



THE IIBOCC

N E W S L E T T E R

Issue No. 474

ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB INC NEWSLETTER

November 2022

FRECKLED DUCK

Scientific Name: *Stictonetta naevosa*

Atlas Number: 214

Description

The Freckled Duck is a dark greyish-brown duck with a large head that is peaked at the rear, and a distinctive narrow and slightly upturned bill. The dark brown plumage is evenly freckled all over with white or buff. During the breeding season the male's bill becomes crimson at the base. The Freckled Duck is also known as Canvasback, Oatmeal Duck, Speckled Duck and the Diamantina Duck



photo by Charles Dove

Similar species:

The Freckled Duck is very unique and is not normally confused with other species of ducks.

Distribution:

The Freckled Duck is found primarily in the south east and south west of Australia, occurring as a vagrant elsewhere. It breeds in large temporary swamps created by floods in the Bulloo and Lake Eyre Basins and the Murray Darling System.

Habitat:

The Freckled Duck prefers permanent fresh water swamps and creeks with heavy growth of cumbungi (bullrushes), lignum or tea-tree. During drier times, the Freckled Duck moves from ephemeral (not permanent) breeding swamps to more permanent waters such as lakes, reservoirs, farm dams and sewerage ponds. They generally rest in dense cover.

Seasonal movements:

The Freckled Duck is forced to disperse during long inland droughts. The species may occur as far south as coastal New South Wales and Victoria during such times.

Feeding:

Freckled Ducks feed at dawn and dusk and at night on algae, seeds and vegetative parts of aquatic grasses and sedges and small invertebrates.

Breeding:

Nesting usually occurs between October and December but can take place at other times when conditions are favourable. Nests are usually located at or near water level, and are made from finely woven twigs with a layer of down. Males remain with females during early incubation, but the female does all of the incubation and rearing of the young.

Living with us

Threats to the Freckled Duck include draining and clearing of wetlands and swamp habitat; changes to natural river flow and flood as a result of dams, weirs and irrigation, grazing and trampling of wetland habitat by stock, and illegal shooting. This species is listed as Vulnerable in New South Wales.

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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CLUB CONTACTS

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VICE PRESIDENT	Pam Hazelwood
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MEMBERSHIP :	Ken Brown
EDITORS:	Charles Dove, Janina Dove
RECORDS OFFICER:	Darryl Goldrick

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

GENERAL MEETING

General Meeting and AGM - 7.30pm Monday 14 November 2022

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

This will be the IBOC AGM followed by a Members Night so that Club Members can give a short presentation. If you would like to make a presentation, please contact Ross Gowans on info@iboc.org.au to let him know before the meeting.

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

MIDWEEK OUTING

Wednesday 16th November 2022

Macquarie Rivulet: 9.00 am

Leaders Bill & Joan Zealey

Meet at **9.00am** at the northern end of Shearwater Boulevard.

If you are coming from Wollongong leave the M1 at the Princes Highway Albion Park Rail exit. Drive south to Albion Park Rail along the Princes Highway. Turn left at the lights at Creamery Road and cross the railway. Continue to the "T" junction and turn left into Koono Street. Continue north along Koono St./ Shearwater Drive and park near the playground at the end of Shearwater Drive. Easy walking. Bring morning tea. Be sure to bring plenty of insect repellent and sunscreen.



In the event of inclement weather
Phone Bill on 0414747644.

MONTHLY OUTING

Sunday 20th November 2022 at 9am

Killalea Regional Park

leaders Alan and Anne Cousins

Take the Princes Highway south to the Shell Cove exit and follow brown signs to park. Meet in the car park by the toilets/cafe at 9am. **Bring morning tea and lunch**

In the event of inclement weather contact Alan or Anne Cousins on 0413869534 by 8am

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Next Committee Meeting

Monday 21st November 2022 7.00pm

Committee Meeting via Zoom

NEWSLETTER

DEADLINE 25th November

For all articles & photos in the next IBOC newsletter PLEASE E-mail contributions: To Charles Dove Email newsletter@iboc.org.au or post to 1/13 Horrocks Crescent, Kearney's Spring, Toowoomba QLD 4350.

