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The Wing Thing 003

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THE WING THING SHOREBIRDS


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AUSTRALIA

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Shorebirds

Hi Kids,

I am Ruddy Turnstone, or just 'Ruddy' to my friends. You can find me on the shore, in fact almost any shore on the planet: Sydney Harbour, South Pacific, Sumatra and Siberia, you name it, I'll be there every year but only for a short time. No wonder people call me a migratory shorebird!

Lately though, it's been getting hard to find a shore where I can put my orange feet up and have a snack. So I decided to tell people about my troubles; maybe they can help? Why don't you join me on a trip into my world and see what it's like being a shorebird? You will meet some of the strangest bird folk, who are fun to watch and amazingly athletic.

Just follow my footsteps!

Ruddy

Shorebirds eat so much that they need to **POO** every 2 minutes

shorebird poo

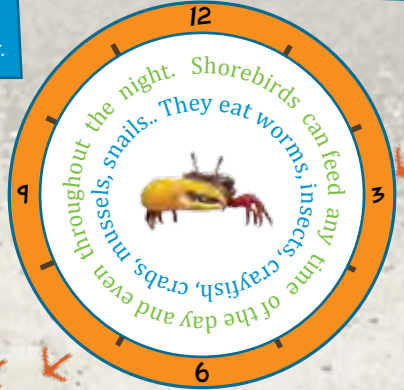
This crab can't hide from the Whimbrel's bill

How can you chew with **no teeth?** Shorebirds swallow their food whole and chew it with their **stomachs!**

These daphnia better watch out for this Red-necked Avocet's thin bill

Shorebirds are easy to spot because they feed out in the open, on the beach, on mudflats or wading through shallow water. They are different from herons, ibises or ducks because shorebirds are a lot smaller.

Almost **10%** of Australian bird species are shorebirds. There are **migratory** ones (like Ruddy) that breed overseas and **residents** that breed in Australia.



Shorebirds with small eyes and long, strangely shaped bills are **Probe feeders**. They stick their bill into the mud and can feel the tiniest worm wiggle with the sensitive nerve endings on the tip of their bill (like the tips of your fingers). That's the end of that worm. **Godwits** are master probers.

Shorebirds with large eyes and short, strong bills are **Surface feeders**. They spot small animals thanks to their excellent eyesight and then quickly grab them. **Plovers** are good at this. You can watch them standing, searching, running and pecking at the surface trying to find food.



SHOREBIRDS REALLY GET AROUND...

In June they sit on top of the world in Siberia or Alaska where they raise their chicks. They go there because the Arctic summers are short but the days are loooooooong. For the 6 weeks of summer the sun hardly ever sets so the birds can feed 24 hours a day.

Once the chicks are grown up everybody leaves because snow and ice will soon return to the Arctic.

On their way to Australia, shorebirds first hop, skip and jump along the coast of China or Japan. They may drop by Thailand and an Indonesian island or two before landing in Australia. This way they can spend the summer holidays with you on the beach.

The route they travel is called the **East Asian-Australasian Flyway** - a highway for birds. One round trip on the flyway is about 20 000km and migratory shorebirds do it every year. Not bad for a bird half the size of a chocolate bar!



In a lifetime a shorebird might fly as many kilometres as it takes to fly to the MOON and back!
 THAT'S 768 802 KM
 OR
 293 933 719 WINGBEATS



DRESSING FOR THE OCCASION

Before flying to the Arctic to breed, migratory shorebirds put on colourful feathers that blend in perfectly with the summer vegetation there. This is called their **breeding plumage**. On their way back to Australia, when they are getting ready for a relaxing life on beaches and mudflats, they grow grey and brown feathers. Their **non-breeding plumage** makes them really well camouflaged and almost invisible to predators. Shorebirds really do know how to dress for the occasion.

Can you find the Red Knot that is not RED?



Shorebird breeding habitat: Chuhotoki Peninsula Siberia, Russia Northern Hemisphere summer

Shorebirds are really good at matching their **PLUMAGE** with the colour of their habitat

The breeding and non-breeding **PLUMAGES** of these 5 shorebird species are amazingly different!

