

SUBMISSION TO EXTINCTION ENQUIRY FROM ANNA SUBLET

I'm writing to make a brief submission regarding species extinction. My personal experience is with the little birds that live on the shore, Hooded Plovers.

The last breeding season was the worst on record, according to BirdLife Australia, and they are classified as threatened.

In my correspondence with an expert from BirdLife Australia, I was told

"The 2019-2020 breeding season has been one of the worst on record in the 14 seasons we've been monitoring (31 fledglings produced by 132 pairs). The hoodies across Vic suffered high nest losses and very few chicks made it to fledging." and "Currently we have around 730 of these birds in the Victorian population."

A few years ago, after watching dog owners let their dogs run in to the dunes, I wrote a piece for The Guardian, including the lines:

*"Each nesting season, the small vulnerable hooded plovers nest along the shoreline of beaches and inland salt lakes. Each season, volunteers map and track the plovers' precarious lives, and each season, chicks are lost—to seabirds, to horses trampling, to people stomping, to foxes, and yes, to dogs. To add to the challenge, each summer on the beach I visit, the signs put up to protect the birds are torn down: defaced, wiped out, ripped off and smashed over. Signs on the track tell of the hooded plovers' plight, and at the edge of the beach during nesting season, a large sign makes it clear: 'Dogs must be on a lead past this point'. The repeated destruction of these signs astounds me, for it seems to suggest something about humans—changing our behaviour for reasons of the greater environmental good may not come easily, especially if it forces us to give up practices which suit us."*

Here is a link to my piece: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/sep/14/one-dog-off-the-leash-could-be-the-end-of-a-nesting-shorebird>

Please help our community educate people towards caring for our environment and the species with which we share the world. Further funding towards public information campaigns, beach sanctuary zones and dog-free stretches of beach (if people really cannot keep them on leads even when it is the local regulation/law to do so) could help these little birds successfully breed. In ensuring they survive and thrive we also teach future generations that it matters how we treat the land and animals in this shared world. The benefits of seeing governments do good work towards the environment will also strengthen our democratic system, with citizens feeling more engaged in solutions and collective caring. (Call me naive! Idealistic?)

I realise this submission is a rough, personal perspective, but trust it may help provide some food for thought and further action.

Thank you for considering my input.

Anna Sublet

