



# Port Hacking Shorebirds

## Proposed Dredging and Other Issues



# Shorebirds

## What are they?

- Shorebirds don't get human attention or appreciation. They are often plain grey and white, roosting and feeding way out on the sandbanks and mudflats
- But they are a wonder of nature, amongst the greatest migrants in the natural world. Every year they traverse the globe from their winter feeding grounds to reach their summer breeding grounds.
- They fly nonstop thousands of kilometers, no gliding on thermals, just continual wing flapping
- The longest flight recorded is a Bar-tailed Godwit who flew from Alaska to New Zealand in 11 days, 12,200 kilometers

# Shorebirds

## Who are they?

- Bar-tailed Godwits (V - Vulnerable)



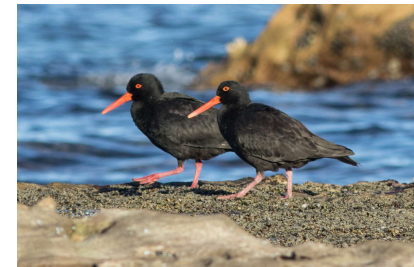
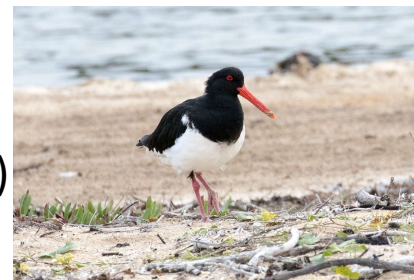
- Eastern Curlews (CE - Critically Endangered)
  - Population has dropped by more than 80% in 30 years

- Sandpipers – Sharp-tailed, Curlew (CE), Broad-billed(V), Terek(V) etc



- Plovers – Double-banded etc

- Oystercatchers – Pied (E) and Sooty (V)



# Shorebirds

## Survival in the 2020s

- Shorebirds feed on mudflats and have evolved to use this resource to traverse the globe
- Regular staging points to refuel are needed on their global journeys
- But all across the globe humans have started to encroach and remove this vital resource
  - In China, N&S Korea the critical staging point of the Yellow Sea is under constant industrial development
  - In Australia we reclaim the mudflats for leisure developments: marinas and the like
- At high tide shorebirds cannot feed, they need roosting sites safe from predators and these too are threatened

