

Dear Mr Grounds

I refer to your email to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Gabrielle Upton MP about conservation of the hooded plover in the Shoalhaven. Your email was referred to the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and I have been asked to reply.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank Birdlife Shoalhaven and its members for the dedicated support provided over many years to the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program, more recently under the banner of Saving our Species. OEH (including the National Parks and Wildlife Service) could not have managed this long running conservation project without the efforts of volunteers and bird enthusiasts from the community to monitor and protect shorebirds. Your past support is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to continuing working in partnership with you.

As you raise in your letter, Cudmirrah Beach has a known history of nesting by the hooded plover, a species listed as Critically Endangered on the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. Our data shows that hooded plovers have nested on this beach three times in the last ten years. The most recent nesting activity was recorded in 2015/16. The NPWS Shorebird Recovery Coordinator has also reported increasing presence of off-leash dogs on Cudmirrah Beach over recent years, which supports your own observations. This is despite the on-leash regulation being in place.

I understand that Shoalhaven City Council is still considering their position on the proposal to change the on-leash requirements. You can be assured that OEH shares your concern and is therefore providing data and other information to council. We are advising council that Cudmirrah Beach is an important beach for the conservation of the hooded plover and that the threat from domestic dogs needs to be managed at this site by having a no dogs policy, or at a minimum, keeping the existing on-leash regulation. We are also requesting that these regulations be backed up by active compliance, particularly through the spring and summer breeding season for the hooded plover.

Further information about the Saving our Species program can be found at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/saving-our-species-program>.

If you have any further questions about this issue, please contact James Dawson, Senior Team Leader, Ecosystems and Threatened Species, South East Branch on 4224 4125 or at james.dawson@environment.nsw.gov.au.

MIKE SAXON

Director South East

Conservation and Regional Delivery