Christmas BBQ – 4.30pm Monday 12 December 2022,
Integral Energy Park, Darkes Road, Kembla Grange.
More details will be in the December Newsletter.

CLUB REPORTS

CLUB MEETING REPORT

Monday 10th October 2022

Speakers for the night were Anna & Andrew Knowlson who spoke of their recent trip to Mornington in the Kimberly region, a property operated by Australian Wildlife Conservancy. It is south of the Gibb River road and north of the main highway east. They flew to Broome and then on by light plane to the Mornington sanctuary where they saw Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens from the verandah of their accommodation. Other memorable sightings included White-quilled Rock Pigeons, Crimson Finches, Long-tailed Finches, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos and Gouldian Finches. On a visit to Lake Argyle they spotted Yellow Chats.

Andrew did the talking but Anna behind the scenes prepared the photos and sequencing for the talk. The experience of riding in a helicopter to places on the property and the fantastic scenery made us all wish we had gone too. For some us it revived trips from the past or hopes of trips in the future. The only downside of this adventure was that they caught COVID on the trip home. We thank them for their presentation, well done.

Pam Hazelwood

Midweek outing

Wednesday 12th October 2022

Bass Point, Wednesday 12th October 2022

By Jann Gowans

We arrived a few minutes late to join the group for a total of 10 of us on a cool, grey morning. Birds were all around, Red-browed Finches on the ground, a Fan-tailed Cuckoo on a dead branch, Eastern Whipbirds calling and a male Satin Bowerbird with lots of others flitting around. We set off to look over the water where several Humpback Whales close in lolled around, much to the group's delight. There was also a raptor on the gravel loader which was confirmed as an Eastern Osprey, thanks to Pam's photography. A few cormorants were also added to the tally and a White-faced Heron took off to reveal itself.

As we ambled on, more birds were identified, despite the glare. Two Eastern Spinebills chased each other at great speed, making identification very tricky but White-browed Scrubwrens, Grey Fantails and a Shining Bronze-cuckoo were more co-operative. After morning tea at the picnic area, the group headed to the point to see shearwater, most likely Short-tailed but difficult to be certain due to the conditions. Eventually everyone made their way back along the road to the cars near the entrance. We had walked further than we realised... In the end, it was a good effort with 39 species and the timing was good as it started raining on our drive home. Thanks to those who made the effort to attend and to Bill and Joan for a good outing!

Bird List for Bass Point Walk 12 th October 2022		10 Members	39 Species
Pacific Black Duck	White-faced Heron	Little Wattlebird	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Koel	Osprey	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Grey Goshawk	New Holland Honeyeater	Magpie-lark
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Osprey	White-browed Scrubwren	Australian Raven
Silver Gull	Crimson Rosella	Brown Thornbill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Crested Tern	Satin Bowerbird	Yellow Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Short-tailed Shearwater	Variiegated Fairywren	Eastern Whipbird	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Little Pied Cormorant	Superb Fairywren	Golden Whistler	Silvereeye
Great Cormorant	Eastern Spinebill	Grey Butcherbird	Red-browed Finch
Little Black Cormorant	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	

Ebird reference: S120572416

Images from the Bass Point outing courtesy Pam Hazelwood



White-browed Scrubwren



Eastern Whipbird



Variegated Fairy-wren



Brown Goshawk

WEEKEND OUTING
Saturday 15th October 2022

Royal National Park,

By Jann Gowans

Question: how many people does it take for an IBOC outing? **Answer:** two, in this case! That’s right. Probably due to a combination of uncertainty about the outing with news that the fearless leaders, Alan and Anne Cousins, were sick with COVID, and birders on the injury bench or away, Ross and I were it. However, it was a beautiful, sunny spring day (which are in short supply lately?) and the birds were plentiful. We even encountered birders from Birdlife NSW.

