



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
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"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: TO JOIN TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH A COMMON INTEREST WHO WISH TO FURTHER THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE BIRDLIFE AROUND THEM

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Diana died in the Palliative Care Unit at Berry Hospital after a long battle with cancer.

She was a long-time member of IBOC, participating in early camps and outings and in the major coach trips with the Club to the Top End, Centre and Cape York, which I had the pleasure of sharing with her.

Diana was an enthusiastic and conscientious birdwatcher from when she first retired to the South Coast. She meticulously kept accurate records of all her sightings and trips and contributed to the *Australian Atlas* over a number of years. She was also involved in the 1999 production of *A Handbook of Birds found in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Adjacent Tablelands* and conducted U3A birdwatching courses in the Shoalhaven over many years. She was also a member of the Penguin Study Group on Bowen Island.

Overriding all her birdwatching was her deep concern for the environment, particularly in the conservation of bird-life, and its influence on all flora and fauna. Notable in this were her appearances on ABC Television in her successful campaign to have milk-packaging blue rings changed to protect Satin Bowerbirds from choking or starvation.

Diana was an active member and office holder of the Shoalhaven Conservation Society and A.C.F. for many years and also initiator and leading force in active landcare groups at Bomaderry Creek, Booderee and Jervis Bay National Parks, and at Seven Mile Beach. She was widely read and informed on weed control and revegetation/regeneration programs and techniques. I have been amazed at her library of technical books and the detailed records of all her work as birdwatcher, conservationist and landcare/bush regenerator. She was a keen bushwalker and in later years, when unable to make the longer more strenuous walks of the Shoalhaven Bushwalkers, initiated her own group for easier walks. Diana was also a published author of a book on the genealogy of her family and had done extensive research in this area.

I have benefited in so many ways from her knowledge and support and our friendship.



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I wish all members a safe and prosperous 2003 and I trust the **program** will provide a range of activities that will sustain enthusiasm and enjoyment for all. Thank you to all who contributed to the **Christmas meeting** – I have received favourable comments, so I trust it was an enjoyable and fitting conclusion to 2002. Special thanks to Norma Almond for the traditional Christmas cake.

Subscriptions are now due (including the completion of the yellow information form), and Bronwyn wishes to thank those who to date have returned them with their subscription renewals.

The Club requires a new custodian of the **camping equipment**. Given Peggy McKinlay has moved house, Tom Wylie is temporarily housing the equipment under his house. It requires more suitable accommodation. Could members who may have spare room in a garage, loft or bomb shelter please contact Tom to discuss (tel 42842051).

The traditional monthly **mid-week walks** will continue – the program shows, at this point, the February and March walks – future walks will be published over the next few newsletters.

The Lake Illawarra Authority has agreed to fund the Club's **Lake Entrance survey**. Could members who wish to participate please contact Chris Brandis (tel 42962837) to register their names to enable Chris to prepare a roster and provide you with details.

CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 10th February** at Fairy meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. Our guest speaker will be **Peter Nolan** with tales about his recent excursion to England and USA. Peter assures me that his presentation will be as entertaining as was his 2002 showing.

MID-WEEK WALK will be the traditional wader observations at Lake Illawarra Entrance on **Wednesday 5th February** commencing at **5.30 pm SHARP**. This year we will be taking two boats for these observations given the absence of water at the entrance sandshores per se. Two eight-seat and one six-seat boats have been booked to observe the waders on the sand shoals along the eastern margins of the lake. Members are to meet at the boat-shed which is adjoining the north-west Windang Bridge abutment in **Judbooley Parade**. If travelling from the north, turn right into Boronia Street at the Windang Hotel traffic lights, then left into Oakland Avenue, which leads into Judbooley Parade. Park in the cul-de-sac at the eastern end. For those coming from the south, proceed north over the bridge and turn left into Cedar Avenue, then left in Oakland Avenue and proceed to Judbooley Parade. **There will be a \$5.00 per head charge to meet boat hire costs.** Please be on time – 5.30 pm sharp. Following a couple of hours boating/observation we will return to the cars and proceed to our usual picnic site east of the bridge for a 'high'/picnic tea.

FIELD OUTING will be on **Saturday 15th February** at **Killalea Lagoon**. Proceed along the Shellharbour-Dunmore Road and take the Killalea Reserve turnoff (left hand side) approximately 2 km south of the Shellharbour/Wattle Road traffic lights (the Shellharbour Workers Club site). Proceed on the left hand road (quarry haul road) at the roundabout for approximately 2.5km. You should have the high concrete noise barriers on your left side – if you don't, you are on the low road to Killalea SRA – turn around and go back to roundabout and take the high road. We will be accessing the lagoon from the northern shoreline as opposed to the main entrance access. **Starting time will be 8.30 am** – bring your usual drinks, eats, sunscreen and hats. For those who have spotting scopes could you bring them along as well.

IBOC PROGRAM for 2003

Feb	5 (Wed)	Windang: Lake Illawarra Entrance (wader observations)
	10 (Mon)	Meeting – Peter Nolan (UK-USA birding)
	15 (Sat)	Killalea Lagoon
Mar	10 (Mon)	Meeting – Trevor Quested (Tibet-China)
	16 (Sun)	Tallawarra Ash Ponds
	23 (Sun)	Puckeys Estate – Senior Citizens bird walk
Apr	13-17 (Sun – Thurs)	Camp no walk – no meeting
May	12 (Mon)	Meeting – Jack Baker (“Managing Fire-Sensitive Birds”)
	17 (Sat)	TBA
June	9 (Mon)	Meeting – Roger Truscott (Birds of Winnipeg)
	15 (Sun)	Berry Mountain & Cambewarra
July	14 (Mon)	Meeting – Debbie Saunders (Swift Parrot Survey)
	20 (Sun) *	Yalwal – Shoalhaven
Aug	11 (Mon)	Meeting – Lloyd Robinson (speleologist)
	17 (Sun)	Maddens Plains
Sept	8 (Mon)	Members Night
	13 (Sat)	Whispering Gallery & Rocklow Creek
Oct	13 (Mon)	Meeting – Geoff Boxsall & Terry Outtrim
	18-25 (Thurs-Thurs)	Camp – Condobolin
Nov	10 (Mon)	Meeting – Phil Straw (Wader Identification & Migration)
	16 (Sun)	Macquarie Pass
Dec	8 (Mon)	Christmas Meeting
	13 (Sat)	Thirlmere Lakes & Art on Argyle Gallery, Picton

SHOALHAVEN BIRDWATCHING OUTINGS for 2003

date	venue	meeting point
Feb 16	Comerong Island	Punt 0830
Mar 13	Video/Picture night 7 pm at Dallas’ 17 Amundsen Av, Shoalhaven Hds 4448.8118	bring supper & pictures to share
Mar 16	Grassy Gully/Coolendel	Jet 0830
Apr 20	Killalea SRA	Apex Park Berry 0830
May 18	Bomaderry Creek	Skating Rink 0830
June 15	Barren Grounds	Apex Park Berry 0830
July 20*	Yalwal	Jet 0830
Aug 17	Currumbene SF	Jet 0830
Sept 21	Ben’s Walk	Nowra Showground 0830
Oct 19	Pender Road	Jet 0830, Braidwood Rd 0900
Nov 16	Lake Wollumboola	Archgate Nursery 0830
Dec 21	Berry Beach Picnic Area 5 pm	BYO BBQ & drinks, pickies & salad to share

contacts: Barry 4464.1389 Dallas 4448.8118 Peter & Julie 4447.1318

Having never been to the Minnamurra Falls I had little idea of what to expect when I arrived there for the December 6th outing. Would it be a run-down, overgrown picnic area with a faded welcome sign or a well kept, expensive tourist trap with cafe, gift shop and hoards of tourists armed to the teeth with cameras and spare roles of film? I didn't really expect the latter because our area is not wildly regarded as a tourist mecca. Whether or not this is relevant I don't know, but, when I arrived, the atmosphere of the place impressed me. The large car park seemed too big for just the occasional visitor and the presence of a small cafe/kiosk told me that this must be a popular tourist spot.

As we waited for the others to arrive, Peter Kennedy, the park ranger told us about the area and the effect the drought was having on it. For example, trees, notably the fig, had been blooming and fruiting very quickly. Apparently the Falls Ring Track was the only part of the Budderoo National Park still open, and he cautioned us against setting fire to the dry thickets of lantana.

When everybody had arrived, we were directed through the glass doors of the gift shop to the start of the walk. With our eyes and ears in bird-finding mode we scanned the trees and under brush. Then suddenly there was an exclamation, "There's a Lyrebird over there!" Sure enough, on the other side of the creek a lone female Superb Lyrebird was scratching around in the leaf litter completely oblivious to our presence. Then a small movement up in the canopy alerted us to another sight and, after some squinting and moving around, we finally caught a glimpse detailed enough to make out the dark body and white head and neck of the White-headed Pigeon. It soon became obvious that it was not alone and over the course of a few minutes more than ten were seen, all feasting in the one Lilly Pilly tree. As we continued along the board-walk through the rainforest, more birds were seen. Rufous Fantails fluttered around in the canopy; White-browed and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens played alongside us; and Bassian Thrushes darted away into the undergrowth. After a while the board-walk moved away from the river and led to a large platform with informative plaques for the interested and benches for the weary. It was then a relatively short walk from there to the intersection of the extended ring track. We were prevented from walking this more challenging track because of fire hazard signs and empty stomachs. Just 100 metres down the track a small bridge crossed a gully and there we were greeted by a group of Superb Lyrebirds. The male in the group then began a beautiful courtship performance and demonstrated great skill in imitation. These imitations included calls of the Satin Bowerbird, Pied Currawong, Laughing Kookaburra, and Eastern Whipbird.

At the end of the walk we were all happy to see the coin-operated barbecues, picnic tables and even happier to see dinner. I hope to return there in a wetter season to see if the type of bird-life has changed. This was not a challenging walk, and yet we saw many birds and enjoyed ourselves immensely. Next time an outing to the Falls is planned I hope more people come, for it is truly a hidden paradise. The 24 species recorded were:-

White-headed Pigeon	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Grey Fantail
Wonga Pigeon	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Whipbird	Pied Currawong
Australian King-Parrot	Brown Gerygone	Golden Whistler	Australian Raven
Crimson Rosella	Brown Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush	Satin Bowerbird
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Eastern Spinebill	Black-faced Monarch	Silvereye
Superb Lyrebird	Rose Robin	Rufous Fantail	Bassian Thrush

Is there any 'reptilogist' that can account for the alternating presence of a tiger snake and a blue-tongue lizard under a sheet of corrugated iron on the ground in the Excelsior Coal Mine, apparently without their having come to blows as to occupancy? Just one of nature's mysteries that occupies my mind during my bird surveys there.

We had really good bushwalking weather on 12th January for our outing to Morton National Park at Bundanoon. Ten of us set out into just a beautiful area with our leader, Bruce O'Brien. There were quite a few early sightings: Yellow-rumped Thornbills, White-browed Scrubwrens, Eastern Yellow Robins, Superb Fairy-wrens, and, of course, little Grey Fantails that were present right around the track.

We followed the road most of the way, so it was fairly easy walking. A couple of people had their bird-callers out, when one of the group, Alison Foley told us about a whistle she had bought. We all encouraged her to "give it a go". Well, birds came from every "neck of the woods" to get a "bird's-eye view" of the new bird on the block. First came a Black-faced Monarch, then a Golden Whistler, a Rufous Whistler, a Mistletoebird, a White-throated Treecreeper, and a Grey Shrike-thrush with its beautiful musical song. Various other birds were around, but not identified – probably Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and thornbills. Needless to say, we were all thrilled with such a variety.

It was overcast and cool with a brief shower of rain, so Bruce took us to a cave for shelter. It was tucked in under an overhanging cliff, accessed by steep steps; it was the closed-in entrance to an old coal mine opened in the 1860s. It was closed and opened a few times by different companies – one such being the Baker Brothers, who named it Erith Coal Mine after their birthplace in England. It was theirs from 1872 – 1881. The coal was of poor quality and had to be hauled up over a very steep cliff. It was finally closed in 1915. We had morning tea here and we heard and sighted a Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo who was circling around for quite a while – I think it was fascinated by Alison's whistling.

We continued on sighting various other birds and saw a Sacred Kingfisher nowhere near a creek. A Rufous Fantail kept showing itself off, being very elusive to some of the group. We stopped after another brief shower and had lunch under another overhang, where we had a pair of Gang-gang Cockatoos join us. Along the track at various points we were able to view the valley from lookouts. It was a very cold and windy up-draught, but the views were spectacular. There were quite a few wattle trees in bloom. One banksia tree had quite a few New Holland Honeyeaters in it.

We sat around comparing bird lists and having coffee, when there in the park was the Rufous Fantail flitting around in the open for all to see after all our attempts to point it out in the bush. It was a really enjoyable fun-filled day. Thanks to Alison and her whistling and to everyone's common interest in birds and the bush. Thanks too to Bruce, our leader. Our bird species tally for the day was 29:-

Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Spinebill	Grey Fantail
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Olive-backed Oriole
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Brown Thornbill	Golden Whistler	Australian Magpie
Crimson Rosella	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Rufous Whistler	Pied Currawong
Laughing Kookaburra	Striated Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush	Mistletoebird
Sacred Kingfisher	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Black-faced Monarch	
White-throated Treecreeper	White-naped Honeyeater	Magpie-lark	
Superb Fairy-wren	New Holland Honeyeater	Rufous Fantail	

A few of us called in at Cecil Hoskins Reserve on the way home. Quite a few water-birds there, and of interest was the Great Crested Grebe. Of note, too, were the many European Goldfinches and more gang-gang Cockatoos.

The next committee meeting will be held on Tuesday 18th March at 7.30 pm chez Joan & Tom Wylie at 4 Daphne Street, Bellambi (ph. 4284.2051).

The deadline for the March issue of *IBOC News* is Wednesday 26th February.

In October 2002 a small group of IBOCers spent time in four different mallee areas, each with its own unique features. Our first stay was in **Hattah-Kulkyne National Park** in N.W. Victoria, beside Lake Mourmpall. The park is partly bounded by the Murray River.

There are several lakes in the park, all dry at present, except for a small amount of water in the centre of Lake Hattah, where we saw three Emus paddling. A Whiskered Tern was skimming over the surface, landing at the water's edge to feed on a large dead carp which was lying there. At one end of the water a pair of Black-fronted Dotterels were picking quietly in the mud, while two White-bellied Sea-Eagles cruised overhead. Nearby a pair of Pelicans were resting, and towards the dry edge of the lake about 100 Black-tailed Native-hens wandered on the cracked, hardened mud in search of a tasty morsel.

Surrounding the lake are tall, misshapen Red River Gums, and at the picnic area the flood-level indicator stood showing the number of times these majestic trees had been standing in water, with 1956 showing the highest mark by a long way.

By the mid-1800s the Aboriginal people had left the area, and grazing and logging for Cypress Pine and Belah was in progress until the establishment of Hattah lakes National Park in 1960, with the Kulkyne section added in 1980.

During our stay we searched the spinifex and other small bushes growing under the low, many-trunked mallee for Striated Grasswrens, but without success. However, we saw many other birds, including the beautiful Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, and a pair appeared to be nesting in a hollow of a tall old eucalypt in the camping area. I always enjoy seeing the pink and white cousin of the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo we know from home.

Moving further west in Victoria, our next camp was in the southern edge of the **Murray-Sunset National Park** at Lake Crosbie in the Pink Lakes area. The pink tint is due to red from the algae, colouring the highly saline ground-water, which evaporates leaving shimmering salt-beds. In 1851 salt lakes were first reported. Large pastoral runs had been taken up in the area, but the hot, dry environment and endless rolling sand-dunes hindered permanent settlement. However, early in 1916 commercial salt-mining brought families to the shores of the lakes, where a small town and school were built. It was hard work for men and machines, while camels were used to transport the salt for a number of years. Salt-mining became a thing of the past when the area was declared a state park in 1979, leaving only huge mounds of salt and rusting machines as a memorial to early days.

The wind blew across the open expanse of the lake for the two days we were there, and some light showers of rain fell. However, we enjoyed walking along the Kline Nature Track across the hill to Lake Kenyon, where we wandered between the mallee and the spinifex in relative shelter from the wind. We didn't see a great variety of birds during our stay, but the beautiful blue of the Splendid Wren and the dear little Red-capped Robin brightened the overcast days. Some of our party were fortunate to see the Mallee Emu-wren, cousin to the Southern Emu-wren, seen at Barren Grounds and Puckeys Estate much closer to home. Further north in the park the vegetation changes, and maybe some other time we'll return to explore more.

We then crossed the border into South Australia, boarding the ferry at Waikerie to cross the "Mighty Murray" and drive 64 km north to spend a few days at **Gluepot**, a 51,300-hectare reserve owned by Birds Australia to protect part of the largest intact block of mallee vegetation remaining in Australia, and therefore helping to protect the flora and fauna in the region. Gluepot has led a very chequered history since white settlement. I've endeavoured to include a very scant summary, which I found interesting.

The property was purchased in 1910 by Walter Finch for his two sons, who had just left college. They were sent off with a horse, a dray and a flock of sheep and told "to make a go of it". They stayed for four years. The property was again sold a couple of times until Reg Barnes became the owner in 1934. A two-room house was built in the Old Gluepot site, another two rooms being added a couple of years later. The underground cellar was

built about 1939 and still remains today. Termites destroyed the house, and the present Gluepot house was built in 1957, 12 km east of Old Gluepot. The property has changed hands several times and was finally purchased by Birds Australia, being officially opened in August 1998. We wondered about the name 'Gluepot', but have learnt "the soil turns to an all-coating powder when dry or clinging mud when wet"; hence the name.

We enjoyed our stay and camped in the Babbler camping area, driving along several of the marked roads and visiting the ruins of Old Gluepot, where we admired the still flourishing cactus garden; also a map of Australia marked out with white stones on the ground near the ruins of the house; and we marvelled at the underground cellar, which is a room approximately 10 ft by 8 ft. It must have been well used in the summer heat! We walked among the mallee, spinifex and low bushes and also among the stands of Black Oak, which the White-browed Treecreepers frequent. Again the beautiful Red-capped Robin brightened the blue-grey of the trees.

Our visit was highlighted by the good sighting of three Striated Grasswrens, that ran like fast little clockwork mice, tails aloft, between the low bushes and fed among the grey strips of mallee bark and leaf-litter lying on the red soil. They are pretty little birds in their soft red-brown plumage streaked white with beige underparts, white throat and black whisker marks. What excitement for us as we added a new bird to our life list!

After overcast days and quite a bit of wind, the day of our departure dawned bright and clear, with Gilbert Whistlers, Crested Bellbirds, Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Brown Treecreepers, and Mulga Parrots hopping and flying around the campsite to send us on our way – it was hard to leave!

After an overnight stay in the historic little town of Burra and a few days spent in the Flinders ranges, we again camped in the mallee, at Lake Gilles Conservation Park, which is west of Iron Knob.

Our plan to camp beside the salt lake was quickly changed, as once more the wind was blowing across the open expanse of the lake. Instead, we chose a secluded spot beside a side-track amongst the mallee. Here we spent two nights with a day to wander along the track, where the mallee was in flower and the honeyeaters were having a feast! Red Wattlebirds and Spiny-cheeked, Singing, White-eared, Yellow-plumed and White-fronted Honeyeaters were all seen several times and also Rufous Treecreepers. Blue-breasted and Splendid Fairy-wrens kept us busy, especially as the former were happy to flit around while we watched them, seemingly unconcerned at our presence. The Splendid Fairy-wrens gave us only fleeting glimpses of their brilliant blue plumage. Later in the day we saw Blue-breasted fairy-wrens several times as we sat in the shade beside our van.

Lake Gilles is a most rewarding place to camp. The four mallee areas were new to us and warrant a second visit. It would certainly be worthwhile when there was more water around and maybe a different time of year would be good, although spring is always a good time to birdwatch. Whatever, we will return!

The *Handbook of the Birds found in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Adjacent Tablelands, 2nd Edition* is being planned for publication in mid-2004. Whilst that might seem a long way off, I can't believe its four years since I finished the first version. Nevertheless I have been asked by the Club to prepare a 2nd edition, and so preparation has begun. There are a number of new regional species to add and, of course, the mountain of data (2,000+ records) that's been collected since 1999. Despite this, I'm looking forward to synthesising that data with my co-authors, and we'd like to include data on places that are hard to get to or infrequently visited. You might think that those places are few, but I can assure you they're not: remember the region covered by the Handbook stretches from Stanwell Tops to Warragamba Dam via Cataract and Nepean Rivers, then south along the Wollondilly River to Marulan, then south along the Shoalhaven River to the Corang River, south-east to Corang Peak, then east to Lake Conjola - an area of some 880,000 hectares. So there's plenty of sites for which we still have few data, though admittedly most are well away from the major urban areas.

So, if you are interested in going to locations few people have visited, I would like you to contact me, preferably by email or phone (details on the "back page"), or at the February meeting. I will collate names and then suggest places that need visiting. There is no restriction when volunteers go, how many times you visit sites, or how long you stay, but the cut-off date will be 31 December 2003. Please consider.

2002 represented the best year yet for the IBOC Unusual Records Scheme since its inception in the 1980s. Over 800 records were entered into the database from some 82 contributors, including three new regional species (Fairy Tern, Australian Pratincole, Canada Goose). Two additional new species, Jouanin's Petrel and Manx Shearwater will be provisionally accepted until their cases are reviewed by the Birds Australia Rarities Committee. The year saw the start of a possible prolonged dry period and, towards its end, the entrance of Lake Illawarra became closed, and the lake began to dry. Certainly it was the lowest level I have seen since becoming interested in such things in the late 1970s. But I digress; the purpose of this article is to synthesise the contributions to our regional ornithological knowledge.

