

# TOONDAH SAVE THE BAY



Eastern Curlew by Duade Paton

## Eastern Curlew FACT SHEET

Eastern Curlews are the largest of all the world's shorebirds and you can often hear their mournful 'Cuuuurlew' call, ringing out beautifully across vast coastal wetlands. Their impressive bill, which is characteristic of the species, is used to probe the mud and dig up crabs, their main food source in Australia.

Sadly, its down-curved shape also mimics the decline of Australia's migratory shorebirds. The Eastern Curlew occurs only in our flyway, and about 75 per cent of the world's Eastern Curlews winter in Australia, so we have a particular responsibility to protect coastal wetlands for them and the smaller shorebirds that live in their shadow.

### Key Facts

Eastern Curlew is the world's largest migratory shorebird, spending the majority of the year on our shores before making a massive migration to their northern breeding ground, in some cases over 10,000 km.

They are long haul migrants – with each migration consisting of two major flights of several thousand kilometres, each requiring a huge amount of refuelling.

Ongoing coastal development across its range has resulted in an 80% population decline over the past 30 years leading the species to be listed as Critically Endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* in 2015.

**This makes it even more important that we should protect their remaining strongholds.**

Some Eastern Curlews travel over 10,000km in their annual migration

**Moreton Bay is one of the most important areas for Eastern Curlew in Australia and in the East-Asian Australasian Flyway, with up to 9% of the Flyway population.**

They are the most timid of our shorebirds and are nearly always the first wader species to take flight if approached. With increasing human populations there is less undisturbed coastal habitat for the Eastern Curlew.

After they arrive in Australia young birds remain for 2-3 years before they first migrate north and attempt to breed. During this time, they spend time developing the foraging skills required to refuel under tight time-budgets.

**Moreton Bay is one of the most important areas for juveniles that stay in Australia during this critical time.**

Eastern Curlews use their long bills to access prey that is too deep in the mud for most predators to reach. They feed primarily on worms and crustaceans such as Ghost Shrimps and Sentinel Crabs. Eastern Curlews have a high site fidelity where they return to the same feeding grounds each year.

**We do not know how to re-create feeding habitat for Eastern Curlew. Every piece of habitat that is destroyed means less food for Eastern Curlews.**



Eastern Curlew by Simon Blanchflower

# TOONDAH! SAVE THE BAY

## Moreton Bay BIRDS

Great Knot, Andrew Silcocks

Moreton Bay is home to many amazing birds protected under Federal law.

### Threatened migratory shorebirds:

- Eastern Curlew – Critically Endangered
- Great Knot – Critically Endangered
- Curlew Sandpiper – Critically Endangered
- Lesser Sand Plover – Endangered
- Red Knot - Endangered
- Bar-tailed Godwit (subspecies *baueri*) – Vulnerable
- Greater Sand Plover - Vulnerable

### EPBC listed migratory shorebirds:

- Whimbrel
- Terek Sandpiper
- Grey-tailed Tattler
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Red-necked Stint
- Black-tailed Godwit
- Pacific Golden Plover
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
- Common Sandpiper
- Sanderling
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Double-banded Plover
- Latham's Snipe
- Broad-billed Sandpiper
- Asian Dowitcher
- Little Curlew
- Common Greenshank
- Marsh Sandpiper
- Grey Plover
- Wood Sandpiper
- Common Redshank
- Long-toed Stint

### Why are these wetlands so important?

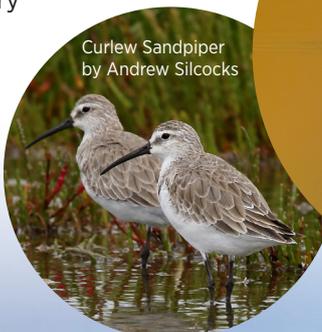
Moreton Bay, surrounding Brisbane, is an internationally important wetland listed under the Ramsar Convention for its significance to migratory shorebirds.

As well as being recognised as a Ramsar Wetland, Moreton Bay is a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA).

It is one of 136 Flyway Network Sites recognised by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Partnership, indicating the site's global significance for conserving migratory shorebirds across the EAAF.

During the Austral summer, Moreton Bay serves as terminal, non-breeding habitat for tens of thousands of migratory shorebirds that migrate along the EAAF. Many of these migratory shorebird species are experiencing significant population declines across the flyway.

Pacific Golden Plover  
by Andrew Silcocks



Curlew Sandpiper  
by Andrew Silcocks



Red-necked Stint  
by Duade Paton



Terek Sandpiper  
by Andrew Silcocks



Eastern Curlew  
by Andrew Silcocks