

## **Catch report 4<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

### **Daniel Aspey and Val Burgess**

After last week's disappointing start to the catch season, we were excited to be back out again this week. It was interesting that we were going to be catching resident shorebirds, in particular Black-winged Stilts. Apparently, they do move about, as tagged birds from Broome have been sighted as far away as Perth and even Java. So, although they are not part of the usual migratory shorebird research projects, tagging them does help us to find out where they go.

I was lucky to be camping out at the BBO the night before for the lovely BBO and shorebird 30<sup>th</sup> birthday party, so was up early and able to help out with the setting up of the net and the cages. One thing I learned was that it's really important to make the best job possible of setting up the net, so that we have the best chance of a good catch. If we are slack about that, then we might have no birds and a lot of disappointed people.

Stilts are more used to people and are not as nervous as some of the migratory shorebirds, so when we had to do a bit of twinkling, they didn't mind us so much. In fact, when we normally do this it's to move the birds closer to the net, but this time we were trying to chase away some of the Gull-billed Terns that were in front of the net. We also had the kites in our favour as they were pushing the birds towards the net. We still ended up with more terns than stilts.

Usually when we move the birds from the net to the cages, we put them in boxes of several of the same species. You can't do that with terns. They like their own space. So this time each tern had to go into an individual bag or box and then the bags were hung up in the shade above the cages. I was lucky as Andy gave me some gloves to protect my hands (thanks Andy), but others had more than a few nips when handling the terns. The stilts were much calmer and peace-loving in comparison, and although they seem very fragile with their gangly legs they are pretty robust. All-in-all it was a good catch, definitely a good idea to go for the residents not the migratory birds this time round and it was very special to handle some of these beautiful birds.

Here are the catch results:

Old Gull-billed Terns at 14+, 17+ (x3), 18+.

Stilts at 17+, 14+ (x2), 12+

3 stilts from same beach on 24/06/2017

4 terns from same beach 4/7/2012 and 2 from same beach

08/08/2018

See below for catch totals and a pretty picture.

4-08-2018

SPECIES	NEW	RETRAP	Age 1 1st Year of Life	Age 1+ 1st Year of life or older	Known Age 2	Age 2+ 2nd year of life or older	TOTAL
Black-winged Stilt	36	11	12	24	4	7	47
Gull-billed Tern	46	12	2	44	0	12	58

