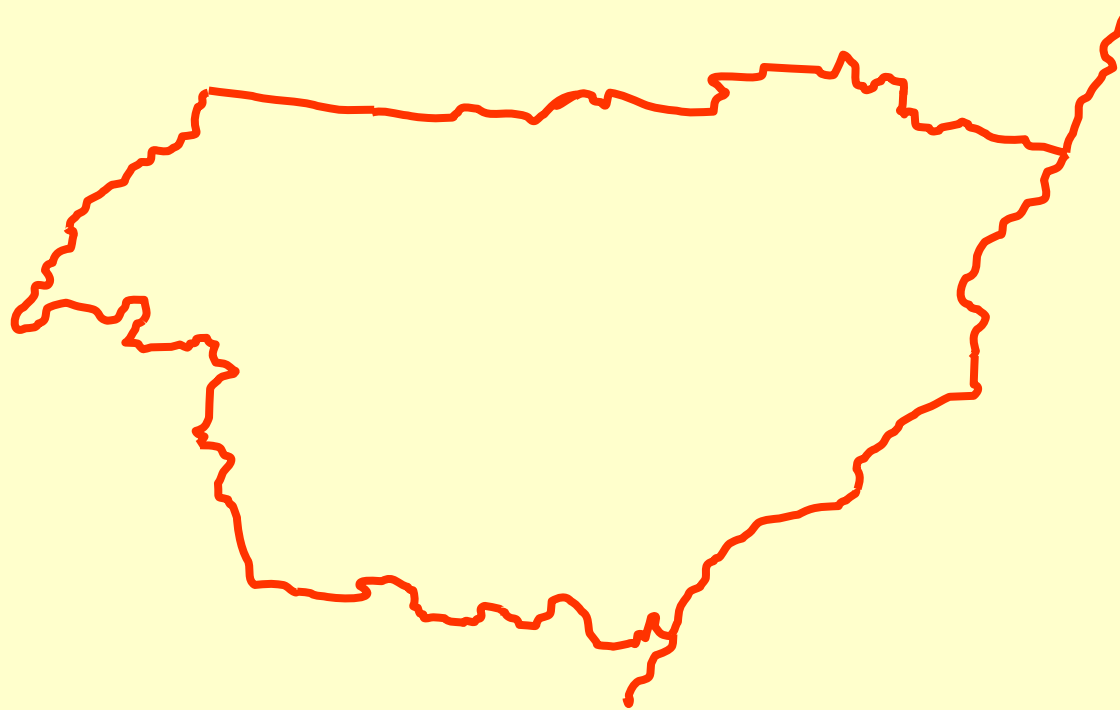
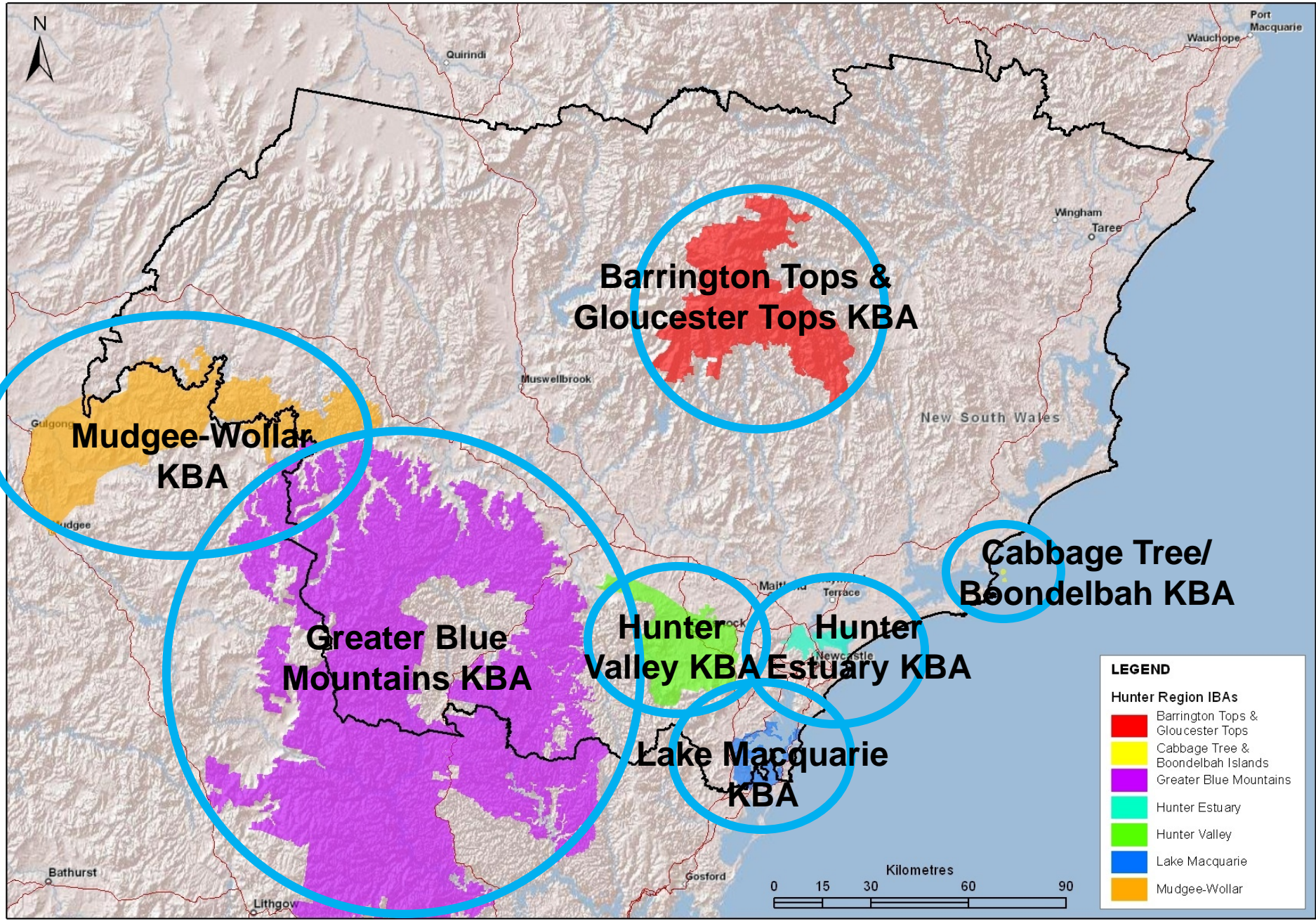


