

**WEEBILL**

Scientific Name: *Smicrornis brevirostris*  
 Atlas Number: 465

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Weebill's common name comes from the short, stubby, pale beak. The eye is pale cream, and there is a pale line above the eye. Weebills are dull grey-brown on the head and olive-brown on the back, and the underparts are buff to yellow. In the south and east of the



photo by Charles Dove

country, the birds are light brown, while northwards and inland they become paler and more yellow. Both sexes are similar in colouration, and young birds can be separated from the adults by their greyer eye.

**SIMILAR SPECIES:**

Many other small mostly brownish coloured Australian birds are similar to the Weebill. Members of the thornbills have varying amounts of spots and streaks around the head and face, while the slightly larger gerygones mostly have red-orange eyes.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

The Weebill is found throughout mainland Australia.

**HABITAT:**

The Weebill inhabits almost any wooded area, with the exception of the wettest forests, but favours open eucalypt forests. It spends most of its time in the canopy, in pairs or small groups. The birds stay in the same area throughout the year.

**SEASONAL MOVEMENTS:**

Sedentary.

**FEEDING:**

Weebills move in active flocks, feeding mainly in the outer edges of the tops of trees. The bill is well suited to taking small scale insects from the leaves; other insect prey is also eaten.

**BREEDING:**

The Weebill's nest is a neatly woven dome, made from grasses and other fine vegetation. It has a narrow spout-like entrance towards the top. The interior of the nest is lined with feathers and soft vegetable matter. The female alone incubates the eggs, but both parents care for the young birds.

Cover text courtesy of <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

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**Founded in 1977**

**Club's Aim:**

To join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the bird life around them.

**ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.**

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 P.O. BOX 56 FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519  
[www.iboc.com.au](http://www.iboc.com.au)

**CLUB CONTACTS**

**Address All Email Correspondence to**  
[info@iboc.org.au](mailto:info@iboc.org.au)

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>PRESIDENT :</b>      | Ross Gowans               |
| <b>VICE PRESIDENT</b>   | Pam Hazelwood             |
| <b>SECRETARY:</b>       | Andy Knowlson             |
| <b>TREASURER &amp;</b>  |                           |
| <b>MEMBERSHIP :</b>     | Ken Brown                 |
| <b>EDITORS:</b>         | Charles Dove, Janina Dove |
| <b>RECORDS OFFICER:</b> | Darryl Goldrick           |

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## JUNE ACTIVITIES

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### GENERAL MEETING

**Club Meeting** 7.30pm Monday 12th June 2023

Fairy Meadow Community Hall, Cnr. Cambridge Ave and Princes Hwy. Fairy Meadow.

The meeting presentation will be from Alana and Greg Dare on Australian Birds: Crakes, Rails plus Painted Snipes, includes a video.

*Please bring a plate of 'goodies' and a mug for supper after the meeting.*

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### MIDWEEK OUTING

Midweek Walk Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Leaders Andrew & Anna Knowlson

**Hooka Point, Berkeley – 9.00am start.**

Parking – Meet at the carpark at the end of Houlborn Street and Sussex Street, Berkeley. We will do the circular walk around Hooka Point and after morning tea will cross the bridge across Hooka Creek to the bushland adjacent to the Berkeley Sports Fields.

*In the event of inclement weather phone Andrew on 0427 757 109*

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### MONTHLY OUTING

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Leaders Ken & Sue Brown

**Lisa Road Wilton and Cordeaux Dam – Meet at 9.00 am**

Cordeaux Dam doesn't open to the public until 10.00 am, so we will start with a walk along Lisa Road near Wilton and then come back to the Dam for morning tea before a walk and lunch.

We will meet at 9.00 am about halfway along Lisa Road. To get there, follow Picton Road from Wollongong and continue past the turn off to Cordeaux Dam. About 5.5 km further on take the turn off to the right marked "Douglas Park / Appin" into Macarthur Drive. The turn into Lisa Road is on the left, 1.6 km along Macarthur Drive. The Brahma Kumaris spiritual learning centre is on the corner. Drive about 400 m along Lisa Road. There is space for parking beside the road, opposite the Parelli Horsemanship Centre. We will walk along the road and then return to the cars.

After the Lisa Road walk, we will drive back to Cordeaux Dam. Turn into the car park on the left and we will meet in the south-east corner of the picnic area. After morning tea we will walk around the picnic area and then down to the dam. Alternatively, you can drive down to the dam. Lunch will be back at the cars in the picnic area.