The year began with a bunch of goodies, including Beach Stone-Curlew and Australian Pratincole at Shoalhaven Heads and Comerong Is. The Pratincole was a new species for the region, and the Stone-Curlew was to be observed irregularly through the year between Shoalhaven Heads and Crookhaven River. We also had another new species in January with Fairy Terns breeding at Lake Conjola for the first time. Emu, Turquoise Parrot, Banded Stilts, Tahiti Petrel, Pacific Baza and Chestnut-breasted Mannikins made sure we started the year with a bang. And it maintained its momentum through the year. In February/March there was a string of Emu sightings, and other rare visitors included King Quail, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Red-tailed Tropicbirds and Fork-tailed Swifts. April continued the fine birding with goodies including Striated Fieldwren, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Streaked Shearwater, Grey Ternlet, White Tern, Superb Fruit-Dove, Square-tailed Kite, and a number of Grey Currawong locations. In May there was another Plumed Whistling-Duck location, Red-necked Avocet, and an influx of Spangled Drongo. In May/June Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and Swift Parrots were the highlights. In July Budgerigars were recorded in the region for the first time since 1972, while other goodies included more Swift Parrots, Pacific Gull, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Speckled Warbler, Barn Owl, Hooded Robin and Diamond Firetails. As winter began to wane in August/September the first Freckled Duck arrived in the region along with Pacific Baza, Spotted Harriers, Great Crested Grebe, thousands of Hardhead, Gull-billed Terns, Red-kneed Dotterels, and the first of the woodswallows, including the second regional record of Little Woodswallow. By October, shorebirds were beginning to return for their Arctic sojourn, including Grey Plover and Greater Sand Plover. The fourth regional Red-capped Robin and eighth regional Noisy Pitta turned up, and we also saw the first Whiskered Tern arrive, slowly increasing their numbers to over 230 by the end of the year. Sooty Owl, Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin and more Freckled Duck were other highlights for October, which also saw the first Australian record of the Canada Goose turn up at Shoalhaven Head, spotted amongst the swans by that old stalwart, Lindsay Smith. If accepted by the BARC, the Jouanin's Petrel observed off Wollongong will also be an Australian first, while the Manx Shearwater will be a regional first. November produced a plethora of observations, including thousands of sandpipers along Windang Peninsula, more Spotted Harrier and Pacific Baza, Black-tailed Godwit, Buff-banded Rail, Baillon's Crake, Grey-backed Storm Petrel, Turquoise Parrot, Pheasant Coucal, Black Bittern, White-winged Triller, thousands of Eurasian Coot, the second regional Australian Pratincole, and thousands of White-browed and Masked Woodswallows. December continued the mountain of records pouring into my email box. Goodies included Buller's and Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, White-necked and Black Petrels, Sooty Terns, Terek Sandpipers, Pectoral Sandpipers, Australian Shelduck, Glossy Ibis, Masked Owl, White-throated Nightjar, the first Pied Butcherbird since the 1839, and the 11th regional record of Spectacled Monarch.

What a fantastic year, and the "back page" has had many positive comments. Just remember, I can't write the back page without your regular contributions, so please don't hesitate to send records in. Eventually I'll produce an annual report and put it on the web site. All records will go towards the revision of the Handbook in 2004, and data is used by many regional consultants, Councils and Government agencies as they endeavour to protect valuable natural areas for the conservation of our regional fauna. They can't do that if they don't know where things live, and the Handbook is quickly gaining regional recognition as the definitive work on our area. Indeed, bird records from IBOC, the Nowra Bird Club and Birds NSW helped save the Lake Wollumboola catchment from development and the subsequent addition of the lake into Jervis Bay National Park. The Handbook was also used in the inquiry into the Illawarra Escarpment and is referenced on nearly every page (dealing with birds) in the National Parks & Wildlife publication on regional biodiversity of the Wollongong local government area. So the message is, your every contribution adds to our regional knowledge, which is subsequently summarised in the Handbook and on the web site (www.ezy.net.au/users/cchafer/index.html). Congratulations and thanks go to all contributors; may 2003 bring you all a year of magic birdwatching.

Send your records to: email: cchafer@ezy.net.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	2	25-Nov	Bellanglo SF	forest	CJC
Australian Brush-Turkey	2	Nov	Wollongong Botanical Gardens	rainforest	MJ
Australian Brush-Turkey	1	Nov	Jamberoo Mountain	rainforest	BD
Australian Brush-Turkey	1	31-Dec	Mt. Keira Ring Track	rainforest	CB
Australian Shelduck	1	8-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	mudflats	BA
Australian Shelduck	1	15-Dec	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Hardhead	600+	13-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	lake	CJC
Great Crested Grebe	2	15-Nov	Swan Lake	lake	KM
Tahiti Petrel	1	28-Dec	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
White-necked Petrel	1	28-Dec	off Wollongong	pelagic	LS
Black Petrel	1	16-Nov	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Buller's Albatross	1	28-Dec	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross	1	28-Dec	off Wollongong	pelagic	LS
White-necked Heron	2	24-Nov	Darkes Forest	paddock	JB
Striated Heron	1	22-Dec	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	RT
Nankeen Night Heron	3	30-Nov	Duck Creek	riverine	DG
Nankeen Night Heron	1	1-Nov	Maddens Plains	dam	KM
Nankeen Night Heron	1	10-Dec	Bellawongarah	farm dam	BA
Glossy Ibis	2	1-Dec	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
Glossy Ibis	4	30-Nov	Tallawarra Ash Ponds	wetland	DG
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	27-Dec	Windang	mudflats	CB
Swamp Harrier	1	17-Nov	Jindy Andy mill, Pyree	overhead	BA
Swamp Harrier	1	10-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	overhead	BA
Swamp Harrier	1	4-Nov	Bulli Tops	overhead	KM
Swamp Harrier	1	13-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	overhead	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	3-Dec	Figtree	urban	JZ
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	12-Dec	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Little Eagle	1	24-Nov	Rocklow Creek	overhead	JB
Brown Falcon	1	17-Nov	Jindy Andy mill, Pyree	overhead	BA
Peregrine Falcon	1	17-Nov	Nowra Fair	overhead	BA
Buff-banded Rail	1	14-Nov	Cudmirrah	urban	KM
Lewin's Rail	1	10-Dec	Broughton Mill Creek	creek bank	BA
Baillon's Crake	2	24-Nov	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB
Baillon's Crake	2	15-Dec	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Australian Spotted Crake	1	30-Nov	Windang estuary	mudflats	MJ
Australian Spotted Crake	1	27-Dec	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	CB
Eurasian Coot	1800	8-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	lake	BA
Latham's Snipe	1	19-Nov	Cabbage Tree Ck., Fernhill	reedbed	AF
Marsh Sandpiper	10	8-Dec	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	SB
Marsh Sandpiper	1	8-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	mudflats	BA
Wood Sandpiper	1	1-Dec	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
Terek Sandpiper	1	20-Nov	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	DG
Terek Sandpiper	2	36-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	mudflats	MJ
Terek Sandpiper	1	8-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	mudflats	BA
Grey-tailed Tattler	5	1-Dec	Little Lake	mudflats	GB
Sanderling	1	18-Nov	Windang Peninsula	lake edge	DG
Sanderling	6	1-Dec	Shoalhaven Heads	sandflats	DM
Sanderling	2	13-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	sandflats	CJC
Red-necked Stint	200	8-Dec	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	SB
Pectoral Sandpiper	2	20-Nov	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	DG
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	30-Nov	Lake Wollumboola	mudflats	DM
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	22-Dec	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	RT
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	800+	24-Nov	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	CB
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	2000+	22-Dec	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	CJC
Beach Stone-curlew	1	Nov	Comerong Island	mangroves	per DM

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Pacific Golden Plover	103	13-Dec	Shoalhaven Heads	mudflats	CJC
Grey Plover	1	30-Nov	Lake Wollumboola	mudflats	MJ, DM
Red-kneed Dotterel	6	5-Dec	Kully Bay, Lake Illawarra	mudflats	CJC
Long-tailed Jaeger	2	16-Nov	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Gull-billed Tern	3	1-Dec	Shoalhaven Heads	sandflats	DM
Sooty Tern	1	16-Nov	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Sooty Tern	5	28-Dec	off Wollongong	pelagic	LS
Whiskered Tern	166+	24-Nov	Terrara, Shoalhaven River	riverine	BA
Whiskered Tern	100+	8-Dec	Windang Peninsula	mudflats	CJC
Whiskered Tern	30+	8-Dec	Bomaderry Sewage Farm	wetland	BA
White-winged Black Tern	2	1-Dec	Shoalhaven Heads	sandflats	DM
White-winged Black Tern	2	8-Dec	Windang	mudflats	CJC
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	19-Nov	Numbaa	rural	KM
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	19-Nov	Comerong Island	forest	KM
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	25-Dec	Frazers Creek, Albion Park	woodland	PF
Long-billed Corella	100+	15-Nov	Tongarra	paddock	CJC
Turquoise Parrot	5	7-Nov	3km n Stockyard Swamp, Avon R	woodland	NPWS
Turquoise Parrot	4	24-Dec	Molly Morgan Crossing, Avon R	woodland	CJC
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	25-Nov	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	12-Nov	Appin	overhead	KM
Masked Owl	1	6-Nov	8D fire trail, Cordeaux catchment	forest	NPWS
Masked Owl	1	6-Nov	15H fire trail, Avon catchment	forest	NPWS
Masked Owl	1	21-Oct	7L fire trail, Cataract catchment	forest	NPWS
Tawny Frogmouth	2a3j	4-Dec	Mt. Ousley	parkland	G&JR
White-throated Nightjar	1	18-Nov	Austinmer	bushland	RM
White-throated Nightjar	1	13-Dec	Nepean Dam on road at night	forest	MN
Azure Kingfisher	1	18-Nov	Broughton Creek	riverine	BA
Southern Emu-wren	2	21-Nov	Ben's Walk, Nowra	woodland	BV
Southern Emu-wren	2	24-Dec	Molly Morgan Crossing	woodland	CJC
Pilotbird	1	4-Nov	Maddens Plains	gully forest	KM
Rockwarbler	2	30-Nov	Ben's Walk, Nowra	woodland	SE
White-plumed Honeyeater	3	4-Dec	Wollongong TAFE	parkland	RM
Crescent Honeyeater	1	8-Dec	Jamberoo	garden	BH
Rose Robin	1	12-Dec	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Logrunner	3	19-Nov	Barren Grounds NR	rainforest	JS
Crested Shrike-tit	2	17-Nov	Excelsior, Thirroul	forest	MM
Crested Shrike-tit	1	12-Dec	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Spectacled Monarch	1	23-Dec	Bulli	forest	RT
Spangled Drongo	2	9-Nov	Windang	dune forest	DW
Spangled Drongo	1	21-Nov	East Corimal	dune forest	DW
Cicadabird	1	30-Nov	Curramore	forest	KM
Figbird	3	24-Nov	Windang	figtrees	DW
Figbird	2	7-Dec	Gerroa	pinetrees	CJC
White-browed Woodswallow	11	7-Nov	Maddens Plains	overhead	KM
White-browed Woodswallow	100	14-Nov	Cudmirrah NP	overhead	KM
White-browed Woodswallow	4	14-Nov	Tomerong	woodland	KM
Dusky Woodswallow	4	8-Dec	Primbee	woodland	JW
Pied Butcherbird	1	24-Nov	Rocklow Creek	forest	JB
Grey Currawong	1	25-Nov	Bellanglo SF	forest	CJC
Beautiful Firetail	1	24-Dec	Molly Morgan Crossing	woodland	CJC
Red-whiskered Bulbul	2	19-Nov	3km N Currawong	shrubland	KM
Rufous Songlark	2	24-Dec	Molly Morgan Crossing	woodland	CJC

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; SB - Simon Blanchflower; JB - John Blomstedt; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; JC - Josh Coyte; BD - Barry Duncan; SE - Sheila Emery; PF - Peter Fackender; AF - Alison Foley; DG - Darryl Goldrick; BH - Betty Hudson; MJ - Michael Jarman; PM - Peter Milburn; KM - Kevin Mills; DM - Darryl Mackay; RM - Richard Miller; MM - Mike Morphett; MN - Mark Noonan; CP - Chris Presland; G&JR - Gwen & Jim Robinson; LS - Lindsay Smith; JS - John Starks; RT - Roger Truscott; BV - Barry Virtue; JW - Joan Wiley; DW - David Winterbottom; JZ - Joan Zealey



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: TO JOIN TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH A COMMON INTEREST WHO WISH TO FURTHER THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE BIRDLIFE AROUND THEM

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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I know it's not fashionable.
I told you...it's for a bird walk,
not the catwalk!



> It is readily apparent that the opening to the year's birding has been very popular, with the outings and meeting well attended and excellent sightings – a number of 'lifers' for the newer members. I trust the remainder of the year's activities are equally as pleasant and rewarding for members. Please note the change to the scheduled March outing – no water at the Tallawarra Ash Ponds. We will reschedule it for May – provided we get LA NINA!!!

> The Committee is investigating the acquisition of club-logoed T-shirts, key rings, car stickers, etc. I will advise members re purchasing details when our enquiries are finalised.

> **Subscriptions** are now overdue. If you have a reminder slip in your newsletter, could you please attend to your renewal ASAP – thank you.

> As part of my 'duty of care' (especially in this litigious society we now live in) it is incumbent on me to remind members that it is important that you dress appropriately for field outings. This is important for your own personal well-being. You should wear sound footwear consistent with bush-walking; e.g. boots or joggers with ankle-height support), wear hats for sun protection, block-out cream + insect repellent, light-coloured clothing (reflects sun/heat in summer conditions), water-repellent windjacket (winter period). You should also carry water-bottle(s) to prevent dehydration.

> We wish long-time member **Karen Hansen** a speedy recovery from her fractured hip and extend a warm welcome to new members **Pat & Mick Berghuis**.

FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events. 2...Hooters & Hawkers Seminar. 3...April Camp. 4...February Club Meeting. 4...Windang Wader Outing. 5&6...Killalea State Park Outing. 6&7...The London Wetland Centre. 7...Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program. 8...The Peckers. 8...Useful Birding Websites. 9&10...Unusual Records: Jan 2003. 10...Local Rarities.

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 10th March** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. Our guest speaker will be **Trevor Qusted**, who, like our February speaker, Peter Nolan, will talk about his birding experiences overseas; this time in **Tibet** and **China**.

MID-WEEK WALK will be on **Wednesday 12th March** at the **Mount Keira Scout Camp** under the leadership of **Joan & Tom Wylie**. Please meet initially at **8.30 am** at Byarong Park car park, west side of Mount Keira Road.

FIELD OUTING will be on **Sunday 16th March** to **Macquarie Pass**. After gathering at **9 am**, with **Chris Chafer** as leader, we will walk along Clover Hill Road to the Balancing Rock and Rainbow Falls. Drive out on the Illawarra Highway towards Robertson and set your tachometer to zero as you cross over Macquarie Rivulet. Clover Hill Road is exactly 2.5 km up the Pass on your left side. The sign is prominent, but the entrance road is narrow, so have your navigator on the lookout. As car parking is limited to a maximum of 8 vehicles, you are advised to ring around and attempt to car-pool. Don't forget your 'duty of care' and nourishment packages!

SENIOR CITIZENS' WEEK ANNUAL BIRD WALK: As in previous years **David Winterbottom** extends a warm welcome to IBOC members to join in this event through **Puckeys Estate**, followed by a substantial and tasty breakfast (\$3 the lot) upstairs at the **Fairy Meadow Surf Club**, from where the walk will proceed at **7 am**. Those intending to participate should contact **Denise Wright** on 4228.4855, especially for catering logistics.

APRIL CAMP: Please refer to Darryl's separate article for details.

COMMITTEE MEETING will be on **Tuesday 18th March** at **7.30 pm** at the domicile of **Kerri & Alan Lewis** at 14 Tolson Place, Balgownie (Tel 4285.2736). Please contact a committee member beforehand if there is some matter you'd like put on the agenda and wish to participate in discussion.

APRIL NEWSLETTER: Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 27th March**. If possible, could contributors with bird lists arrange them in taxonomic order. *The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and Its Territories* by Christidis and Boles is a very good reference for this. Every birdo's home should have one!

HOOTERS and HAWKS SEMINAR

Frances CZWALINNA

Birds Australia – Southern NSW & ACT Group invites YOU to attend 'Hooters' and Hawks, a seminar on the status on Australian raptors.

When? 12th April 2003 commencing at 1.30 pm.

Where? Macquarie Graduate School of Management, Talavera Road, North Ryde, 2109.

Why? Australian raptors have been having a tough time. This seminar will look at the 'big picture' as well as the needs and habits of some specifics. It will conclude with an open discussion of their conservation and how we can help.

Who? Stephen Debus, Dr Rod Kavanagh, Carl Gosper, Natasha Schedvin, and Paul McDonald, with Birds Australia President, Professor Henry Nix chairing the conservation discussion.

Enquiries: Birds Australia Sydney Office – Ph: 9436 0388 Fax: 9436 2677 email: rosella63@bigpond.com
Post PO Box 1322 Crows Nest 1585. Bookings are essential.

APRIL CAMP: YADBORO FLAT

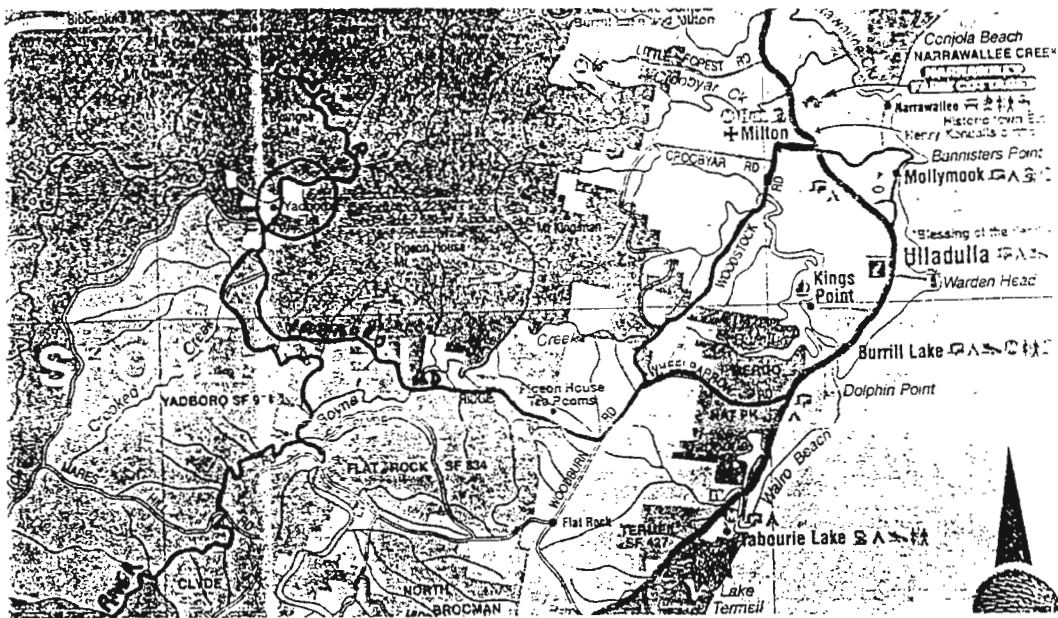
The camp site for the above camp has been checked out, and Darryl, our President, can confirm that **YADBORO FLAT** is the selected location for *Sat 12 April to Thurs 17 April*. Please note the starting date – this is one day earlier than shown in the program: it will allow early occupation of the site before the general public, given it is the first day of the school holidays.

The club will set up on the north-side site (the main access road bisects the overall site into two sections). The Clyde River adjoins the camp and had a low flow at the time of the 'reccy' two weeks ago - given the recent good rains these flows are expected to be improved by the time we arrive.

The site is naturally not 'powered', and you should bring sufficient water for drinking and, of course, all your food provisions. It is a good hour's drive back to Ulladulla if you require supplies.

Directions: Travel to Milton and turn right at 'The Angel Rose Historic Restaurant' into Croobyar Rd. (southern outskirts of Milton). Follow bitumen and Croobyar Rd, which then becomes Woodstock Rd (with Rural Fire Station on your right) for about 13 km to the Pigeon House/Yadboro turnoff on the right (west). A large property sign "CLYDE RIDGE PARK" is unmistakable at this turnoff. Turn right - the first few kms of this road (you have now left the bitumen and are on dirt) is a bit rough, so take it easy. Proceed for about 8 km and turn right at the signpost Pigeon House/Yadboro. Follow road for about 15.6 km to Clyde River and camp site. In this last section you are descending to the River and there are a few bends. Cross the bridge and turn right into the north-side campsite. From Windang the one-way trip is about 170 km and normal sedan travelling time was 3 hours - allow an extra 1 hour if towing a van.

A word of caution: the dirt road had 25mm of rainfall the day prior to the 'reccy' and there are frequent short sections (20m or so) that are soft and clayey when wet – take it easy in these parts. The road signs indicating the best speeds and conditions are an accurate assessment of driving conditions. The road does dry out quickly, however, over a 2-3 hour period following rain.

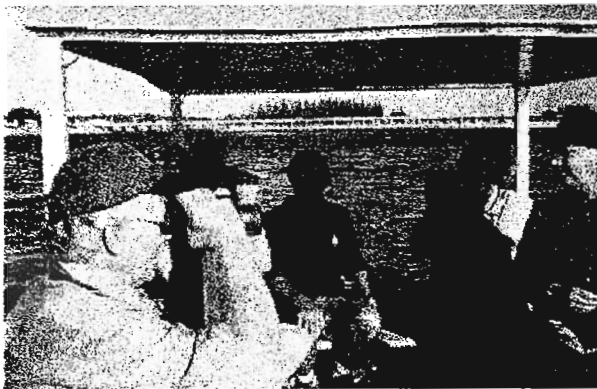


[Presumably this location has no connection with yarborough, a full hand of cards containing no card higher than 9. This bridge term comes from a story about Charles Anderson Worsley (1809-97), 2nd Earl of Yarborough, North Lincolnshire, and a Whig politician. He is said to have unsuccessfully bet 1000 to 1 that such a hand would not occur. After holding three hands in a row without an honour, he reportedly left the table and emerged from his room a week later with two cards rolled up: one in his left ear and the other up his right nostril. Or was it the other way round? We hope that Yadboro Flat campers come up trumps with some unusual bird sightings; otherwise, a pack of cards might be needed to while away the time if the rain sets in. – Ed.]

The change in format from previous years by taking to the boats certainly proved very popular with members on this occasion. On 5th February a total of 37 people, including 3-4 children, assembled at the Windang boatshed and, after a few frantic minutes by the owner to rig up a couple more boats, we finally 'shoved-off' and headed for the outer back channel and sand-banks, where all the waders were roosting. Good sightings were made by all boats and there were, fortunately, no capsize or calls of 'man overboard' heard, though some boats required extra assistance when they became stuck fast on mud-banks.

On our return to land, most of the group reassembled at the picnic area on the eastern side of the bridge to enjoy a 'high tea' and recall the special moments of the boating trip. The 35 bird species recorded helped to make it a very pleasant and popular start to the new birding year.

Black Swan	Australian Pelican	Marsh Sandpiper	Caspian Tern
Pacific Black Duck	White-faced Heron	Common Greenshank	Crested Tern
Grey Teal	Little Egret	Red-necked Stint	Little Tern
Chestnut Teal	Great Egret	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Galah
Darter	Intermediate Egret	Pied Oystercatcher	Cockatiel*
Little Pied Cormorant	Australian White Ibis	Red-capped Plover	Magpie-lark
Pied Cormorant	Royal Spoonbill	Black-winged Stilt	Australian Raven
Little Black Cormorant	Bar-tailed Godwit	Masked Lapwing	Welcome Swallow
Great Cormorant	Eastern Curlew	Silver Gull	*picnic grounds



FEBRUARY CLUB MEETING

Kerri LOWIS

The guest speaker for February's meeting was Peter Nolan, one of our IBOC members. It has become a tradition that Peter does the first talk of the year, and the members that attended were not disappointed. Once again Peter's oratory skills in explaining his frustration in being able to observe birds and photograph them provided another entertaining evening.