*Citizen Science: strategies for  
monitoring Hunter Region KBAs*



*Alan Stuart*

*18 March 2017*



**Barrington Tops & Gloucester Tops KBA**

**Mudgee-Wollar KBA**

**Greater Blue Mountains KBA**

**Hunter Valley KBA**

**Hunter Estuary KBA**

**Lake Macquarie KBA**

**Cabbage Tree/Boondelbah KBA**

**LEGEND**

**Hunter Region IBAs**

- Barrington Tops & Gloucester Tops
- Cabbage Tree & Boondelbah Islands
- Greater Blue Mountains
- Hunter Estuary
- Hunter Valley
- Lake Macquarie
- Mudgee-Wollar

# Some background

## Issues

- Small group of dedicated people: our resources are stretched
- Plenty of ground to cover and so little time!
- There are lots of “joyriders” – driven by interests in (e.g.) photography, twitching, bucket lists
  - But sometimes they can be helpful
  - Usually not BLA connected but often they are HBOC connected

## Solution

- Focus on the 4 KBAs most in need of coverage
- Apply different strategies for each KBA and/or each nominated species

# Hunter Estuary KBA

- Nominated Species:



Chestnut  
Teal



Latham's  
Snipe



Straw-necked  
Ibis



Australasian Bittern



Eastern  
