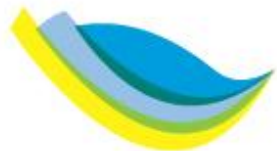




MONITORING DIVERSITY AND ABUNDANCE OF WETLAND BIRDS

Chris Healey President, BirdLife East Gippsland



Gippsland
Lakes
Ministerial
Advisory
Committee



GIPPSLAND LAKES IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

Ramsar site & Important Bird Area
(GLIBA)

Recognised under international protocols

1% of global population of:

- Black Swan
- Chestnut Teal
- Musk Duck
- Little Tern

Refuge area for many other wetland
species, including:

vulnerable, threatened and endangered
species;

migratory waders



White-bellied Sea Eagle – a wetland-dependent top
order predator. Photo: John Hutchison

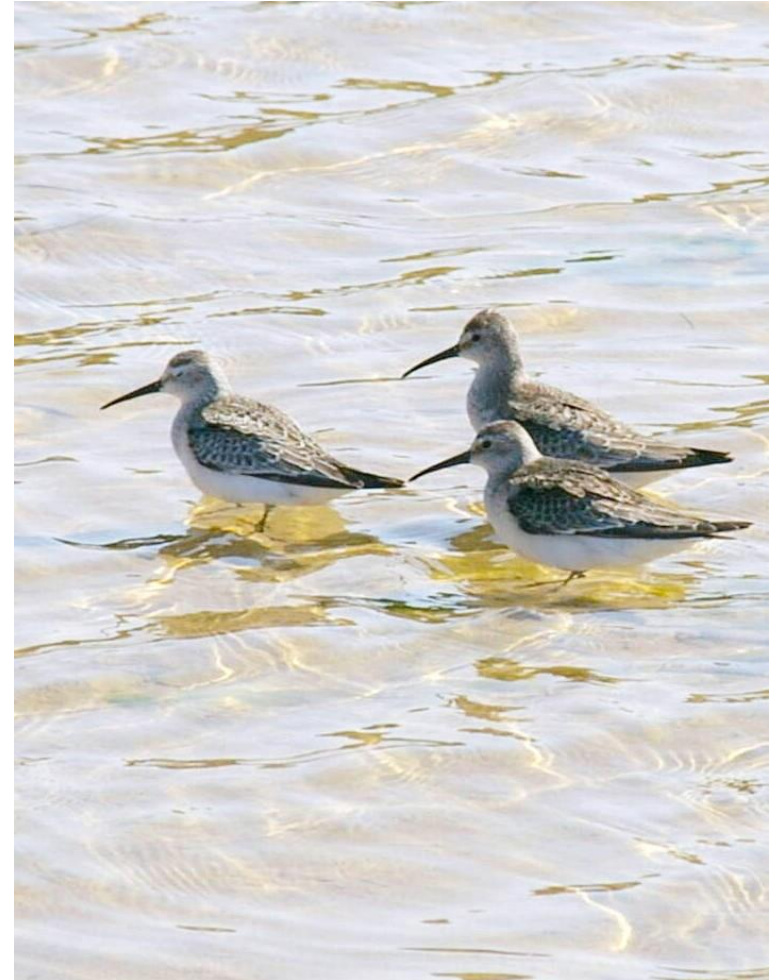
WHY MONITOR WETLAND BIRDS?

Birds are top-order organisms in wetland food chains – therefore good indicators of ecosystem health

Large, highly visible, easily identified

Baseline data available from surveys over several decades by BirdLife East Gippsland, other organisations and many individuals

This presentation based on information from BirdLife Australia's **Atlas of Australian Birds** database



International migrants from northern hemisphere:
Curlew Sandpipers. Photo: Ken Sherring

Atlas data for GLIBA

- 1987-2012 (26 years)
- Almost 2000 individual surveys
- 500+ survey sites



The endangered Freckled Duck. Photo: Leah Beekman

HOW MANY WETLAND BIRDS?

