

17th September 2010

Fox and Raven Culling Program

Pied Oystercatchers and Hooded Plovers have started nesting on the beaches of the Shoalhaven, and in response, Shoalhaven Council and National parks have commenced their operations to control the predators looking for a quick feed of endangered shorebirds.

The first chicks have already hatched at one of the Ulladulla beaches (believed to be the earliest ever), while eggs have been laid at Lake Conjola, Narawallee Inlet, Ulladulla, Burrill and Kioloa. Nesting activity has been spotted at Cudmirrah, Manyana, Wairo and Bawley Point. Within a couple of weeks, almost all beaches will have intense nesting and child caring by our local beach nesting birds.

Parks and Council will conduct a coordinated program of baiting and trapping of foxes as well as shooting of foxes and ravens to protect the nesting shorebirds. Fox control is already underway in the rural areas behind Shoalhaven Heads, Lake Wollumboola, Conjola and Narrawallee.

Fox shooting will be conducted on many of the rural properties, with baits treated with 1080 laid on National Parks Estate, in most of the Council Sewage Treatment Plants, on Council reserves and on many private properties. All baiting sites are clearly signposted, and with neighbours notified by either mail or by public advertising. Baiting will continue throughout the summer, until the chicks are out of danger. As a quick response technique, soft jaw trapping will be undertaken around the shorebird nests that are under immediate threat from a roaming fox.

Chicks on the beaches are increasingly at risk from ravens, which appear to have recently realised that the shorebird chicks and eggs are a tasty treat. Chicks are protected from ravens by a combination of strategic shooting and nest destruction in problem areas and protective cages over the threatened shorebird nests.

The shorebird program is widely supported by groups of volunteers assisting at each of the nesting sites. More volunteers are still needed. If you are interested, please contact Council or the Local National Parks Office on 44286300 (Nowra) or 4454 9500 (Ulladulla).

For further information on the culling program, you can contact Council's Natural Resources Officer on (02) 4429 3291

CONTACT: Director City Services and Operations Bill Paterson (02) 4429 3298