Curlew



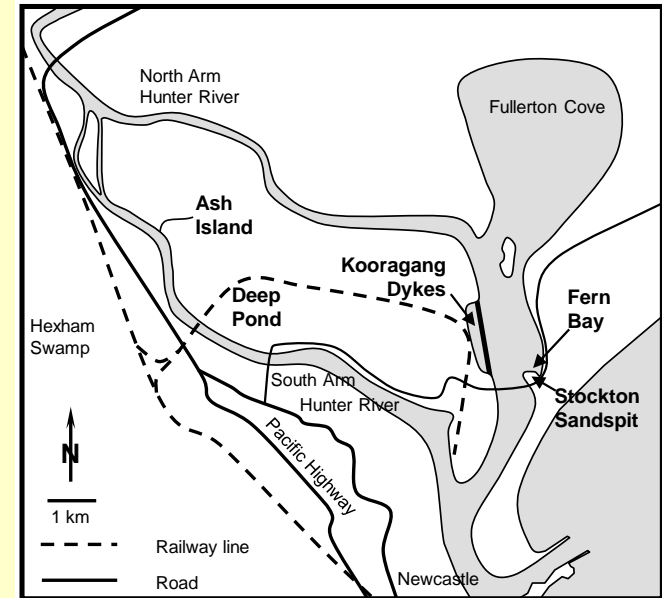
Red-necked  
Avocet



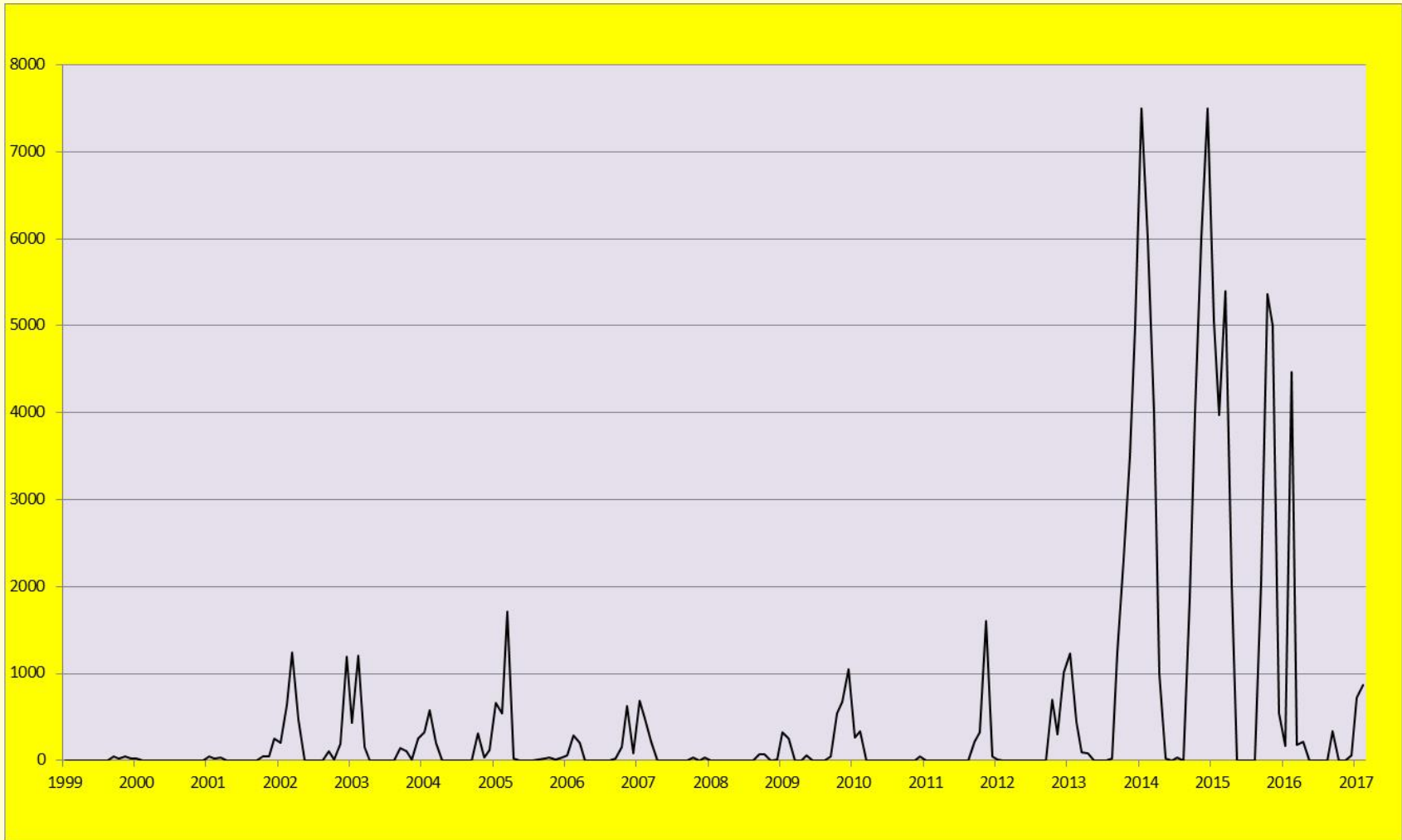
Sharp-tailed  
Sandpiper

# Hunter Estuary KBA

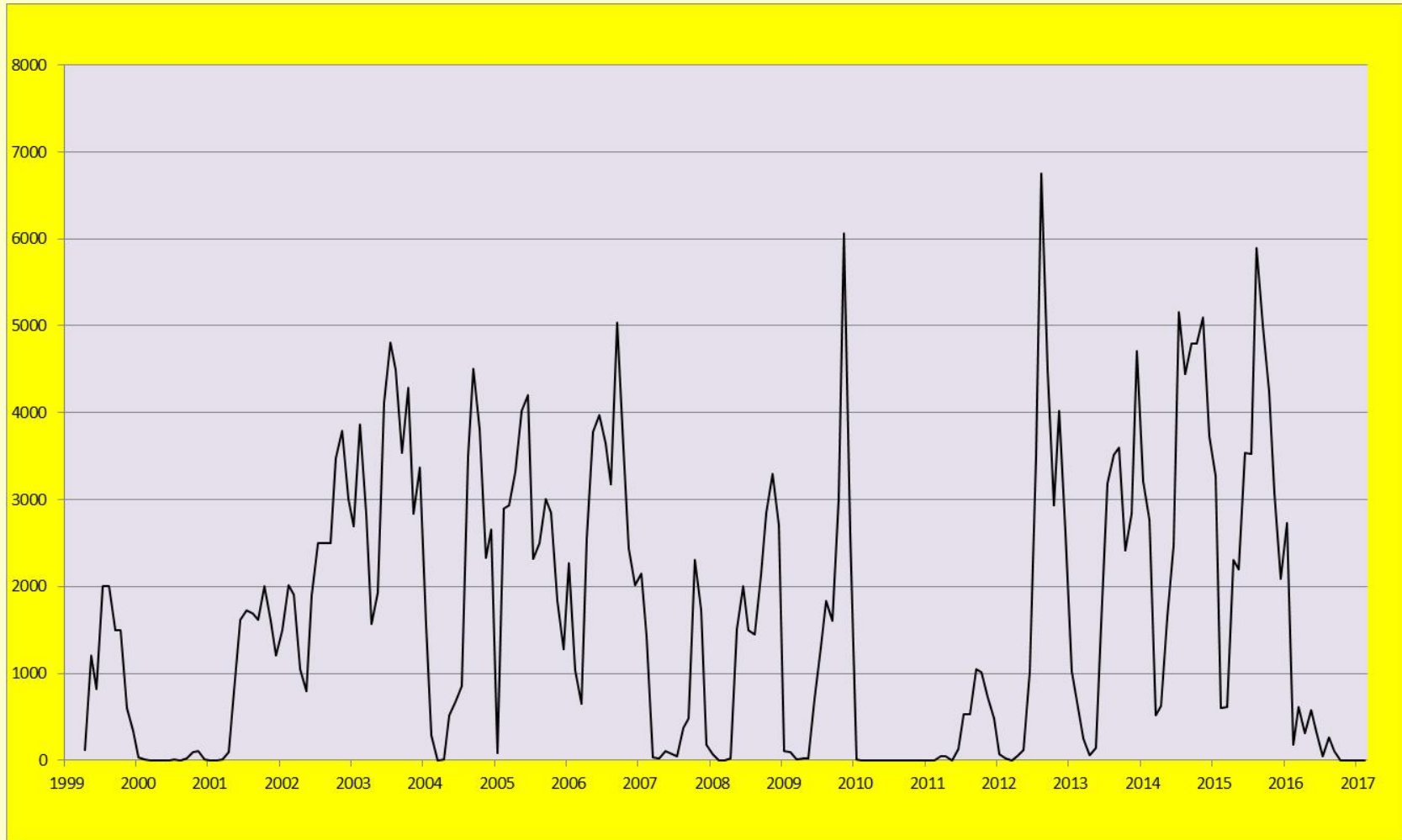
- Monthly surveys of the estuary targeting non-cryptic waterbirds
  - Involves 6 teams simultaneously
- Annual surveys for Latham's Snipe at Pambalong NR (parked since 2014)
- Occasional multi-site night surveys organised for Australasian Bitterns
- All the above are supplemented by frequent *ad hoc* leisure/pleasure visits to the accessible sites