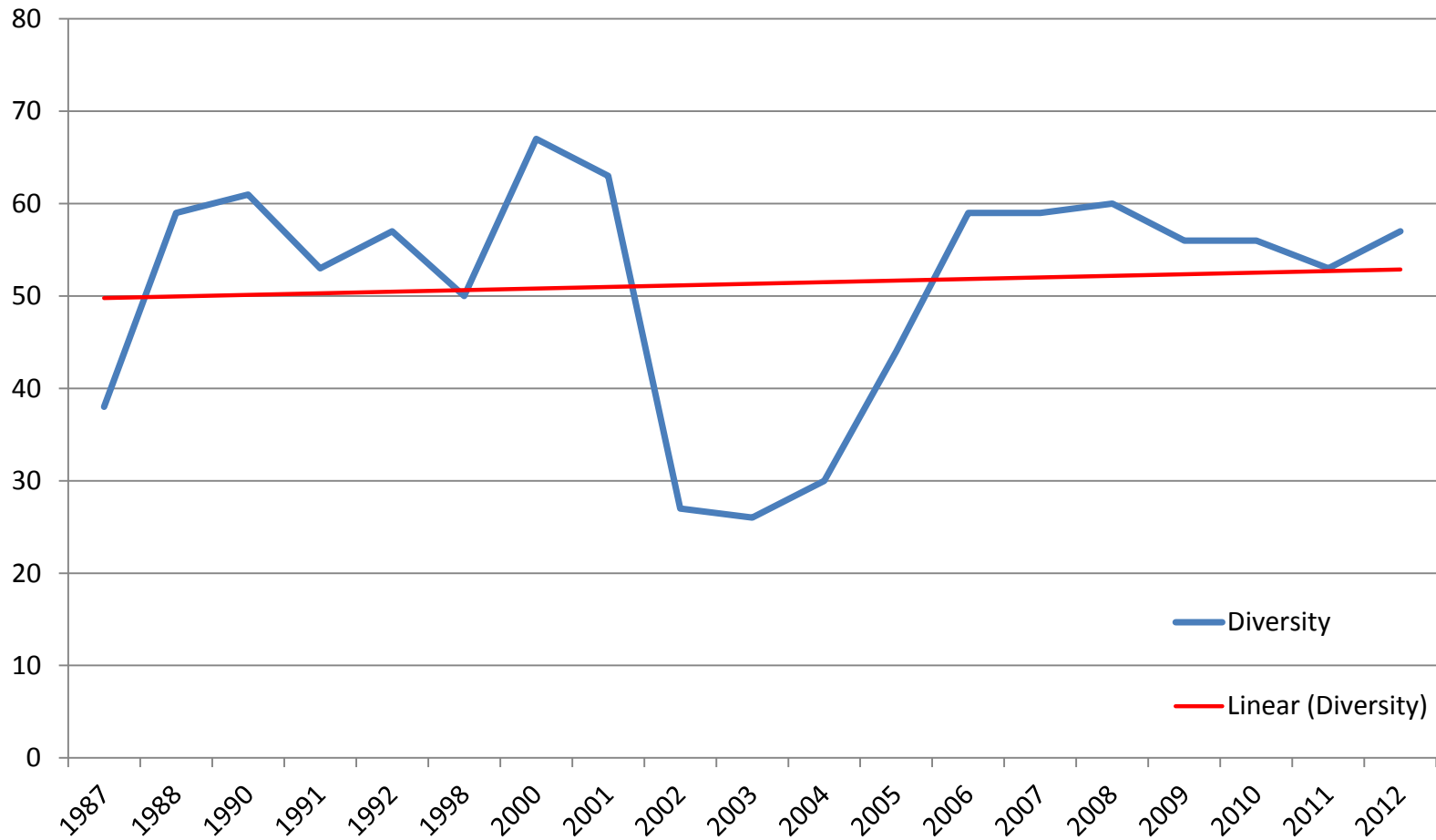
Species **diversity** varies

92 species recorded over
26 years of Atlas surveys



Royal Spoonbill and Chestnut Teal.
Photo: John Hutchison

Annual species diversity in GLIBA – wetland birds



ABUNDANCE

Calculated as **Annual Reporting Rate**
for each species

i.e. how frequently a species is recorded
each year (as %age)

For this analysis:

confined to **Top 10** most frequently
recorded species – as follows:

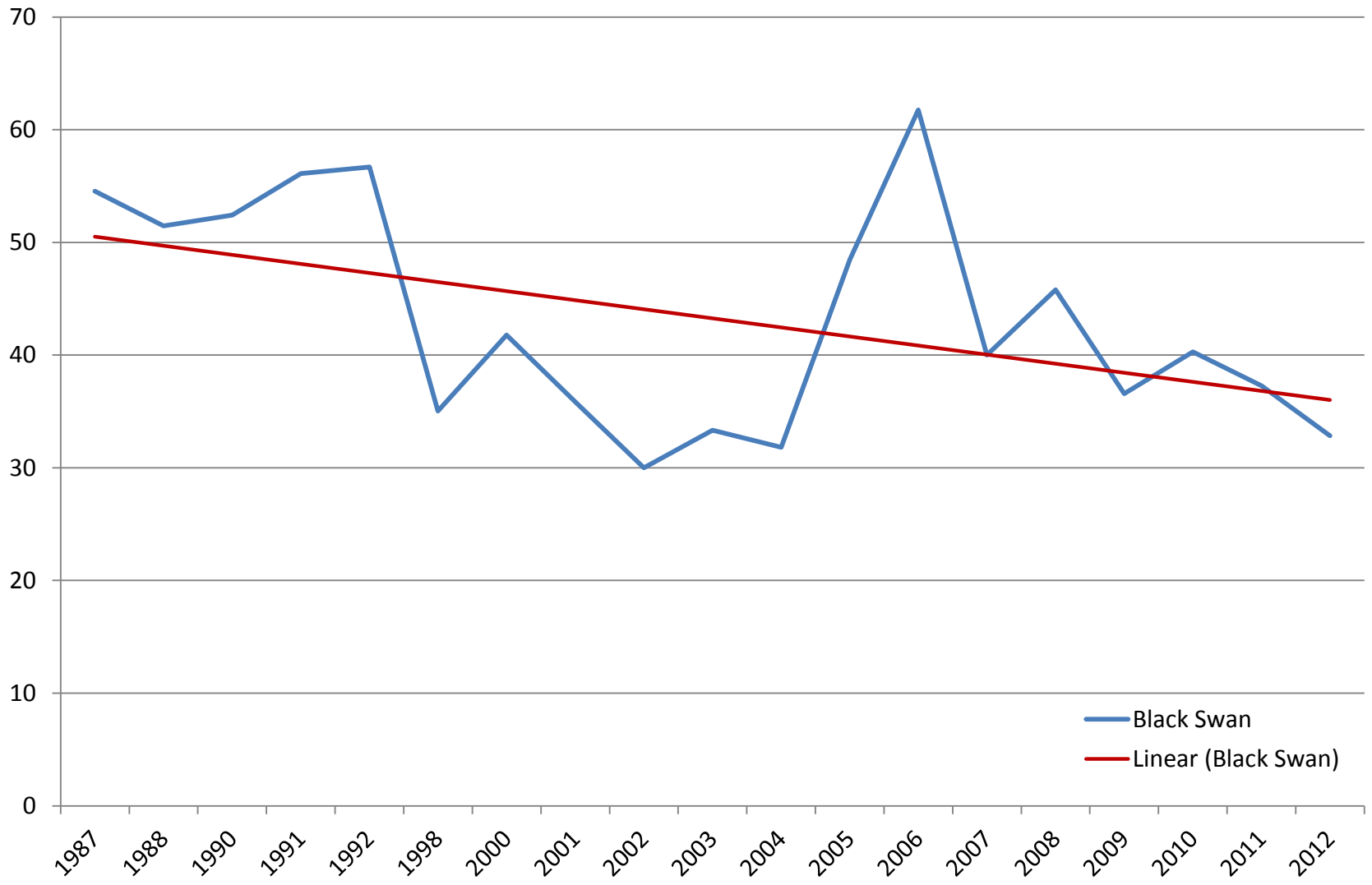


Cape Barren Goose -- a rare visitor to GLIBA.
Photo: Chris Healey



Black Swan Photo: Chris Healey

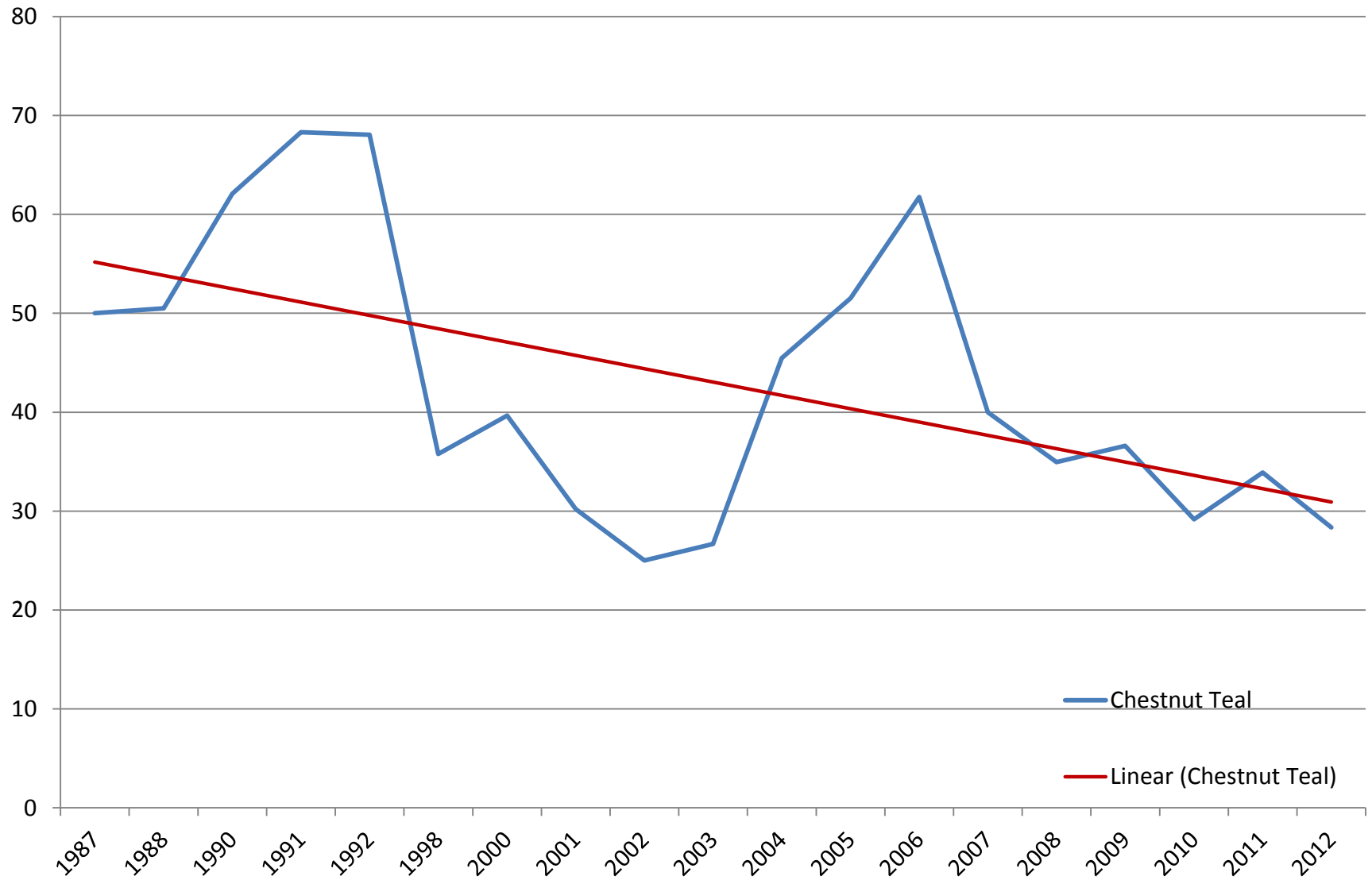
Black Swan





Chestnut Teal Photo: John Hutchison

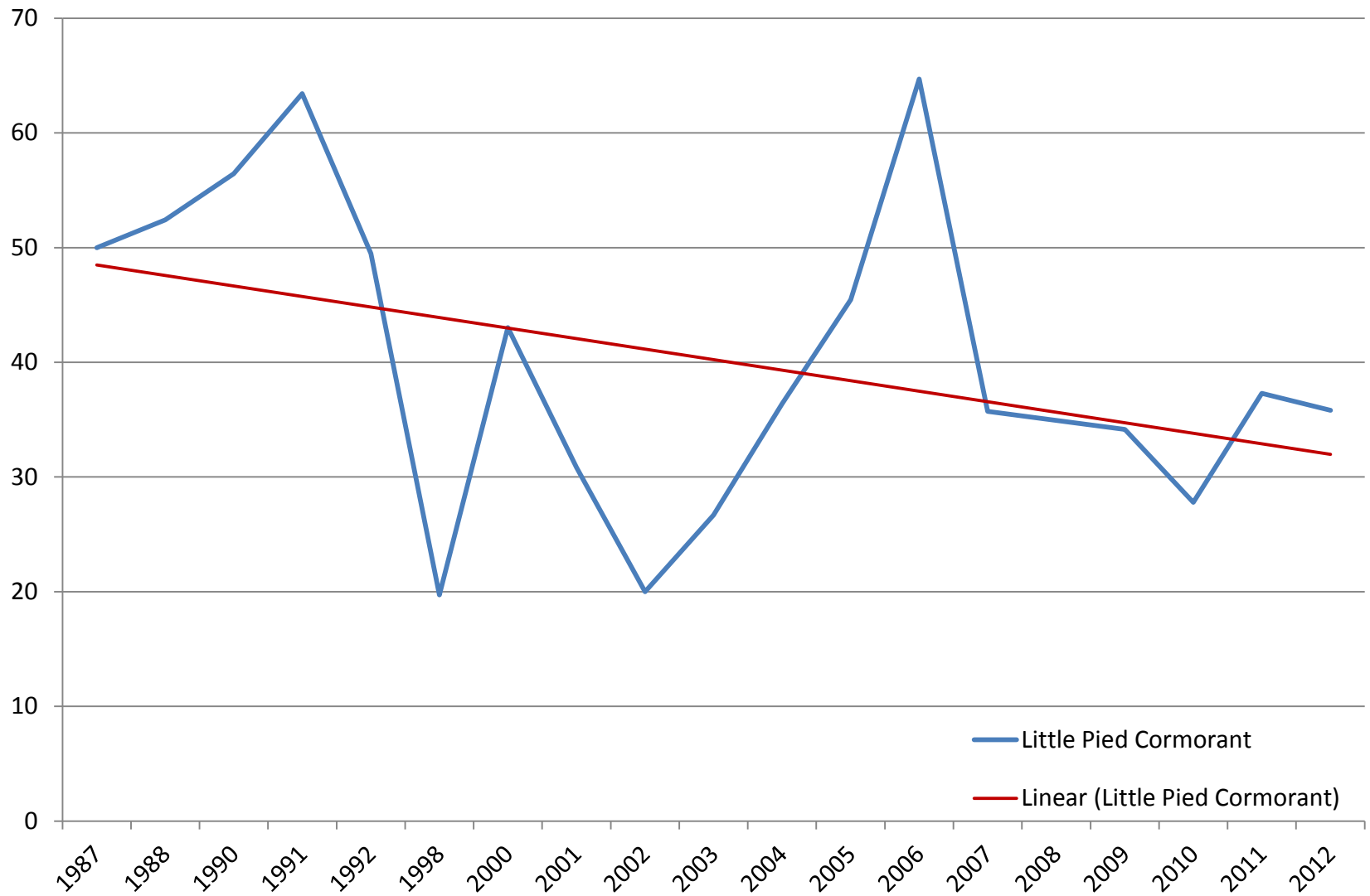
Chestnut Teal



Little Pied Cormorant Photo Chris Healey



