

EASTERN BARN OWL

Scientific Name: *Tyto alba delicatula*
Atlas Number: 249

DESCRIPTION:

Eastern Barn Owls are moderately common, but generally hard to see, as they are mostly active at night. During the day, the birds roost on concealed tree branches. They are the most widespread and familiar of the owls. Barn Owls are medium sized birds (females slightly larger than males), with a 'heart-shaped' facial disc. They have sandy orange and light grey



upperparts and white to cream underparts. Both the back and breast are evenly spotted with black. Birds often appear whiter than normal when illuminated in car headlights or torches. Young birds are similar to adults in plumage. When threatened, the Barn Owl crouches down and spreads its wings.

SIMILAR SPECIES:

Barn Owls, are smaller and generally lighter in colour than Masked Owls, *T. novaehollandiae* (35 cm - 51 cm), which are otherwise similar nocturnal birds (night birds).

DISTRIBUTION:

The Barn Owl is found throughout Australia. Its distribution is limited only by habitat and food availability.

HABITAT:

By day the Barn Owl roosts in hollow logs, caves or dense trees, and is usually seen alone or in pairs. The preferred habitat is open, often arid (dry) country, such as farms, heath and lightly wooded forest.

FEEDING:

Barn Owls feed mostly on small mammals, mainly rodents, and birds, but some insects, frogs and lizards are also eaten. One of the more favoured foods is the introduced House Mouse, *Mus musculus*. Barn Owls hunt in flight, searching for prey on the ground using their exceptional hearing. The heart-shaped structure of the facial disc is unique to these types of owls (*Tyto* species). The slightest sound waves are

channelled toward the ears, allowing the owl to pinpoint prey even in complete darkness.

BREEDING:

Barn Owls have no definite breeding season. Breeding takes place mostly in response to food availability and often twice per year. The nest is normally a hollow in a tree, but birds sometimes nest in caves or abandoned buildings. The entrance hole is usually 15 to 25 m above the ground, though the nest chamber may be up to 10 m down inside the tree. No nest material is used, except a few old pellets, which are the regurgitated indigestible leftovers of small mammals and other prey.

The pale white eggs are laid at two-day intervals. The female alone incubates the eggs, but both parents care for the young. The young will perch in the vicinity of the nest site and be fed by the adults for a further month or so after leaving the nest.

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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SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

GENERAL MEETING

NO MEETING IN SEPTEMBER

MIDWEEK OUTING

NO MIDWEEK OUTING IN SEPTEMBER

MONTHLY OUTING

NO MONTHLY OUTING IN SEPTEMBER

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Next Committee Meeting

Monday 17th October 2022 7.00pm

Committee Meeting via Zoom

NEWSLETTER

DEADLINE 25th September

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.

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](#)*

CLUB REPORTS

CLUB MEETING REPORT

Monday 8th August 2022

A good number of members were in attendance and ready for what promised an interesting presentation from outside of our normal area of visitation. After the traditional technical glitches Nic van Oudtshoorn was able to launch into our presentation for the evening with assistance from Daphne who helped fill out the picture. Drawing mainly on images and video they had taken over the years, we were introduced to two birds they find of particular interest.

Starting with Oxpeckers of two varieties, the Yellow-billed and Red-billed which both, as their name suggests, live on and around large African mammals including cattle, impala, hippopotamus, rhinos and giraffes, eating small insects, botfly larvae and other parasites and yes, some of this write up is plagiarised from Nic. Following on from this, we were informed of the birds' other common name: vampire birds; this arises from their habit of pecking blood from wounds on their hosts.

The second bird was the Weaver bird which covers a huge number of birds in Africa, with one, the red billed Quelea so numerous their largest groups can take 5 hours to pass.