Peter's talk focused on a recent trip to a convention in America, where bird enthusiasts like Peter can meet and share information on raptors. We also got to share Peter's time in Cornwall and Devon, England where he stayed in the home of a very talented painter (we were fortunate enough to see some of his work), who also worked part-time as a gamekeeper on one of the biggest estates in England. Even though the winter weather was bitterly cold and wet, this did not prevent Peter from walking through forests, along cliffs, across rocky beaches and windy moors in search of the elusive raptor. One of the birds that Peter talked about was a pair of Peregrine Falcons (I think we recognised them) along a stretch of wild coast. Peter had us in stitches recalling how he had walked for ages to get up close to the birds, but they flew off just as he thought he'd be in range for a photo. This wasn't the only case of "spot the bird" – one was so well disguised that on the advice of the friend he was staying with, Peter took a wide shot of a group of trees because he had been told that there was a bird in there somewhere!! (We still don't know in which tree!)

Peter explained the difficulty of photographing birds through double-glazing (a necessity if you live in England). We saw various attempts by Peter to photograph – opening the window (capable of opening it only a little); standing back from the window; sneaking up from the birdfeeder from the outside; and pretending not to look at the birds and then take a shot. Once again it was Peter's delivery that brought the house down! Everyone that attended had a really good night and, on their behalf, Martin Potter thanked Peter for such an entertaining talk.

“We took the high road, and we took the low road...”

Saturday 15th February saw a good turnout of 18 members assemble at the northern entrance to Killalea Lagoon. The earlier birds had been rewarded not with a worm, but with the sighting of a Collared Sparrowhawk. As directed, we had taken the high road from the roundabout at the State Recreation Area entrance, passing the sign that said “Private Road”. With a clear sky, a light breeze, and no arrests (apparently it is a public road but Pioneer Quarries would prefer that you didn’t know that) we set off in good spirits along the short track to the lagoon; a pair of curious Black-shouldered Kites watched from their tree as the IBOC army filed past.

The track along the eastern side of the lagoon is elevated and with the sun behind us we were afforded good views of the considerable array of birdlife on display. In rainier days this would have been one large body of water closely fringed by reeds at the edges, but now large expanses of mudflats were exposed. As we approached the water a group of eight Glossy Ibis took off and treated us to an awesome display of formation flying above the lagoon; their formation disintegrated in dramatic fashion with the arrival of an adult White-breasted Sea-Eagle. (A juvenile Sea-Eagle was also present). The Ibis eventually returned to their patch of mud, giving us excellent views of their iridescent, almost metallic plumage glinting in the sunshine; this was definitely a highlight of the day and a new sighting for many.

Recent reports had been received of Crake sightings here, and our leader Darryl was determined to track them down for us. His foray along the edges of the reed beds on distinctly soft ground revealed, skulking furtively in the shadows, a Spotless Crake. In contrast Darryl emerged looking anything but spotless, ankle deep in mud. Sighting of the inconspicuous Crake was aided greatly with the spotting scope which had been kindly provided by new members Ann and Alan Cousins. We continued along the track for a short distance, then made another diversion to the lagoon’s edge; this time the Crake spotted was a Spotted Crake.

At the southern end of the lagoon there stood out amongst the other duller ducks four Australian Shelduck, resplendent in their bright chestnut plumage; the white eye-ring of the one female was clearly visible. Also sticking out like a sore thumb was a large exotic goose, possibly hybrid; fortunately I had with me a field guide of British birds (you never know when you might need one!) and the closest match was that of a Greylag. Morning tea was taken under the limited shade available, and whilst Jude entertained us with unusually clean jokes, Mike Morphett disappeared into the undergrowth to confirm sightings of adult and juvenile Tawny Grassbirds.

We continued along the track, which ended with a fabulous view of Killalea Beach, lapped with turquoise waters. The sun was hot and the water very inviting, but reluctantly we had to turn back. Perched nearby on a wire fence, facing into the north wind, were about sixty swallows – a very welcome sight. Retracing our steps, on the far side of the lagoon we saw one of the Sea-Eagles being harried by two Black-shouldered Kites. You would think that raptors are given a hard enough time by other birds without harrying each other... We returned to our cars, drove back to the roundabout and this time took the low road through the SRA, adjourning for lunch at the camp site. Eschewing the decadence of using the picnic tables provided, we ate instead under the fig trees. We then drove on to the furthest car park. On the western side is a locked barrier, passable by walkers, which is the start of the track to Minnamurra Spit. Descending into dense littoral rainforest, the change of habitat gave us the chance to add to our already impressive list of 47 species. Within minutes we had Black-faced Monarch, Golden Whistler, Yellow Robin, and many other forest birds, and were serenaded by a particularly melodious immature Grey Butcherbird perched in the mistletoe. A female Flycatcher was seen which was initially identified as a Leaden, but the close proximity of a male Satin Flycatcher prompted a re-think. The latter bird flew out and caught a robber fly and duly ate it. The identification process wasn’t helped by the field guide (Slaters) which shows the female Leaden as having no ‘whiskers’; if you own this book you might wish to draw them in!

By the time we reached Minnamurra Beach the list exceeded 60 species, minus the parrot family, and newer members were showing distinct signs of bird overload; (don’t worry – it won’t always be like this!) The beach only produced one seabird, a Miscellaneous Tern. A climb up steep steps brought us back to our cars. Many thanks are due to Darryl for what we all agreed was an excellent day’s birding, with Crake the icing on the cake. The list for Killalea is as follows:

Black Swan	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Superb Fairy-wren	Willie Wagtail
Exotic Goose	Collared Sparrowhawk	Variiegated Fairy-wren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian Shelduck	Nankeen Kestrel	Brown Gerygone	Grey Butcherbird
Pacific Black Duck	Australian Spotted Crake	Brown Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Australasian Shoveler	Spotless Crake	Yellow Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Chestnut Teal	Purple Swamphen	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Hardhead	Dusky Moorhen	New Holland Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Australasian Grebe	Eurasian Coot	Eastern Spinebill	European Goldfinch
Little Pied Cormorant	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Eastern Yellow Robin	Welcome Swallow
Pied Cormorant	Black-winged Stilt	Eastern Whipbird	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Little Black Cormorant	Black-fronted Dotterel	Crested Shrike-tit	Tawny Grassbird
Great Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	Golden Whistler	Little Grassbird
Australian Pelican	Silver Gull	Black-faced Monarch	Golden-headed Cisticola
White-faced Heron	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Satin Flycatcher	Silvereye
Glossy Ibis	Crested Pigeon	Magpie-lark	Common Starling
Australian White Ibis	Bar-shouldered Dove	Rufous Fantail	Common Myna
Black-shouldered Kite		Grey Fantail	

The LONDON WETLAND CENTRE

MIKE MORPHETT

During our holiday from early last September to early November in England (with a side-trip to Mallorca, including the wetlands of S'Albufera Natural Park), Carol and I managed to squeeze in some birding. On our second day we walked to Barnes from our Fulham base, across Putney Bridge, along the Thames Path on the southern bank, noting the takeover by Canada Geese, and turned left into Queen Elizabeth Walk towards the Red Lion pub. Our 1999 copy of *A-Z London* showed that the Barn Elms Waterworks lay behind the high fence; however, a few hundred metres on we came across a sign pointing to The London Wetland Centre. The short detour brought us to the fine statue of Sir Peter Scott (1909-1989), painter and naturalist and founder of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), standing at the edge of a pond in front of the entrance to the centre. It was not until the penultimate day of the holiday, while Carol was Westminster Abbeying, that I explored the site at a not too leisurely pace under an unusually clear blue November sky.

In 1975 the Barn Elms Waterworks was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on account of the large numbers of overwintering ducks from abroad. As water storage bodies the four Victorian reservoirs became redundant in the late 1980s when the Thames Water Ring Main (about 50 miles of tunnel big enough for a double-deck bus to drive through) came into operation and were decommissioned in 1994. The WWT, in partnership with Thames Water, the owner, and Berkeley Homes, the initial financial backers, undertook mammoth and unprecedented recycling conversions to the 40-hectare site, to construct the wetland visitors centre, which was opened in May 2000.

Some 160 bird species, both resident and migratory, have since been recorded there. Latest sightings of interest are posted in the Observatory, which has the feel of an airport terminal, with panoramic views across Main Lake and the entire site, composed of lagoons, ponds, marshes and reedbeds. Bird updates are also on show in each of the six hides; the largest of which are the three-storey Peacock Tower and two-storey Wildside Hide. The visual aids of closed circuit television and bird identification murals feature in most of the hides.

Surfaced pathways, boardwalks and bridges take you past or through the thirty wild wetland habitats. The most interesting, in my view, are the collection of fourteen that form the World Wetlands sector, providing sanctuary for globally threatened wildfowl. The diversity of habitats and birdlife you can experience within a short distance is remarkable; for example, the Greenland White-fronted Goose from the Frozen North; Hooded Mergansers of the Northern Forests; Coscoroba Swan and White-winged and White-fronted Ducks from the Warm and Tropical Zones; and in the Islands section Laysan Duck from Hawaii, South Georgia Pintail the Falklands, the New Zealand Blue Duck, and, from our own neck of the wetlands, the Magpie Goose and Freckled Duck. Further on lies the Wildside, where, in addition to birds, amphibians and insects, notably butterflies, moths, dragonflies and damselflies, can be studied.

The London Wetland Centre also contains designed wildlife-friendly sustainable gardens; a children's farmyard; the Pond Zone with thatched house displays; a cottage featuring the historical uses of wetlands; the Discovery Centre with interactive devices; the Art Gallery lecture theatre; a shop for the purchase of gifts, souvenirs and books; and the Water's Edge Café. All these combine to form a family-friendly environment with the emphasis on education and enjoyment in a relaxed atmosphere.

Ironically and sadly, wetlands, the origin of civilisation and agriculture, are continually under threat from human development world-wide by way of drainage, dredging, dams, degradation, pollution and over-exploitation of resources. The WWT is the largest U.K. charity dedicated to conserving the world's wetland birds and their habitats and continues to pursue Peter Scott's aim of bringing people closer to nature. The London Wetland Centre is a classic example, which he had dreamt of securing. I'm sure that he would have been impressed with this latest addition to the nine wetland visitor centres now established in the U.K., which began at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, in 1946. With the slogan 'Wise up to WEBS' (water, ecology, biodiversity, sustainability), the Trust advocates education and training programs that "extend beyond the classroom into the home and workplace as part of lifelong learning". In an advisory role it draws on its experience and expertise in wetland restoration, creation and management and visitor access and has assisted in the development of wetland projects in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia. The Trust's website is www.wwt.org.uk.



I thoroughly recommend that any fellow birdos heading for Britain include a visit to the London Wetland Centre in their itinerary. I would also suggest that something similar in concept be incorporated in plans for revamping Killalea State Park area.

REGENT HONEYEATER RECOVERY PROGRAM

Volunteer tree planters are again needed in the **Capertee Valley** for the weekend 5th & 6th April. Planting organiser, **David Geering** reports that 4000 trees are to be planted in a new section of the valley, dominated by White Box, a very important habitat for Regent Honeyeaters, and the endangered Swift Parrot, when these trees flower.

As on previous occasions, very reasonably priced accommodation, plus a convivial Saturday dinner at the local community hall, can be booked through David for those wanting more comfort than canvas and baked beans. Camping at Glen Davis or on a local property can also be arranged through him. So, if you want to get your hands dirty for a very good cause, contact David on 1800.621.056; email: david.geering@npws.nsw.gov.au.

Camping by one of many of Canada's lovely lakes, it was a wonderful experience to listen to the mystic call of the Loon, to search over the crystal-blue water to find him before he dived under the water, to come again – WHERE? Having the luxury of out-of-season when there were few campers, we were intrigued by another sound echoing through the maples, which sounded quite out of place: a sharp, metallic rat-a-tat-tat, eventually discovering it was the Woodpecker, pecking not on wood, but on the metal plaques on the posts to number the camp-sites.

Here at home I have the glass-peckers! At various times there's been a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, a Lewin's Honeyeater, a White-browed Scrubwren, and an Australian Magpie. At the moment I have five, not exactly at the same time but on the same window just the other side from my recliner! A pair of Superb Fairy-wrens, two Red-whiskered Bulbuls (a pair?), and a little Yellow Thornbill who has his own section of window right at the top – WHY? They can't all be nesting!

[I have observed this glass-pecking phenomenon at my home with performances by the Brown Thornbill and Green Catbird as well as the Superb Fairy-wren. I'd venture to say that such agonistic displays are confined to certain passerines, attacking a perceived intruder or challenger of the same species in a reflective surface. By contrast, some non-passerines could be termed glass-trekkers, that apparently see a passage for continued flight through reflected trees and skies. At home a Brown Goshawk, Spotted Turtledove, Crimson Rosella and Southern Boobook have each collided with window panes with some force. Norma's enquiry about 'peckuliar' behaviour should generate some interesting debate among our members and could be an intriguing area of research for an amateur or professional birdo. – Ed.]



1. IBOC – www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc
2. Chris Chafer – www.ezy.net.au/users/cchafer/index.html
3. Hunter Bird Club – <http://users.hunterlink.net.au/hboc/home.htm>
4. Canberra Bird Club – <http://www.canberrabirds.dynamic.com.au>
5. Birding NSW – www.ozemail.com.au/~nswbirds
6. Murrumbidgee Naturalist Club – www.angelfire.com/mn/fieldnats
7. Cumberland Bird Club – www.cboc.org.au
8. SOSSA – <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~sossa/>
9. Australasian Wader Study Group – www.tasweb.com.au/awsg
10. S.N.A.G. – www.snag.birdsaustralia.com.au
11. Birds Australia – www.birdsaustralia.com.au
12. Bird Observers Club of Australia – www.birdobservers.org.au/
13. Interpretative Birding Bulletin – www.ibirding.com
14. Barren Grounds Observatory – www.birdsaustralia.com.au/barren_grounds
15. Andrew Isles Natural History Books – www.AndrewIsles.com
16. The Birding Shop Catalogue – www.thebirdingshop.com.au
17. Bushcare – www.ea.gov.au/land/bushcare
18. Landcare – www.landcareaustralia.com.au & www.landcarensw.org

There are numerous commercial organizations which have special birding tours around Australia. There is quite a listing of advertisements in *Wingspan* (Birds Australia publication). Copies are held in the library if you need further contact details. Good Browsing.

Send your records to: email: cchafer@ezy.net.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Stubble Quail	2	11-Jan	Swamp Rd., Jamberoo	rural	JS,DM
Chestnut Teal	1500+	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Little Egret	13	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Striated Heron	1	5-Jan	Purry Burry Point, Primbee	in tree	CJC
Nankeen Night Heron	1	23-Jan	Macquarie Rivulet - Albion Park	riverine	BBH
Nankeen Night Heron	3	26-Jan	Swan Lake	estuary	KM
Nankeen Night Heron	1	Jan	Bellawongarah	small pond	BA
Black Bittern	1	1-Jan	Swan Lake	estuary	KM
Black Bittern	1	6-Jan	Swan Lake west	creek	KM
Black Bittern	1juv	26-Jan	Swan Lake	estuary	KM
Australasian Bittern	1	10-Jan	Gerroa	wetland	KM
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	6-Jan	Spring Ck., Kiama	wetland	RS
Pacific Baza	2	14-Jan	Balgownie	overhead	KM
Pacific Baza	1	16-Jan	Worrigee	woodland	KM
Pacific Baza	2	24-Jan	west Albion Park, Macquarie R.	riverine	DG
Square-tailed Kite	1	4-Jan	Cudmirrah	overhead	KM
Square-tailed Kite	1	24-Jan	Colburra	urban	EV
Square-tailed Kite	1	26-Jan	Little Forest Plateau	overhead	MZ
Swamp Harrier	1	21-Jan	Sandon Point, Thirroul	wetland	RT
Brown Goshawk	1	12-Jan	Albion Park Rail	garden	PF
Brown Goshawk	1	27-Jan	Primbee	dune forest	CJC
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	14-Jan	Mt. Pleasant	urban	DT
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	20-Jan	Comerong Is.	forest	KM
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	3-Jan	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	24-Jan	Nth Macquarie Rd./Illawarra Hwy	riverine	DG
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	4-Jan	Dharawal SRA	overhead	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	5-Jan	Toolijooa	overhead	CP
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	16-Jan	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Australian Hobby	1	Jan	Fairy Meadow	shops	KL
Peregrine Falcon	1	18-Jan	Kembla Grange	overhead	CJC
Buff-banded Rail	1	2-Jan	Swan Lake	estuary	KM
Buff-banded Rail	1	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Buff-banded Rail	1	5-Jan	Nicolle Rd. drain, Primbee	channel	CJC
Bar-tailed Godwit	132	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Bar-tailed Godwit	270	27-Jan	Comerong Is.	mud flat	SB
Marsh Sandpiper	9	26-Jan	Cudgerre Bay, Lake Illawarra	mud flat	CJC
Common Greenshank	5	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Red Knot	22	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Red-necked Stint	200+	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Red-necked Stint	120	27-Jan	Comerong Is.	mud flat	SB
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	2000+	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Black-winged Stilt	197	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Pacific Golden Plover	106	27-Jan	Comerong Is.	mud flat	SB
Grey Plover	1	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Grey Plover	1	27-Jan	Comerong Is.	mud flat	SB
Lesser Sand Plover	1	27-Jan	Comerong Is.	mud flat	SB
Hooded Plover	2+1j	8-Jan	Inyada Beach, Manyana	beach	MJ
Long-tailed Jaeger	2	25-Jan	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Gull-billed Tern	3	18-Jan	Lake Wollumboola	sand flats	DM
Sooty Tern	1	25-Jan	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Whiskered Tern	236	5-Jan	Windang Peninsula	mud flat	CJC
Common Bronzewing	2	10-Jan	Cordeaux Dam Rd.	woodland	CJC
Common Bronzewing	2	12-Jan	St. Georges Basin, Bleheim Beach	woodland	BE
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	27-Jan	Primbee	dune forest	CJC
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	22-Jan	Goodmans Ford	woodland	CB
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	26-Jan	Basin View	overhead	KM
Sooty Owl	1	29-Jan	Jamberoo Mountain	rainforest	RJ
Azure Kingfisher	1	24-Jan	Nth Macquarie Rd./Illawarra Hwy	riverine	DG
Azure Kingfisher	1	Jan	Balgownie	garden	KL

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Fork-tailed Swift	30	11-Jan	Figtree	overhead	BZ
Fork-tailed Swift	2	15-Jan	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Fork-tailed Swift	6	18-Jan	Windang	overhead	CB
Fork-tailed Swift	20+	18-Jan	Corrimal	overhead	GB
Fork-tailed Swift	11	18-Jan	Bulli	overhead	RT
Fork-tailed Swift	40	30-Jan	Figtree	overhead	BZ
Red-browed Treecreeper	1	4-Jan	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
Southern Emu-wren	few	30-Jan	Lake Wollumboola	lake edge	DM
Pilotbird	1	4-Jan	Dharawal SRA	gully forest	CJC
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	few	12-Jan	St. Georges Basin, Blenheim Beach	woodland	BE
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	2	18-Jan	Cudmirrah	garden	KM
Hooded Robin	5	22-Jan	Goodmans Ford	woodland	CB
Logrunner	2	2-Jan	Barren Grounds NR	forest	EV
Varied Sittella	9+	5-Jan	Swan Lake	forest	KM
Crested Shrike-tit	1	5-Jan	Swan Lake	forest	KM
Crested Shrike-tit	1	23-Jan	Sublime Point track	forest	IM
Satin Flycatcher	2	22-Jan	Goodmans Ford	woodland	CB
Cicadabird	1	16-Jan	Nowra south	forest	KM
Cicadabird	1	30-Jan	Albion Park west	forest	Mro
Figbird	1	28-Jan	Thirroul	garden	IM
Green Catbird	1	18-Jan	Keiraville	garden	ME
Beautiful Firetail	6	26-Jan	Little Forest Plateau	heath	MZ
Brown Songlark	3	11-Jan	Swamp Rd., Jamberoo	rural	JS,DM

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; SB - Simon Blanchflower; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; ME - Mary Eskdale; BE - Brian Everingham; PF - Peter Fackender; DG - Darryl Goldrick; BBH - Brian & Barbara Hales; KL - Kerri Lewis; IM - Ian McKinlay; MJ - Michael Jarman; RJ - Richard Jordan; PM - Peter Milburn; KM - Kevin Mills; DM - Darryl Mackay; MRO - Mark Robinson; CP - Chris Presland; RS - Ron Simcock; JS - John Starks; DT - Dave Thomson; RT - Roger Truscott; EV - Edwin Vella; DW - David Winterbottom; BZ - Bill Zealey; MZ - Marnix Zwankhuizen

Comment: The new year's got off to an excellent start. Fork-tailed Swifts were observed by a number of people through January. This threatened species is apparently becoming rare, so all observations are useful. Two records of Yellow-tufted Honeyeater from the coast where they have not been reported previously. Brown Songlarks remained along Swamp Rd. for most of January, but I'm surprised there haven't been more reports of this species given the dry inland conditions. Black Bitterns appear to have successfully bred on Swan Lake. More Square-tailed Kite and Pacific Baza records, and the Bazas bred at the Wollongong Botanic Gardens in February. That species continues to spread through the Illawarra, which is consistent with their increase in the Sydney region, a pleasing trend for this beautiful raptor. In fact, there appears to have been an increase in many raptors through the region over the past decade (based on records submitted to the URS), the only exception is Nankeen Kestrel, which appears to have declined. Huge numbers of waterbirds visiting the exposed seagrass meadows along eastern Lake Illawarra (Windang Peninsula) as the lake dried out. Record numbers of Chestnut Teal, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint for this location, and the largest number of Black-winged Stilts and Whiskered Tern recorded in the region. In February there was even better species to arrive here and in the Shoalhaven, but that can wait for the next newsletter. Goodman's Ford is one of the few regional locations where Hooded Robin is regularly observed. Logrunner were again observed on Jamberoo Mountain. The only record between Jamberoo and Berry-Cambewarra area is from Broughton Vale; does anyone of know of other records along those escarpment forests?

Remember: if you want to be added to the local birding hotline, just send me your email address. This means you get to know all the latest observations when they get reported to me.

LOCAL RARITIES

Among the rare birds reported in N.S.W. two species have been accepted by the N.S.W. Ornithological Rarities Committee (ORAC) in its determination last year and which were observed off Wollongong:-

Cases 338-340 Grey-headed Albatross in 1989, 1998 & 1999

Case 341 Blue Petrel 03-07-99.

To obtain Unusual Record Report Forms contact the Secretary NSW ORAC, 121 George Road, Wilberforce, NSW 2756. Email: kbrandwood@hawknnet.com.au.



