

## TIPS FOR BIRD OBSERVATIONS

The best time to observe birds is usually between dawn and midday, or in saltmarsh environments often at low tides when birds are often feeding (avoid the heat of the day) .



### Point-based 2-ha Area Bird Observations:

1. Identify the saltmarsh cluster and determine the component saltmarsh sites (spatially separated areas mapped as individual polygons), their areas (estimated spatial extent in ha) and accessibility (land tenure, physical access);
2. Depending on the number of sites within the cluster, their relative areas and accessibility, select sites and point locations within the sites based on:
  - a. the principle that at least 50% of the sites within each saltmarsh cluster is accessible and surveyed;
  - b. survey points selected being representative of the vegetation diversity in the cluster (either low succulent saltmarsh, high shrubby saltmarsh, or grassy saltmarsh);
  - c. each survey point is predominantly made up of one of the three vegetation types (> 50% of the 2 ha area is occupied by either low succulent saltmarsh, high shrubby saltmarsh, or grassy saltmarsh); and,
  - d. at each saltmarsh site, the number of survey points depend on the size of the marsh area and the diversity in the vegetation types (where possible at least 50% of the area must be covered and all three vegetation types represented).
3. At each saltmarsh site, either survey the entire site where the area occupied is below 2 ha, or in the case of larger marshes (above 2 ha) or marshes with low accessibility (e.g. due to creeks), select one or more representative areas to survey, with each survey lasting a minimum of 20 minute duration and scanning an area of minimum 2 ha in size (e.g. shape of a rectangle of 100 x 200 m or a circle of 80 m radius);
4. Where two or more survey points are used in a large site, they must be separated from each other by a minimum of 300 m, placed away from upland vegetation boundary by a

minimum of 50 m (a note must be made in the comments section if this buffer is not available);

5. A minimum of two counts must be conducted separated by 14 days or more, both done during the warmer months when birds migrate to Tasmania (October-April), one count done during maximum high tide (so the use of saltmarsh by shorebirds can be recorded) and another during low tide (for sake of comparison);
6. The surveys should be done between dawn to 1200 h, on days with lower than average wind speeds (of about 15km/h or lower) and, at most, a light rain (such that weather conditions are not windy with rain);
7. Binoculars of 8x32s or 10x42s are recommended (which provide a field of view of about 100-150 m from suitable vantage points).