*In the event of inclement weather phone Ken on 0438 298 057*

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### NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

**Next Committee Meeting**

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023 7.00pm

Committee Meeting via Zoom

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### NEWSLETTER

**DEADLINE 24<sup>th</sup> June**

For all articles & photos in the next IBOC newsletter PLEASE E-mail contributions:  
To Charles Dove Email [newsletter@iboc.org.au](mailto:newsletter@iboc.org.au)  
or post to 55/303 Spring St, Kearney's Spring, Toowoomba QLD 4350.

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# CLUB REPORTS

## MAY MEETING

The weather made a sudden change to winter; the weekend had already been cold and Monday evening was not much warmer. Despite this we still had a good turnout for the meeting. The sightings were low in numbers.

So, I can only conclude that people must have been interested to hear our presenter, Kieran Tapsell, talking about the history of the First Nations People of Illawarra.

We were told that the intentions of the first white settlers was to be peaceful in this new settlement and that originally the first nations people were not aggressive. Over time disputes grew and disease took a heavy toll on the original peoples. Despite this, they still continued to assist white settlers who found themselves in trouble. There was at least three shipwrecks that settlers and seamen only survived due to assistance given by the original peoples.

Over time disputes grew and it reached a point where the governing powers ordered

Thank you, Kieran  
Ross Gowans

what was a war against the first nations people.

This was by no means a unanimous view amongst the settlers: there were dissenting voices, including the first Catholic bishop who voiced his opposition to the treatment of the first nations people. He was not a lone voice.

I could try and recall more of this story but my recollections are not the greatest.

So, if anybody wishes to learn more on this subject and hear more stories, Kieran's book is called "Tales of Old and New From Stanwell Park, Reminiscences of a Local". It is available online both on Kindle or in print. Kieran also noted that in the printed book the photos are in black and white due to the intricacies of printing online.

All in all, an interesting presentation that prompted some thought and certainly discussion at the time.

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## MIDWEEK OUTING

Wednesday 10th May 2023

**Wollongong Greenhouse Park**

by Pam Hazelwood.

On a cold morning a group of 17 members assembled at the park. The park is a small part of the original Tom Thumb Lagoon wetland which covered around 500 Ha. The larger wetland has been "improved" over the years by dredging to make a deep-water port and the material produced used to reclaim land. The Greenhouse Park site was used as a builder's tip from 1960 to 1991. Instead of wetland with salt marsh and mangroves the park, now a huge mound, has been lovingly revegetated with native trees and shrubs to produce a refuge for birds and animal life. The Green and Golden Bell Frog is also resident.

Chris led the group on the lower track through tall trees to a small area where the remnant mangrove still survives. White ibis, Yellow Robin, Brown and Yellow Thornbills were seen here. The group then walked to the eastern boundary of the park where we found a tank with many tadpoles. What frog species was debated but without resolution. At this point most made their way through long grass up to the bare top of the mound and the lookout and what a lookout it is! From views to the north and the southern end of Wollongong Golf Course, to the industries east and south. An informative sign identifies the industries that can be seen. From this viewpoint a Brown Falcon and a Brown Goshawk were seen circling around in the thermals above. Superb Fairy-Wrens danced about in long grass and small shrubs as we looked.



Back at the picnic spot out of the wind and in the sun, we held our annual Cancer Council Big Morning Tea. With tables supplied by the Browns, tablecloth and bunting decorated by Ann Cousins we set about demolishing the many treats supplied by our members. A total of \$400 was raised from generous donations of those present.



After morning tea Chris led the group on the middle track which wound around the middle level of the huge mound. Some members remained at the picnic site and had a nap in the sun or watched the feral, but still beautiful, Red-whiskered Bulbuls foraging in nearby trees. The wandering group returned and Jann read out the list of sightings; 35 species. Thanks to Chris for reminding us of this hidden gem.

