Protect birds from uncontrolled beach driving this South Australian election

Background

Vehicles on beaches continue to kill birds and damage habitats critical to their survival in South Australia. Across the state’s coastline, significant shorebird feeding, roosting, and breeding sites (which are widely dispersed) are impacted by vehicles, including collisions, crushing of nests and chicks, destruction of feeding/nesting habitat and increased erosion.

In June 2020, the SA Natural Resources Committee (NRC) tabled their final report to a 2019 inquiry into the impacts of off-road driving in the state. As of February 2022, the SA Government has not acted on the recommendations, and beach driving remains out of control.

Wildlife, beach user safety, and irreplaceable cultural heritage are all at risk, unless South Australian politicians take immediate action.

Key Threats

Many of South Australia’s significant shorebird roosting and foraging sites, and vulnerable nesting sites remain without any regulations or restrictions around vehicle access. Sensitive habitats are managed and signposted as roads. There is little indication for most drivers of the impacts they could have on the threatened wildlife that depend on these beaches for survival.

While some councils have been proactive in signposting and even seasonally or permanently limiting vehicle access to the most vulnerable wildlife sites, the majority of our threatened shorebirds remain at risk from the SA Government’s inaction.

How you can help this election

BirdLife Australia and Birds SA are calling on our South Australian supporters to reach out to local candidates, especially from the two major parties, to ask them to take immediate action to protect birds from uncontrolled beach driving.

Key messages to ask SA election candidates

1. Will you commit to an audit of coastline to identify sensitive sites for wildlife?
2. Will you develop appropriate regulations for the most sensitive sites (which may include permanent or seasonal exclusion zones)?
3. Will you commit to a permit system or communication strategy to assist in awareness of regulations and limits for driving on beaches?
4. Will you commit to funding the implementation and the enforcement of regulatory zoning, infrastructure, and permit systems?