A Wonga Pigeon was heard persistently calling along with the kakakak of a Dollarbird nearby. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were raucously calling and flying to and fro with a few Little Corellas in the mix. Wood Ducks were seen with varying sizes and ages of ducklings. As it had been wet and muddy, we confined our early wanderings to the Wattle Forest grassy area before heading to Figtree Flat for a cuppa. You all missed a glorious morning overlooking the action on the Hacking River and bush beyond. As I was standing and admiring the scenery, an Azure Kingfisher flew to a snag directly in front of me and posed nicely. We then proceeded up Lady Carrington drive where we managed to see a male Cicadabird that we’d heard calling. We suspect there may have been several Cicadabirds as their distinctive calls rang out on both sides of the river. We even located a Sacred Kingfisher nest in a gum tree bole with a pair of birds coming and going. Nesting Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Noisy Miners were also seen.

All in all, we had a fantastic morning and ate our lunch again overlooking the river. The **only thing missing was YOU!** A tally of 39 species was seen in the two locations. Not bad for a few old birdos!

Bird List for RNP Walk 15 th October 2022		2 Members	39 Species
Australian Wood Duck*	Sacred Kingfisher*	Eastern Spinebill	Eastern Whipbird
Pacific Black Duck#	Dollarbird*	Lewin's Honeyeater*	Golden Whistler*
Wonga Pigeon*	Little Corella*	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo*	Noisy Miner*	Grey Butcherbird*
Dusky Moorhen	Australian King Parrot	Little Wattlebird	Australian Magpie*
Australasian Swamphen	Crimson Rosella	Red Wattlebird#	Pied Currawong
Little Pied Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet*	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Fantail*
Little Black Cormorant	Satin Bowerbird	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven
Azure Kingfisher	White-throated Treecreeper*	Brown Gerygone	Eastern Yellow Robin
Laughing Kookaburra*	Superb Fairywren	Common Cicadabird*	

Ebird references: S120740415 and S120741029; * denotes species seen in both locations and # denotes those only seen at Wattle Forest.

NOTICES & ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Beauty in the eye of the beholder of a white-fleshed bird

Mike Morphet

Of the 965 extant and extinct bird species recorded in Wikipedia for Australia and its waters and islands I'd plump for the Wonga Pigeon among the most beautiful and striking, with its composition of grey, white and black colours. It has warranted inclusion among the million-plus designs of fabric, wallpaper and home decor offered by Spoonflower, an online marketplace, from independent artists all over the world. In their Field Guides, Graham Pizzey regards this species as stately and Michael Morcombe distinctive in its markings. Most eye-catching frontally is the double-V shaped pattern, which I liken to a football jersey; Birdlife Australia's view is of a "white scarf wrapped around its neck". At the other end of its body they say some sources have compared the half-moon markings to a piece of broken dead wood; presumably to serve as camouflage. This I couldn't accept until seeing photographs of a breeding bird tilting its tail up well above the rim of the nest, making for a cryptic appearance. There's widespread agreement as to the plumpness of the Wonga Pigeon, which back in the 1900s was to its disadvantage with decline in numbers, along with the threats posed by land clearance, predation by foxes, feral cats and the Powerful Owl, and the shotgun in the name of crop protection and sport. Fortunately, gaining protection itself, its survival is now deemed of least concern by Birdlife International. According to Animal Life Expectancy, an individual can live for up to sixteen years.



