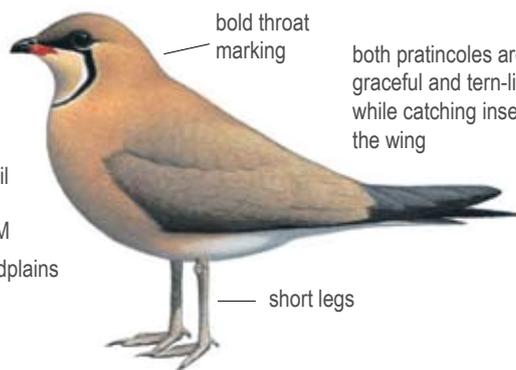
pale blue legs

long pink legs



forked tail

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



bold throat marking

both pratincoles are graceful and tern-like while catching insects on the wing

short legs



legs trail beyond square tail

**AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLE** 21cm. R

open grasslands and gibber plains of the arid interior

chestnut belly

long legs

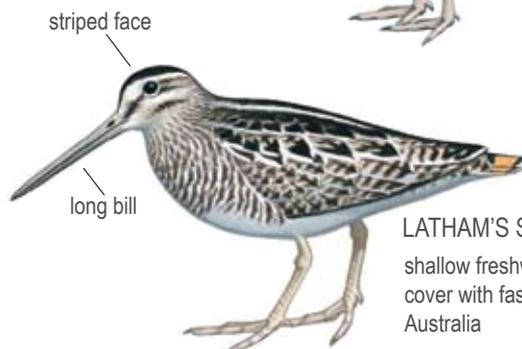
**AUSTRALIAN PAINTED SNIPE** 27cm. R



male

female

shallow freshwater swamps, sits quietly under cover becoming more active towards dusk



striped face

long bill

**LATHAM'S SNIPE** 31cm. M

shallow freshwater swamps, erupts from cover with fast zig-zagging flight, eastern Australia

another two species of snipe SWINHOE'S, and PIN-TAILED are recorded in small numbers in northern and western Australia, they are both difficult to separate in the field from LATHAM'S and each other



# Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet

Large Sandpipers

## No.5



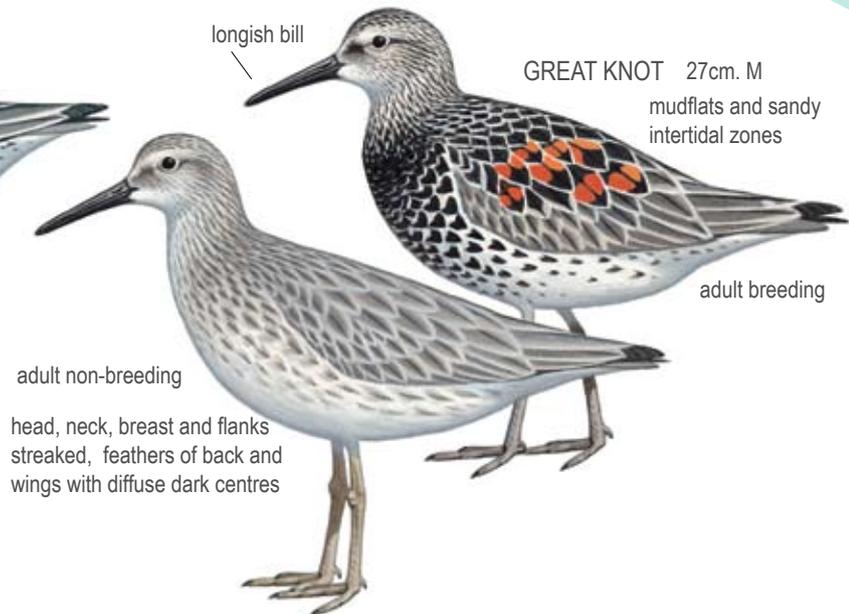
Australian Government  
Department of the Environment  
and Water Resources



short bill  
RED KNOT 24cm. M  
mudflats and sandy intertidal zones  
feathers of back, wing and crown plain grey with fine dark centre line

adult breeding

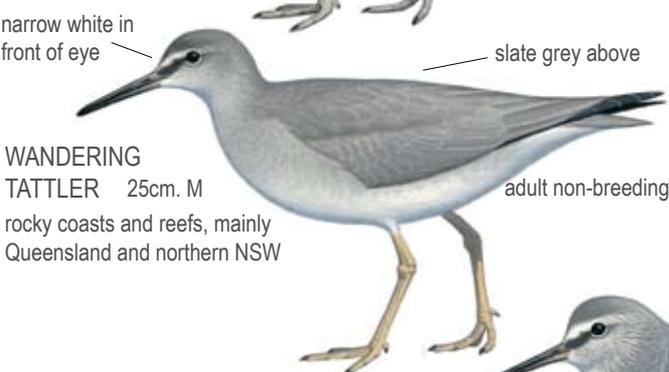
adult non-breeding



longish bill  
adult non-breeding  
head, neck, breast and flanks streaked, feathers of back and wings with diffuse dark centres