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them

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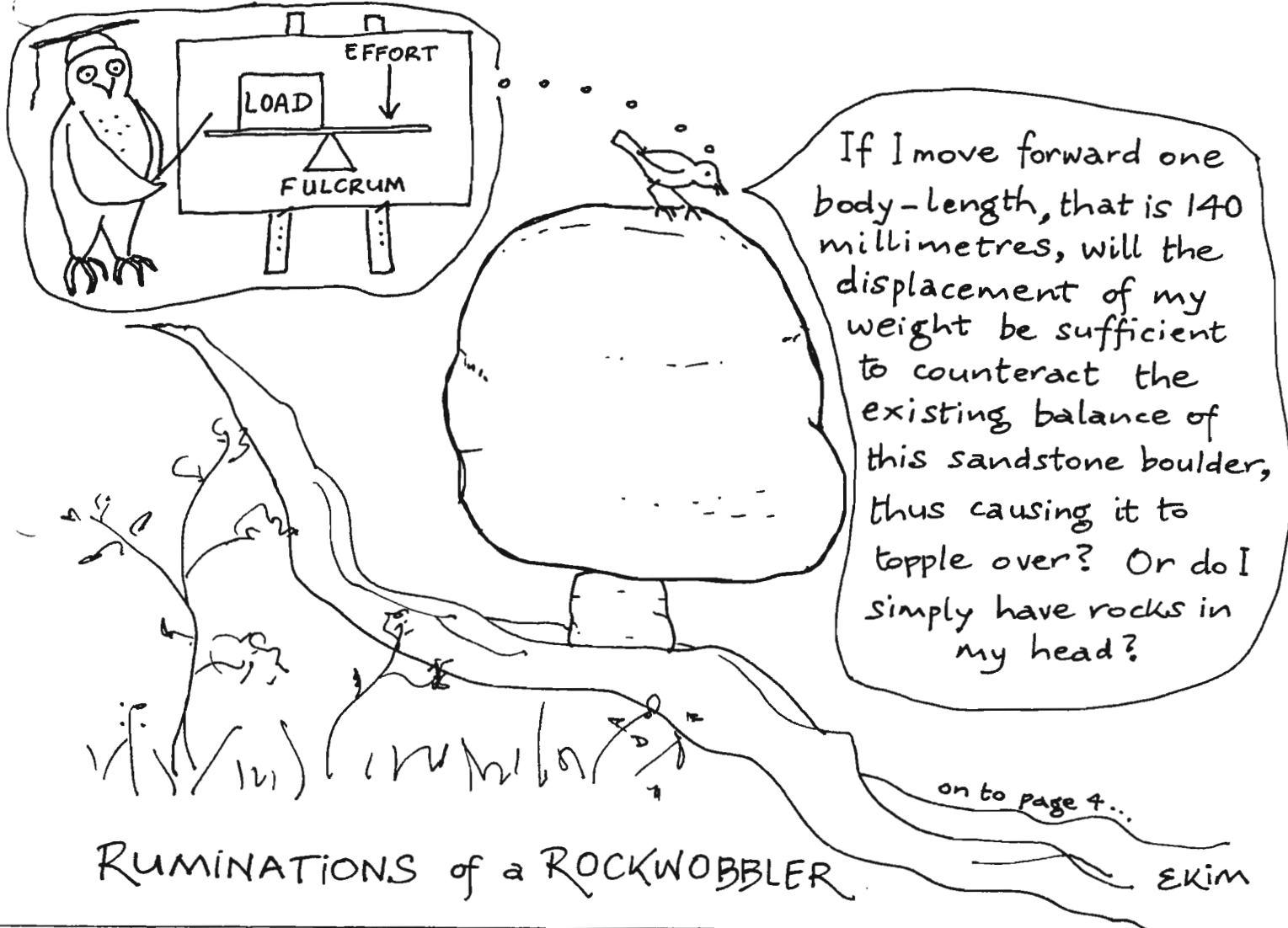
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FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events. 3...March Club Meeting. 4...Macquarie Pass National Park Outing. 5...2nd Australasian Ornithological Conference. 6&7...A Solar Eclipse Outshone By Outback Birds [Ceduna trip]. 7...Mt Keira Mid-week Walk. 8...Introduced Birds. 9&10...Unusual Records: Feb 2003.

UPCOMING IBOC EVENTS

During the month of April there will be no club meeting, field outing or mid-week walk.

APRIL CAMP: Saturday 12th April to Thursday 17th April at Yadboro Flat. Please refer to page 3 of last month's issue of *IBOC News* for details. If you haven't registered and wish to attend, please contact **Tom Wylie** on 4284-2051. Tom could do with some help in transporting the communal camping gear; viz toilet and shower, so would volunteers please get in touch with him. Tom advises that folk should bring suitable clothing for what could be hot days and crisp nights.

COMMITTEE MEETING: will be on Tuesday 22nd April at 7.30 pm at the home of **Bronwyn Wilson** at 8 Wellington Drive, Balgownie (Tel 4283-4744). The usual invitation goes out to club members to attend who wish to discuss a particular issue.

MAY NEWSLETTER: Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is Tuesday 29th April. With the only expected group report being the April Camp, here is the chance for individual members to fill the space with their own exploits.

We extend a warm welcome to new members **Lutz and Ingrid Kleimann** from Albion Park Rail and **Alan and Anne Cousins** from Tarrawanna. They can look forward to happy, exciting social occasions with us, as evidenced by the photo below, taken on the recent Killalea Lagoon outing! Looks can be deceiving.



Mention that Trevor Quested is to be the Guest Speaker and you are assured of a good crowd, and such was the case at the March 10th Club Meeting, and no-one who came went home disappointed. For many years Trevor has generously given of his time to come to our meetings to entertain, educate and encourage us in our bird observing through his illustrated talks. His holiday treks and slides have become legendary and enjoyed by all lucky enough to have seen them.

Despite very heavy rain, Trevor drove down from Sydney to be our Guest Speaker, and we were truly grateful to him for his commitment to our Club and members. So we settled back and took a journey via the lens of Trevor's camera and his wonderful commentary to China and Tibet in May 2002 to see the people, their culture, and the bird-life. Trevor was escorted on this three weeks tour by some good mates and efficient guides.

The first stop was Beijing, and all were surprised at the modern buildings and superb architecture, which was attested to by the great photographs shown; especially enjoyed were the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City, and some of the city sights by night.



Into Tibet in spring for the next stage of their exciting journey, which was one of extreme contrasts, with industrial cities, villages of mud, clay and stone buildings, open desolate plateaux, deep ravines with flowing rivers, snow-capped mountains and steep rugged cliffs, forests, and beautiful lakes.

The locals were colourful and welcoming, and Trevor told us how they introduced them to bird-watching, and how enjoyable, cheap and plentiful the food was in the mainly Muslim eating-houses, but how the accommodation was very spartan and very cold. They witnessed and photographed festivals, processions, and dancing and saw the Buddhist influence in the many monasteries dotted throughout the region, with flapping prayer flags, painted prayer rocks along the creeks and escarpment, and spinning prayer wheels along the roadside, both in the cities and in the villages. Animals were sighted, including the yak, sheep, goats, gazelles, horses and rodents.

They experienced blizzards, snow storms, and difficulty in breathing due to the high altitudes; so walking, bird-watching, and photographing were hard, but, needless to say, the results we saw were stunning. The scenery, spring blossoms and wild flowers were breathtaking, and we could almost smell the perfume of the daphnia and appreciated the wonderful shapes of the trees in the ancient juniper forest and their colourful berries. Trevor summed the country up as too remote, too windy and too cold, but appreciated the opportunity of seeing it, and, as you'll see by the birds he photographed, it was a very worthwhile bird-watching trek:-

Bar-headed Goose	Black-headed Stork	Asian three-toed Woodpecker	White-rumped Snowfinch
Himalayan Griffon	Brown-headed Gull	Hume's Warbler	Rufous-necked Snowfinch
Upland Buzzard	Hill Pigeon	Tickell's Leaf-Warbler	Rufous-breasted Accentor
Saker Falcon	White-backed Thrush	Rufous-vented Tit	Grey-capped Greenfinch
Black Kite	White-capped Redstart	Oriental Skylark	White-browed Rosefinch
White-eared Pheasant	Chough	Tibetan Lark	Beautiful Rosefinch
Black-eared Pheasant	Black-billed Magpie	Asian short-toed Lark	Mongolian Finch
Black-necked Crane	Wallcreeper		

On behalf of members present, a vote of thanks to Trevor was given by Graham Barwell.

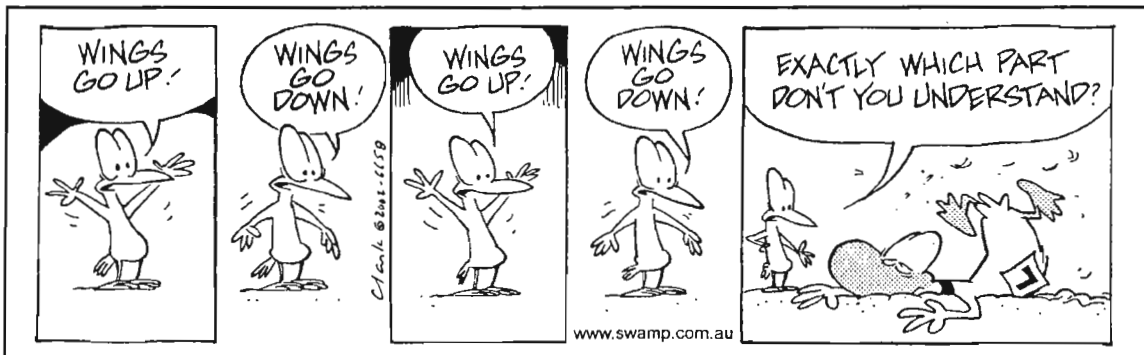
Heavy early morning showers probably deterred a good many folk from venturing on this 16th March Macquarie Pass walk, but the thirteen brave souls who did attend were rewarded, despite the further falls of rain during the latter part of the reviver breaks taken out in the open in the morning and beside Macquarie Rivulet at lunch. The sun was strong and, when it shone on the cliff-face and the passing clouds of mist, created a spectacle to inspire an artist. The walk took us along Clover Hill Road through forest, paddock and forest again to the hypnotic sight and sound of Rainbow Falls and the physics and geology thought-provoking Balancing Rock. Thanks go to Chris Chafer for organising the outing.

Of the 33 bird species recorded the highlights were the pair of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, one of which spent much time at the end of a long dead branch while the other was busy feeding in foliage close by. Rose Robins appeared at different spots and tested viewers' neck muscles. A small flock of Topknot Pigeons was roosting in tall trees overlooking the derelict dwelling. Young Avril came across a frog Kevin McGregor described as being no larger than a pencil head.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Grey Goshawk | Spotted Pardalote | Eastern Yellow Robin | Australian Magpie |
| Brown Cuckoo-Dove | Yellow-throated Scrubwren | Eastern Whipbird | Pied Currawong |
| Wonga Pigeon | White-browed Scrubwren | Crested Shrike-tit | Australian Raven |
| Topknot Pigeon | Brown Gerygone | Golden Whistler | Satin Bowerbird |
| Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo | Striated Thornbill | Grey Shrike-thrush | Red-browed Finch |
| Australian King-Parrot | Little Wattlebird | Black-faced Monarch | Silvereye |
| Crimson Rosella | Lewin's Honeyeater | Rufous Fantail | |
| Superb Lyrebird | Yellow-faced Honeyeater | Grey Fantail | |
| Superb Fairy-wren | Rose Robin | Grey Butcherbird | |



Balancing Rock



The Second Biennial Birds Australia AOC is to be held on Wednesday 10th to Saturday 13th December this year at the Australian National University, Canberra.

The conference will provide a forum for the exchange of information between avian-based researchers and conservationists in the Australasian region. Similar to the Inaugural Conference held at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst (which David Winterbottom, Roger Truscott and Eddie Torre from IBOC attended), it will be a scientific program of symposia, and discussion and poster sessions, with optional conference dinner and post-conference excursions. At CSU early morning bird-watching outings were also arranged.

Keynote speakers will be Professor Andrew Cockburn – evolutionary ecology; David Lindenmayer – landscape ecology; and Trevor Worthy – paleoecology.

Penny Olsen, Denis Saunders and Nick Nicholls are the principal organisers. The Organising Committee describe this 2nd AOC as a no frills conference. Morning and afternoon tea and a list of on/off campus accommodation and handy eateries will be provided, and participants will be expected to arrange their own lunches and bed space.

The Australasian Waders Study Group will be staging their two-day conference immediately after the AOC at the same venue.

For further information and updates (including conference fees) please visit website www.birdsaustralia.com.au/aoc or email enquiries to penny.olsen@anu.edu.au or denis.saunders@csiro.au.

Gulls threaten Big Island's bird species

By MICHELLE SINGER

A BATTLE of wings is raging on Wollongong's Big Island.

The population of Silvergulls has exploded, threatening the survival of the island's other birds.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service spokesperson John Ross said a feasibility study was under way to slow down the growth of the Silvergull population.

"The Silvergulls have exploded because of a nearby tip which has provided an unnatural food source," he said.

"It has had a flow-on effect to other species. We will look at what can be done to reduce the food source which in turn will reduce the excessive number of gulls on this island."

Mr Ross said the study aimed to restore the natural balance to the island's habitat. The study is a medium-to-long-term project which is estimated to take three to 10 years before completion.

Other islands that have benefited from these studies include Brush Island off Bawley Point where rats were eating waterbird eggs.

"If the rats could be eradicated from the island it would be a major boost to the waterbirds that use the island to breed," he said.

"These studies are being considered for all sort of places like Lord Howe Island where rats are again the problem endangering birds and insects."

Falls facilities to be upgraded

By DANIELLE WOOLAGE

UPGRADES to visitor facilities at Maddens Falls in the Dharawal State Conservation Centre are expected to begin in mid-January.

The tender to construct a car park, walking track and viewing platform has been awarded to GC Civil and Garden Craft, a Unanderra company.

The platform and boardwalk will be made of steel mesh with protective fencing. Crushed sandstone will be used to build the walking track.

The \$146,000 project is jointly funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Georges River Foreshore Improvement Program (a regional planning initiative of PlanningNSW).

The project is one of 11 designed to improve the environment and create new recreational opportunities along the Georges River.

About \$800,000 would be shared between the 11 projects as part of PlanningNSW's \$6 million, four-year program.

Keira MP David Campbell last week handed over a \$73,000 share of

the falls project cost to NPWS south regional manager Mike Patrick.

"This area contains a beautiful waterfall fed by Maddens Creek in the unpolluted upper catchment of the Georges River," Mr Campbell said.

"The new facilities will ensure (the falls) provides an important tourism asset for the Darkes Forest community and the Illawarra region as a whole."

Works also include the installation of a viewing platform at the waterfall, a raised swamp deck path through the sensitive upland swamp, the provision of a small car park off Darkes Forest Rd, interpretive signage and environmental rehabilitation works.

"A short informal walking track currently leads visitors from Darkes Forest Road through an ecologically sensitive upland swamp to the waterfall," Mr Campbell said.

"Some parts of the site will require substantial rehabilitation and revegetation, such as the old quarry which is adjacent to the walking track."

18/12/02 - Illawarra Mercury - 26/2/03

Begging the indulgence of IBOC members, I'd like to tell you about our birding and other adventures on a month-long trip (24/11 to 23/12) last year which David & I were fortunate enough to be able to undertake. The excuse for this Christmas present (To: Us, From: Us) was the Total Solar Eclipse in Ceduna (S.A.) on December 4th, which we set as our goal and the limit of our travels westward.

The outward journey took us through Wee Jasper Nature Reserve, Hay, Mungo National Park, Scotia Sanctuary (between Broken Hill and Wentworth), Renmark and Iron Knob. At first, birdspotting was easy as we started with a blank slate on to which went 32 species in the first 24 hours. At Micalong Creek in Wee Jasper N.R. we were treated to the delightful flight and spectacular colours of the Rainbow Bee-eaters: a flash of blue and orange on the wing as they wove and threaded their way through the air en route to their burrows in the creek bank, laden with nesting material or insect-fare. And, twice a day, a small group of White-browed Scrub-wrens would materialize, finding the underneath of our 4WD a veritable gourmet's paradise for breakfast and supper.

At a free camping area called Soapworks Beach (the sea being the Murrumbidgee!), 3km west of Hay, we found the birdo's dream – the unexpected treasure trove: another 16 species to add to our list, on an overnight stop. We were the only campers on a virtual island created by the river looping almost 360°, leaving a lagoon in the centre of this swirl. A walk around the edge of the river set us reeling as we grabbed the shared binocs from each other's hands, dizzily switching from one new find to the next. Best of all were the many Sacred Kingfishers, a kindly species in that it stays still long enough to get a fix. We even saw one of them fishing, with the sun on its iridescent blue and green plumage, seeming to radiate light. An early start next morning was foiled by a parrot we could not identify, eventually twigging that it was a 'Yellow' Crimson Rosella (race *flaveolus*), also called "custard-head".

Mungo served us up a feast of new sightings and, with Dave's keen eyesight, we were privy to all the birds mentioned in the park leaflet: our first sighting of Major Mitchells (very exciting, though we saw them quite often after that), Blue Bonnets, Red-rumped Parrots, Mallee Ringnecks (I called them Molly Ringwalds), the dazzlingly colourful male Mulga Parrot, and Orange and White-fronted Chats – even the names tell what a rainbow we were seeing in this desert. A modern but low impact visitor centre with hot showers, precocious Yellow-throated Miners, Apostlebirds, Grey Currawongs, and 'maggies' that flock from nowhere to stalk your picnic table at the first clink of cutlery, and excellent, marked walking and driving trails (not to mention the Walls of China) make it highly recommendable except, of course, in hot weather. The mallee gums afforded us little shade during oven-baking time which stretched from 11 am to 6 pm as the holiday progressed.

One evening, as the sun languished on the horizon, its power for the day thankfully spent, we roused from our stupor, at one with the dawn/dusk feeders like roos and started tea. From nowhere, about a dozen aptly-named Apostlebirds, zoomed in, and our sluggish camp became a hive of raucous activity. Previous campers' leftovers were inspected and consumed, bits of hamburger and tomato were tossed around as if they were the Highland Games; our gas stove was also investigated, a shame for poor "Burntfoot", as we named him, seeing as we'd just used it. I was washing up some dishes, and a little soapy water had fallen on the ground. Looking down, I saw one trying to drink the fast-disappearing suds and I thought they might be a bit thirsty. A small bowl of water became the place to be seen as they all formed a circle round it and, for once, were silent, drinking their fill, little necks reaching for the sky. When all had had enough, one of them got in for an impromptu bath, leaving behind a muddy puddle. On some secret signal, they left without a backward glance, returning again at breakfast next morning, exchanged pleasantries and tucked in. Their visits were eagerly awaited.

The flirty nature and blatant disregard for camouflage of the Splendid Fairy-wren made it another outback delight, an incessantly-moving royal blue, almost luminous purple, ink-spot, so easily identifiable, unlike the similar-sized thornbills. At Scotia Sanctuary I spent unforgiving hours in the midday sun chasing the little 'darlings' from tree to tree, trying to distinguish between an Inland and a Chestnut-rumped Thornbill by eye colour. I was obviously raving with sunstroke.

After we witnessed the stunning 32-second total solar eclipse at Ceduna, the return journey took us through the Gawler Ranges, Mt. Remarkable National Park, Flinders Ranges National Park, Birds Australia's Gluepot Reserve, and Kinchega National Park. We had had many encounters with Red-capped Robins on the trip, so curious that they come really close to have a look at you and then turn their backs, all too aware of their blushing embarrassment. But on a walk in Mt. Remarkable N.P., we fleetingly saw one that didn't have his cap painted in or so we described it. Uttering those famous last words "Right, we've had a good look at it. It should be easy to identify in the bird book", we opened it up to find those wannabe twins, the Scarlet and Flame Robins staring back at us. Suddenly, your high resolution mental image of the bird becomes a milky blur as you debate the tone of red and the cap characteristics (jaunty or mad). Oh, it became an impossible tug-of-war and we surrendered. Next morning, we walked back in the crazy hope of glimpsing it again, if we could remember the spot. Sure enough, at the same point, it flitted down onto the path before us and stayed there long enough for Dave to get the goggles on it, wiggled its bum and flew off, never to be seen again. But Dave had the goods on it – big, white cap, no spot and a scarlet chest. So the score reads: Birdwatchers 1 Birds 40.

Gluepot was a bird haven but unbearably hot. With no water source and only mallee gums for shade, camping here in summer is only for the truly bird-brained. We intended to stay three days but 49°C had us lickety-spit out of there after one night. However, the one bird walk we did (one of seven, from 0.6 to 6.5 km), Whistler Tank Circuit, was very rewarding for its beautiful bird hide and close encounters with the masses of birds drinking there – Brown Goshawk, Striped and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Regent Parrot and Black-eared Miner, to name but a few. Gluepot is one of the few places in Australia where this last bird is common.

At Kinchega N.P., the drought was more visible than on our last visit in September. Lake Menindee has been pumped dry, the water going to fill Copi Hollow, a much smaller but deeper reservoir, thus reducing evaporation. The Darling was also a few centimetres shallower, but there was a drastic decline in the amount of birds around, though the lack of friendly brown 'ground-creepers' (well, they were never on tree trunks) was partly compensated by a sleeping Tawny Frogmouth and a couple of lucky Ducks (Pink-eared and Freckled, a bit like me by the end of the trip), and we were on our way home.

A total of 127 positively (and most definitely – no buts) identified species and a personal tally of 47 new species (if we include a dead Fan-tailed Cuckoo) made the holiday unforgettable. Literally! We remember where we were by what bird we saw there. The bad news, for family and friends anyway, is now we're really hooked. There's even wild talk about a second pair of binoculars!

P.S. Top Secret Birding Hot Spot – Cobar Caravan Park. Dave saw a Spotted Bowerbird, Red-winged Parrot and Blue-faced Honeyeater without moving from his camp chair all within the space of 30 minutes.

March 12th marked the end of a week of steady rainfall amounting to about 90 mm, so not surprisingly the mid-week walk was adversely affected. Only Kevin McGregor joined Tom and Joan Wylie to brave the wet. No bird list was kept, but the trio did come across the Australian Brush-turkey.

“The love of field and coppice, of green and shady lanes, of ordered woods and gardens, is running in your veins”. Most of us know better the second verse, “I love a sunburnt country...”

That love of things familiar led many of our early settlers to introduce plants and animals alien to our land, and most had adverse effect on life already here. Many of these newcomers were birds. The deliberate introductions were by acclimatisation societies and individuals with similar views. The most common reasons advanced for such introductions have been for sport (?)/food, for aesthetics/display, and for pest control.

Probably the best known of these immigrants is the humble House Sparrow. Sixty birds were sent to us from England in 1862 on the *Suffolk*, but all died on the way. In 1863 several batches arrived safely and were released at various places in Victoria. Over the next few years more were released in Victoria and in other states. In 1865 two boys found a House Sparrow's nest in a street tree in Warnambool and were fined five pounds for destroying the eggs. Sparrows were released in Adelaide in 1863. Within 20 years the SA government, in an attempt to exterminate them, had paid out at sixpence a dozen for 37,875 sparrow heads and at two shillings and sixpence a hundred for 209,793 eggs. House Sparrows are now plentiful in all states except WA and the NT.

We have a dozen or so other well-established introduced birds, among them birds as diverse as the Indian Peafowl, Spotted Turtle-Dove and Common Myna. Fortunately, not all introductions have been successful. There have been the Ostrich, Secretarybird (to rid us of snakes), Silver Pheasant and many others. 90-odd introductions in all.