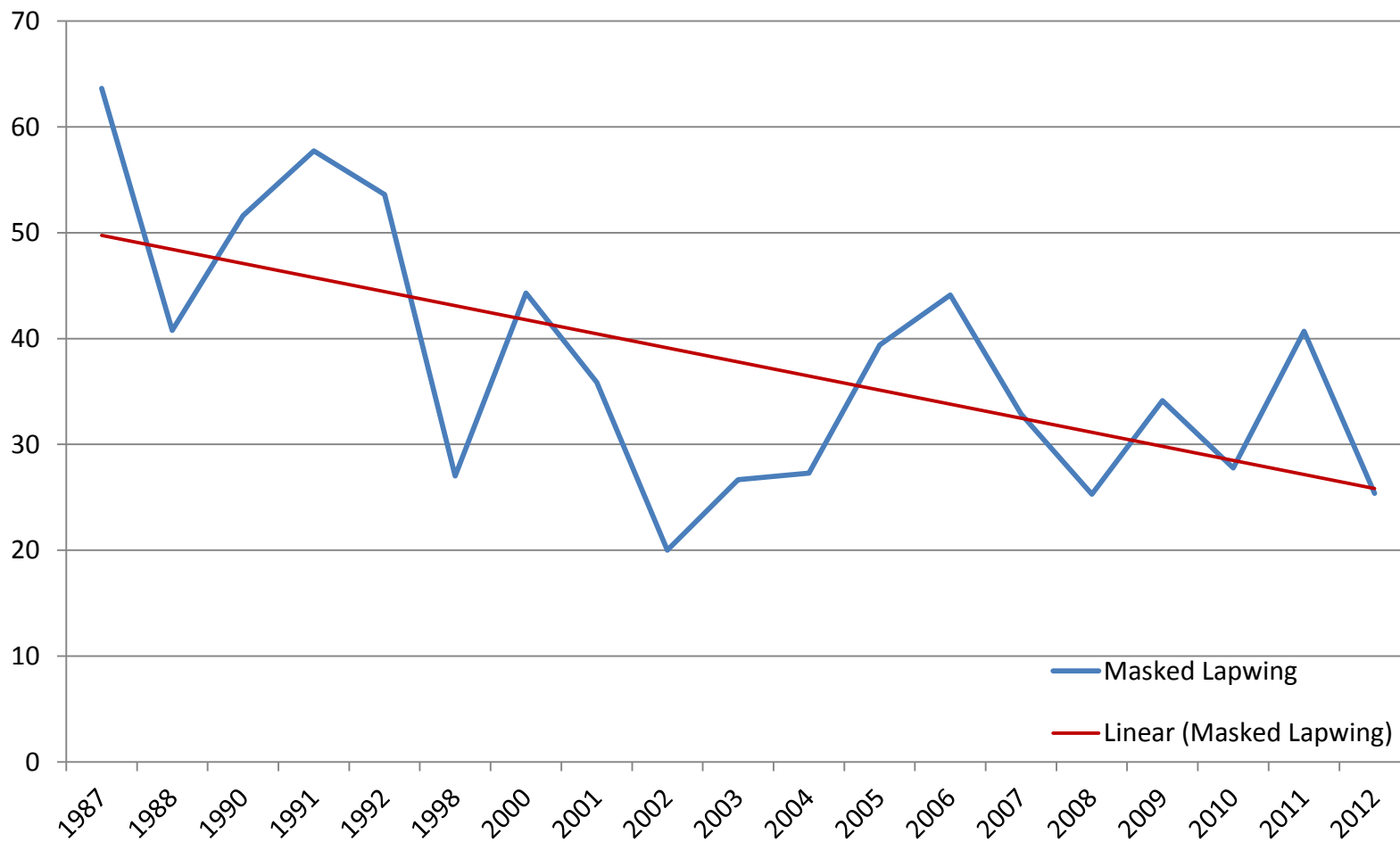
Little Pied Cormorant



Masked Lapwing Photo Chris Healey



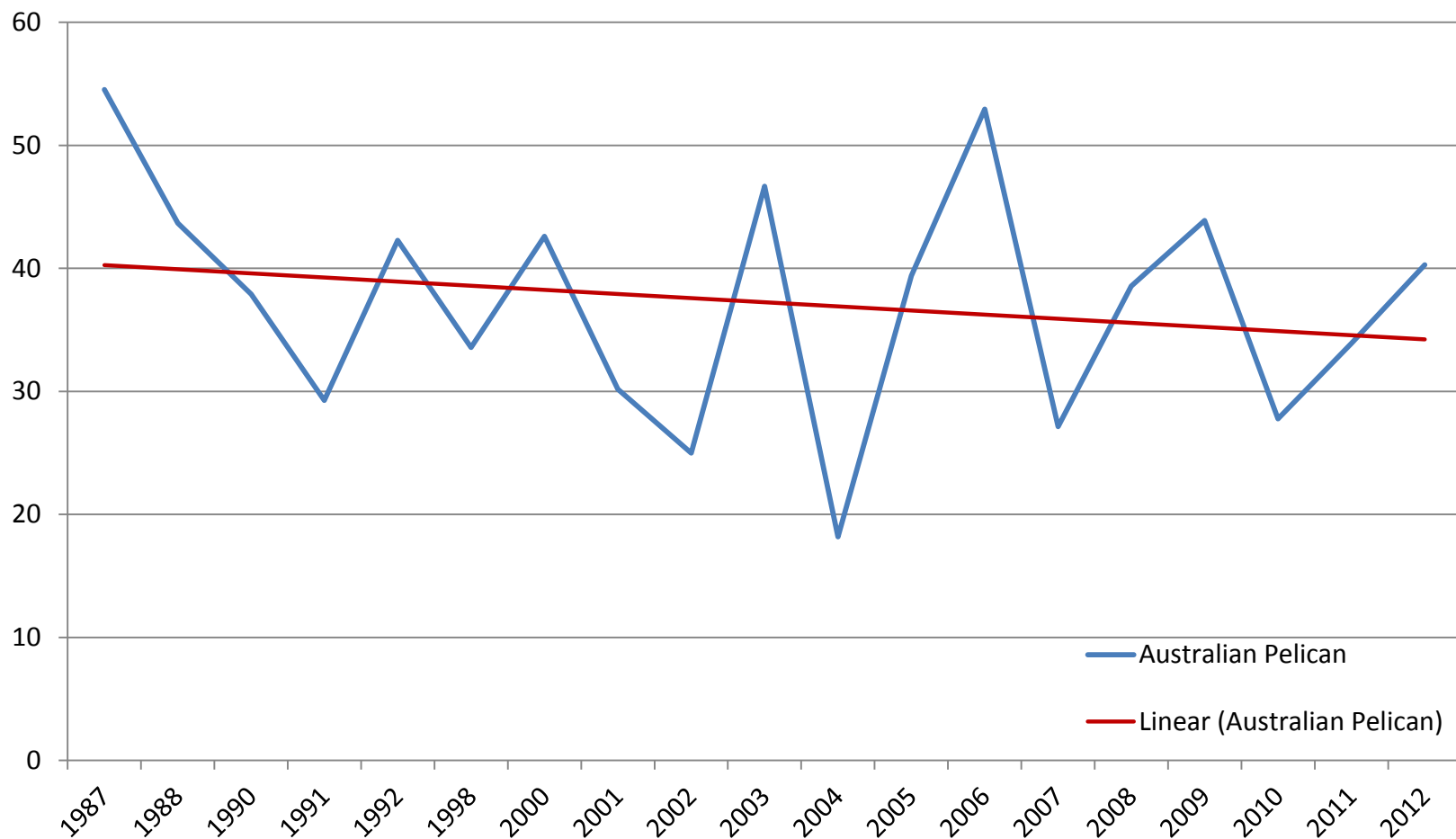
Masked Lapwing



Australian Pelican (and Little Black Cormorant) Photo John Hutchison



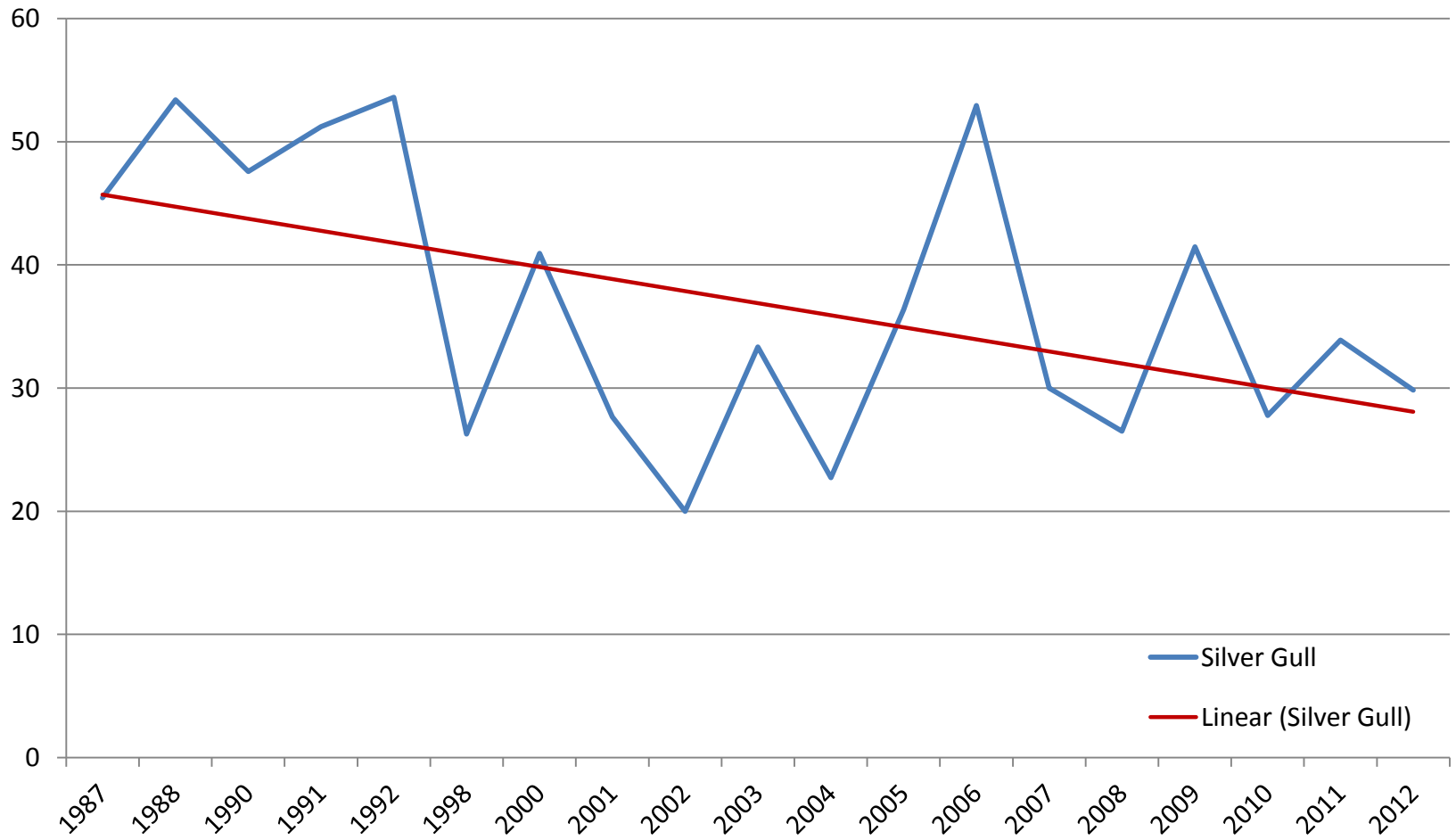
Australian Pelican





Silver Gull Photo Chris Healey

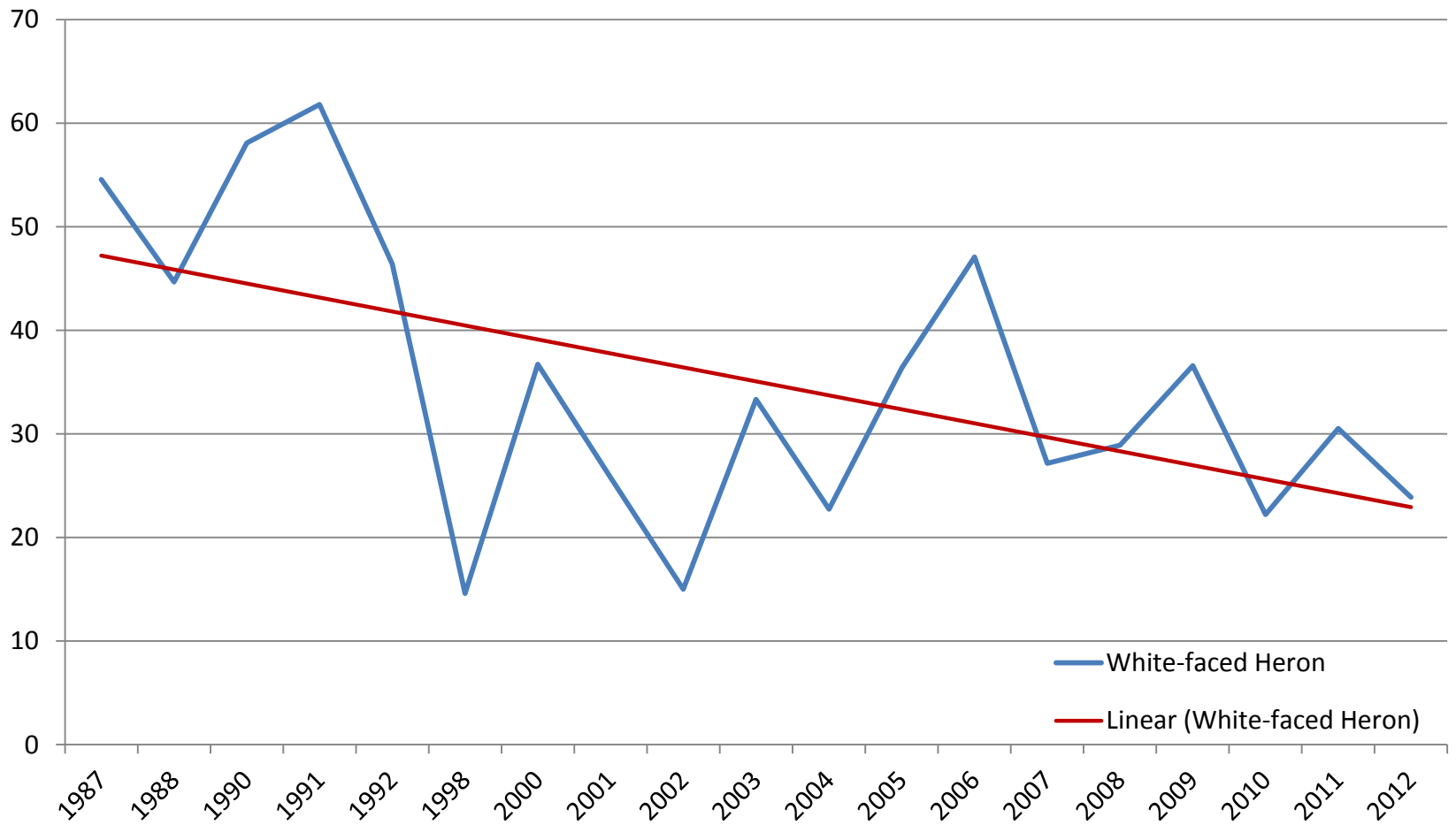