Breeding plumage

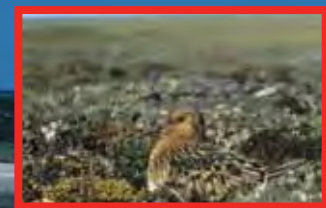
Non-breeding plumage



Red-necked Stint



Pacific Golden Plover

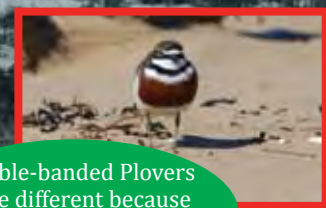


Sanderling

TURN TO PAGE 7 TO FIND OUT WHY THIS BIRD HAS COLOURED LEG FLAGS



Red Knot



Double-banded Plover

Double-banded Plovers are different because they migrate to **New Zealand** to breed

Shorebird non-breeding habitat: Inverloch, Victoria, Australia Southern Hemisphere summer

WHERE'S RUDDY?

Can you find the one Ruddy Turnstone in this wetland habitat?

USE YOUR SHOREBIRD ID BOOKLET OR FIELD GUIDE
TO IDENTIFY THE OTHER SHOREBIRD SPECIES IN
THIS WETLAND

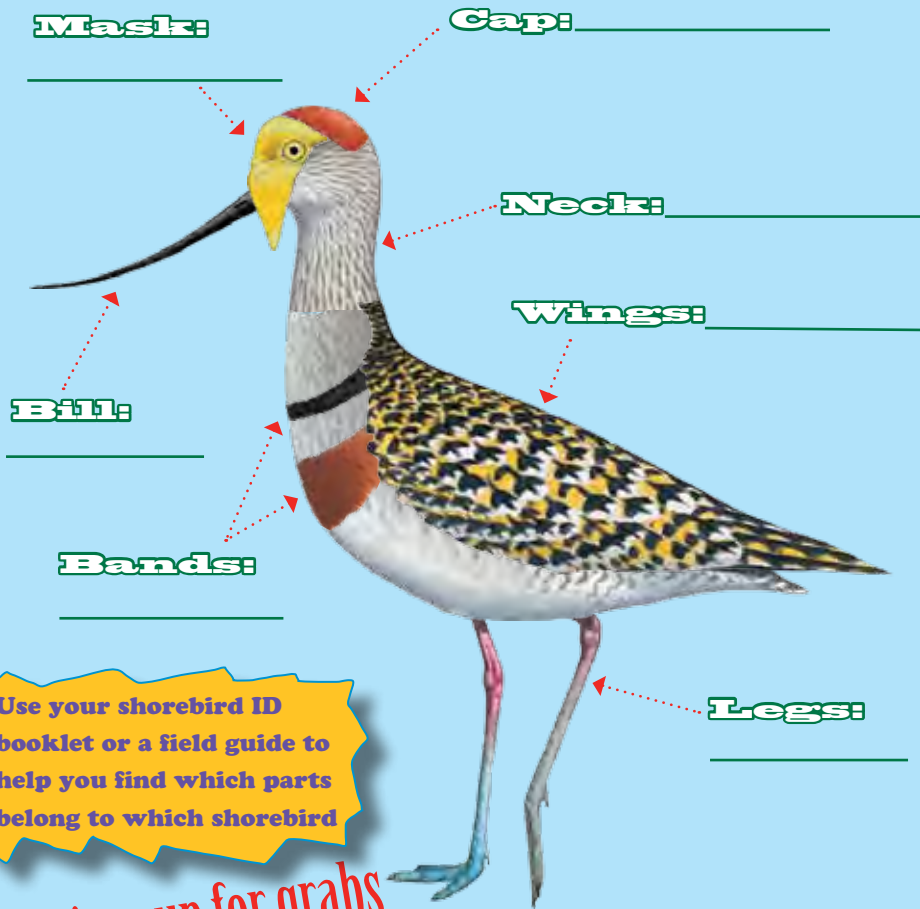
Go to our
website to see
how many species
you identified
correctly

www.birdlife.org.au/shorebirds2020



CAN YOU FIND THE **5** THREATS IN THIS WETLAND?

CAN YOU WORK OUT WHICH SHOREBIRDS MAKE UP THIS CRAZY LOOKING BIRD?



Use your shorebird ID booklet or a field guide to help you find which parts belong to which shorebird

Prizes up for grabs

Make your own FRANKEN-SHOREBIRD and send us your drawings by the end of April 2013 and be in the draw to win a pair of you very own BINOCULARS on World Migratory Bird Day (11-12 May)

Binos are great!