As I'm sure you know, these birds are well known for their ability to construct their nests by tying together grass leaves and other plant fibres in a number of different designs. But do you recall having seen some of the communal nests which look rather like a haystack in a tree or on a power pole? These communal nests consist of up to hundreds of nests all under one roof. Just as a little more information, these huge nests can also remain occupied for over 100 years and are used as an escape from heat and cold in the desert areas where they exist. A great presentation from Nic and Daphne: Thank You. Plus, there is also lots more I have not covered in this write-up you will have to google but it is worth doing.

Ross Gowans

Midweek outing 10th August.

Coomaditchy Lagoon and Hill 60, Port Kembla

By Joan and Bill Zealey

Seven members gathered to walk round Coomaditchy Lagoon; a spot often forgotten by birders. We had 15 species on the list before we even set off from the cars, and we added a number of woodland species, honeyeaters, whistlers, wrens and thornbills, at the farther side of the lagoon. The small island hosted a couple of Royal Spoonbills along with the usual flock of pelicans. Neil McKinley noted that many of the pelicans showed bright pink on their bills, a sign of breeding plumage. This was particularly noticeable as a group of seven birds fished close to us. A Nankeen Kestrel hovered above us at the start of the walk, and was still hunting as we returned to the cars.



We had morning tea at the Hill 60 lookout, where there was a constant traffic of Australian Pelicans, Silver Gulls and Australian White Ibis to and from the islands, and an unexpected view of the HAR's Connie.



Although there were showers in the distance, the weather remained sunny until we were finished.

Joan Zealey

Coomaditchy Lagoon		39 species	7 members attended
Pacific Black Duck	Great Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet	Australian Magpie
Chestnut Teal	Pied Cormorant	Superb Fairywren	Pied Currawong
Australasian Grebe	Australian Pelican	Lewin's Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail
Crested Pigeon	White-faced Heron	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail
Dusky Moorhen	Cattle Egret	New Holland Honeyeater	Magpie-lark
Eurasian Coot	Australian White Ibis	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Raven
Australasian Swamphen	Royal Spoonbill	Yellow Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Silver Gull	Laughing Kookaburra	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Common Starling
Australasian Darter	Nankeen Kestrel	Eastern Whipbird	House Sparrow
Little Pied Cormorant	Galah	Golden Whistler	

eBird checklist – S116647397

Hill 60		11 species	7 members attended
Silver Gull	Shearwater Sp.	Australian Pelican	Australian Raven
Kelp Gull	Australasian Gannet	Australian White Ibis	Welcome Swallow
Crested Tern	Great Cormorant	Red Wattlebird	

eBird checklist – S116647384

A total of 43 species were recorded for the day

WEEKEND OUTING

Saturday 13th July 2022

Bangalee Nature Reserve-North Nowra

Alan Cousins

11 members met at 9am in the car park at the end of a very uneven track and began spotting almost immediately. Once all were ready, we went through the bush for about 50 metres to a large open space with amenities and picnic tables alongside the Shoalhaven River and took the walking track east along the river spotting Wonga Pigeon, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Yellow Robin, Superb Lyrebird etc. After reaching an impasse due to very muddy and wet conditions due to the recent flooding we retraced our way back to the picnic area for morning tea.

After morning tea, we took the westerly track along the river until we reached a gate leading into private land. On the way there and back we spotted Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Red-Browed Finch, Crested Tern, Green Catbird etc. and had a really good view of a Little Eagle in full flight quite low above us. Returning to the picnic area we had a nice casual lunch and as the time was pushing on and it is quite a long drive home for most, we started the journey home.