Throughout my 43 years' residence in Thirroul I have regularly heard the wonga's 'woo-woo' call (various other glosses have been proposed), chiefly in the wooded old Excelsior Coal Mine site and primarily by just the one bird and occasionally by two in unison some distance apart within the 38-hectare area. To some ears the call has been dismissed as annoying, incessant and monotonous. The same might be said of the 'coo-eing' of the male Eastern Koel that's just recently moved into my neighbourhood. It wasn't until November 2018 that a solitary wonga first arrived in my back garden, which brought me joy. The table of my recorded observations of this species (the same bird?) shows it has gradually become a regular visitor, mainly coinciding, it seems, with its August to January breeding season. It continues to display its characteristic wariness and alertness, but is becoming bolder. No doubt it's been encouraged by watching other species, such as a small group of brown

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018											*	
2019										*		*
2020		*		*			*					*
2021								*	*	*	*	*
2022	*	*		*	*			*	*	*		

cuckoo-doves, that regularly seek my food supplement, it now ventures on to the back verandah. In retreat from any human movement it sees, it either silently hot-foots it (Its legs and feet must be at least twice the size of the doves'.) north-west along the sheltered pathway in the darkened corner or takes off north-east with loud clattering wingbeats. A bird of routine, it seems.

I should be on safe ground by stating that etymologically ‘wonga’ has no connection with the English slang for money; likewise with the woody climbing vine that bears tubular yellowish flowers. However, the name has been applied to the wood fashioned by Aborigines of the Central and Western Deserts to make spears thrown from woomeras. In their book *Australian Bird Names: Origins and Meanings* (2019) Ian Fraser and Jeannie Gray state the word derives “Undoubtedly from an Indigenous language but as usual we don’t know which one...[suggestive] of the Sydney area language groups...and probably onomatopoeic for its truly incessant call.” The authors add that the bird’s genus name *Leucosarcia*, chosen by John Gould, stems from the Greek meaning white flesh, which he attributed to the colonists of New South Wales, who likely compared it with the European wood pigeon. In his book *Birds of Australia* (1848) Gould described the wonga pigeon as “the only species in the Columbidae family blessed (or cursed) with white meat.”



Andrew Dwyer’s roast wonga meal
Hannah Maclurcan 1898>
Mrs Maclurcan’s roast wonga recipe>>

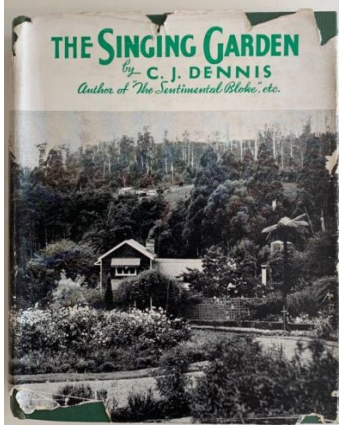


516. Roast Wonga Pigeon

6 pigeons	Juice of 3 lemons
Saltspoonful of cayenne	1/2 lb. butter
Teaspoonful of salt	2 cupfuls of bread crumbs
	1 tablespoonful of chopped parsley

Mode.—Pluck and clean the pigeons nicely, rub them over well with flour, pepper and salt, make a stuffing with half the butter, all of the bread crumbs, chopped parsley and pepper and salt, divide it into six and equally stuff each bird. Then squeeze the lemons into a basin and beat up the butter with the juice until it is like a cream. Place six pigeons in a baking tin and cover each one well with the lemon and butter, place in a smart oven and bake for half or three quarters of an hour; baste them as often as you can. Serve at once with watercress (if obtainable).

On his website (March 2019) Andrew Dwyer, otherwise known as the Cast Iron Cook, has highlighted the bird’s culinary appeal: very tasty and with a delicious fat breast. One bird died instantly when it flew directly (and conveniently?) into his window; he duly plucked it, while still warm, and roasted it with root vegetables, served on a bed of polenta and accompanied with some Barossa Valley wine. He also made reference to the very popular (18 new editions in 30 years) *Mrs Maclauran’s Cookery Book: a collection of practical recipes specially for Australia* (1898). Hannah Maclauran (1860-1936) was a prominent cook and hotelier, who with Donald, the second of three English husbands she outlived, took over the lease of the Wentworth Hotel in Sydney in 1901; eventually she became managing director for over twenty years and converted the ‘glorified boarding house’ into an internationally acclaimed hotel. No surprise that her book contains her own recipe for roast wonga.



Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis, also known as C J Dennis or ‘Den’, and ultimately the ‘Poet Laureate of the Larrikin’, eventually settled in Toolangi north-east of Melbourne. In a home he named ‘Arden’ he became a keen observer of birds within the adjacent forest, composing poems of several different species, giving them an imagined point of view in their interaction with their surroundings, including humans. I imagine the birds were a major source of comfort for his depression, alcoholism and asthma. Originally printed in the Melbourne ‘Herald’ in the early 1930s, the poems were arranged on a seasonal basis as a collection in his final book publication in 1935, *The Singing Garden*, which was never reprinted. I came across a used copy for sale at the mere price of \$575! In the Autumn grouping there’s the poem ‘The Wonga Pigeon’, which captures the bird’s behaviour and response to threat; namely, being destined for the dinner table. Here is just an extract:

‘Too trusting. When they found my flesh was sweet—/Was sweet and white and succulent withal--/What mattered beauty? I was good to eat!/Then trust was my undoing; and my call/A summons to men’s hunger and the chase--/... You may, by chance, around a sudden turn,/With some brief, fleeting glimpse of my grey coat,/Then, with a swift wing-clapping, I am hence;/Or, crouching down, ingenuously seek/To merge my colours with the brushwood dense,/And trick the spoiler,’.

Coincidentally, after doing the finishing touches to this ‘thesis’, I sat back to watch the third and final instalment of the SBS TV three-part series ‘Iceland with Alexander Armstrong’. As a farewell treat in a family home, he was presented with salted boiled sheep’s head and encouraged to eat the eye, which the presenter described as ‘like nothing else’, as he did to the country itself, more favourably I suspect. He was also told about the tastiness of Atlantic puffin (lundi in Icelandic) meat, but no mention was made of the flesh colour. Curiosity got the better of me. According to Kimberly Baxter, owner of Eat Delights, it’s dark with a livery, fishy taste and an oily texture and can be used as a filling in haggis.

Satin Bowerbirds:

Some observations in my backyard

Pam Hazelwood

At our last IBOC meeting members asked questions about the bowerbirds we see here in Illawarra. I have observed them in our rather overgrown garden making bowers in which the male tries to convince any female that he is worth mating with. The bower is the playground and the nest is elsewhere. The adult male is blue/black with a white beak and violet eye.



The female is at first sight a dirty brown/green but on closer inspection has a beautifully patterned breast and dark beak and also the violet eye. So now we know how to tell the sexes apart – the beak colour is the diagnostic feature of this species.



What about immature males? I'm glad you asked that because it is not at first glance easy until we remember that males have a white beak! The immature males sport plumage similar to that of the female but it is the colour of the beak that it cannot hide.



I can remember reading somewhere that the immature males wear their immature plumage until around the age of 7 years when they start to display the male colouring of blue/black that earns them the name of Satin Bowerbird. The change to adult happens over some time and if you are lucky you can see the males changing as shown below.



And now my tail comes to the end and I must say it is the most beautiful end of any bird I have ever photographed!

LINKS

Twitchathon birdwatchers race to help rare cockatoo

Teams of avid birders from across NSW and the ACT will race to record as many different bird species as possible in an event focused on saving a special species. [Read the full story](#)
Shared from [ABC app](#)

Competitive bird calling revived by Bega Valley school students

ABC South East NSW By Vanessa Milton

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-19/bird-call-competition-revival-in-the-bega-valley/101550188>

White Terns

http://www.marineornithology.org/PDF/50_2/50_2_151-158.pdf

Exciting news: A New... - Pukorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre | Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/437949496218757/posts/exciting-news-a-new-world-record-godwit-flight-late-yesterday-a-juvenile-godwit-j/6155210641159252/>

**WILLIAMS
Nola Louise**

Passed away peacefully on Tuesday, 18th of October 2022. Beloved wife of Laurie, mother and mother-in-law of Wendy and Ian, Julie and John. Loved Grandmother of Renee and Steve, Paul and Jody, Greg and Clair, Fiona and Dan. Great Grandmother of Sage and Amos, Emily and Jeremy, Cohen and Willow.