# Shorebirds in Port Hacking

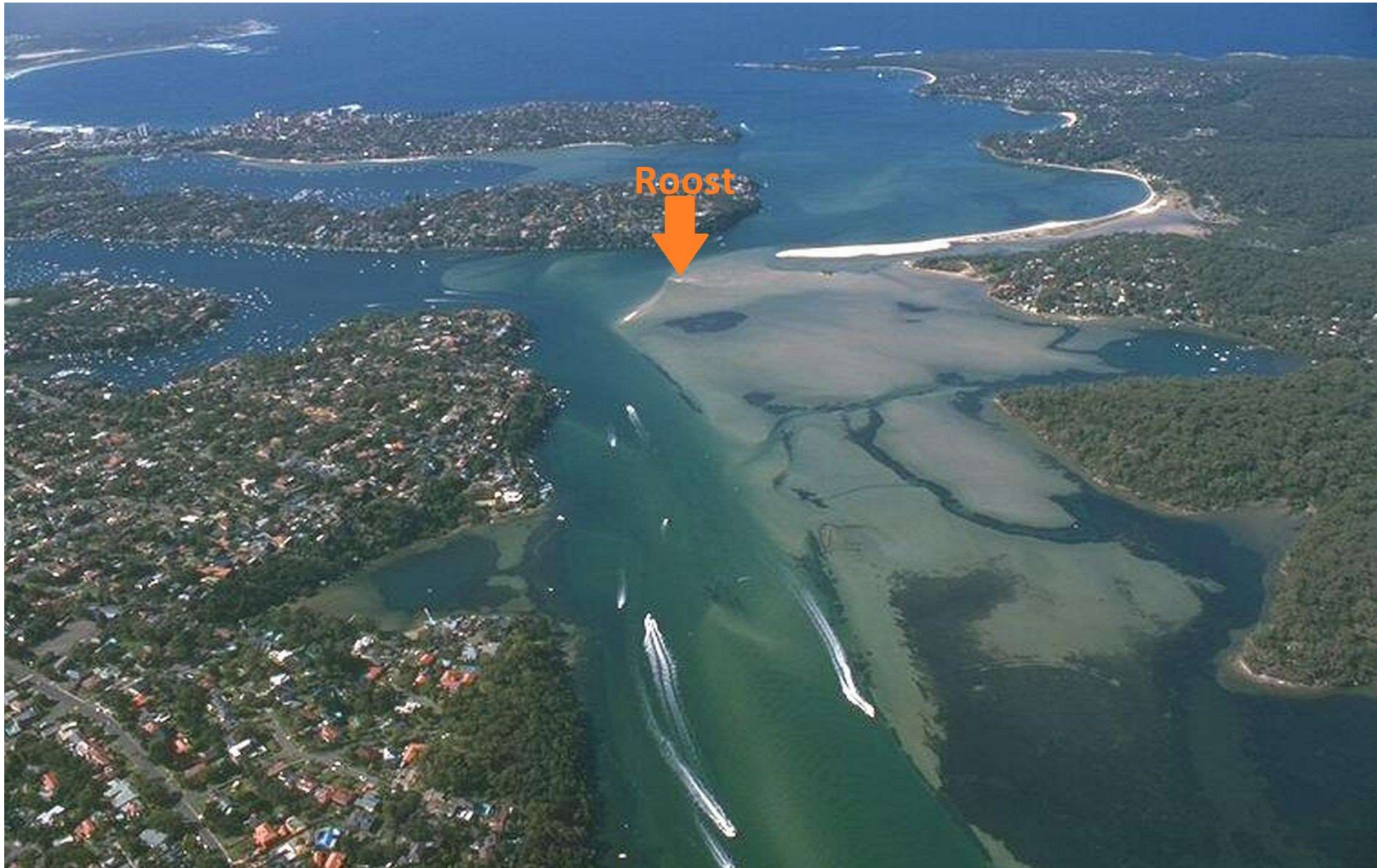
- The mudflat from Bonnie Vale to Costens Point is an important link in this global network ....a food stop
- It attracts a great array of migratory birds for both long stays and one night stands. Some young birds over winter here
- The migrants:
  - In early August we have around 12-17 Eastern Curlews (CE) arrive from northern Russia.....they stay until late February/mid March then return. In 2019 one of these migrants had been banded in China.
  - In September the Bar-tailed Godwits fly in from Alaska and northern Siberia. Last year we had 8, but two years ago 70 dropped in for 6 weeks. In 2019 one of these migrants had been banded in China.
  - In February the Double-banded Plovers arrive from New Zealand and stay until August. About 15 often call Port Hacking home.

# Shorebirds in Port Hacking

- The residents:
  - Pied Oystercatchers have been attempting to breed on Deeban Spit for the last few years. 2016-18 the eggs were taken by foxes, 2019 a chick was raised, 2020 an adult was killed by a competing bird
  - Crested Terns and Silver Gulls
- The one night stands (sometimes longer)
  - Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers, Sanderlings, Common Greenshanks, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red Knots, Whimbrels, Grey-tailed Tattlers, Terek Sandpipers, Pied Stilts, Red-necked Avocets, Caspian Terns, Little Terns, Australian Pelicans



