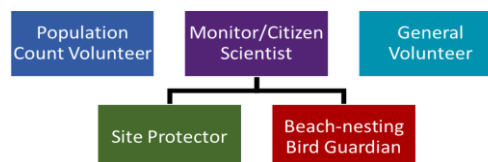


Date: 1 February, 2025

*Below are descriptions of the five key roles a Beach-nesting Birds Program volunteer can participate in. Note you can sign up for multiple roles. Note the Monitor/Citizen Scientist role is a core requirement for the Site Protector and Guardian roles as shown in the diagram to the right.*



## 1. Population (Biennial) Count Volunteer

Every two years (in even years), BirdLife Australia’s Beach-nesting Birds (BNB) team coordinates a population count with the primary aim of counting the number of Hooded Plovers in their Eastern mainland range. Hundreds of volunteers simultaneously survey thousands of kilometres of coast on a given weekend in November and this gives us the closest estimate of how many hoodies we have in the population.

Over time, the count has expanded to include surveys of other coastal regions for species of beach-nesting birds, such as a count of Red-capped Plovers on the Sapphire coast, and in 2024 the count has expanded to include surveys of the Western Hooded Plover subspecies

This count is a great way to participate in helping threatened beach-nesting birds, particularly if you are unable to commit to anything more regular or involved. You may like to survey your local beach or put your hand up to travel further afield and count a more remote section of coast.

**This role requires a low level of training.**

Key tasks:

- Participating in a population count within a given time frame
- Entering data onto the Birddata and/or submitting data sheets to your regional coordinator
- Complete a short, online induction

Desirable qualities:

- Good fitness
- A keen eye
- Record keeping skills



## 2. Monitor/Citizen Scientist

This is one of the most important roles a volunteer can play in the conservation of beach-nesting birds. Information about the birds, their nesting successes and failures, and the threats at breeding sites is pivotal to guiding our conservation actions, and to evaluating our success at helping these birds.

A volunteer monitor typically commits to helping monitor a given pair of birds or a particular beach, or can be someone who travels to multiple sites and reports on the birds to report sightings of behaviours such as breeding, flocking or details of flagged/banded birds.

For breeding pairs, ideally we would like to build a complete picture of a given pair of birds or nesting site over the entire breeding season, which can mean a weekly visit over the peak breeding months. We understand, however, that not everyone has this much time to give. We aim to therefore have a number of volunteers who can share the monitoring of a given pair of birds and we encourage participants regardless of availability.

All *Victorian* participants require a Working with Children Check.

### **This role requires a high level of training.**

Key tasks:

- To monitor a particular pair/s of breeding birds or a particular beach/s over time
- To provide information about breeding activity and threats at the breeding site/s, or flocking or leg flag details
- To record sightings and report these to BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds team using the online 'Mybeachbird' portal or paper datasheets/notebooks
- Successfully complete online induction training (requirement for Hooded Plover participants)
- Where possible, attend a training workshop run by BirdLife Australia and/or a one-on-one training session with experienced staff/volunteers
- This role has no requirement to speak with beach users, however working in a public area means you may have interactions with the public. Therefore, there is a new requirement to complete the 'Speaking with the public' induction.

Desirable qualities:

- A keen eye
- Attention to detail
- Patience
- Record keeping skills
- Works independently
- Owns or has access to a pair of binoculars. Note: if you do not have access to binoculars, please contact BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds team to discuss options of borrowing equipment.



### 3. Site Protector (on-ground, breeding site protection)

This role involves responding to management alerts and setting up protective signage and fencing around vulnerable nest and chick sites. Depending on the support networks in place, this can either be done independently being guided by BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds team, or as part of an on-ground response team, working with land managers and/or other volunteers.

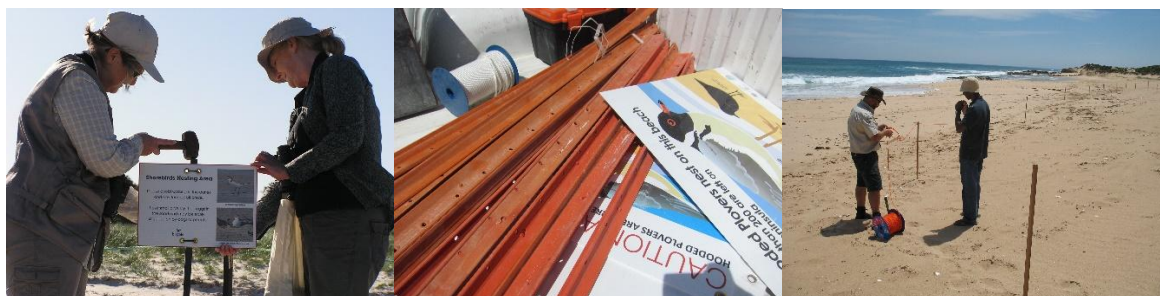
**This role involves a high level of training and as a pre-requisite you would also be registered as a monitor / citizen scientist (previous role description).**