A very special thank you to the doctors and nurses at Coledale Hospital for their tender care and compassion.

***Aged 85 Years
Forever in our Hearts***

Relatives and friends are invited to attend Nola's funeral service to be held at **H Parsons Funeral Home, 278 Princes Highway Bulli** on **Thursday 27th of October at 2pm**. Those unable to attend are invited to view her service via a link available at funeralannouncement.com.au

In lieu of flowers, donations to Dementia Australia would be greatly appreciated.



Carly Weatherly was lucky to capture a couple of our local birdlife.



Lewin's Honeyeater



Koel - male

SHOREBIRDS ARE ARRIVING

Great time now to start looking for the shorebirds and waders on the beaches, lakes and dams in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven areas and up on the tablelands. The beaches have been suffering with the weather conditions this year so a good chance you could come across the migratory shorebirds in some unusual places this year.



Grey-tailed Tattler



Little Tern

Monthly Sightings: Sept/October 2022

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

Eurasian Coot	2 + nest/3 eggs	30-Sep-22	Wollongong Botanic Garden	pond	Mike Morphett
Cattle Egret	3	12-Oct-22	Woonona Beach	Beachside Park	Robyn/John Cashman
White-headed Pigeon	1	30-Sep-22	Thirroul	backyard	Mike Morphett
Topknot Pigeon	3	11-Oct-22	Balgownie	Overhead flying	Pam Hazelwood
Tawny Frogmouth	1	20-Oct-22	Corrimal	Front yard Fence	Carly Weatherly
Masked Lapwing	2 Ad + 2Juv	30-Sep-22	Blue Haven Bonaira Kiama	Lawn outside cafe	Alan/ Anne Cousins
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	1	8-Oct-22	Helensburgh	Seen from train journey to Sydney	Robyn/John Cashman
Eastern Koel	1 m	18-Oct-22	Thirroul	front garden jacaranda	Mike Morphett
Eastern Koel	1	16-Oct-22	Corrimal	Backyard Garden	Carly Weatherly
Eastern Koel	2	daily	Lake Illawarra South	Backyard tree – calling day & night	Darryl Goldrick
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	27-Sep-22	Albion Park NSW	Remnant Cool Temperate Rainforest	Bruce Coyte
Dollarbird	2	30-Sep-22	Albion Park NSW	O'head, Urban Reserve, Rainforest	Bruce Coyte.
Dollarbird	1	8-Oct-22	Thirroul	Excelsior southern edge	Mike Morphett
Noisy Friarbird	4	9-Sep-22	Balgownie	Feeding on flowering bottlebrush	Pam Hazelwood
Golden Whistler	1 m	17-Oct-22	Bulli	Grevillea Park	Mike Morphett
Olive-backed Oriole	1	10-Oct-22	Thirroul	Excelsior southern edge	Mike Morphett
Magpie	2	16-Oct-22	Dapto	surrounding trees	myself
Superb Fairy-wren	2	2-Oct-22	Hennessey Lane, Figtree	Lavender bush residential	Madelina Belo
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	12	1-Oct-22	Lake Illawarra Entrance-S'Harbour side	feeding on the foreshore grassy reserve	Joan and Bill Zealey
Australian King-Parrot	3	10-Oct-22	Austinmer	House balcony	Lyndall Dawson
Gang-gang Cockatoo	1	17-Oct-22	Brokers Nose Walk	Bushland	Carly Weatherly

SIGHTINGS

please report your sightings be what they may be. No need to be 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](#)