



Wednesday 12 January 2011

Chicks on the beach, dogs on a leash

Esperance dog owners and their pooches are invited to a free “Dogs Breakfast” next Monday at Fourth Beach, Twilight Cove.

Hosted by the Esperance Bird Observers Group and South Coast NRM from 7.30am to 9am, the barbeque breakfast will be a good opportunity for dog owners to socialise and learn more about protecting shorebirds.

As well as being popular with dogs, Fourth Beach is a popular nesting spot for the rare Hooded Plover bird, which nests in the open sand and vegetation above the high tide mark.

Esperance Bird Observers Group secretary Mike Gibbs said beach users should be aware of the nesting birds at this time of year, and keep an eye on their dogs.

Mr Gibbs said species such as the Hooded Plover, Red Capped Plover, Double Banded Plover, Pied Oyster Catcher, Stilt, Sooty Oyster Catcher, Red Necked Stint and the Sand Piper were all active on Esperance beaches and islands at this time of year.

“The drive up to Cape Le Grande is a highlight of many people’s holidays but they must remember that they are sharing it with lots of rare bird species. Stick on the hard wet sand so the little blokes above the high water mark are left alone,” he said.

Mr Gibbs also urged visitors to Lake Warden and Gore to take care around the shoreline as more Hooded Plovers had been found nesting there this year compared to previous years, due to lower water levels.

“We’re very lucky to still see Hooded Plovers here, even in small numbers. Populations on the east coast from Victoria up to Queensland have just about disappeared.”

The Esperance Bird Observers Group has participated in the National Shorebird Survey over the past three years and Mr Gibbs said the group expected to see more Hooded Plovers emerge in coming years, provided water levels remained low on the lakes and the species was not disturbed.

South Coast NRM biodiversity officer Robyn Cail said the “Dogs Breakfast” was a great morning out for families and four-legged friends, with giveaways and specialist advice on offer.

Guests should register their dog’s attendance by calling the Esperance NRM Centre on (08) 9076 2200. Signs for the BBQ will be erected in the last carpark, before the gazebo. BYO leashes and poop bags!

ENDS

Jenelle Carter
Communications and Public Relations Coordinator
South Coast NRM
Direct (08) 9845 8521
Mobile 0428 928 536
Email jenellec@southcoastnrm.com.au

South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is the leading regional group for natural resource management in the South Coast region of Western Australia. As an independent not-for-profit organisation, we work with the community to improve the environment by preserving and protecting unique plants and animals, managing land and waterways sustainably, and sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.