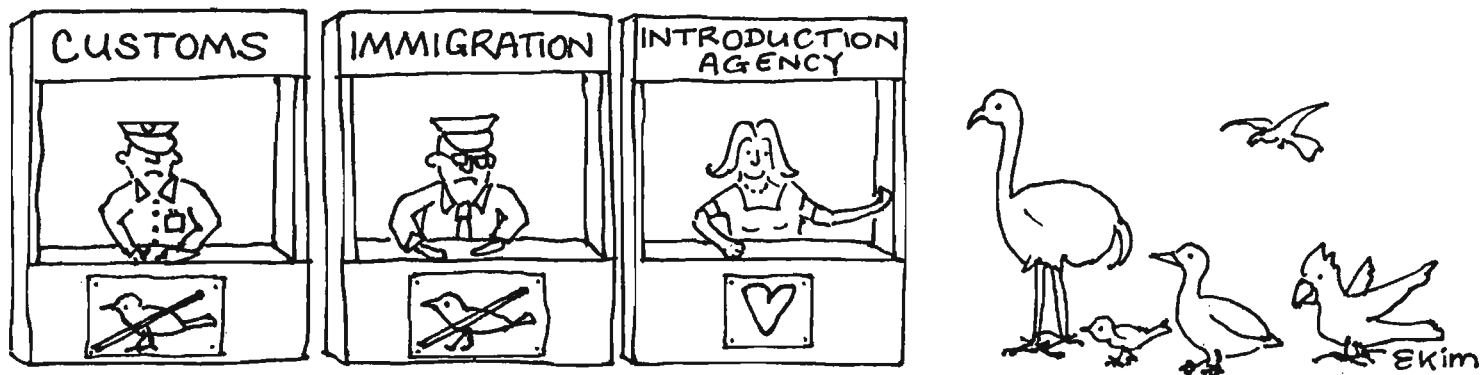
And we've done our own little bit towards changing the balance. Among other moves, we've introduced the Emu to Heron Island, Laughing Kookaburra to SW Western Australia (with reports of impact on small birds) and Superb Lyrebird to Tasmania.

But in international terms, others have had worse experiences. The place which has enjoyed (?) most introductions is the Hawaiian Islands. They've seen the arrival of 160-odd species, among them the Common Flamingo, 75 kinds of game birds, South American Macaw, geese and ducks and small birds. NZ hasn't been far behind, with 130-odd introductions. Again, it's fortunate that not all have been successful.

And there have been a few Aussies taken for a ride: among them the Australian Brush-turkey to France; Partridge and Spinifex Pigeons, Willie Wagtail and Magpie-lark to Hawaii; Major Mitchell's Cockatoo and Grey Currawong to Fiji; Budgerigar to England (Scilly Isles) and Japan; and Diamond Firetail and Gouldian Finch to Tahiti. Alas, we've made our contribution.

As suggested above, it's fortunate that many of the introductions have failed, but enough have been sustained to cause major problems for some of the host countries. Consider that “Cane Toad with wings”, the Common Myna.

If you want to read further, most of this information comes from *Introduced Birds of the World* by J.L. Long, an Australian researcher. It was first published in 1981 and is an easy and eye-opening read, setting out well the distribution and known effects of the immigrants. For a brief but broader look at the problem, there's a good article titled “A Land of Alien Species” in the May/June 1996 issue of the *Geo* magazine.



Send your records to: email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Brush-Turkey	2	Feb/Mar	Balgownie	garden	TE
Australian Brush-Turkey	1	16-Feb	Mt. Keira Scout Camp	forest	AF
Brown Quail	1	4-Feb	Albion Park Rail	urban	PF
Black Swan	12,000	13-Feb	Lake Wollumboola	wetland	GT,CJC
Australian Shelduck	4	15-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	IBOC
Australasian Shoveler	150+	28 Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
White-necked Petrel	1	22-Feb	off Wollongong	marine	PM
Eastern Reef Egret	1	9-Feb	Little Lake	wetland	DG
Nankeen Night Heron	4	6-Feb	Swan Lake	lake	KM
Little Bittern	1	24-Feb	Hewitts Ck., Thirroul	wetland	IM
Australasian Bittern	1	4-Feb – 22 Mar	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB,CJC
Glossy Ibis	5-8	4-Feb – 23Mar	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB, RJ, RT,CJC
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	5	24-Feb	Bendeela, Kangaroo Valley	wetland	AF
Pacific Baza	1	1-Feb	Cordeaux Heights	overhead	no name
Pacific Baza (nesting)	2+1j	Feb	Wollongong Botanical Gardens	rainforest	MJ
Pacific Baza	2	4-Feb	Wollongong University (mating)	parkland	RT, DW
Pacific Baza	2	22-Jan	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Square-tailed Kite	1	13-Feb	Nowra	overhead	GT
Whistling Kite	1	5-Feb	Bomaderry Creek	overhead	BA
Whistling Kite	2	9-Feb	Cudmirrah	overhead	KM
Swamp Harrier	1	6-Feb	Curramore	overhead	KM
Brown Goshawk	1	5-Feb	Bomaderry Creek	overhead	BA
Brown Goshawk	1	20-Feb	Albion Park Rail	overhead	PF
Brown Goshawk	2	24-Jan	Excelsior Mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	5-Feb	Bomaderry Creek	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk	1	15-Feb	Excelsior Mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	26-Feb	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	15-Feb	Killalea SRA	overhead	IBOC
Little Eagle	1	4-Feb	Maddens Plains	gully forest	KM
Little Eagle	1-2	9-Feb – 22 Mar	Killalea Lagoon	overhead	DG,CJC, CB
Brown Falcon	4	13-Feb	Moss Vale Rd. Bomaderry	rural	BA
Brown Falcon	1	25-Feb	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Australian Hobby	2	13-Feb	Albion Park Rail	overhead	PF
Peregrine Falcon	1	21-Feb	McCauleys Hill, Thirroul	urban	IM
Buff-banded Rail	1	14-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB
Lewin's Rail	1	2-Feb	Harry Graham Park, Figtree	creek	BZ
Lewin's Rail	1	10-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Baillon's Crake	1	10-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Australian Spotted Crake	2	4-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB
Spotless Crake	10	10-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Marsh Sandpiper	3	4-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB
Red-necked Stint	150+	13-Feb	Lake Wollumboola	wetland	GT
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	500+	13-Feb	Lake Wollumboola	wetland	GT
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	800+	3-Feb	Cudgerre Bay, Lake Illawarra	mud flat	CB
Ruff	1	3-Feb – 5 Mar	Cudgerre Bay, Lake Illawarra	mud flat	CB, GB, JF, RI
Beach Stone-Curlew	1	13-Feb	Orient Point	wetland	GT
Red-necked Avocet	12	11-Feb	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	RJ

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Black-fronted Dotterel	12	10-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Long-tailed Jaeger	1	22-Feb	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Gull-billed Tern	2	12-Feb	Lake Wollumboola	sandflats	GT
White-headed Pigeon	5	22-Feb	Bendeela, Kangaroo Valley	Forest	AF
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	10	2-Feb	Macquarie Pass, Clover Hill Rd.	forest	CJC
Emerald Dove	1	8-Feb	Bellawongarah	rainforest	BA
Superb Fruit-Dove	1	12-Feb	Jamberoo Mountain	rainforest	RJ
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	13-Feb	Bulli	garden	MRe
Long-billed Corella	250+	26-Feb	Shellharbour Square	field	NB
Little Corella	16	15-Feb	Warrawong	playing field	CJC
Little Corella	4	18-Feb	Bulli	urban	MPP
Azure Kingfisher	1	4-Mar	Fairy Creek, Fairy Meadow	riparian	JW
Fork-tailed Swift	10-20	2-Feb – 7 Mar	Corrimal	overhead	GB, JW
Fork-tailed Swift	60	8-Jan	Kiama	overhead	DM
Superb Lyrebird	10	16-Feb	Mt. Keira Scout Camp	forest	AF
Southern Emu-wren	5	10-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Pilotbird	1	2-Feb	Macquarie Pass, Clover Hill Rd.	forest	CJC
White-plumed Honeyeater	few	Feb	North Wollongong	garden	NLW
Jacky Winter	4	23-Feb	Tallowa Dam	woodland	AF
Logrunner	5	11-Feb	Jamberoo Mountain	rainforest	RJ
Logrunner	2	Feb	Excelsior Mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Crested Shrike-tit	2	Feb	Excelsior Mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Crested Shrike-tit	2	15-Feb	Killalea SRA	forest	IBOC
Leaden Flycatcher	2	22-Feb	Excelsior Mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Satin Flycatcher	2	15-Feb	Killalea SRA	forest	IBOC
Spangled Drongo	1j	9-Feb	Barrack Swamp	woodland	DG
Spangled Drongo	1	11-Feb	Mt. Warrigal	garden	NB
Spangled Drongo	1	25-Feb	top of Bulli Pass	power pole	MM
Dusky Woodswallow	8	24-Feb	Bendeela, Kangaroo Valley	woodland	AF
Green Catbird	1	18-Feb	Helensburgh	garden	CR
Beautiful Firetail	1	4-Feb	Maddens Plains	gully forest	KM
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	3	17-Feb	Sandon Point, Thirroul	wetland	IM
Tawny Grassbird	2-3	4-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB, CJC

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; SB - Simon Blanchflower; CB - Chris Brandis; NB - Norma Burke; CJC - Chris Chafer; JC - Josh Coyte; ME - Mary Eskdale; TE - Terry Edwell; PF - Peter Fackender; JF - Jenny Farrell; AF - Alison Foley; DG - Darryl Goldrick; RI - Ron Imisides; IM - Ian McKinlay; MJ - Michael Jarman; RJ - Richard Jordan; DM - Dave Metford; MM - Mike Morphett; PM - Peter Milburn; KM - Kevin Mills; DM - Darryl Mackay; MPP - Martin & Penny Potter; CP - Chris Presland; MRe - Mandy Reid; CR - Chris Ross; RS - Ron Simcock; RT - Roger Truscott; Graham Turner; JW - Joan Wylie; NLW - Nola & Laurie Williams; DWh - David Wheeler; BZ - Bill Zealey;

Comment: The Ruff is the 421st species recorded from the region since 1839, and the 8th regional addition since the Handbook was published in 1999. Fortunately, it stayed around for several weeks giving many people good views. Once again, a wealth of records flooding in to my email box, great to see; I only had room for February records in this issue. More excellent records of Fork-tailed Swifts, obviously local conditions were good for this species this year. Lots of great raptors including breeding Baza at the Botanic Gardens – wow. Lots of great waterbird records from Killalea Lagoon; it must be the most significant freshwater wetland in the region. Beach Stone-Curlew continues to be observed around Orient Point. The Red-necked Avocet is the 10th regional record and the first Shoalhaven sighting since 1997. Little Bittern at Hewitt's Ck. is a new location and only the 9th regional record. Huge flock of Long-billed Corella in the Warilla area, an excellent observation. The first Emerald Dove sighting since 2001 – a declining species. The 13th Superb Fruit-Dove record; ten Lyrebirds in one location; returning Drongos; and a pair of Glossy Black-Cockatoo from Bulli escarpment (many observers). Another spectacular month in the Illawarra.



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Darryl GOLDRICK

It is with a sad and heavy heart that I extend, on behalf of all past and present IBOC members, our sincere condolences to the **Knowlson family** on the tragic loss of Matt in a recent motorcycle accident. Our thoughts are with you all at this most difficult time.

By all reports the April camp at **Yadboro Flats** was very successful - Wal Emery's report appears later in the newsletter. [As does Neil Wheway's - this must be the first time *IBOC News* features two quite independent contributions about the same event! Interesting to compare the perspectives from a new recruit and one of the old brigade. - Ed.]

Kerrie & Alan Lewis are progressing with the **club T-shirt** estimates/quotes - it would appear that the cost is likely to be in the order of \$25-\$30. At the meeting I will be seeking numbers from members who are interested in buying - those who will not be present but are interested please call me.

The club has confirmation from the new owners of **Tallawarra Power Station, TXU**, that we will have continued access for our outings and atlassing. We will be visiting this site for the May walk.

The Committee has agreed to form a working party to investigate the preparation and publication of **birding tourist brochures**. This is happening with other bird clubs across NSW and will not only be of value to members, but will also promote 'birding' to the broader community and Illawarra eco-tourism industry. Any member who would like to assist would be most welcome, especially if you have cartographic/desktop publishing skills/experience - please call me.

We now have 20 additional copies of the *Handbook Of Birds Found In The Illawarra, Shoalhaven And Adjacent Tablelands* available for sale - this is a 'must' for your reference library.

Membership renewal is well overdue - if you haven't renewed please do so asap; otherwise you will not receive next month's newsletter. Also if you are not financial, you are not covered by public liability insurance.

FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events. 3...Yadboro Flats Camp (1). 4&5...Yadboro Flats Camp (2)
5...Birdwatcher's Guide to the Sydney Region. 6&7...COG Woodlands Birds Seminar & BIGnet. 7...Hooters &
Hawks Seminar. 8...Hastings Birdwatchers Brochure. 9&10...Unusual Records: March 2003.

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 12th May** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. Our guest speaker will be **Jack Baker**, who is currently a Threatened Species Officer with the NSW NPWS and is closely involved with the recovery planning and management of these species. His talk is titled **Managing Fire-Sensitive Birds**. After 15 years of trying to save Ground Parrots and Eastern Bristlebirds, Jack knows more than a few interesting facts about these and other fire-sensitive birds. Come along and hear some real success stories about these and other threatened NSW birds.

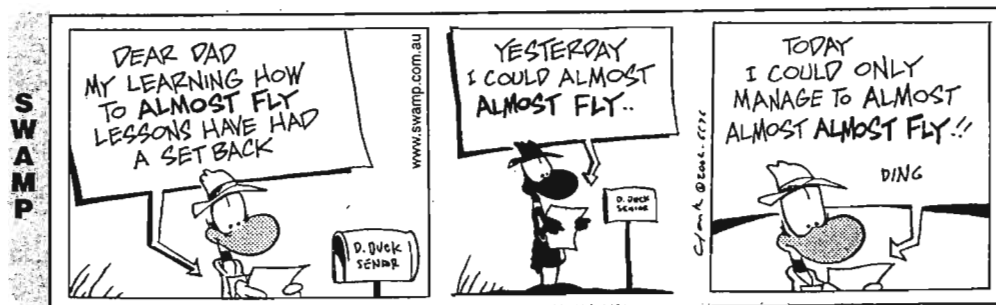
MID-WEEK WALK will be on **Wednesday 14th May** through the **Wollongong Botanic Gardens**. Meet the leader, **Jude Parkinson** at **8.30 am** at the Murphys Avenue car park entrance to the gardens. Jude is hoping that the earlyish start will mean more sightings.

FIELD OUTING is on **Saturday 17th May** to **Tallawarra Power Station Ash Ponds**, commencing at **8.30 am**. Members travelling from the north should take the Princes Highway through Dapto, past Mount Brown Public School, and then the power station turn-off (2nd turn on left as you pass under the freeway). For those south of Dapto, take the Dapto offloading ramp on the freeway, then turn right on to the Princes Highway and take the 2nd turn on the left after you pass under the freeway. We will meet at a point about 500 metres from the entrance. Take along eats, drinks, sunscreen (and umbrella?). For further enquiries, please contact the outing leader, **Darryl Goldrick** on 4296-1316.

FILM NIGHT, to be organised by **Kevin McGregor**, will take place on **Saturday 31st May** at **7.30 pm** at the **West Wollongong Uniting Church** hall, Fisher Street. The films have yet to be selected. Don't forget to take along a plate of grub with you.

COMMITTEE MEETING will be on **Tuesday 20th May** at **7.30 pm** at the home of **Darryl Goldrick** at 149 Reddall Parade, Lake Illawarra (Tel 4296-1316). Safer parking is to be had on the green strip opposite. The usual invitation goes out to club members to attend who wish to discuss a particular issue.

JUNE NEWSLETTER: Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Friday 23rd May** – a few days earlier this time as the Editor has a major family commitment that he can't get out of!



For Tera and me this was our first camp away with the bird club; we arrived at **Yadboro Flats** not knowing what to expect. Before the car had stopped rocking from the fairly rough drive in, we were accosted by a lady: "Are you birdos?". With an affirmative reply she introduced herself: "I'm Gwen. Tea or coffee?" After morning tea with her, we set up camp and waited for Jim, Joan and Tom to come back from their morning walk.

We found the campsite well chosen with a fireplace and were surprised to find shower and toilet tents set up and well fitted out with all the mod cons. Tom said to me later in the week, "I know it's a bit of a rough camp," when I said I'd like him set up a five-star campsite. He and Joan had done a lot of work setting up and getting the site shipshape.

Later on Chris arrived with his girls Avril and Jessika. After they set up their camp, we had a short walk; however, not many birds were sighted. By way of compensation we found a cleared area with two cabins under construction and a magnificent view of the escarpment and The Castle. We all agreed it would be a "pretty ordinary" aspect to wake up to in the morning.

Later that afternoon Hazel and Wal arrived, setting up their campervan. Finally Bruce and Kelsey set up their tent, and this completed our camping group.

Nine o'clock next morning Kevin and Fae arrived for the day. We drove to Blue Gum parking area and set off to observe the bird-life: again very scarce in the trees. After removing boots and socks to ford the river, leeches were found wriggling on boots and legs. Tera's screams would have frightened birds off for many kilometres.

Tuesday morning we walked the track to The Castle, some going part-way while others soldiered on above the tree-line and into the conglomerate rock. By this time we had split into two groups (some walking slower). Both groups found different tracks to access the top; however, neither climbed up chains or ropes to the summit. The view, however, from our position beneath the summit was worth the climb. Wandering back down gave us time to look back and ponder on where we had walked and observe the changing vegetation.

Wednesday morning Chris wanted to reconnoitre the tracks beyond the two cabins we had discovered previously. Off we set again, but again not too much in the way of bird-life. We reached the cabins and showed the others the view. We spotted a fox on the hillside opposite. Avril and Jessika wisely returned to camp whilst we plodded on and up and up and up and up. We finally reached the return track down, down, down and down. It was pretty hard-going but was made easier with lots of jokes, wisecracks and very good company. Not many birds were spotted; I think this was because birds can't fly that high.

Every night was spent yarning around the campfire and going over the day's events and reading over the bird list. The final number of species for the period 11th to 17th April was 48, which are given below.

Thursday was breaking camp day and going home. Tera and I thoroughly enjoyed the camp and had a great time. The weather behaved itself and we had terrific camping companions. We are looking forward to the Condobolin camp in October.

Whistling Kite	White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Spinebill	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Red-browed Treecreeper	Jacky Winter	Cicadabird
Masked Lapwing	Superb Fairy-wren	Rose Robin	Olive-backed Oriole
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Dusky Woodswallow
Brush Bronzewing	Brown Gerygone	Eastern Whipbird	Grey Butcherbird
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Brown Thornbill	Crested Shrike-tit	Australian Magpie
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Golden Whistler	Pied Currawong
Australian King Parrot	Striated Thornbill	Rufous Whistler	Australian Raven
Crimson Rosella	Red Wattlebird	Grey Shrike-thrush	Satin Bowerbird
Laughing Kookaburra	Lewin's Honeyeater	Magpie-lark	Red-browed Finch
Sacred Kingfisher	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Fantail	Mistletoebird
Superb Lyrebird	White-naped Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail	Silvereye

Set in a pleasant valley on the banks of the Clyde River in the Yadboro State Forest, our camp was attended by fifteen campers and two day visitors. The later arrivals greatly appreciated the sterling effort put in by Tom & Joan Wylie, who carted all the camp gear and erected the facilities in tandem ready for the campers. Well done, Tom and Joan.

The first morning saw the campsite shrouded in fog. Not surprising I suppose, considering one of the nearby peaks in the Budawangs is called Shroud God's Mountain. Considering the amount of rain about the district, the weather was very kind to us, with none falling on the camp for the whole five days except for a few overnight showers. Short walks around the camp area produced a number of species, including the Brush Bronzewing along with the beautiful little Rose Robin and its yellow cousin.

Monday morning saw the arrival of Kevin & Fae McGregor, for a day visit only, due to the sad demise of 'Nessie'. Cars were pooled, and we drove a few kilometres to Blue Gum Flat for a half-day walk. A point was reached where we had to do a knee-deep crossing of the Clyde River. Thoughts turned to a past "knee-deep" crossing at the mouth of Mullet Creek. Fortunately, short legs presented no difficulties this time, although slippery rocks slowed the progress. Unfortunately, Kelsey had a traumatic experience, losing her orange sock in the swift-flowing river. Her tears added to the flow of the Clyde as we watched it disappear out of sight to who knows where, despite some valiant attempts to retrieve it. Leeches outnumbered birds in the moist surrounds, when we stopped for morning tea. Oh, for a video camera! Tera's impromptu dance would certainly have won first prize in *Funniest Home Videos*; such a big fuss for such a little creature.

An afternoon cricket match with the young ones provided some good entertainment, with some of us doing "all right for our age". Tom's canoe also proved popular.

Lunches were packed Tuesday morning, and we headed for The Castle picnic area. For those wishing to follow The Castle walking track, another river crossing was required, although not as hazardous as the last one. A Brown Gerygone's nest with two eggs was found near the river, but it appeared to have been abandoned. People walked various distances along the track, the first section following a lovely tree fern-studded creek. The Rose Robin was again sighted in this area. As the track began to rise, a rest was called for, and I was delighted to find young Chris breathing as heavily as I was, only to be told, "Oh, yes, but I ran up." Nonetheless, five intrepid adventurers struggled on, up past the tree-line, through the break in the first scarp to the base of The Castle. All felt satisfied with their effort as they later sat in the picnic area and discussed their exploits over a cup of tea. Little did they know what the next day held in store.

Wednesday morning and eight walkers equipped with a map and GPS and led by Chris, set out to do a circular walk from camp, hopefully by connecting a walking track with some fire trails. The first section passed without incident, with a smattering of birds and a Fox holding our interest. At the base of the first hill, Jessika and Avril decided to return to camp by the route they had come. Did they know something the rest of us did not? On we walked; the higher we climbed, the lower Chris' reputation became. Morning tea was taken along with a discussion as to whether we should continue on or return the way we came. With the map showing only about half a kilometre to the junction of the trail which would lead us back to the camp, the decision was made to carry on. Steep hills became steeper. Yesterday's Castle walk began to feel like a stroll in the park. Chris vowed if he survived, never would he lead another walk again. Upon reaching the summit, we realised there were four roads leading off where we needed only one. After a quick look at the map and with the downhill trail appearing the most inviting, we headed back to camp, agreeing "we had all done very well for our age", and, despite the damage to Chris' reputation, I'm sure we can persuade him to lead another walk in the future.

Our last evening and another great night was enjoyed around the campfire, with stories old and new being told, including the dangers of cooking a Chinese meal whilst trying to watch the finish of Bathurst. Who did win that race and where can you buy those underpants? Every red-blooded male should have a pair!