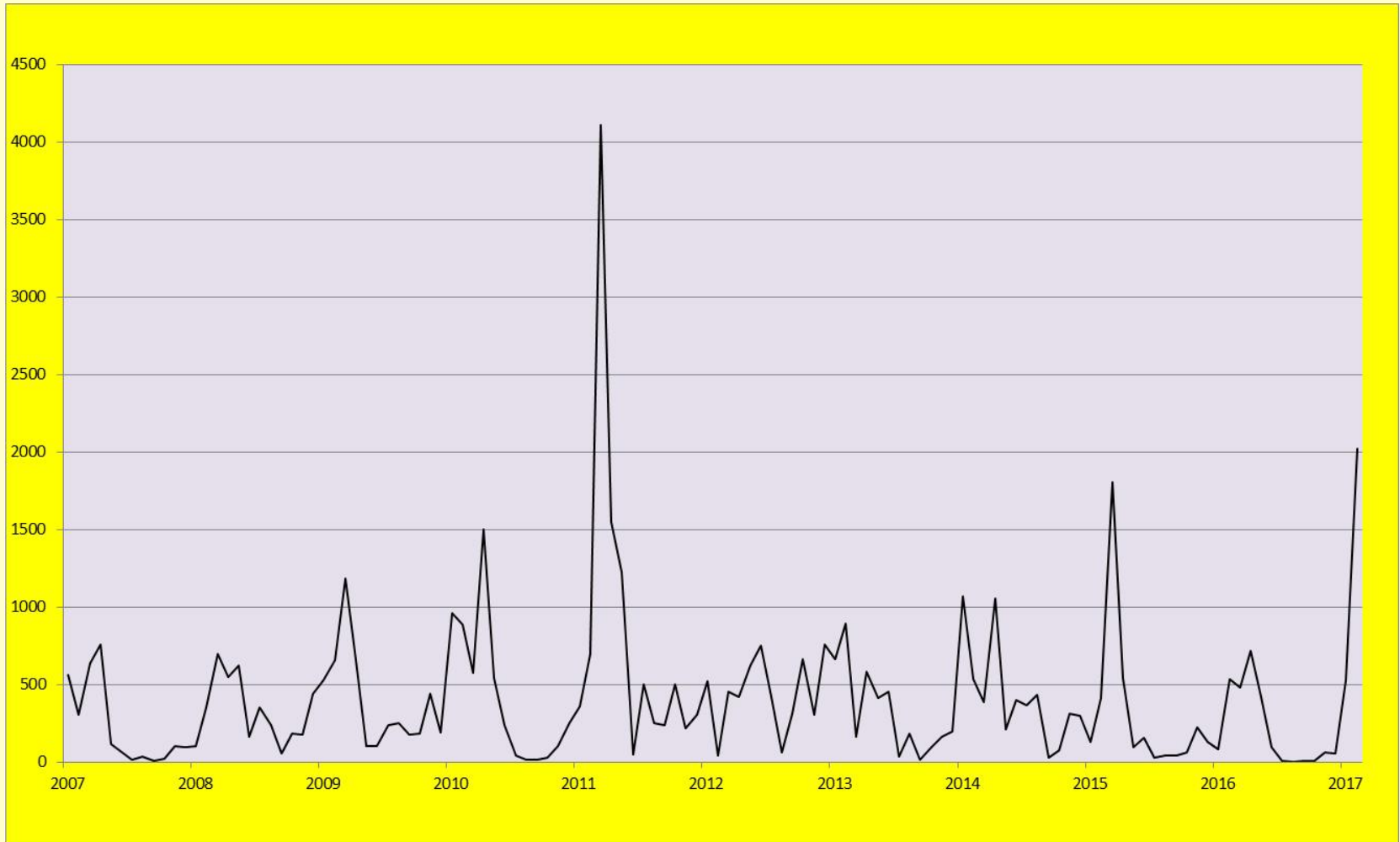
# Hunter estuary: Sharp-tailed Sandpiper