GREAT KNOT 27cm. M  
mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

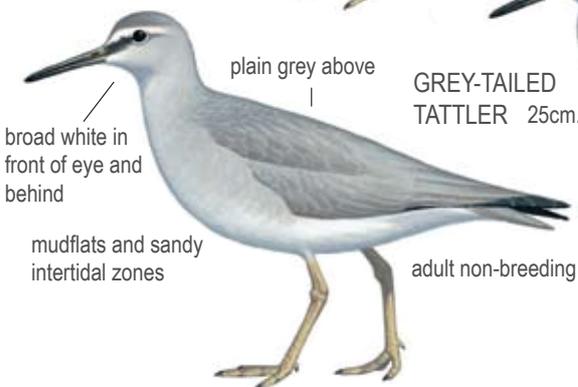
adult breeding



narrow white in front of eye  
WANDERING TATTLER 25cm. M  
rocky coasts and reefs, mainly Queensland and northern NSW

slate grey above

adult non-breeding

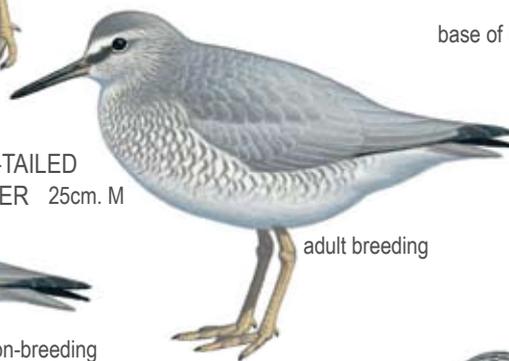


broad white in front of eye and behind  
mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