They let you see everything 8 or 10 times closer **AND** they are really easy to use

Before you start birdwatching make sure you set them up properly ● The small lenses on top are called the eye pieces ● If you are not wearing glasses or sunnies twist them out ● Now you can put the binos around your neck and go exploring ● If you spot a bird point your binos at it and look through ● Chances are it will look blurry, but that is easy to fix ● Turn the central wheel to the left or right until the bird looks clear ● Now you can make eye contact with a **WILD** bird

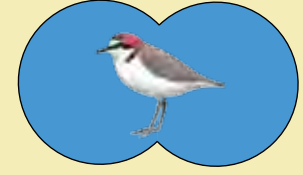
NEVER LOOK INTO THE SUN WITH YOUR BINOCULARS, IT WILL HURT YOUR EYES!! **OUCH**



When you see a bird, ask yourself:

- What is its main colour?
- What are its special markings?
- Does it have special behaviour?
- Do you recognize its call?
- Is it small, medium or big?

WHAT FEATURE CAN YOU USE TO IDENTIFY THIS BIRD?



When looking for **birds** remember to:

- ➔ Walk quietly and slowly, stop, stand still and wait
- ➔ When you see a bird, raise your binoculars to look at the bird without moving your head

Waving shorebirds goodbye

Each year around the end of March crowds of kids, grown-ups and dogs on leashes gather in Broome and Cairns to wave goodbye to the migratory shorebirds that have spent the summer with us and are ready to head back to their breeding grounds. At the other end of the flyway, in the Arctic, people are eagerly awaiting their return because it is a sign that summer has finally arrived.

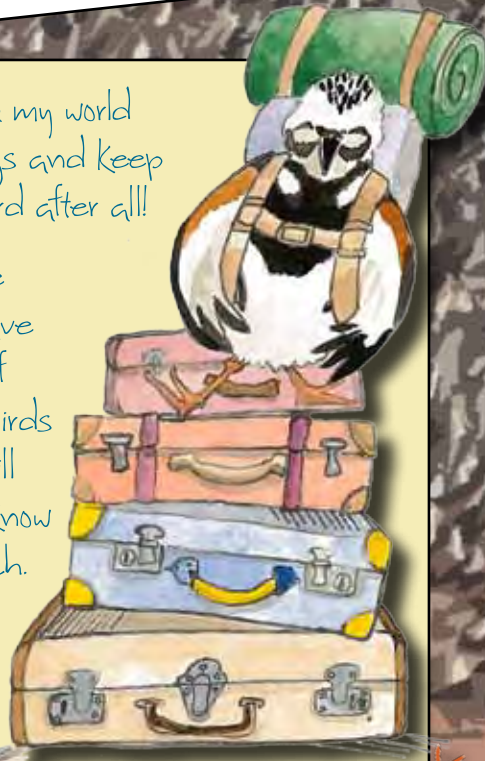
BIRDLIFE AUSTRALIA'S BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY is one of the best places in the world to see shorebirds and you can stay there on your holiday (visit broomebirdobservatory.com). But the great thing about shorebirds is that, once you know what you are looking for, you can discover them in almost any wetland near you. To help you find shorebirds we have made a booklet and a poster that you can order from shorebirds@birdlife.org.au and you can also join birdwatching trips and workshops with a BirdLife Australia branch near you. Find out more at birdlife.org.au

I have really enjoyed showing you my world but it's time for me to pack my bags and keep moving. I am a migratory shorebird after all!

I will travel a little easier this time though, knowing that shorebirds have friends like you looking out for us. If people work together to give shorebirds a little space along the flyway we will keep coming back. As you would know by now, we are a pretty tough bunch.

See you next year

Ruddy



GIVEAWAYS & GAMES

SHOREBIRD ID BOOKLET



SHOREBIRD POSTER



RUDDY BADGE

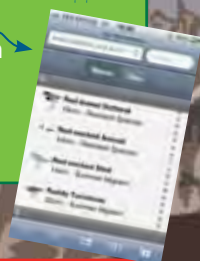
Shorebird Identification and Counting skills

BirdLife Australia's Shorebirds 2020 program has lots of fun online resources to help you learn more about shorebirds. Email us to receive a free poster, id booklet or badge: shorebirds@birdlife.org.au

Cool Shorebird Game

You can also practice shorebird counting and identification using our **FUN** shorebird game. Go to: <http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/shorebirds-2020/educational-material>

Cool Shorebird App



There are many places in Australia where you can see shorebirds. Contact shorebirds@birdlife.org.au or your local BirdLife Australia Branch if you want to find out when the next fieldtrip or workshop takes place.