Greenhouse Park/Tom Thumb Lagoon 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2023		17 Members	35 Species
Australian Wood Duck	White-faced Heron	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail
Rock Dove	Australian White Ibis	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Raven
Spotted Dove	Brown Goshawk	Brown Thornbill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Eurasian Coot	Brown Falcon	Yellow Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Masked Lapwing	Rainbow Lorikeet	Black-faced Cuckooshrike	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Silver Gull	Superb Fairywren	Golden Whistler	Silvereye
Little Pied Cormorant	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	Red-browed Finch
Pied Cormorant	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	European Goldfinch
Australian Pelican	Little Wattlebird	Willie Wagtail	

eBird checklist numbers S137008215.=

## WEEKEND WALK

Sunday 14th May 2023

### SAND LOOP TRACK AT SEVEN MILE BEACH

By Anna Knowlson

The scheduled walk for Sunday 14th of May unfortunately also clashed with Mother's Day and we had several people notify us early that they would not be able to attend. (NOTE to Committee for future reference - Don't include a Sunday walk in May !!). But we had, so Andrew and I were prepared to lead the walk. The next complication was that overnight the weather turned nasty and early morning rain brought some others cancelling. However, Tera and Neil Wheway rang and said they were still coming. So, we headed south to the Beach Picnic Area at Seven Mile Beach, as we got down past Kiama the weather improved and there was no rain down at Gerroa. Only the 4 of us turned up but another hardy group of walkers were meeting at the same location to walk on the southern Sand Loop Track. Red-wattlebird and Grey Butcherbird were heard at the Picnic Area along with Rainbow Lorikeets flying over. Just after 9am we four headed off on the northern Sand Loop Track and although it was a bit quiet bird wise to start with a good catch-up chat was had. As the sun came out the birds increased and we heard and then located Yellow, Brown and Striated Thornbills. Yellow Robins, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Grey Fantails were along the track which was very flat and ran along behind the dunes on the east side of the Gerroa Road. After about an hour we turned around to head back for morning tea. On the return trip we were able to see the White-throated Treecreeper that we had been hearing and also found a male Golden Whistler with a Grey Shrike Thrush just to confuse us. Some rustling at the top of the gum trees turned out to be a flock of Top-knot Pigeons and we got good views. After a nice morning tea in the picnic shelter,

we strolled out to the beach to see what was about. The ocean was quite flat and no flying off-shore birds were found but a raft of large unidentified White birds bobbed up in the wave's way out near the horizon, also a Sooty Oystercatcher was seen some way off to the north at the water's edge. A detour through the bush back to the picnic area turned up more little Thornbills again, a Mistletoe Bird and Spotted Pardalote to add some colour. The crowds were gathering so we had a quick picnic lunch and headed off, saving the southern Sand Loop Track for another day.

Seven Mile Beach NP	14 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	4 Members	27 Species
Topknot Pigeon	White-throated Treecreeper	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Butcherbird
Sooty Oystercatcher	Superb Fairywren	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Fantail
Silver Gull	Lewin's Honeyeater	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven
Laughing Kookaburra	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Striated Thornbill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Australian King-Parrot	Little Wattlebird	Brown Gerygone	Silvereye
Crimson Rosella	Red Wattlebird	Grey Shrike-thrush	Mistletoebird
Rainbow Lorikeet	New Holland Honeyeater	Golden Whistler	

eBird checklist numbers S137804755.

## **IBOC SPRING CAMP 2023**

**Wednesday 30 August to Sunday 3 September (5 nights)**

**Location: Riverwood Downs Resort  
311 Upper Monkerai Road, Monkerai – NW of Stroud**

**Phone: 1800 809 772**

**Cabin accommodation and Powered campsites available.**

Spring Camp will be early this year and will be held over 5 nights again, arriving on a Wednesday and leaving on Monday morning.

**Please make PHONE BOOKINGS for Cabins ASAP (preferably by the end of April or early May) as this Resort is popular and may book out quickly.**

**Also, when you are booking, please let the Resort know you are with the Illawarra Bird Observers Club (IBOC).**

Once you have made your booking, please let me know by E-mail on [knowlsons@bigpond.com](mailto:knowlsons@bigpond.com).

**Anna Knowlson – IBOC Camp Coordinator**

**BIG MORNING TEA**

Hi Anne Cousins,

**Thank you so much for your donation**

On behalf of Cancer Council NSW, I would like to thank you for your fundraising efforts and deposit of \$400.00 towards Australia's Biggest Morning Tea.

Your support funds life-saving research, prevention programs, and vital support services like our Information and Support line 13 11 20, for people across Australia impacted by cancer. As a majority community funded organisation, we couldn't do it without our community of compassionate supporters, so, **thank you**.

*"I reached out, and the health professional who took my call listened to my concerns and navigated me to supportive care services like counselling which helped me copy. It would be a completely different story if I hadn't reached out. That support was life-saving".*

*– Cancer survivor, Bridget, after calling 13 11 20*

We've attached a receipt for your collection to this email. Please note this is not tax-deductible.

