

Wongaling Beach Beach-nesting Birds records and Threats Profile: 9 September 2023 –  
30 November 2023

Compiled by SIMON KENNEDY, Birdlife Australia.

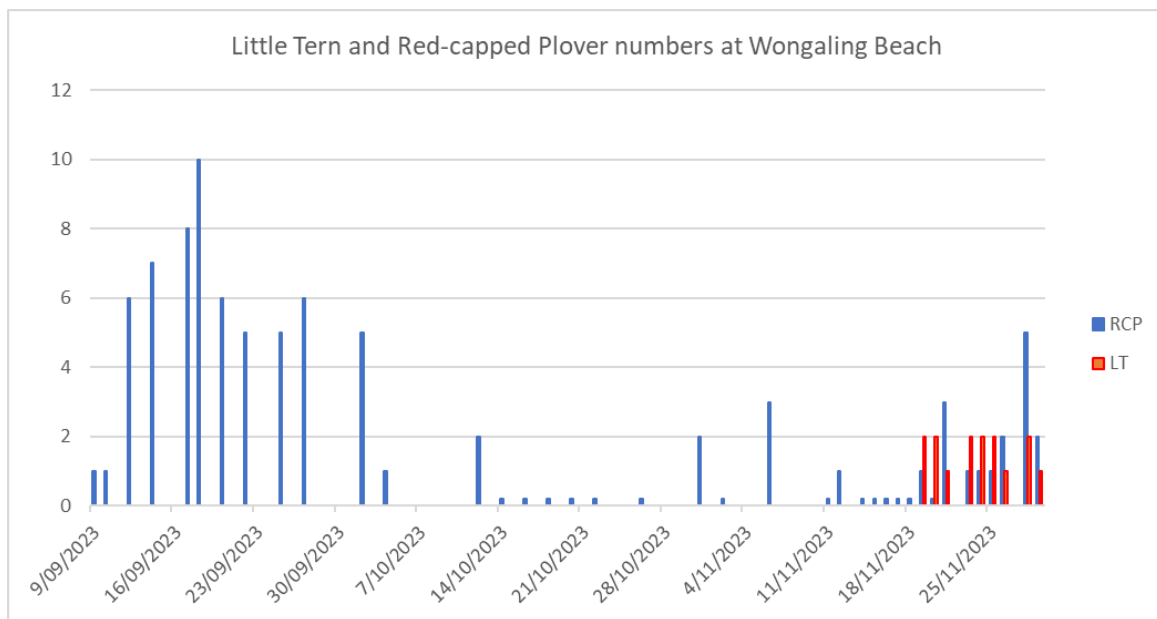
Wongaling Beach is suitable nesting habitat for Little Terns, Beach Stone-curlews, Red-capped Plovers and possibly Pied Oystercatchers. A team of surveyors from the local area have conducted xx surveys here across three months. 28 species have been recorded, including three beach-nesting species (Little Tern, Beach Stone-curlew and Red-capped Plover) three migratory shorebirds (Eastern Curlew, Curlew Sandpiper and Lesser Sand Plover) and three coastal raptors (Osprey, Brahminy Kite and White-bellied Sea-Eagle).

Species	Scientific Name	No. of surveys	No. of birds
Red-capped Plover	<i>Charadrius ruficapillus</i>	26	88
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	23	29
Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	9	14
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	7	9
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	6	12
Lesser Sand Plover*	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	5	11
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	4	4
Eastern Reef Egret	<i>Egretta sacra</i>	4	4
Australian Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon macrotarsa</i>	3	3
Torresian Imperial-Pigeon	<i>Ducula spilorrhoa</i>	3	30
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	3	3
Sacred Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	2	2
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus longirostris</i>	2	5
White-faced Heron	<i>Egretta novaehollandiae</i>	2	2
Australian White Ibis	<i>Threskiornis moluccus</i>	1	12
Black Butcherbird	<i>Melloria quoyi</i>	1	1
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	1	1
Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher	<i>Tanysiptera sylvia</i>	1	1
Masked Lapwing	<i>Vanellus miles</i>	1	1
Rainbow Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus moluccanus</i>	1	20
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus banksii</i>	1	6
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	1	1
Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	1	1
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	1	1
Curlew Sandpiper*	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	1	1
Far Eastern Curlew*	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	1	1
Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	1	15
Beach Stone-curlew#	<i>Esacus magnirostris</i>	1	1

\*-Threatened nationally #-Threatened state level

A pair of Little Terns returned to the site where they nested just north of the mouth of Wongaling/Porters Creek in 2022 and are currently incubating eggs. Little Tern nests have been found at several locations in North Queensland in recent weeks, but the total number of nests is still less than 20. The Red-capped Plovers disappeared in October, coinciding with an algal bloom, but returned in November. Ospreys were also frequently reported, as the beach is part of a known territory for these raptors.

Lesser Sand Plover, Eastern Curlew and Curlew Sandpipers are Endangered migratory shorebirds. Numbers were small but records on several occasions for the Lesser Sand Plover suggest that the creek estuary is a suitable foraging habitat, and this species forages in both muddy and sandy environments.



55 threat assessments were conducted from the 39 surveys (a threat assessment can be carried out whenever a beach-nesting bird is encountered, so there can be more than one threat assessment per survey).

- Off-leash dogs were encountered on >60% of surveys.
- Dog on-leash compliance rate was 26% by total number of dogs and 38% by number of surveys encountering dogs. These surveys are within an on-leash area south of Miter St.
- Bicycles were encountered frequently (37%), as the beach sand is hard and flat. This activity has been observed above high tide mark and presents a significant risk to Little Tern eggs and chicks.
- Quadbike frequency was much lower than data collected from many other Little Tern habitats in the area. These tend to be a greater problem on beaches with fewer people.
- Horses and horse tracks were encountered on three occasions.

**Wongaling Beach Threats Profile: 9 September 2023 – 18 October 2023**

	off-leash dogs	On-leash dogs	Humans*	Bicycles	Quadbikes	Horses
Assessments (n=55)	30 (55%)	18 (33%)	49 (89%)	20 (36%)	4 (7%)	6 (11%)
Mean no. per survey	1.36	0.49	6.7	NA	NA	NA

\*-denotes humans other than the observer(s)