Silver Gull





White-faced Heron Photo John Hutchison

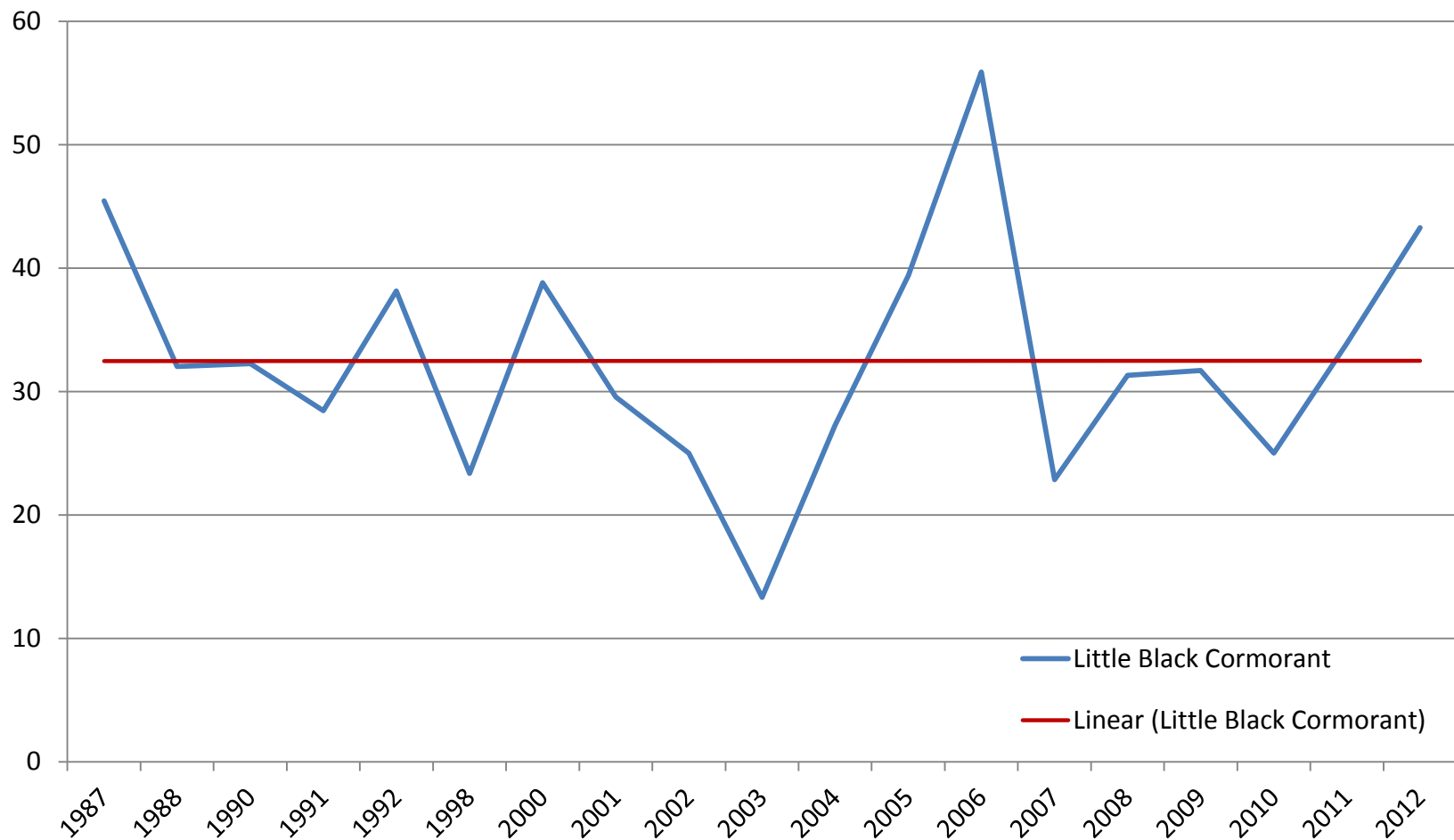
White-faced Heron



Little Black Cormorant Photo Chris Healey



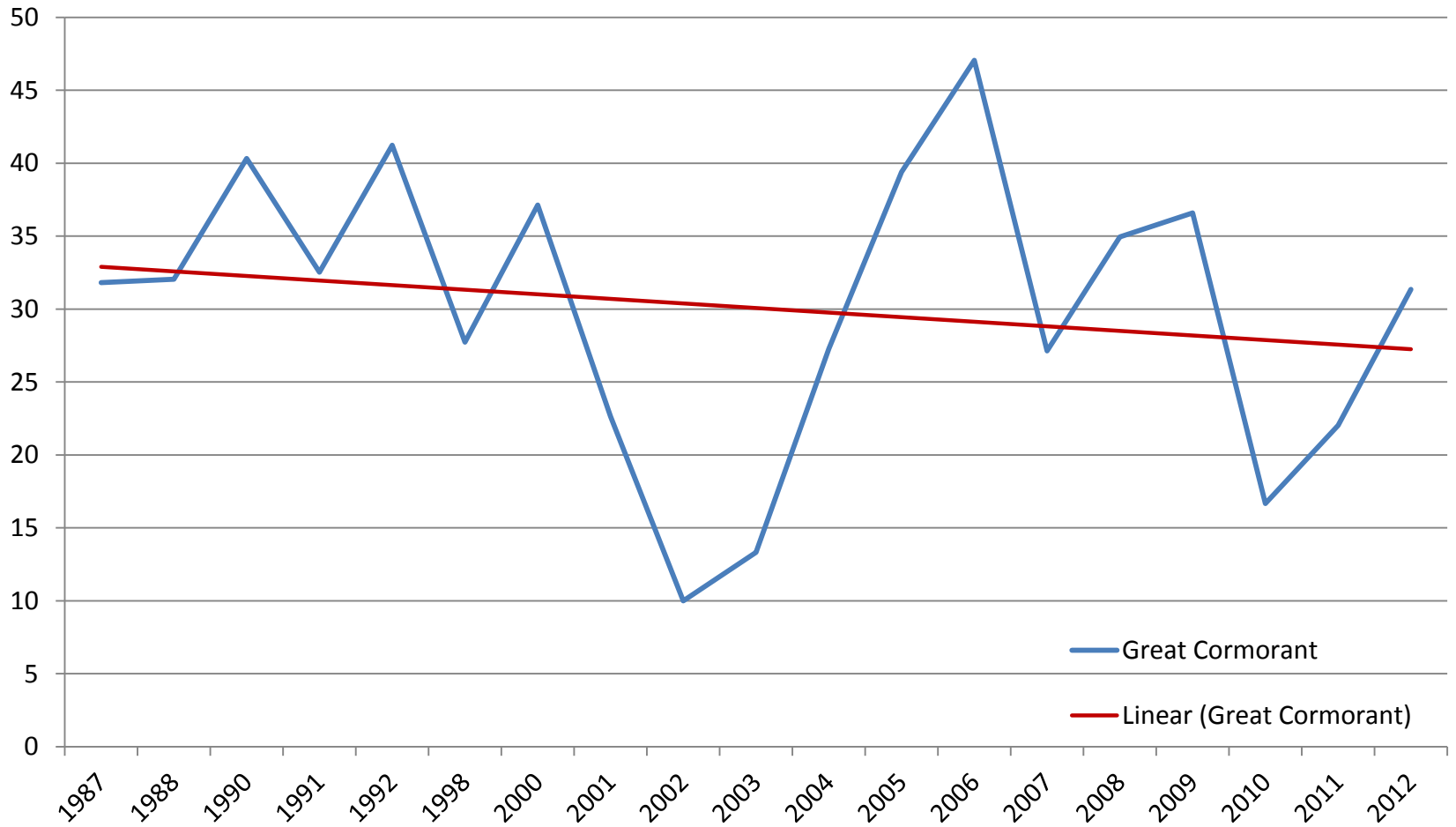
Little Black Cormorant



Great Cormorant Photo John Hutchison



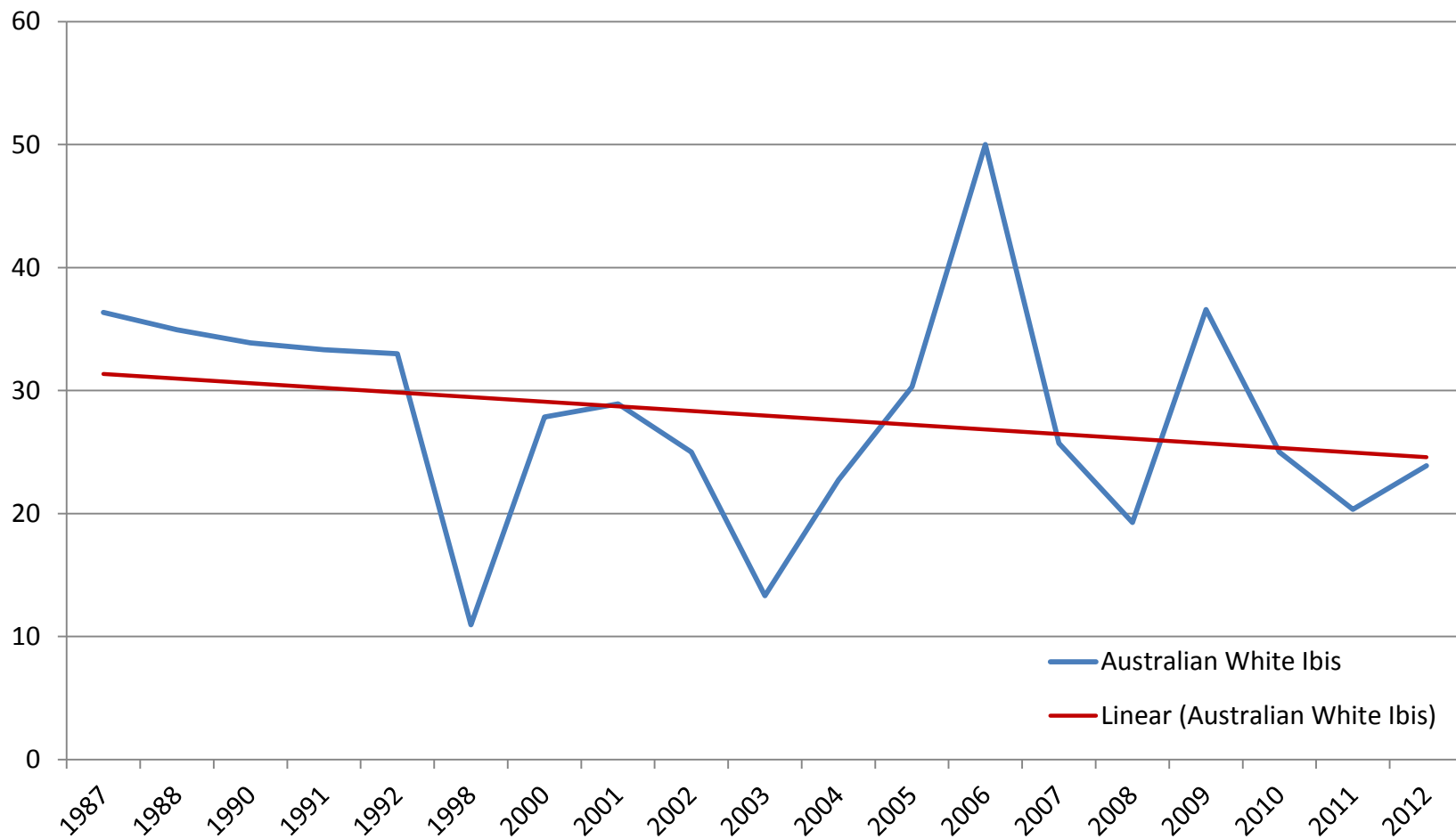
Great Cormorant