**Learn more**



**Your impact**

You're changing lives.  
Here's how you've made a difference.



**Reduce your cancer risk**

Healthy lifestyle choices will help reduce your cancer risk.

To find out more about how you are making a real difference, click on the images above, [visit our website](#) or call us on 1300 65 65 85.

**Thanks again, Anne Cousins. With your support, we're one step closer to a cancer free future.**

Kindest regards,  
Cancer Council NSW team

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**Cancer Council NSW Receipt**

**Received From:**  
Anne Cousins

**Constituent ID:** CO2899228

**Address:**  
U 111 14a Bonaira St  
KIAMA NSW 2533

**Receipt Number:** INV04449545

**Date:** 10/05/2023

**Donation:** \$400.00

**Cancer Council NSW ABN:** 51 116 463 846

Check out our website and social channels to stay in touch with the incredible Cancer Council Community.



Cancer Council acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout NSW and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past, present, and emerging.

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## SIGHTINGS –

**please report your sightings be what they may be. No need to be a rare or unusual sightings, even though it is preferred. We still need to keep track of our bird species population to view any obvious changes either an increase or decrease in any of our native species.**

*Email all your bird sightings to Darryl Goldrick at  
[to email click sightings](#)*

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### Links

#### **Rare black cockatoo with white feathers carries '1 in 30,000' mutation**

A clean capture of a rare leucistic Baudin's black cockatoo has put to rest a rumour which had been circulating among the bird lovers of Margaret River. [Read the full story](#) Shared from [ABC app](#)

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#### **Leucistic Grey Fantail**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-30/rare-white-willie-wagtail-leucistic-delights-birders/102277642>

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#### **Student's innovative design a game-changer in safeguarding wildlife populations - CSU News**

<https://news.csu.edu.au/in-brief/students-innovative-design-a-game-changer-in-safeguarding-wildlife-populations>

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#### **Why birds and their songs are good for our mental health - Washington Post**

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/interactive/2023/birds-song-nature-mental-health-benefits/>

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#### **Two in the bush: The quest to save Australia's wildlife**

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/two-in-the-bush-the-quest-to-save-australia-s-wildlife-20230418-p5d1g1.html?btis>

## ARTICLES AND NOTICES OF INTEREST

### **CURRAWONG COPING, CONCEIVABLY**

Mike Morphet

The Pied Currawong with scaly mite disease first appeared in my Thirroul backyard early June last year and has since made periodic visits, cashing in on some blueberries and diced figs, primarily left out for the resident Satin Bowerbird. Photographs I've taken in the interim suggest the disease has been gradually spreading, and the questions remain as to how far the mites will continue their subcutaneous tunnelling and breeding and for how long this bird will cope with this affliction and survive. Wikipedia states this species can live to over twenty years in the wild. Its three front claws are partially covered, but that of its first toe (hallux) stretching backwards appears as yet unaffected. It seems to take off, land and perch without any difficulty. And, as a function of temperature regulation, it will from time to time raise one leg and tuck the foot into its breast feathers. But how does it manage to scratch its body feathers successfully as part of its preening behaviour? This urbanised omnivorous, opportunistic and nest-predator species is generally far from popular with us humans: in German it is called Dickschnabel-Würgerkrähe - the literal translation being thick-bill slayer-crow! Its family name Artamidae hails from the Greek for butcher. Like the clever Blue Tits in Britain had done, they reportedly learnt how to pierce with their larger beaks the foil tops on milk bottles in Sydney suburbs in the 1960s<sup>1</sup>. But I can't help but feel some sympathy towards this particular individual, which, without my being too anthropomorphic, seems to display a fair degree of stoicism. These two photographs were taken on May 19.



Whilst I've nicknamed this bird Clubfoot, over time the species has been given many common names, some of which have been given to replicate their call; such as chillawong, currawang, tullawong, tallawong, charawack, and kurrawack. But how did it acquire 'pied afternoon-tea bird'<sup>2</sup>? One that you'd invite to your table to dine? Or to be eaten? According to Ian Fraser and Jeannie Gray<sup>3</sup>, quoting Irish-born Secretary of the Zoological Society of London, Nicholas Vigors and American naturalist, Dr Thomas Horsfield<sup>4</sup> in 1827, colonists deemed it "very good eating, except the hinder parts, which have a strong goatish smell." At a pinch, I'd opt for nothing more than a very small portion of hot curried currawong breast.