I haven't mentioned a lot about birds. They were very scarce: only 48 species recorded, in part due to a lack of variation in habitat, but that didn't stop those who attended from having a good time. It was great to see new members, Neil & Tera Wheway attending their first camp, along with Bruce & Kelsey O'Brien and Chris' friends, Tracey & Chris. Their company was greatly enjoyed, and we hope to see them again at our future camps. Thanks once again to Tom & Joan for organising the camp and making it so enjoyable for all those who attended.



Birdwatcher's Guide TO THE SYDNEY REGION



BIRDWATCHER'S GUIDE TO THE SYDNEY REGION

A book review by Mike Morphett: *Birdwatcher's Guide to the Sydney Region*, written by Peter Roberts and published by Kangaroo Press (1993), is a very compact paperback, comprising 168 pages and selling for about \$15.

The author, an honorary life member of the Gould League, focuses on twenty localities within 80 kilometres of the centre of Sydney and includes the Illawarra Escarpment and Lake Illawarra. He also mentions Wollongong Harbour excursions to view offshore and pelagic birds. In each area he details how to access them (using public transport as well as your own means) and in most of them provides a simple map. For each he highlights birds of interest and where to look for them. He gives a neat pen picture of each of 286 bird species listed. The non-passerines are divided into groups: seabirds, shorebirds, waterbirds, hawks and eagles, ground dwellers, pigeons and doves, parrots and cockatoos, cuckoos, owls and nightjars, kingfishers and allies, and swifts. He also groups birds according to habitat: closely settled urban districts; suburban streets and gardens; shrub layer; heathland; water; estuary; seashore; woodland and forest; rainforest; and farms and grasslands. In an appendix he gives suggestions for the novice birdo in regard to binoculars, birdcalls, injured birds and particularly hazards, such as bushfires, snakes and spiders, ticks and leeches, giant stinging tree (I learned my lesson a long time back: once stung, twice shy!), and other pests. Sprinkled through the localities section are boxed-off "tips" – useful bits of information about the behaviour of certain bird species in their interaction with other forms of nature.

At the outset Peter gives this caveat: "The information in this book is, at the time of writing, as accurate as I can make it. Readers will understand that neither birdlife nor the extent of human development is static, and with the passage of time changes will inevitably occur". No doubt there are many of us who can attest to significant (and sometimes subtle) changes on our own Illawarra doorstep. I had not been aware of this publication until seeing copies on display at the recent SNAG 'Hooters & Hawks' seminar; I feel like adding 'Handy Handbooks' to that title. Wanting to make up for lost time, I look forward to exploring in my retirement next February the places the book covers, with the possibility of recommending some for the club to enjoy too. Peter's enthusiasm is infectious.

As part of the Bignet meeting, held on 22nd & 23rd March and hosted by the Canberra Ornithological Group, the seminar focused on the Yellow/White Box and Blakley's Red Gum Woodlands around the ACT and NSW western slopes.

Dr David Lindenmayer studied various restoration sites compared with remnant sites and found they supported different bird and animal populations, with some of the declining species of birds preferring the areas of replanting while remnant woodlands often had too many Noisy Miners.

Jenny Bounds and **Nicki Tews** of COG described their projects on monitoring the birds in 11 areas in and around Canberra, with 114 monitoring sites, including leasehold properties. Vulnerable species such as the Hooded Robin and Brown Treecreeper were found to be still declining in the protected areas, but still holding on some leasehold sites. They suggested a university student project be directed to find the cause for the decline in what appears to be good areas. Are we protecting the wrong areas or managing them incorrectly?

Murray Evans of Environment ACT talked about the use of club member-collected data in preparing action plans for woodland strategies, many of which with a multi-species focus. It was evident that much of the best land on the fertile river flats is now under cultivation, pushing the birds and animals into the less productive areas.

Julian Reid of the CSIRO described work with local communities via the NPWS Woodland Ecology Group to slow the losses recorded of some 50 of the 90 species recorded from many 10-minute blocks. Studies of block size, shape, age, shrub cover etc will lead to defining optimum habitats for many of the vanishing species.

Kathryn Maxwell of the Conservation Council described actions in ACT to reduce the 6 million tonnes of firewood sourced, mostly from NSW, with its consequence of loss of habitat, especially older trees with hollows and ground cover. As well, the health aspect on the residents is a factor.

Lorraine Oliver of the NPWS described the task of managing some of the remnant bush sites with the assistance of local organisations, such as councils and fire services. It was essential to get community ownership of these areas to ensure they are preserved for the future and available for proposed revegetation programmes.

Adrian Manning summarised his PhD work on the landscape ecology required by the breeding Superb Parrot. He found that they generally nested in tree hollows that are 150 to 200 years old. Many of these are those lonely gums in the middle of the paddock and, as many of these are sick and in the early stages of dying, the problem is that there are few replacement trees growing. If it takes 150 years for a decent hollow and, with pressure from other hollow-nesting birds and animals, the future of these beautiful parrots, that live for only about 50 years, looks very bleak.

BIGNET

Public Liability Insurance: The NPWS confirmed that PLI is not required for birding and natural history clubs to visit their reserve systems. These activities are considered non-commercial and low of risk and they support, uphold and advertise the conservation values of the parks. Also the Department of Fair Trading no longer have this as a requirement of incorporation.

CBOC Atlas Data: The value of abundance over presence/absence data was demonstrated with White Ibis in the Sydney region and proposed that it extended to flocking and migratory birds.

COG Woodland bird data: COG presented some interesting statistical data extracted from their woodland bird monitoring, a copy to be placed in the library with copies of draft recovery plans by the NPWS for Barking Owl and Bush Thick-knee. These are plans, but not yet financed into actions.



Memorandum of Understanding: This understanding between birding groups was discussed with some small alterations aimed at all clubs having an understanding of sharing of common goals and ideas, supporting each other, reducing overlap and clashing of functions. It is hoped that this may extend Australia-wide with links to a common website; such as www.absa.asn.au/bignet/home.html.

Pros and cons of small clubs: A discussion paper was presented for future discussion on the duplication of human and material resources in the many bird clubs operating in NSW, some of which are struggling, and the relationship between these and the large Australia-wide clubs.

General Business: COG reported on the impact of the Canberra bushfire; submissions were required for funds raised by the next twitchathon.

All bird groups gave a short summary of their activities and functions.

The next meeting will be hosted by the Tamworth Birdwatchers, but there will be no boot-scooting and all welcome to attend and spend some time birding.

It was not all work; we did have a nice group dinner on the Saturday night and a birding walk on the Sunday morning.

BIRDS AUSTRALIA - SOUTHERN NSW & ACT GROUP SEMINAR Chris BRANDIS

“Hooters” and Hawks, a seminar on the status of Australian raptors, was held on 12th April at the Macquarie University to pass on some of the recent research information available on these birds. Although Australian owls do not “hoot”, the name of the seminar was understood by all.

Stephen Debus gave an overview of the species of raptors in the world and how Australasia fitted into the scene. There has been some revision of the taxonomy, again, with many of the funnier ones that reside this side of Wallace’s line, such as Red Goshawk and Square-tailed Kite being recognised as remnant godwanian species. They have been taken out of the true goshawk and kite families.

Carl Gosper reviewed his surveys of NSW night birds in the Darling River Plains, Southern Brigalow belt and the Riverina. For some such as the Barking Owl, the populations are very restricted now, mostly due to habitat destruction, with inland riparian zones being extremely important as they are often the only trees left with suitable hollows for both owls and their prey.

Natasha Shedvin studied Barking Owls near Albury and radio-tracked them, often all night, to determine the ranges of pairs of Barking Owls and how they reacted to adjacent pairs in forming viable ranges. During breeding the male does all the hunting, feeding the family until the young are almost fledged, and they feed on a surprising range of prey, including gliders, galahs, choughs, rabbits, and even bats are taken in flight. But again they need mature woodlands, with a pair needing some 1100 ha, but male and female have separate but overlapping ranges.

Rod Kavanagh did similar studies on two male Masked Owls in NE NSW in an area that had both native forest and pine plantations. One owl stayed, but the other disappeared and was eventually found over 60 km away. They appear to feed on terrestrial mammals, with a pair requiring over 3000 ha range, within which are various roosting sites and feeding areas. Again males and females have different but overlapping territories.

Paul McDonald, an ex IBOCer, described his studies of the Brown Falcon at Werribee in Victoria. It appears that a pair maintains their territory year round, which is recruited by the larger female. Paul found that the larger females were able to obtain territories while small females, generally the third chick in a clutch, never catches up and rarely obtains a breeding territory. There was interesting footage of a nest cam, and again the male does all of the hunting while the female broods the eggs and the chicks until they get feathers and can control their own body temperature.

Overall a very interesting seminar with the dedication of the speakers shown by the amount of field work required to obtain the data, often in poor weather and isolated areas. The audience from all over NSW and the ACT showed their appreciation, which resulted in a lively question time.

Wednesday Life

Book on birds to bring people

BIRDWATCHING in the Hastings will be promoted at home and overseas following the launch of a birdwatching brochure.

About 100 people attended the official brochure launch by Port Macquarie MP Rob Oakeshott at Roto House on Thursday.

Hastings Birdwatchers designed and produced the brochure, titled *Birdwatching Spots around Port Macquarie* and the Hastings Region, thanks to a \$4000 grant from the NSW Department of Tourism.

Mr Oakeshott said that while he had never officially done any birdwatching, he was reliably informed the brochure would attract more than 1000 keen birdwatchers to the area.

"The brochure high-

lights the main birdwatching locations throughout the region and signifies the variety of birds expected to be seen in each location," he said.

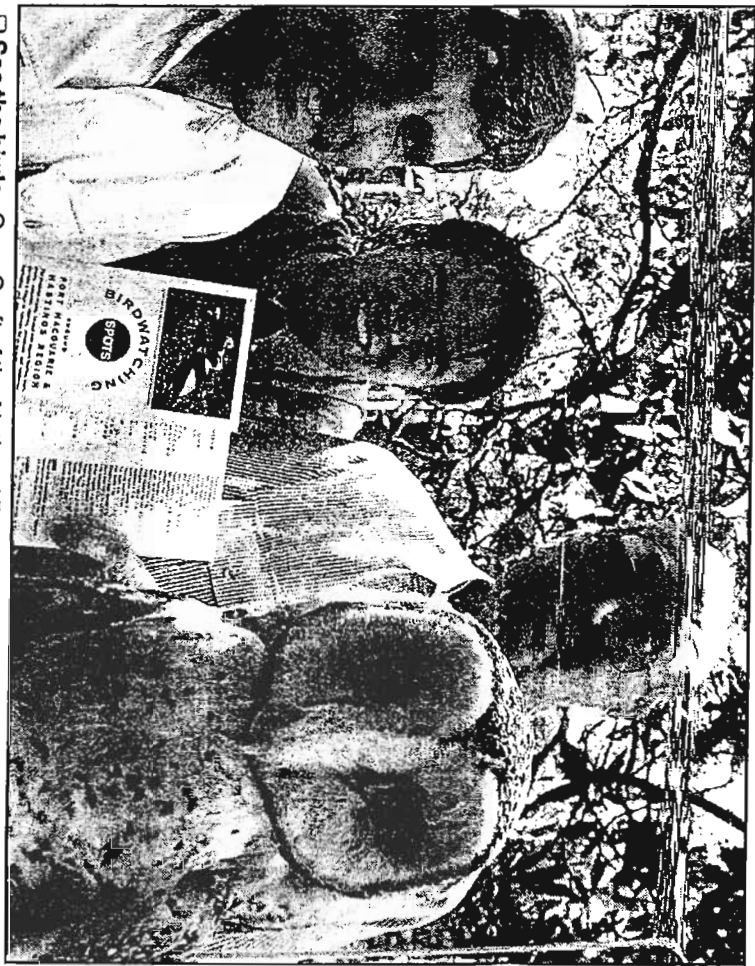
The brochure contains a map, technical information about migration and habitat and birding locations.

Copies of the brochure will be available at the Port Macquarie Visitors' Centre, while some will be sent interstate and overseas.

Hastings Birdwatchers member Bill Saunders said the brochure promoted the Hastings as a destination for birdwatchers.

"Nobody else has really tried to tap into that market on this basis," he said.

There are an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 birdwatchers in Australia.



See the birds: Greg Croft of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Mr Oakeshott and Hastings Birdwatchers president Steve Vine look at a bird exhibit.

Our thanks to **Dave Thomson** for bringing this article in the *Port Macquarie News* (c19/2/03) to our attention, with the suggestion we set about creating a similar brochure for our own patch.



Female and Male Regent Bowerbirds. Photograph by courtesy of Doris Steinhilber

BIRDWATCHING SPOTS

AROUND PORT MACQUARIE & HASTINGS REGION

The Hastings region, blessed with superb beaches, lakes, rivers, estuaries, lagoons, mountains and rainforests, provides a range of habitats for an incredible variety of fascinating and interesting birds.



Port Macquarie

HASTINGS BIRDWATCHERS

Send your records to: email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	4	12-Mar	Sassafras	rural	KM
Australian Brush-Turkey	few	12-Mar	Mt. Keira Scout Camp	forest	JP
Australian Brush-Turkey	1	15-Mar	Mt. Keira Rd.	forest	RS
Musk Duck	11	16-Mar	Bamerang Dam	reservoir	BA
Freckled Duck	35	5-Mar	L. Mackenzie, Booderee NP	wetland	RJ
Australasian Shoveler	150+	6-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Pink-eared Duck	4	22-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Great Crested Grebe	2	9-Feb	Hoskins Nature Reserve	wetland	GB
Great Crested Grebe	12	12-Mar	Bendella Pondage	reservoir	BA
Great Crested Grebe	2	16-Mar	Bamerang Dam	reservoir	BA
Little Penguin	1	8-Mar	Woonona Beach	beach	AF
Tahiti Petrel	1	22-Mar	off Wollongong	marine	PM
Intermediate Egret	1	15-Mar	Swan Lake	estuary	KM
Striated Heron	1	27-Mar	Tom Thumb Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Striated Heron	1	Mar	lower Macquarie Rivulet	mud flat	BBH
Nankeen Night Heron	1	30-Jan	East Corimal	wetland	GB
Nankeen Night Heron	5	15-Mar	Swan Lake	estuary	KM
Nankeen Night Heron	1	22-Mar	Minnamurra Spit	forest	CJC
Australasian Bittern	1	22-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Glossy Ibis	8	6-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CJC, RT, GB
Royal Spoonbill	28	15-Mar	Bellambi Lagoon	wetland	JP
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2	15-Mar	Bellambi Lagoon	wetland	JP
Square-tailed Kite	1	15-Mar	Cudmirrah NP	woodland	KM
Spotted Harrier	1	1-Feb	Jamberoo (Browns Lane)	rural	GB
Spotted Harrier	1	21-Mar	Dapto - F6	overhead	PF
Swamp Harrier	1	26-Mar	Sandon Point, Thirroul	wetland	GB
Swamp Harrier	1	30-Mar	Shell Cove golf course	rural	GB
Brown Goshawk	1	18-Mar	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Brown Goshawk	1	19-Mar	Warrawong	overhead	CJC
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	6-Mar	Bulli Tops	forest	KM
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	4-Feb	Maddens Plains	overhead	GB
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	7-Mar	Nowra Hill	overhead	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	9-Mar	Sassafras	overhead	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	23-Mar	Albion Park Rail	overhead	PF
Little Eagle	1	3-Mar	Mt. Keira	overhead	JB
Little Eagle	2	22-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	overhead	CJC
Brown Falcon	1	9-Mar	Sassafras	forest	CJC
Australian Hobby	1	22-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	over wetland	CJC
Peregrine Falcon	1	2-Mar	Berkeley	overhead	CJC
Buff-banded Rail	1	5-Mar	Wollongong University	wetland	GB
Lewin's Rail	1	8-Feb	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
Eurasian Coot	3000	28-Mar	Swan Lake	lake	KM
Marsh Sandpiper	5-11	3-22Feb	Cudgerre Bay, L. Illawarra	mud flat	GB, CJC
Wood Sandpiper	1	6-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	mud flat	CJC
Grey-tailed Tattler	4	19-Mar	Little Lake	mud flat	GB
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	2-Mar	Lake Wollumboola	mud flat	CJC
Ruff	1	1-5-Mar	Cudgerre Bay, L. Illawarra	mud flat	CB, GB
Pied Oystercatcher	5	16-Mar	Orient Point	estuary	BA
Banded Stilt	1	13-Mar	Windang Peninsula	lake edge	CJC
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	27-Mar	Tom Thumb Lagoon	wetland	CJC
Black-fronted Dotterel	16	30-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
Long-tailed Jaeger	2	22-Mar	off Wollongong	marine	PM
Gull-billed Tern	3	2-Mar	Shoalhaven Heads	beach	CJC
Sooty Tern	1	22-Mar	off Wollongong	marine	PM

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
White-headed Pigeon	2	3-Mar	Curramore	rural	KM
White-headed Pigeon	2	9-Mar	Jamberoo	urban	KM
White-headed Pigeon	2	Mar	Balgownie	garden	TE
Crested Pigeon	3	19-Mar	Maddens Plains	cleared land	KM
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	14-Feb	Maddens Plains	woodland	KM
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	19-Mar	Nowra South	woodland	KM
Gang-gang Cockatoo	15	14-Mar	Yerriyong	forest	KM
Long-billed Corella	60+	7-Mar	Albion Park Rail	playing field	CJC
Long-billed Corella	16	13-Mar	Windang	lake edge	CJC
Red-rumped Parrot	1-2	3-6 Mar	Wollongong Golf Course	field	DW
Red-rumped Parrot	2	6-Mar	Wollongong Golf Course	playing field	DW
Turquoise Parrot	1	10-Mar	Windang	dune forest	DW
Tawny Frogmouth	3	15-Mar	Figtree	garden	KMg
White-throated Nightjar	1	7-24Mar	Maddens Plains	woodland	KM
Australian Owlet-Nightjar	1	11-Mar	Bulee Mountian (Nerriga)	woodland	KM
Australian Owlet-Nightjar	1	19-Mar	Maddens Plains	forest	KM
Azure Kingfisher	1	4-Mar	Fairy Creek, Fairy Meadow	riparian	JW
Fork-tailed Swift	30	18-30Jan	East Corrimal	overhead	GB
Fork-tailed Swift	10	7-Mar	Corrimal	overhead	JW
Pilotbird	1	7-Mar	Tianjarra Falls	forest	CJC
Pilotbird	1	14-Mar	Yerriyong	forest	KM
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	2	12-Mar	Endrick River	woodland	KM
White-plumed Honeyeater	2	15-Mar	Belmore Basin	urban	CJC
White-cheeked Honeyeater	2	15-Mar	Cudmirrah NP	woodland	KM
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	1	15-Mar	Cudmirrah NP	woodland	KM
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	1	28-Mar	Swan Lake	woodland	KM
Scarlet Robin	2	12-Mar	Endrick River	woodland	KM
Rose Robin	1	14-Mar	Yerriyong	forest	KM
Rose Robin	1	19-Mar	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Spotted Quail-thrush	1	12-Mar	Sassafras	woodland	KM
Varied Sittella	9	9-Feb	Avon Dam Rd.	forest	GB
Varied Sittella	4+	14-Feb	Maddens Plains	woodland	KM
Varied Sittella	9	16-Mar	The Grotto, Nowra	forest	BV
Varied Sittella	3	19-Mar	Nowra North	forest	KM
Crested Shrike-tit	1	14-Mar	Yerriyong	forest	KM
Crested Shrike-tit	1	24-Mar	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Leaden Flycatcher	1	4-Mar	Fairy Creek, Fairy Meadow	riparian	JW
Spangled Drongo	1	10-Mar	Windang	dune forest	DW
Grey Currawong	1	11-Mar	Bulee Mountian	woodland	KM
Grey Currawong	1	29-Mar	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Little Raven	25	9-Mar	Jamberoo Recreation Park	field	CJC
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	2	8-Mar	Killalea Lagoon	grassland	CB
Brown Songlark	3+	1-Feb	Jamberoo (Browns Lane)	rural	GB

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; JBl - John Blomstedt, CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; TE - Terry Edwell; PF - Peter Fackender; AF - Alison Foley; DG - Darryl Goldrick; BBH - Brian & Barbara Hales; RJ - Richard Jordan; PM - Peter Milburn; KM - Kevin Mills; KMg - Kevin McGregor; JP - Judith Parkinson; RS - Ron Simcock; RT - Roger Truscott; BV - Barry Virtue; DW - David Winterbottom; JW - Joan Wylie.

Comment: Another great set of records from across the region, with highlights being the 35 Freckled Duck from Lake Mackenzie (highest regional number ever), 150+ Australasian Shoveler from Killalea Lagoon (highest regional number ever), 3000 Coot from Swan Lake, a Banded Stilt from Windang, more Fork-tailed Swifts from the Corrimal area, a Turquoise Parrot from Windang dune woodland, early Little Ravens from Jamberoo, continued observations of the Ruff at Windang, Brown Songlarks from Jamberoo and persistent Glossy Ibis from Killalea Lagoon.

Library



I.B.O.C. NEWS

Issue No. 260

June 2003

The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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A warm welcome to all the recent **new members** of the club: Sally Forsstrom, Asha Mazzella & family, Jill Molan, Peter & Kay Parker, and Noel Ryan. I trust you will all have a long and happy association with us and I look forward to meeting you all at our various activities.

Included in this edition of the newsletter is an updated version of the **Club Program** - please take note of the amendments from the original which was posted in the February newsletter. This latest version will be permanently posted on the noticeboard at club meetings. I am also arranging for this version to be posted on our website.

To enable members the opportunity to be aware of what is discussed at the **Committee meetings**, the endorsed **minutes** will also be posted on the club noticeboard each month.

I have made copies of the official **IBOC bird list sightings form** available to members who wish to have a permanent record of their observations—these lists are available from the library table at monthly meetings. I hope to have it included on the club website in the near future so it can be downloaded readily.

Kerri Lewis is progressing with the ordering of **T-shirts** and she is also making enquiries regarding a sweat shirt style for more wintry conditions.

Please don't forget to forward any **newspaper articles** on birding or environmental issues (local or o'seas) to Penny/Martin Potter who arrange their postings also on the club noticeboard.

The production of **birding guide brochures** is progressing and I hope to be in a position to provide more details on this in the next newsletter—Nonetheless, I am still seeking expressions of interest from members who have desktop publishing - type skills who could assist in the preparation of the master copies. (There will be a series of these brochures representing different geographical areas within the IBOC birding region.)

My thanks also to all those people who contribute articles for the newsletter, especially the walks-talks and camps--- it makes life somewhat easier for myself and especially the editor, Mike Morphett.