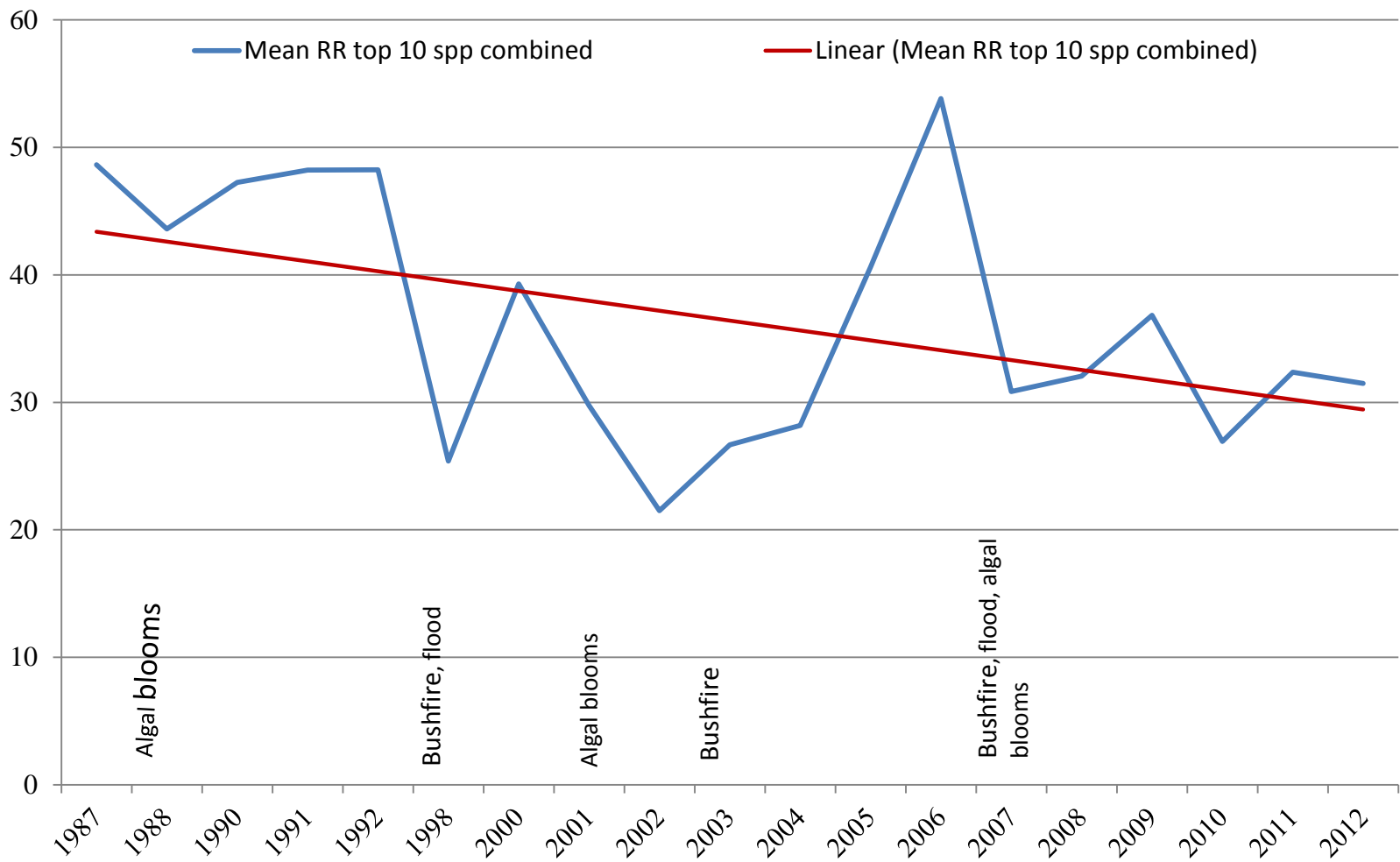
White Ibis Photo John Hutchison

Australian White Ibis





Mean RR top 10 spp combined



THE MESSAGE OF THESE GRAPHS?

The most common, widespread & numerous waterbirds in GLIBA are **all in decline** (except Little Black Cormorant)

Similar situation for many other species – though some are increasing (e.g. Black Duck)

Major troughs in Reporting Rates coincide with ‘**notable ecological events**’ within **GLIBA**

Peak Report Rate in 2006 may be associated with progressive drought across SE Australia – GLIBA a refuge for birds as inland waters dry up

Highlight the importance of **long term** records to pick up trends

BIRDLIFE EAST GIPPSLAND GLIBA PROJECT

surveys every 6 months of
wetland birds

Standard 20-minute surveys
at 17 sites

Data to BirdLife Australia
Atlas Project and national
'Shorebird 2020' project

Long-term project

**NEW MEMBERS AND
GUEST PARTICIPANTS
WELCOMED!**



BirdLife East Gippsland members try out new spotting scopes at Jones Bay

Contact: eastgippsland@birdlife.org.au

Mobile: 0404 983 383