# High tide roost



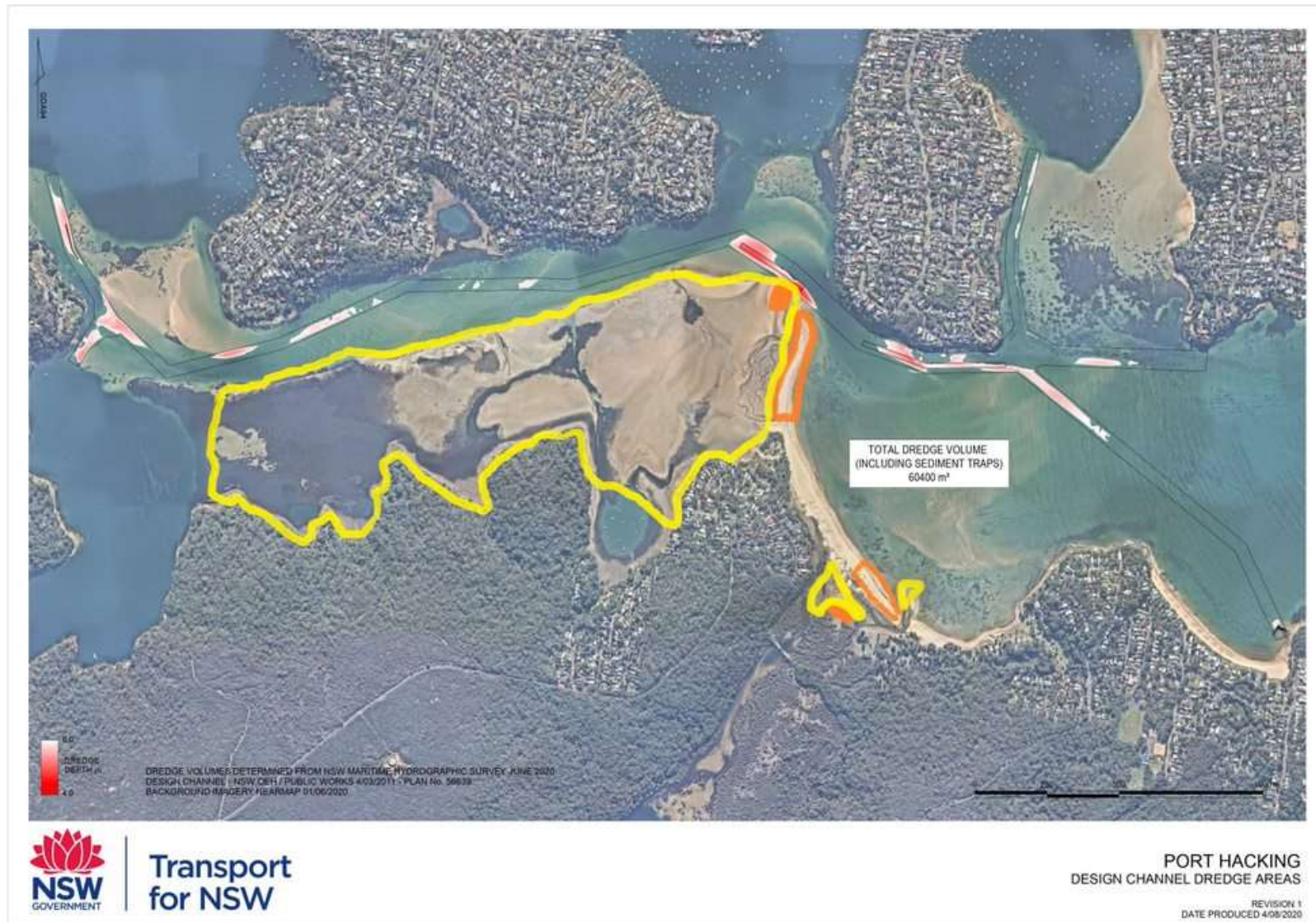
# Port Hacking Shorebirds

## Threats

- Habitat Loss
  - Imminent dredging could destroy the high tide roosts
- Harassment on the roost
  - Boats with fishermen, nipper pumpers, dogs, children
  - People don't understand that these birds may just have arrived from Alaska or be fueling up for a flight to China
- Harassment on the feeding grounds
  - Dog walkers, fishermen, nipper pumpers
- Predation and harassment on the nest (Pied Oystercatchers)
  - Fox predation
  - Human intervention: Dog walkers, fishermen, Boaties, Kayakers



# Dredging area, roost and feeding sites



# Port Hacking Shorebirds Videos

- Taken three weeks ago showing young curlews who have not migrated north feeding at Maianbar  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFrw1fawDP8>
- Male and female curlews at Maianbar  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qa86bo4SRhc>
- Dog which has arrived by boat chasing the curlews  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFZBjf0lgVo>

# Port Hacking Shorebirds Protection

- Today no agency has regulatory control over the sandbars and mudflats
  - Maritime and Fisheries only when covered with water - birds are not in their scope
- The best hope for the survival of the birds in Port Hacking and their habitat is to put them under regulatory control, include the flats in the Royal National Park
  - Opportunistically use the Plan of Management review to lobby for the area south of the navigation channel between Costens Pt and Constables Pt to be added to the Royal National Park
- Ensure the dredging does not impact on the high tide roost site
  - Contact the Office of Maritime that is working on the dredging with the Sutherlandshire Council [kym.warner@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kym.warner@transport.nsw.gov.au)