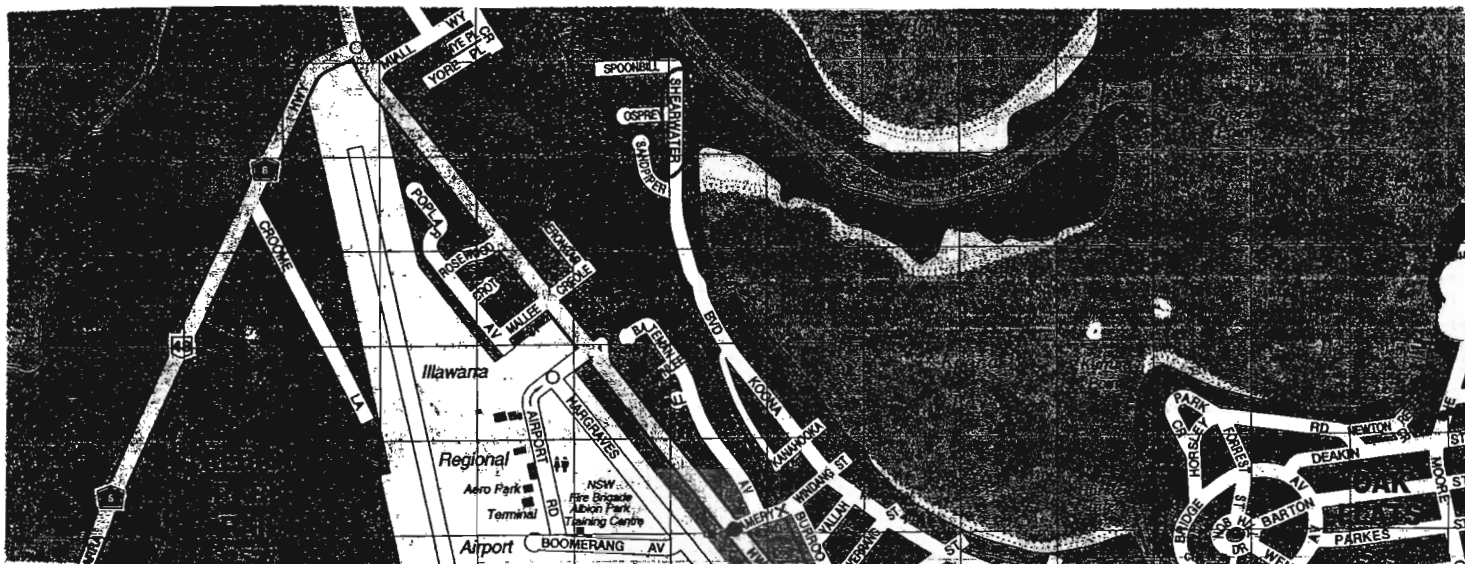
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FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events 3...Amended IBOC 2003 Program 4...May Club Meeting
5...Birds of Bellawongarah 6...A Birds' Collective 7&8...Unusual Records: April 2003 8...Film: Travelling
(with) Birds 8...Computer Key Bird Designs

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 9th June** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. Our guest speaker will be club member, **Roger Truscott**, who spent a short holiday in Winnipeg in May last year and took with him his "big lens". His talk is titled **Birds of Winnipeg**. Roger will be focusing on the warblers that arrive in that area from the south after the weather begins to warm up after the winter freeze. With another talk of an international flavour, members might want to bring along something exotic to eat for supper.

MID-WEEK WALK will be on **Wednesday 11th June** to visit **Macquarie Rivulet**. The leader will be **Barbara Hales**. Meet her at **8.30 am** at her home: 32 Shearwater Boulevarde, Albion Park Rail. See the UBD map extract for directions.



FIELD OUTING is on **Sunday 15th June** to **Berry Mountain & Cambewarra**, commencing at **8.30 am**. Meet at the Beaumont Bush Fire Brigade Station close to the historic Bellowongarah Cemetery. Those coming from the north drive south through Berry to the road sign that says 'Tourist Drive – Kangaroo Valley & Bellowongarah'. Turn right on to this road, Kangaroo Valley Road. Drive up the mountain for about 8 kms. Here the road splits. Keep right and drive through a tunnel of trees. About 1.5 kms from the split is a sign for the cemetery, where an IBOC sign will be displayed. Turn left and follow the track a short distance to the fire station. Those coming from the south could take the Moss Vale Road from Bomaderry, following the Cambewarra Lookout signs. At the top of the mountain turn right (before the Moss Vale road starts to descend) and follow the road past the Cambewarra Lookout sign to a T-junction. This is the split mentioned earlier. Turn left and follow to the cemetery. If you are coming from Kangaroo Valley, take the Kangaroo Valley Road to Berry for about 9.5 kms to the cemetery. Look for the IBOC sign. **Bob Ashford** is the outing leader. He lives two minutes walk from the cemetery. If the weather is lousy on the day, feel free to call him on 4464-1574 to discover what's happening. Take with you the usual equipment, both edible and non-edible.

EXTRA FIELD OUTING by special demand of Darryl Goldrick! Not to be outdone by last month's cancellation due to rain, he will lead a walk through the **Tallawarra Power Station Ash Ponds** on **Saturday 28th June**, beginning at **9 am**. Rendezvous about 500 metres from the site entrance. Directions can be obtained from last month's *IBOC News* or Darryl himself on 4296-1316.

COMMITTEE MEETING will be on **Tuesday 17th June** at **7.30 pm** at the home of **Norma Almond** at 2 Shoobert Crescent, Keiraville (Tel 4229-8612).. Please contact a committee member beforehand if you wish (to attend) to have an issue discussed.

JULY NEWSLETTER: Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Monday 30th June**.

2018 PROGRAM - SUBJECTS CONFIRMED

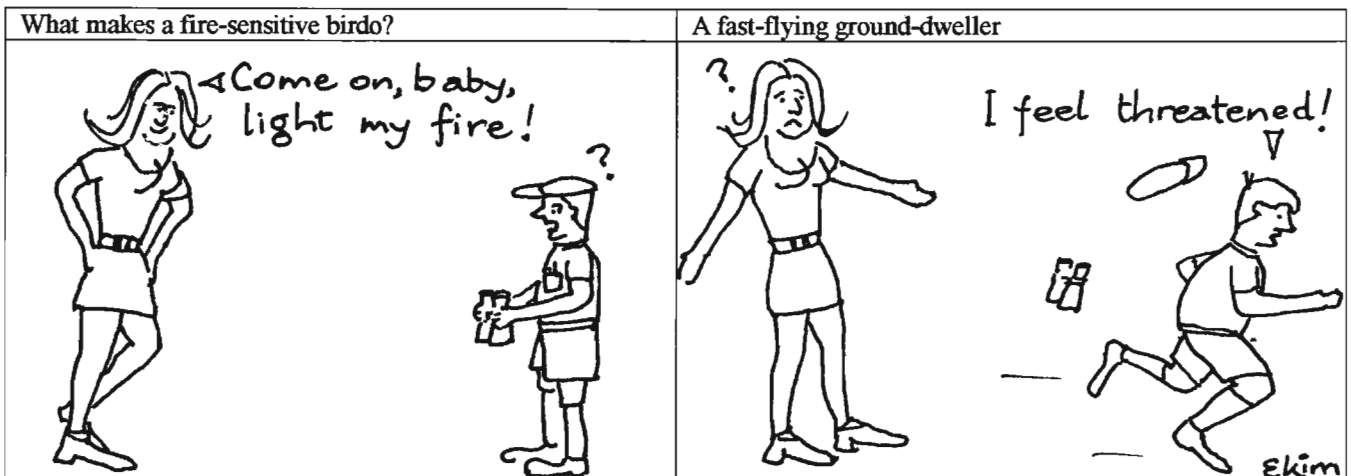
Feb	5 (Wed)	Windang - Lake Illawarra Entrance Wader Identification
	10 (Mon)	Meeting - Peter Nolan (UK-USA birding)
	15 (Sat)	Outing - Killalea Lagoon
Mar	10 (Mon)	Meeting – Trevor Quested (Tibet/China)
	16 (Sun)	Outing - Macquarie Pass
	23 (Sun)	Puckeyes Estate – Senior Citizens walk
Apr	13 –17	Camp - Yadboro Flats No meeting or outing
May	12 (Mon)	Meeting - Jack Baker: ‘Managing Fire Sensitive Birds’.
	17 (Sat)	Outing - Tallawarra Ash Ponds
June	9 (Mon)	Meeting – Roger Truscott: ‘Birds Of Winnipeg’
	11 (Wed)	Outing - Macquarie Rivulet
	15 (Sun)	Outing - Berry Mountain/Cambewarra
	28 (Sat)	Outing - Tallawarra Ash Ponds
July	14 (Mon)	Meeting - Debbie Saunders: ‘Swift Parrot Survey’
	16 (Wed)	Outing – Botanic Gardens
	20 (Sun)	Outing – Yalwal/Shoalhaven
Aug	11 (Mon)	Meeting – Lloyd Robinson (Speleologist)
	13 (Wed)	Outing – T B A.
	17 (Sun)	Outing – Maddens Plains
Sept	8 (Mon)	Meeting – Members Night
	13 (Sat)	Outing – Whispering Gallery and Rocklow Creek
	16 (Tues)	Outing – Rhododendron Park
Oct	8 (Wed)	Outing – Grevillea Park
	13 (Mon)	Meeting – Geoff Boxsall/Terry Outtrim.
 <u>18-25 : Camp- Condobolin/Lake Cargelligo District</u>		
Nov	10 (Mon)	Meeting - Phil Straw, Wader Identification and Migration
	12 (Wed)	Outing – T B A.
	16 (Sun)	Outing – T B A
Dec	8 (Mon)	Meeting – Xmas Meeting
	13 (Sat)	Outing – Thirlmere Lakes & Art on Argyle Gallery, Picton.

The speaker for the night on the subject of **Managing Fire-Sensitive Birds** was fellow member **Dr Jack Baker**, a Threatened Species Officer for the NPWS. His interest in this started while a warden at Barren Grounds and completing a PhD on the Eastern Bristlebird. Jack still assists in the running of the Ground Parrot survey which has been conducted since about 1991; the next one to be on the 10th August and all are invited to participate.

The Australian bush is prone to fire: sooner or later it will burn whether by intentional “hazard reduction” prescribed burning or by accident or by malicious people. Birds have adapted to the natural fire regime, but since European settlement with the fragmentation of the bush and some of the misguided thinking that the bush needed to be burnt. Although burning is required for some plant species to regenerate, it is also done to produce feed for stock, to protect people and their property, so a lot more thought needs to be put into fire management practices to ensure the best balance is achieved.

What makes a fire-sensitive bird? Well one that is a poor flier, a ground-dweller, needs a good vegetation cover, breeds slowly, disperses poorly: all the perfect description of the Eastern Bristlebird. Jack’s work has shown that it takes about 8 years after a fire for the Bristlebird to get comfortable with the bush and start breeding. Small isolated populations can be wiped out by a fire that destroys most of the habitat every few years, as they find it hard even to cross a road to move to re-colonise a site, let alone move kilometres over empty paddocks. This has led to the fragmented northern populations falling from 23 to 11 and the southern ones from 12 to 1, a total of 12 attributable to poor fire management. Thus fire management needs to be adapted to best suit all the stakeholders; this may mean people will have to adapt. It is one of my gripes that people build fire-prone houses in the bush because they are allowed to, then seek someone to blame when the house burns down in a bush fire. It also increases my house insurance costs. Houses can be made virtually fire-proof, which would negate the need to “hazard reduction” burn every year or so to the detriment of some of the more fire-sensitive wildlife and plants. It is hoped that science can take over some of the more emotive issues, so that the NPWS can manage nature for the benefit of all rather than cop the blame for the community mistakes. Hazard reduction burning is also a dangerous operation for those participating in it, and any improvement would be of benefit to all.

Peter Nolan gave the vote of thanks for this most thought-provoking talk and Peter encouraged all those who had not been on a Ground Parrot survey to take the opportunity, an experience and a virtual guarantee to see these elusive birds.



Remember the Jabiru? Yes, that was me who smugly reported it last May! Shortly thereafter Darryl and Chris Chafer enticed me into a small windowless room and sat me under a hot, bright light for several hours. I came to see the error of my ways, signed a Stat Dec, committed to attending Club meetings on a regular basis and I was forgiven.

Such foolishness having passed, I have for the last year been faithfully (and correctly!) recording the birds of Bellawongarah, where I now live. Bellawongarah is halfway between Berry and Kangaroo Valley, not far from Cambewarra Mountain. We used to live in Rozelle, inner city Sydney, and I wouldn't go back for quids!

Three Superb Lyrebirds crossing the track enticed us to buy our plot, *Lothlorien*. Regular appearances of Bassian Thrush and bold Golden Whistlers convinced us a good decision had been made. White-browed, Yellow-throated and Large-billed Scrubwrens all potted around the nearby creek, and regular visits by Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, Gang-Gangs and King Parrots all added to our pleasure. When we spotted a pair of Rose Robins in the spring, all doubt had gone.

It's a bit of a switch to come from a tiny backyard in the city to all the range of habitats on this mountain – and very exciting. Being self-employed it took all the discipline I had to actually earn a dollar instead of permanently birdwatching.

My first sighting of a Green Catbird was in May 2002 from the office window. (Yes, I know, what was I doing looking out anyway?). I find myself regularly abandoning work and stalking Brown Cuckoo-Doves, Shining Bronze-Cuckoos, Brown Goshawks, Black-faced Monarchs, Eastern Whipbirds, and the ever restless Eastern Spinebills.

Highlights of the year have included a Collared Sparrowhawk slamming into the bottlebrush like an Exocet missile. The result was an instant starburst of honeyeaters, including the stunning Scarlets, but it failed to secure a meal.

Another was the discovery of a pair of Logrunners scrabbling away near the creek. Watching them was twenty minutes of pure adrenalin! I've seen the male twice since but not for several months now.

As the drought sucked the life out of the rainforest, the creeks and the dams, our pond was visited regularly by White-faced and Pacific Herons. Later in the year an immaculate Nankeen Night Heron spent four days (and nights?) polishing off the last of our goldfish. We forgave it.

A Grey Shrike-thrush descended the chimney and spent a dusty night in the fireplace. Several Satin Bowerbirds have popped in, one permanently disfiguring a carpet. A Grey Fantail spent several days flitting around the house before we managed to get it out, and we have a King Parrot that knocks on the kitchen window to be fed!

Overall we have seen eighty species on our small property with Willie Wagtail, Common Blackbird, Hobby, and Emerald Dove in the last month.

It is a great spot and it needs skilled and sober birders to do it justice. For my rehabilitation program Darryl and Chris have offered the services of the members of IBOC during the June outing. Little do they know how privileged I feel!

As a filler for the newsletter, Darryl Goldrick passed on to me a contribution by Celia Browne to the Birding-Aus web site with a list of collective nouns for various groups of birds. As I was suffering from bird-list withdrawals as a result of the cancelled outings last month, I set about expanding Celia's list, firstly by looking in the Reader's Digest *Reverse Dictionary* and then various web pages. Terry Ross of the Baltimore Bird Club has obviously done a fair bit of research and, like some others, referred to *An Exhaltation of Larks* by James Lipton (Penguin Books 1977 2nd edition) as a useful source. Ross goes so far as to group group names into those that are standard, shared, archaic but revived, obsolete, or not contained in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Like Lipton's title, some of the terms below date back to the 15th century and have their origin in hunting (venery) and husbandry. Others are said to have been coined by individuals as witticisms or poeticisms. It is interesting to note that in some species, distinctions are made between birds in flight or on the ground or water, and that one particular term can be applied to a number of different species. In his comment on last month's sightings, perhaps Chris Chafer should have referred to the raft or cover of 4000 Eurasian Coot! Keep an eye out for a company of Swift Parrots.

birds	bevy, brace (2 gamebirds/waterfowl killed by hunters), congregation, dissimulation, flight (in air), flock (on ground), pod, volary, volley	(sky)larks	bevy, exaltation
bitterns	sedge, siege	magpies	charm, gulp, murder, tiding(s), twittering
bobolinks	chain	mallards	flush, puddling (on water), sord (flight), sute (on land)
buzzards	wake	nightingales	match, watch
chickens	brood, peep	owls	parliament, stare
chicks	brood, clutch	parrots	company
choughs	chattering, clattering	partridges	covey
coots	cover, covert, raft	peacocks/fowl	muster, ostentation, pride
cormorants	flight, gulp	penguins	colony, rookery
cranes	herd, sedge, siege	pheasants	bouquet (when flushed), nest, nide (brood), nye (on ground)
crows	horde, hover, murder	pigeons	flight, flock, passel
curlews	herd	plovers	congregation, leash, wing
dotterels	trip (migration passage)	ptarmigans	covey
doves	dole, dule, flight, pitying, prettying	quails	bevy, covey
ducks	baddling, badelying, dopping (diving), flush, paddling (on water), plump (flight), raft, team	ravens	unkindness
eagles	convocation	rooks	building, clamour, parliament
falcons	cast	snipes	walk, whisper, wisp
finches	charm, trembling, trimming	sparrows	host, quarrel, tribe
flamingos	stand	starlings	murmuration
geese	flock, gaggle (wild/domesticated), nide, skein (flying), wedge (flying in "V")	storks	muster, mustering
goldfinches	charm, drum	swallows	flight
goshawks	flight	swans	bank, bevy, game, herd, squadron, wedge, whiteness
grouse	covey, pack (late in season)	teal	coil, knob, raft, spring
gulls	colony	thrushes	mutation
hawks	cast, kettle (riding a thermal), leash	turkeys	dole, dule, flock, gang, raffle, raft, rafter
hens	brood	turtledoves	pitying
herons	sedge, siege	wigeons	bunch, coil, company, knob
hummingbirds	chattering, troubling	wildfowl	plump
jays	band, party, scold	woodcocks	covey, fall, plump
lapwings	deceit, desert	woodpeckers	descent

Send your records to: email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

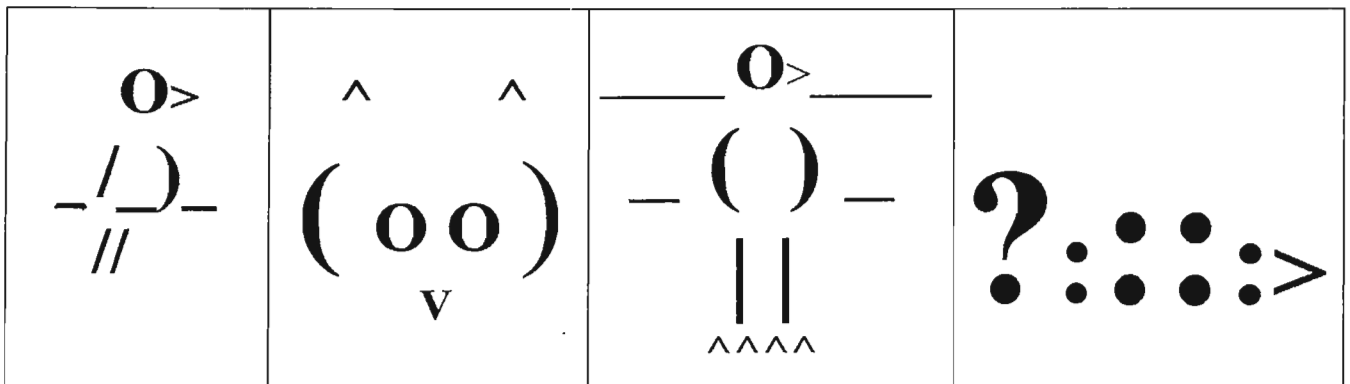
Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Musk Duck	2	25-Apr	Welby Dam, Mittagong	dam	PMk
Australasian Shoveler	2	9-Apr	Spring Creek	wetland	RS
Little Penguin	3	26-Apr	off Wollongong	marine	PM
Tahiti Petrel	1	26-Apr	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Murphy's Petrel	1	26-Apr	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Buller's Shearwater	2	26-Apr	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Darter	2	29-Apr	Macquarie Rivulet - Yallah weir	riparian	DG
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	6-Apr	Gerringong	rural	KM
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	29-Apr	Swamp Rd. Berry	flooded field	BA
Whistling Kite	1	26-Apr	sth Lake Illawarra	overhead	PF
Swamp Harrier	1	23-Apr	Curramore	rural	KM
Brown Goshawk	1	11-Apr	Albion Park Rail	overhead	PF
Brown Goshawk	1	29-Apr	Swamp Rd. Berry	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	11-Apr	top of Mt. Ousley Rd.	forest	CJC
Grey Goshawk	1	12-Apr	Windang	overhead	DW
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	16-Apr	Albion Park Rail	overhead	PF
Grey Goshawk	1	21-Apr	Saddleback Mtn	overhead	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	21-Apr	Noorinan Mtn	overhead	CJC
Little Eagle	1	26-Apr	Oak Flats interchange	overhead	CJC
Peregrine Falcon	1	9-Apr	Albion Park Rail	overhead	PF
Eurasian Coot	4000	6-Apr	Swan Lake	lake	KM
Black-winged Stilt	5	6-Apr	Swan Lake	estuary	KM
Double-banded Plover	10	18-Apr	Tallawarra ash ponds	wetland	DG
Double-banded Plover	48	20-Apr	Windang	sand flats	CJC
Black-fronted Dotterel	2	9-Apr	Spring Creek	wetland	RS
Black-fronted Dotterel	20	18-Apr	Tallawarra ash ponds	wetland	DG
Red-kneed Dotterel	2	18-Apr	Tallawarra ash ponds	wetland	DG
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	23-Apr	Primbee	dune forest	CJC
Large-billed Scrubwren	2	21-Apr	Hoddles Track	forest	CJC
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	5-Mar	Bulli Pass (several mornings)	overhead	KMa
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	6-Apr	Darkes Forest	woodland	CJC
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	4	6-Apr	Berrara	overhead	KM
Long-billed Corella	100+	24-Apr	Warrawong	overhead	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	28-Apr	Wollongong Botanical Gardens	forest	IM
Azure Kingfisher	2	29-Apr	Macquarie Rivulet - Yallah weir	riparian	DG
Pilotbird	2	21-Apr	Noorinan Mtn	forest	CJC
Pilotbird	2	22-Apr	Fitzroy Falls	forest	ID
Pilotbird	2	27-Apr	Staffords Farm, Illawarra SCA	forest	CJC
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	2	21-Apr	Noorinan Mtn	heath	CJC
Crescent Honeyeater	6	30-Apr	Meryla State Forest	forest	CJC
Scarlet Robin	4	6-Apr	Conjola NP	forest	KM
Scarlet Robin	1	22-Apr	Fitzroy Falls	woodland	ID
Scarlet Robin	1	28-Apr	Albion Park Rail	urban	PF
Rose Robin	2	12-Apr	Fred Finch Park	riparian	DW
Rose Robin	1	20-Apr	Drawing Room Rocks	forest	BA
Rose Robin	1	24-Apr	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
Eastern Whipbird	1	23-Apr	Tom Thumb Lagoon	bamboo	DW
Spotted Quail-thrush	5	6-Apr	Darkes Forest	woodland	CJC
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	30-Apr	Meryla State Forest	woodland	CJC
Varied Sittella	few	22-Apr	Wingecarribee Reservoir	woodland	ID
Cicadabird	2	21-Apr	Hoddles Track	forest	CJC
Cicadabird	1	21-Apr	Bellawongarah	forest	BA

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Grey Currawong	1	30-Apr	Manchester Square	rural	CJC
Beautiful Firetail	1	22-Apr	Fitzroy Falls	casuarina	ID

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; ID - Irene Denton; PF - Peter Fackender; DG - Darryl Goldrick; PM - Peter Milburn; IM - Ian McKinlay; PMk - Peg McKinlay; KM - Kevin Mills; KMa - Kylie Madden; RS - Ron Simcock; DW - David Winterbottom.