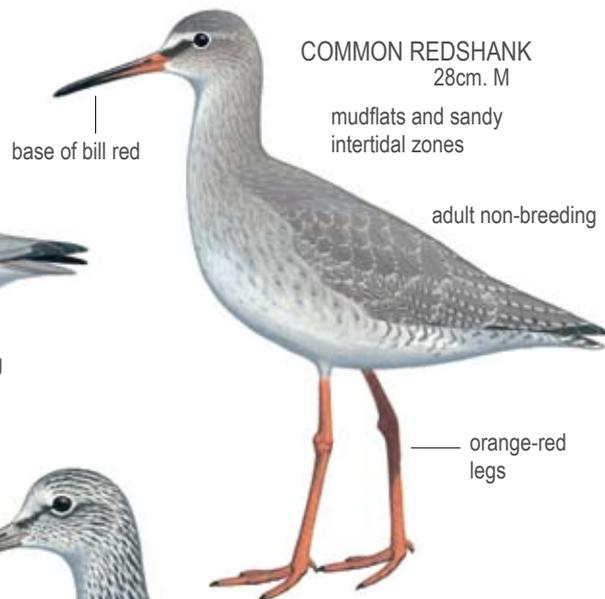
plain grey above

GREY-TAILED TATTLER 25cm. M

adult non-breeding



adult breeding



base of bill red

COMMON REDSHANK 28cm. M

mudflats and sandy intertidal zones

adult non-breeding

orange-red legs

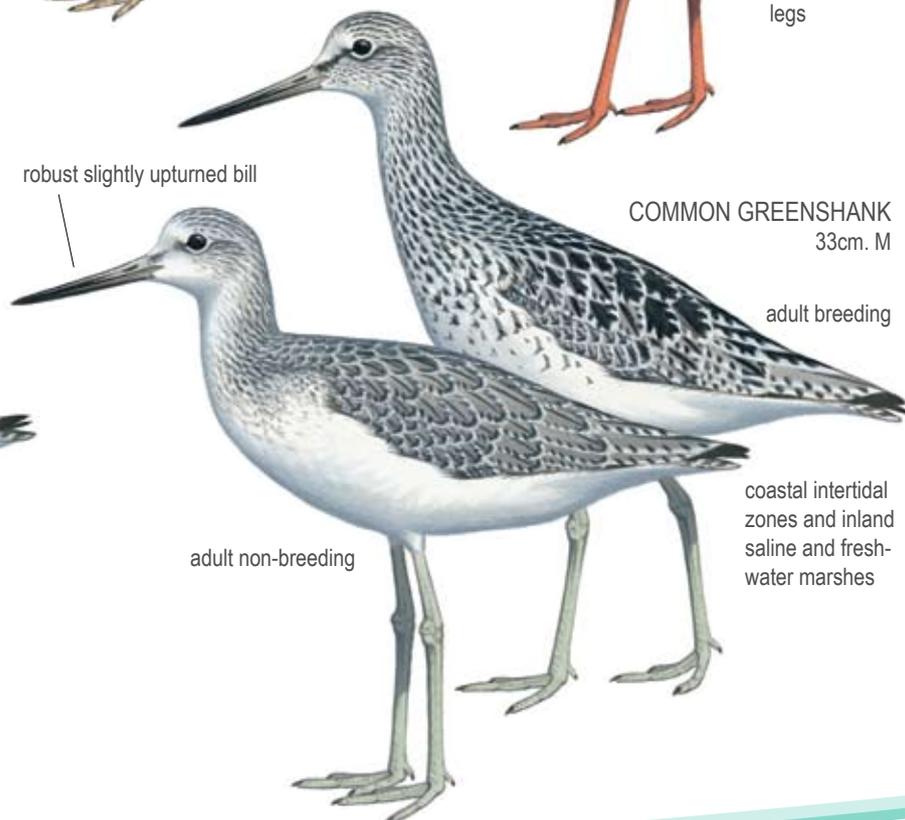


thin needle bill

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

adult breeding

adult non-breeding



robust slightly upturned bill

COMMON GREENSHANK 33cm. M

adult breeding

adult non-breeding

coastal intertidal zones and inland saline and freshwater marshes



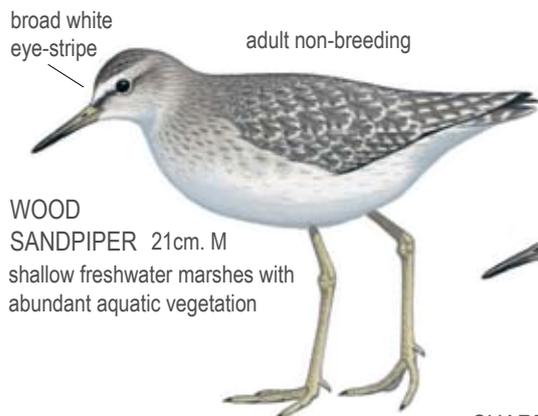
# Australian Shorebirds Identification Sheet

## Small Sandpipers

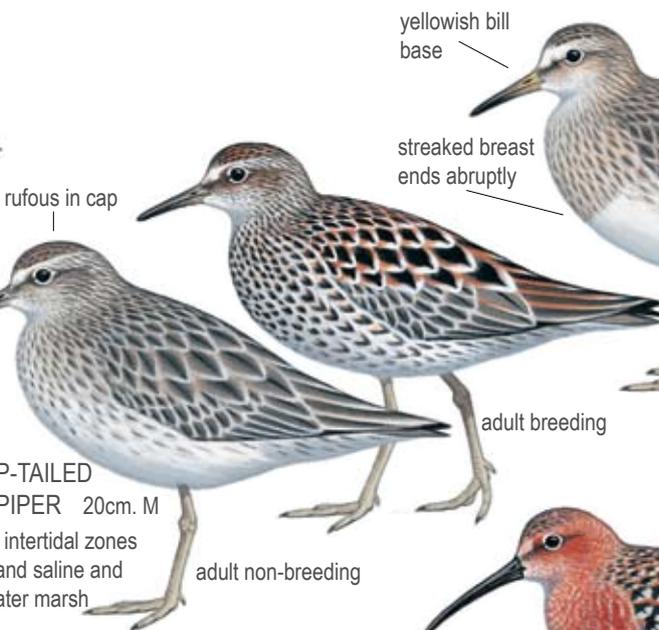
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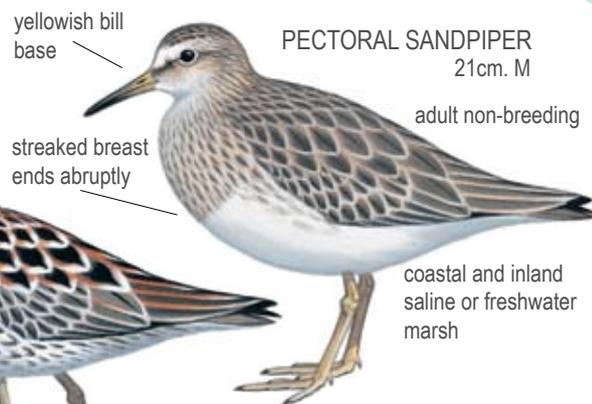
**Australian Government**  
**Department of the Environment and Water Resources**



