

DISTINCTIVE SHOREBIRDS ... *Ellinor Campbell***Illustrations ... *Kaye Traynor***

The following birds may be found along Surf Coast beaches and waterways.

PIED OYSTERCATCHER

This large, conspicuous, stocky bird, 42-51cm, may sometimes be seen along our ocean beaches and estuaries. Its white belly, black back and head contrast with its straight scarlet bill, red legs, and red eye-ring.



Pied Oystercatcher

SOOTY OYSTERCATCHER

Less common, this sturdy wader, 40-52cm, likes rocky shores, and is unmistakable with its all-black body, long scarlet bill, pink legs, and red eye-ring.



Sooty Oystercatcher

GREENSHANK

The Greenshank, at 30 to 34cm, is slightly smaller and is quite common in our wetlands, mudflats, and estuaries. It is fairly plain and pale, mainly white with a brown back, nape, and head, a long slender beak which is slightly upturned, and long, pale green legs. Immature and non-breeding birds have brown streaks on the chest. It is usually solitary, and feeds nervously, dashing about and bobbing its head while feeding.



Greenshank

BLACK-WINGED STILT

This elegant, long-legged bird is a similar size, 33-38 cm, but is usually in groups, and is nomadic according to rainfall. They are always a delight to see as they slowly wade together in shallow, fresh, and brackish waters. They are obvious, with their white heads and breasts, black wings and nape, long black pointed beaks, and long, slender red legs.



Black-winged Stilt

RUDDY TURNSTONE

Who could not but like this distinctive smaller bird, 21-25 cm, with its delightful name, which is representative of its appearance and behaviour? Unlike the other birds in this article it is a summer migrant, flying thousand of kilometres each year to and from its breeding grounds in Siberia. Most of our other migrant waders look very similar in tones of white and brown, but this sturdy bird always stands out in the large mixed flocks, with its strongly coloured tortoise-shell back, black bib and short orange legs. It is such a treat to witness its characteristic behaviour of flipping shells and stones when searching for food. It is often seen on ocean beaches from Breamlea to Point Lonsdale.



Ruddy Turnstone

Ref: Graham Pizzey & Frank Knight. *The Field Guide to Birds of Australia*

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