# Hunter estuary: Red-necked Avocet



# Hunter estuary: Chestnut Teal





# Pambalong NR: Latham's Snipe

<b>1997</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2</b>						

# Hunter Valley KBA

- Nominated Species:
  - Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot
- Method/s
  - Visits by individuals/small groups to prospective areas:
    - Where target species have previously occurred
    - Where suitable blossom is known/suspected to be present
    - Activity level rises during the BLA survey periods (May, August)
  - Results reported to BLA coordinator who arranges follow-up surveys where appropriate
  - Supplemented by BLA/OEH survey program at “key sites”



# Lake Macquarie KBA

- Nominated Species:

Swift  
Parrot



Regent  
Honeyeater



- Method/s
  - Visits by individuals/small groups to prospective areas:
    - Where target species have previously occurred
    - Where suitable blossom is known/suspected to be present
    - Activity level rises during the BLA survey periods (May, August)
  - Results reported to BLA coordinator who arranges follow-up surveys where appropriate

# Barrington Tops/Gloucester Tops KBA

- Nominated Species:



Pale-yellow Robin



Rufous Scrub-bird



Flame Robin



Green  
Catbird



Aust. Logrunner



Regent  
Bowerbird



Paradise Riflebird

# Dealing with data

- Results from all HBOC's surveys go into Birdata
  - We actively encourage other locals to do the same
  - Compatibility of the survey method with the BLA Atlas is secondary (but usually it is possible)
- We also maintain Excel databases for all our formal surveys
  - We hope this requirement will become redundant as functionality of the new Birdata portal improves
- Highlights from *ad hoc* visits are captured through Hunterbirding and into our annual Bird Report
- Tables for waterbirds/shorebirds from regular surveys are published in our annual bird reports
- Several (10+) papers have been written (The Whistler, Stilt, AFO, ... even for Emu)

# High levels of participation

## Volunteers for KBA monitoring

- Hunter Estuary monthly surveys: ~150 people (since 1999)
- Gloucester Tops: 40 people (since 2010)
- Hunter Valley, Lake Mac: not known

## Other examples

- Port Stephens waterbirds: 52 people (since 2004)
- Broughton Island surveys: 14 people (since 2012)

Always there has been a core group plus many “one-offs”