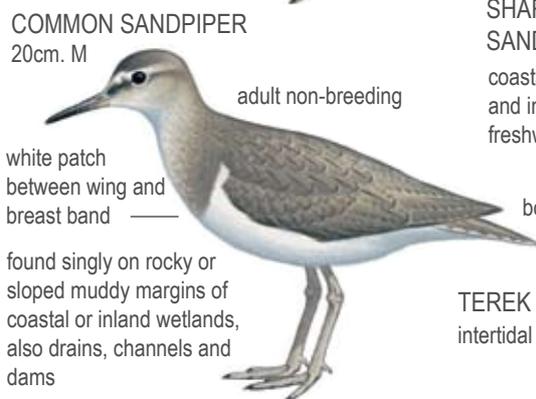
**WOOD SANDPIPER** 21cm. M  
shallow freshwater marshes with abundant aquatic vegetation



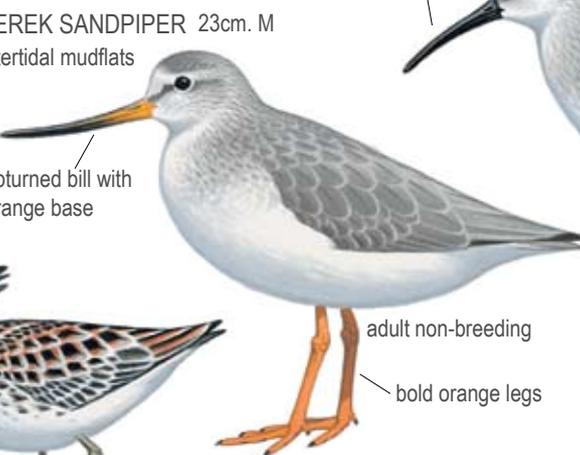
**SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** 20cm. M  
coastal intertidal zones and inland saline and freshwater marsh



**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** 21cm. M  
adult non-breeding  
coastal and inland saline or freshwater marsh



**COMMON SANDPIPER** 20cm. M  
adult non-breeding  
found singly on rocky or sloped muddy margins of coastal or inland wetlands, also drains, channels and dams



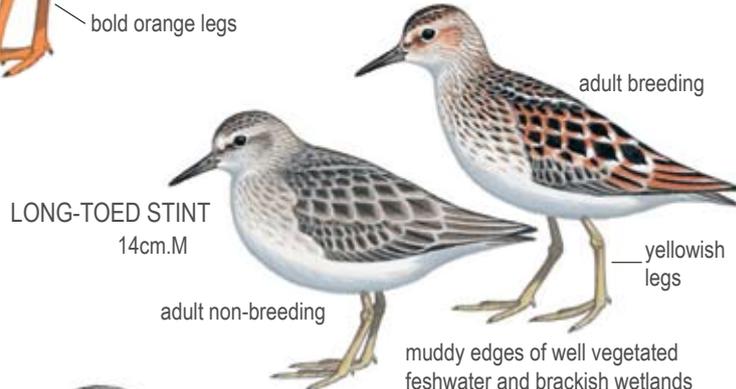
**TEREK SANDPIPER** 23cm. M  
intertidal mudflats  
adult non-breeding  
bold orange legs



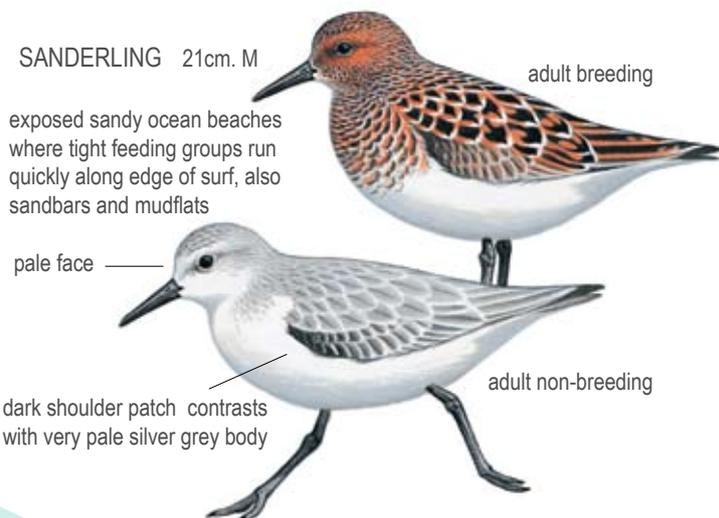
**CURLEW SANDPIPER** 20cm. M  
coastal intertidal zones and inland saline and freshwater marsh



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



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



**SANDERLING** 21cm. M  
adult non-breeding  
adult breeding  
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



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

M = migratory .  
R = resident species.

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

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