

## Bird Report

My name is Toby and I live in South Australia. Me and my family went on a four week caravan holiday up the north coast of WA. While we were in Broome we heard about the Broome Bird Observatory and that they were allowing volunteers to help with tagging birds that had flown from Siberia. Mum and Dad thought this would be a great idea so we jumped in the car and got to the shore line at about 8:30 am.

When we got there we sat down in some seats that were provided and were told to try and not make much noise. We were told that we had to wait for the birds to be standing in a certain patch of sand where a net was planned to shoot onto and that once the cannons fired the net we needed to run down the slope and get the birds out of the net. We waited for about half an hour until we heard a count down on the walkie talkies. On the count of 3 there was a loud BANG and everyone jumped up and ran down the path onto the beach. It was very exciting running down the slope towards the net. The net was like a plastic mesh that had about 200 birds all struggling in it. I was told to get the boxes for the birds to go that were all of the same variety. Once I and some other people had got all the boxes the birds were put in different boxes according to their variety. The birds were carefully taken out of the net and then all the boxes were carried to a shaded area on the beach. The birds were put in more spacious, shade cloth coops and a tag of what variety they were was put on the lid of each coop.

Next, everyone listened to Chris tell the people that knew what they were doing what tags to put on each bird and Chris appointed leaders of each group that would do each variety of bird. Then everyone split into groups and I joined a group with my brother and Mum, a man called Nyal and another lady. My job was to get one Great Knott out of the coop and give it to Nyal. He would then put a metal band that had a number on it on the bird's leg with a tool like a pair of pliers and would make sure that the metal band wouldn't scrape the bird's leg. Then he would put a yellow tag on and my brother Josiah would put a little glob of glue between the 2 ends of the tag to make sure that the yellow tag wouldn't come off. Mum would write down the tag number and the clip number and would write the feathers score. To do the feathers score, Nyal would hold the wing of the bird and he would show us whether the bird's new growing feathers were in good condition or not. He would tell mum to write a big number (1-5, 1 being extremely bad condition and 5 being almost perfect condition) and then in superscript mum would write the number of feathers that the bird had in this condition. We would also write down how many old, long feathers the Great Knott had at the end of its wing and how many new primary feathers it was growing.

I thought it was loads of fun to take the birds out of the coops and Nyal showed me the best way to take them out. It was to put your pointer finger and your middle finger either side of the birds head and hold its wings firmly by its side with your other fingers. I really enjoyed holding the birds like this because it was really easy and it felt really nice. We tagged the birds for about 2 hours and would have tagged about 30 birds. Roughly every 30 minutes all the groups would release all the birds they had tagged so far together so that the eagles that were in the sky wouldn't eat any of the birds because apparently there is safety in numbers. Even though it was loads of fun we had to leave after 2 hours to get back to the camp to pack up so we tagged and banded our last bird and wrote down its feathers and left.

Chris adds what is below.

Below are the wonderful team visiting from SA and then the catch totals.



Amos



Josiah



Milly



Toby

13-10-2019							
SPECIES	NEW	RETRAP	Age 1 1st Year of Life	Age 2	Age 2+	Age 3+ 3rd year of life or older	TOTAL
Bar-tailed Godwit	26	8	0	0	0	34	34
Great Knot	97	35	0	12	2	118	132
Red Knot	1	1	0	0	0	2	2
Whimbrel	27	1	0	8	0	20	28
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>196</b>

plus 1 control from China

The retraps had some old Great Knots amongst them including plenty all older than the kids.

7 teenagers and one that was a minimum of 22 years old.