Bangalee Reserve 13 th August 2022		33 Species	11 Members
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Brown Gerygone
Wonga Pigeon	Crimson Rosella	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Eastern Whipbird
Crested Tern	Rainbow Lorikeet	Little Wattlebird	Grey Shrike-thrush
Little Pied Cormorant	Superb Lyrebird	Red Wattlebird	Grey Butcherbird
Great Cormorant	Green Catbird	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Fantail
Intermediate Egret	Satin Bowerbird	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Australian Raven
Little Eagle	Superb Fairywren	Brown Thornbill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Grey Goshawk	Eastern Spinebill	Yellow Thornbill	Red-browed Finch
Laughing Kookaburra			

eBird checklist number S116873569.t

Links

A tiny school's quest for pokipain and rare finch receives award nomination

Students bring in spy cameras, commission DNA tests, and search high and low in their "treasure hunt" to find endangered animals in one of the most remote parts of the country. [Read the full story](#) Shared from [ABC app](#)

Bird shot through wing with arrow, police examine weapon for DNA

A plover is recovering from an arrow attack on the NSW Far South Coast, angering wildlife rescuers and sparking a police investigation. [Read the full story](#) Shared from [ABC app](#)

Avian Influenza on Grassholm / Ffliw adar ar Ynys Gwales - Ramsey Island and Grassholm - Ramsey Island and Grassholm – The RSPB Community.

<https://community.rspb.org.uk/placestovisit/ramseyisland/b/ramseyisland-blog/posts/avian-influenza-on-grassholm-fliw-adar-ar-ynys-gwales>

Sometimes it just comes down to right place right time and something spectacular turns up.
<https://petapixel.com/2022/08/05/spectacular-and-unusual-photo-of-an-osprey-gliding-on-the-waters-surface/>

Historic Bird Links

Chris. Cartledge

In July 2022 the Southern Highland towns Picton, Tahmoor and Bargo celebrated their bicentenary. *Originally named Myrtle Creek, Tahmoor was a farming area on the Great Southern Road, later named the Hume Highway.*

When the new Main Southern railway line opened in 1919, it included a railway station named Tahmoor. This name was contested by a local businessman, who wished to establish a town called Bronzewing Park, but his claim was rejected. The town had recently been named "Tahmoor", a local Aboriginal word for the common bronzewing, a native pigeon often seen in the area (Wikipedia).



Why am I sharing this? Well, my maternal grandmother established and run the Myrtle Creek Picnic Grounds in Tahmoor in the 1930s (see pic). Together with my immediate family, I lived with our grandmother at Tahmoor in 1950/51 whilst our war service home was built in Fairy Meadow. My father was a 'Rat of Tobruk'.

Without the knowledge of the bronzewing connection, in 2005 I adopted my grandmother's 1950s phone number as my email address – tahmoor223@gmail.com

I see some IBOC members have a more direct bird connection in their email addresses: goldenwhistler@nn, whiskered_tern @nn, oliawren@nn etc. bronzewing@gmail.com has already been taken – bummer!

The Committee and members of Illawarra Birders would like to invite the members of Illawarra Bird Observers Club to our evening meeting on Tuesday 6 September 2022 when we will be celebrating the birding and photography of Ellis MacNamara, an early birder in our region and a founding member of IBOC. Ellis's great-niece recently donated her uncle's wonderful bird slides to our club, and we are holding a slide night to showcase the slides and compare them with his bird list of the Illawarra printed in 1948.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 7.30pm at Coniston Community Centre, 24 Bridge Street, Coniston (next to the Phoenix Theatre), and there is street parking available. If possible, it would be helpful to have at least a rough idea of the number of IBOC members who might attend but this isn't essential.

If anyone has any questions, they are welcome to contact me at penpott@yahoo.com or 0430 343 525.
Kind regards
Penny

This is the first time we have missed out on the bird list for the Month

Monthly Sightings: July/August 2022 on hold

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

Due to a technical glitch, we are unable to recover the bird sightings for this month. If those who posted their bird sightings in the last few weeks and still have them could they please forward them to Darryl again.

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

A couple of past sightings

images - by Charles Dove



Painted Snipe female- Albion Park Rail - 21/10/2010



Painted Snipe male - now Shellharbour Marina - 21/3/2013



Noisy Pitta - Mt Kembla - 29/8/2009



Asian Dowitcher - Shoalhaven Heads - 23/12/2013