<sup>1</sup>*Backyard Buddies: An educational initiative of FNPW [Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife] website.* <sup>2</sup>*Wikipedia.* <sup>3</sup>*Australian Bird Names: Origins and Meanings, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2019).* <sup>4</sup>*Bo Beolens & Michael Watkins: Whose Bird? Men and women commemorated in the common names of birds (2003).*

**April 19: a bountiful day for Laughing Kookaburras.** Members have been regular visitors to my robinia over the past few weeks, generally resting up on branches and looking out for prey. This day one flew in, followed by another, which then received in its beak something sizable from the other: a young eastern water dragon, which was still wriggling. The bird remained in the tree for several minutes, making intermittent calls similar to what Michael Morcombe describes as "some low grinding 'growk-growk' noises". These were accompanied by the occasional chomping of its mandibles, as if to tenderise the reptile. At one point it looked like it was about to swallow the water dragon as its head was positioned to head down the throat, but no, even though it was 'bereft of life". The bird, which I wondered might have been a young one, took off, still carrying its food supply. Mike Morphett



Barely half an hour later another kookaburra appeared with something in its bill: a good size praying mantis, likewise wriggling, but not for long. Silently the bird gobbled it down and then looked around for something else to eat.

## Monthly Sightings: April/May 2023

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

SPECIES	N <sup>o</sup>	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Australasian Grebe	3	4/05/2023	Puckey's Lagoon	On the water	Ken Brown
Sooty Oystercatcher	1	23/05/2023	Coledale Beach	washed-up seaweed	Mike Morphett
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	24/05/2024	Towradgi Pool	On beach south of pool	Ken Brown
Sooty Oystercatcher	1	25/05/2023	Shellharbour Village - Harbour	Rockshelf	Darryl Goldrick
Tawny Frogmouth	1	5/05/2023	Corrimal	Front yard	Carly Weatherly
Masked Lapwing	3	23/05/2023	Coledale Beach	tideline	Mike Morphett
Masked Lapwing	2	5/05/2023	Kiama - Beach	Parkland oceanside	Alan/Anne Cousins
Crested Tern	4 Ad + 2 juv	23/05/2023	Coledale Beach	tideline	Mike Morphett
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	2	18/05/2023	Balgownie	Neighbour's Banksias demolishing cones	Pam Hazelwood & Neil McKinlay
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	5	23/05/2023	Balgownie	Feeding in banksia in William street	Pam Hazelwood
Kelp Gull	4 + Ad + 2 Juv	25/05/2023	Shellharbour - Harbour	Rockshelf	Darryl Goldrick
Pied Cormorant	1	5/05/2023	Kiama	Beach - ocean side	Alan/Anne Cousins
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	18/05/2023	Soaring over escarpment	Balgownie	Pam & Neil McKinlay
Long-billed Corella	2	26/04/2023	Corrimal	Park behind Shell Service Station, with flock of Cockatoos	Ken Brown
Laughing Kookaburra	5	22/05/2023	Gunya Park Dempster St West Wollongong	Suburban park	Chris. Cartledge
Green Catbird	1	8/05/2023	Balgownie	Backyard	Christine Steinmann
Green Catbird	1	4/05/2023	Wollongong	Rainforest-Kooloobong Village Garden (UOW)	Neil McKinlay
Noisy Friarbird	1	15/05/2023	Bulli Grevillea Park	forest canopy	Mike Morphett
Grey Butcherbird	1	25/05/2023	Oak Flats Princes H'Way Interchange	Powerline	Darryl Goldrick
Rufous Fantail	1	30/04/2023	Park at end of Ellenbrook Way Albion Park	Creekside vegetation with other small birds	Anna Knowlson
Eastern Yellow Robin	2	8/05/2023	Tarrawanna - residential	Backyard Tea-Tree	Sue Brown

*Last month I incorrectly published a sighting of Red-Tailed Black-Cockatoo. The R-T B-C are confined to the Barka Darling River in NSW from the Qld border to about Menindee in the Redgum/Coolabah woodlands of the Darling River flood plains Whereas in eastern NSW there are only Glossy Cockatoos. It would appear that the sighting was more likely the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. There has been several sightings (myself included) of small flocks flying over the M1 Freeway between Kanahooka and Figtree.*

*Email all your bird sightings to Darryl Goldrick at  
to email click sightings*

<https://www.iboc.com.au/>

*Remember there is ample room on the back page for listing sightings, otherwise it makes it difficult for Charlie to search for additional 'fill-in' news items. Darryl*