Key tasks:

- Responding to email alerts from the MyBeachBird portal in a timely manner
- Setting up (and later removing) protective signage and/or fencing around vulnerable nest sites
- Assisting with breeding site protection when land managers are unavailable
- Strictly following best practice protocols and seeking advice from BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds team when set up needs adapting for site specific reasons
- Working closely with BirdLife Australia and relevant land managers
- Recording in the portal that management has been implemented
- Updating nest/chick signs where applicable

Desirable qualities:

- Good-very good physical fitness (heavy lifting involved)
- Responsive to email alerts
- Record keeping skills
- Working as part of a team



## 4. Nest/Chick Guardian role

This role involves spending time on the beach near an active breeding site, more commonly when chicks are present, to engage with beach users in an educational capacity. Beach users may be unaware of the plight of the birds, or the presence of newly-hatched chicks, and may not pay attention to signage. The presence of a 'guardian' during this vulnerable time for the birds can be a great opportunity to get the beach-using community interested in the birds and sympathetic to their plight, resulting in improved compliance with on-site protection. While on the beach, guardians collect additional information and report this to BirdLife Australia's Beach-nesting Birds team. This helps us learn more about the beach use at given sites such as peak times of use and main types of activities.

**This role involves a high level of training and as a pre-requisite you would also be registered as a Site Monitor/Citizen Scientist. All Site Guardians must obtain a Working with Children Check (or equivalent for your state or territory).**

Key tasks:

- Maintaining a presence on the beach at a safe distance from an active nest or chick protected area
- Engaging with beach users in a friendly and professional manner
- Providing education about the birds and the site protection in place
- Offering additional information/incentives in the way of handouts (brochures, stickers, dog leads)
- Where safe and appropriate, politely requesting that regulations or harm minimisation guidelines be followed
- Offering alternatives/solutions e.g. nearest off-leash beach, nearest alternative access or route
- Assisting with recruitment of new volunteers when an interested beach user is engaged
- Collecting data where required
- Special attention is made to OH&S, ensuring guardians do not spend long periods in the sun, have regular access to food and water, are well covered to protect from sun damage, and are mindful of their own safety, disengaging if a conversation becomes hostile or aggressive.
- As there is a small chance that beach users can become aggressive, volunteers are required to work in pairs while undertaking this role.
- Participation in specialised communications workshops where available
- Wearing BirdLife Australia volunteer name tag and vest when participating

Desirable qualities:

- A 'people person'
- Excellent communication skills
- High levels of tolerance and patience
- Controlled temperament
- Conflict resolution skills
- Ability to work independently or as part of a team



## 5. General Volunteer

This is for all other types of volunteering roles with the Beach-nesting Birds project, typically those that don't involve bird monitoring and instead are either office/data-based tasks, assistance with events or school visits, such as helping run a craft activity stall at a farmer's market, or field days to weed sites where nesting is not occurring.

These roles typically don't require training, but instead collaboration with, and advice from the BNB team. Some of these activities will require participants to obtain a Working with Children Check (or equivalent for your state/territory) prior to participation.

These tasks might include:

- Assisting the BNB team in the office
- Data entry, vetting and preparing summaries
- Code remote sensing camera images
- Assistance with events (e.g. helping on a stall, helping at a surf event)
- Assistance with school visits/education
- Assistance with social surveys and threat monitoring
- Weed removal field days



Desirable qualities:

- For office roles:
  - High computer literacy. In particular high competency in Excel databases (especially pivot tables and filters)
  - Attention to detail
  - Ability to ask questions and seek guidance
  - Ability to work independently but also collaboratively with staff and other volunteers
  - Regular time commitment
- For social surveys or research project assistance:
  - Excellent communication skills
  - Attention to detail
  - Record keeping skills
- For events and school visits:
  - Working with Children check (compulsory)
  - Excellent communication skills
- For weeding:
  - Good physical fitness