Comment: Murphy's Petrel is the second local and Australian record. Given the comparative rareness of this species and its similarity to Providence Petrel, it's possible this species has occurred previously and been overlooked. The 4,000 Eurasian Coot is the largest regional number ever recorded. There have now been several unprecedented observations of Glossy Black-Cockatoo along and adjacent to the northern Illawarra escarpment. Prior to the 2001 wildfires the furthest north and east the species had been observed was at Thirlmere. Now that autumn has arrived the number of reportings has diminished. Don't forget to keep an eye out for Swift Parrots that occasionally frequent the region in early winter.

In recent despatches Birds Australia has been alerting members to a film titled *Travelling Birds* or *Travelling with Birds*, produced by Hopscotch Films and opening in Sydney on 19th June with a members' preview session on 12th June at 7 pm at the Palace Academy Twin, Paddington. Jim Downey, Chief Executive Officer, reports that the film was nominated for an Academy Award this year for Best Documentary. It looks at the magical and somewhat mysterious world of bird-life migration across seven continents. Species followed were puffins in Iceland, cranes in Japan, geese across New York City, turtledoves in Mali, macaws on the Peru Amazon, flamingos [a stand of them?] in Kenya, Andean condors in Argentina and Chile, swans in the Camargue, France, and pigeons in the Pyrenees. Shooting took three years and required different strategies to capture different bird species; such as filming from a balloon for the circular flight of storks; from boats for pelicans; and uniquely adapted aircraft for geese. Sounds like it's worth more than a gander! You can see extracts of the film by clicking on 'trailer' on the website www.wingedmigration.com.



Can anyone come up with some more bird designs made out of the 68 characters on a computer keyboard?



I.B.O.C. NEWS

Issue No. 261

July 2003

The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Darryl GOLDRICK

- > A very warm welcome to our newest member, **Val Dolan** from Mt. Keira. Our membership has increased significantly over the past year, and I'm finding remembering names somewhat difficult – faces I don't forget, but names...well, that takes a little longer; so don't forget to wear **name tags** at meetings/outings.
- > The **Berry Mountain/Cambewarra** outing was well attended and most enjoyable by all accounts, so many thanks to **Bob Ashford** for his organization and leadership work.
- > The club **library** has some new acquisitions, and my thanks to **Chris Brandis** for his generous donation.
- > The September club meeting is **Members' Night** where members 'do their own thing' for the evening's entertainment (slide show, song/dance, poetry, quiz, or whatever). So I'm seeking volunteers to fill the evening's program. Please contact myself or Kerri Lewis (4285-2736) or Bruce O'Brien (4262-7529) as soon as possible. Remember, if we don't get calls, it will be a very dull evening!
- > The **October Camp** will be held at **Lake Cargelligo** on **18-25 October**. Given the continuing drought conditions, it has been decided that our base camp will be at the Lake Cargelligo Caravan Park. I have included a separate page in this newsletter that lists the range of accommodation both at the caravan park and also motels/hotels for those without vans/tents, plus tariffs. I have tentatively reserved 12 powered sites at the caravan park, so when you book, please identify yourself as being with IBOC. I have spoken to all the patrons (except Lake Cargelligo Motel), and their advice is **get your booking in now**. It is a popular skiing resort and **they get booked out early from Sept onwards**. I will be sending the clipboard around at the next two meetings so as to get names/numbers. If you are unable to attend the meetings and intend coming to the camp, please ring me on my home number (see above) to register. A small group will be conducting a 'reccy' in early August, so as to prepare a program of sites to visit. Further details will be provided in the September Newsletter.

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FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events. 3...Lake Cargelligo Accommodation Info. 4...June Club Meeting – Birds of Winnipeg. 5...Macquarie Rivulet Outing. 5&6...Tallawarra Ash Ponds Outing. 7...Black Ash Nature Reserve Outing. 7...Regent Honeyeater Tree-Planting Program. 8...Twitchathon 2003 for Murray Catchment Project. 9&10...Unusual Records: May-June 2003.

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 14th July** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. Our guest speaker will be **Debbie Saunders**, whose topic is the **Swift Parrot Survey**, held each May and August. Based at Queanbeyan, Debbie is the NPWS mainland coordinator for the recovery program for the migratory *Lathamus discolor*, with funding from Environment Australia. Her talk will include the bird's identification and special habitat and the important role of volunteers. Unfortunately, by the time you receive this newsletter, you will have missed the opportunity of the free all-day workshop on the Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater (which gets a mention further on), to be held on **6th July** at the Chiltern Box Ironbark National Park, Victoria. This location could be well worth an IBOC visit as website <http://www.tourisminternet.com.au/chbird.htm> declares this area to be one of the premiere birdwatching areas in Southern Australia, where two other threatened woodland bird species - the Turquoise Parrot and Square-tailed Kite - can be found. For future reference, Debbie's contact number is 1800-665-766.

MID-WEEK WALK will be on **Wednesday 16th July** through the **Wollongong Botanic Gardens**. The leader will be **Jude Parkinson**. Meet her at **9 am** at the car park at the Murphys Road entrance. It's possible Jude may try to entice you to take a plunge into the lake, after making her splash on the front page of July 1st issue of the *Illawarra Mercury*, so be prepared. Some field notes appear below to help newcomers identify her.

FIELD OUTING is on **Sunday 20th July** in the **Yalwal/Shoalhaven** district. Teaming up with the Shoalhaven Group, members are requested to assemble at **8.30 am** in the park/cemetery bordering Kalandar Street, Nowra. Directions are as follows: Drive through Nowra on the Princes Highway to the Albatross (right turn) - Greenwell Point (left turn) traffic lights intersection. Turn right and proceed approx 300 metres westwards along Kalandar Street to the first roundabout and turn left/south into Kinghome Street and a quick left again into the park bordering the cemetery. (Don't look for the Navy Jet Memorial at this site, Darryl - that was shifted north some time ago and wasn't recommissioned for the Gulf War, as you suggested!) The public toilet still stands there, though. For the outing take victuals and equipment for all weathers.

COMMITTEE MEETING will be on **Tuesday 22nd July** at 7.30 pm at the home of **Joan & Tom Wylie** at 4 Daphne Street, Bellambi (Tel 4284-2051). Please contact a committee member beforehand if you wish (to attend) to have an issue discussed.

MEMBERS' NIGHT is coming up on **Monday 8th September**. Please advise **Bruce O'Brien** as soon as possible on 4262-7529 of your contribution so that he can work out the program for the evening.

AUGUST NEWSLETTER: Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Tuesday 28th July**.



Jaypee (*Judytes parkinsoni*): A rare, colourful, slender, but robust water-bird with prominent wavy double lines down flanks. Its crest evident when striped swimcap removed. Voice: giggling interspersed with ribald jocular calls. Often seen wading in ponds, dams and creeks, esp. on bird club outings. Its favoured haunt is tidal rock pools, where it furtively retreats to. Will accompany female White-fronted Chats (commonly known as Nuns) that gather there to display their underwings. Will actively defend its territory, esp. when under threat of demolition.



OCTOBER 18-25 CAMP.

FISHING THE HEART'S OASIS

Lake Cargelligo is not just a haven for birds. take in the ambience, it also offers some of the best fishing in the Lachlan Valley.

Proof of the popularity of Lake Cargelligo and the nearby Lachlan River is particularly evident in October when the town holds its annual Fisherama. (OCT LONGWEEKEND) 4-6 OCT
The event offers more than 30 cash prizes for fish caught during the festival along with a major prize draw of \$500. As well as these individual prizes, there is a special section for fishing clubs to compete against each other. Juniors are catered for through a number of sections offering cash prizes. The only requirements for participation in the festival are a licence, a fishing licence and a little time to wile away.

Even the most inexperienced fisher is catered for during Fisherama with the \$500 major prize open to anyone who enters, irrespective of whether the entrant catches a fish. However, for the ever popular carp, there is little catching at least

CABINS - UP TO 7 PERSONS
\$44 / double +
\$5.50 / extra persons

POWERED SITE: \$13.75 / TWIN SHARE
UNPOWERED: \$11.00 / SITE (TWIN SHARE)

one fish. Cc just wettng to catch ar European carp as possible in an effort to rid the lake of this species and allow native fish to flourish. During October, the highly prized Yellow Belly and Redfin are flavour of the month.

Any money from the Fisherama goes back into the acquisition of native fingerlings for restocking the lake with up to 10,000 a year being released.

TARIFF
\$55 - single
\$66 - double

licences for fishing. The Lachlan River often is as busy as the Northern Territory's Daly River as people head bush
8 Rooms,
\$15/p/nite - incl continental B'fast
most Rooms have 2/3 single beds.



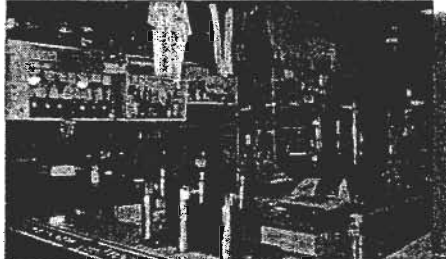
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DOUBLE = \$59



The speaker for our long-weekend June meeting was IBOC member **Roger Truscott**, who presented a multi-media talk on "**Birds of Winnipeg**". Roger has the unfortunate(!) task of having to go to Florida for an annual conference, and in May 2002 he combined this conference with a birding holiday in the prairie state of Manitoba, Canada.

Roger explained that Spring was 2 weeks late that year and he got to see the arrival over several days of many of the warblers. These birds lose almost half their body-weight on their flight from South America to breed in the northern parts of North America.

Many of the lakes in the region were only just starting to thaw, and the deciduous trees were yet to open their leaf buds. This made spotting a little easier for larger birds, such as Green Horn Owl and Snowy Owl. Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers as well as many types of ducks, such as Blue-winged Teal, Horned Grebe, Buff-headed and Wood Ducks, survive the icy conditions.

Roger had taken his "big lens" and was able to capture fabulous shots of many of the smaller birds. The Yellow-rumped Warbler was one of the first arrivals, surviving on insects and fruit in the really cold conditions. In all there are about 47 species of warblers that visit Northern America. Some which Roger saw were the Magnolia Warbler (with its white ring under its eye), Wilson's Warbler, Black and White Warbler (like a treecreeper in its movements), and Palm Warbler (very pretty chestnut cap and yellow face). Roger had hoped to see lots of woodpeckers and was lucky enough to photograph a male Hairy Woodpecker, with his distinctive red patch, Downy Woodpecker, and a pair of fighting woodpeckers.

Unfortunately most of the wild prairie is farmed, but there are still areas where native fauna abound. We saw examples of this in Roger's photos of very cute squirrels, chipmunks, musk rats and the evidence of trees felled by elusive beavers. Prairie dogs are regarded as a pest by farmers, as their holes cause cattle to injure their legs. Bull-frogs and tortoise thrive in the cold water of the many lakes.

Identifying sparrows required the assistance of field guides. There are so many different types, varying only slightly in markings and colour – Harris', White-crowned, Lincoln, White-throated, Marsh, and Clay-collared Sparrows, just to name a few.

Perhaps my favourite sounding bird was the Black-capped Chickadee (what was the name of the famous actor that used a similar expression?) and the fact that Roger "saw a Sora" (very secretive) bird! The talk was very entertaining and informative, and the vote of thanks was given by Bob Ashford for Roger's excellent photography as well the variety of birds observed.

I have organised a supply of club T-shirts with our logo embroidered on the pocket for a cost of \$30. They will be forest green, and currently I have 20 ordered (5 medium, 10 large, and 5 X-large). If any members would like me to place a "hold" on a T-shirt, please feel free to contact me on 4285-2736 (after hours). It is expected that they will be ready in 4 weeks and available at the August meeting (just in time for Spring!).

On Wednesday 11th June seven birdwatchers enjoyed a pleasant walk through the reserve adjoining Macquarie Rivulet at Albion Park Rail after meeting at the Hales' residence at 8.30 am.

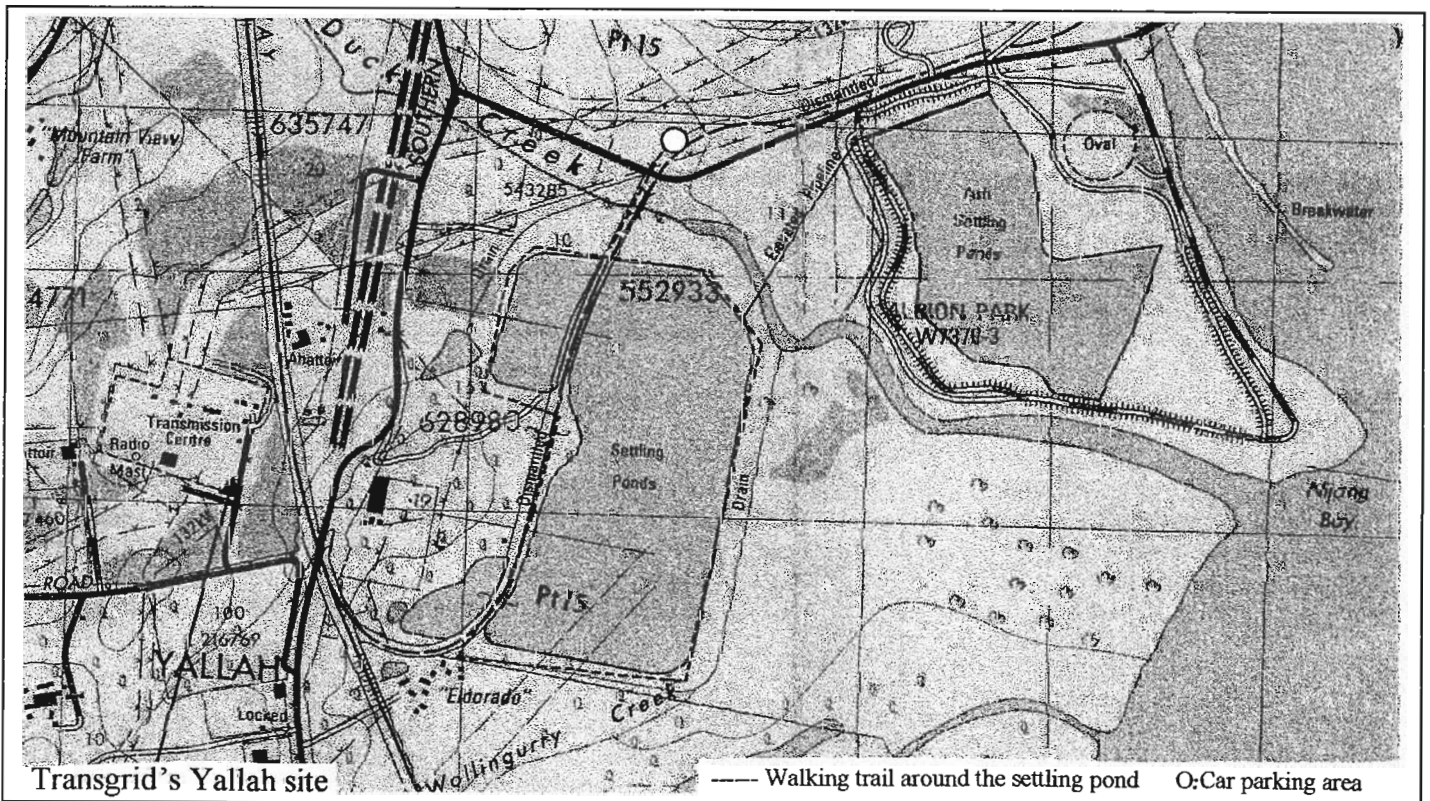
While waiting for our birding friends to arrive, an Indian Ringneck was observed. Barbara informed us that there were originally two birds which had apparently escaped from their aviary a couple of years earlier, but had since bred and the group now totalled five birds.

The weather was fine with little wind, making for good birdwatching. We were rewarded with a steady stream of new observations. At one point on the bank of the Rivulet, we all had excellent views of several Darters in a tree, sunning themselves after their breakfast. At another point, eight White-faced Herons were observed close together in a paddock.

At Darcy Dunster Reserve we did an about-face and returned the way we had come. At this point, under the flight-path to Illawarra Regional Airport a Great White Bird was observed: actually an Air Force VIP jet carrying our stand-in Governor General on a flying visit to the Illawarra.

Many birds were observed due to our proximity to Macquarie Rivulet, but many smaller birds were also observed in the reserve due to the good plantings of Banksia, Grevillea, Casuarina, Eucalypt and other natives. Our total for the morning was 48 species. Many thanks to Barbara for facilitating the outing.

- | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Musk Duck | Australian White Ibis | Eastern Rosella | Grey Fantail |
| Black Swan | Black-shouldered Kite | Superb Fairy-wren | Willie Wagtail |
| Australian Wood Duck | White-bellied Sea-Eagle | Spotted Pardalote | Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike |
| Pacific Black Duck | Purple Swamphen | Brown Thornbill | Grey Butcherbird |
| Chestnut Teal | Dusky Moorhen | Yellow Thornbill | Australian Magpie |
| Australasian Grebe | Masked Lapwing | Red Wattlebird | Australian Raven |
| Darter | Silver Gull | Little Wattlebird | House Sparrow |
| Little Pied Cormorant | Spotted Turtle-Dove | Yellow-faced Honeyeater | Welcome Swallow |
| Little Black Cormorant | Crested Pigeon | New Holland Honeyeater | Red-whiskered Bulbul |
| White-faced Heron | Galah | Eastern Spinebill | Silvereye |
| Great Egret | Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | Golden Whistler | Common Starling |
| Striated Heron | Rainbow Lorikeet | Magpie-lark | Common Myna |



Map to Tallawarra Ash Ponds Outing

Having been postponed last month due to bad weather, club members met on Saturday 28th June for the walk around the Tallawarra Power Station Ash Ponds. A good roll-up to the tune of 19 members was warmly welcomed by outing leader, **Darryl Goldrick**. Bob set the tone with talk of Jabiru and Brolga, but Judy was not to be outdone, as will be noted later. The weather forecast for the day was not good with showers predicted, but, to the group's delight, good weather conditions remained throughout the day. Sightings were plentiful, with 83 species seen on the day.

A male Satin Bowerbird and two Galahs were spotted near the gated entrance. On the elevated trail that encircles the settling pond, all were entertained by a Nankeen Kestrel devouring its prey (mouse?) on a low post, with plumes of fur or feathers drifting up into the air. In the pond below, several Black Swans, ducks and two grebes. Further around to the west in a smaller adjacent pond more swans were sighted, along with several Eurasian Coots, Australasian Shovelers, Pacific Black Ducks as well as cormorants in nearby trees. A Black-shouldered Kite, seen in the distance off to the west perched on a powerline, later ventured closer to the trailing members in the group, perching in a nearby tree. Several Galahs and a pair of Corellas passed noisily overhead as the group progressed further south along the west side of the settling pond. A Brown Falcon and Whistling Kite were seen as the group approached the southwest corner of the settling pond, and another Kestrel was seen by the trailing group members. Upon reaching the southern perimeter, the leading members were rewarded with the appearance of a Spotless Crake (which disappeared, as it turned out, for stragglers); needless to say the writer missed out on this sighting, having lagged behind gawking at a Black-Shouldered Kite and some Striated Pardalotes. The group rested on the south-western embankment of the settling pond before venturing east and, immediately upon doing so, a large raptor was wheeled overhead with a shout of "Whistling Kite", which immediately turned everyone's heads skywards. This was followed by calls of "No, it's a Swamp Harrier" and "Yes, it has a slight whitish rump patch", then "No, it banked, and the above wing pattern is wrong" and "The wing profile is wrong." Miraculously then numbers of members sprouted I.D. books, and it was concluded the bird which graced us with its presence was a dark morph Little Eagle.

Soon after, as we ventured along the eastern side of the settling pond, a Whistling Kite arose from or near a small Casuarina and satisfied all of its credentials by calling and flying in the manner a Whistling Kite ought to, while the Little Eagle could still be seen further east gliding above the tree-tops on the lake's edge. Venturing further along, a Collared Sparrowhawk was spotted flying up from eye level over the pond, and, gaining height, it proceeded to soar eastward. Just before rounding the final bend, calls of "peregrine!" alerted everyone's attention to a falcon soaring off in the distance before it accelerated with flapping flight away toward the escarpment. On the last stretch another Little Eagle was spotted, but this time it was a light morph with its typical "M" or "W" shape pattern, depending on how the bird is viewed. Before returning to the cars near to two pairs of Masked Lapwings, several dotterels were spotted below a partially inundated settling pond. On the group's return to the car park, the silhouette of a heavily backlit raptor perched on a powerline above the cars caused much debate; the confusion finally resolved when it flew to the ground and the better lighting revealed it to be another Brown Falcon, a fitting conclusion to the walk that had been dominated by such a high number of raptor sightings. We then rested for lunch at the car-park.

Following the early departure of a few members, Darryl treated most of us to a visit to **Transgrid's Yallah site**. This was a short easy walk along Paperbark /Eucalyptus woodland, which has elements of wet/dry woodland and the now recognized as threatened Illawarra Grassy Woodland (IGW) plant community. The IGW plant community proved to be the most rewarding area for sightings of passerines, with Red-browed Finch, Superb Fairy-wren, Rose Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Noisy Miner, Eastern Spinebill and Dusky Woodswallow showing to us its ecological value. Back a touch during this walk and near the old railway lines Darryl, Peter and others heard an unusual call thought to be a Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, and soon after Judy sighted two such birds in the close vicinity, but was the only person to be so rewarded. Introduced species sighted along the railway line and beyond included European Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Common Starling, Common Myna and Red-whiskered Bulbul. Judy was to prove her proficient observational skills with the help of a Grey Butcherbird detecting a Tawny Frogmouth biding its time as an imitation "branch" until gloomier times.

Everyone agreed that the Ash Ponds are a "gem" for birdwatchers and possibly the best, by way of accessibility and conditions, for great bird sightings, especially raptors and water-birds. Darryl indicated that increased diversity and abundance of birds (particularly birds of prey) may well be the result of the return of grasses sedges, reeds, Casuarinas and other plants that are giving species diverse food and shelter resources, as they come to populate or utilize the area in increased numbers, especially after rain has recharged the ponds.



On 15th June seventeen chilly members assembled at the Bellawongarah Rural Fire Station on **Berry Mountain**, actively seeking a pocket of sunshine to warm up with. The night before had been quite cold and windy and the weather forecast was not encouraging. Never trust the weather report: the day was beautiful. This was the first time the club had journeyed through this nature reserve and gauging by the continued voices of surprise as we explored the area, it won't be the last. Our intrepid leader, **Bob Ashford**, had gained permission to traverse some private property and this flat walk is one of the best I've been on in 25 years of trekking the region.

After a quick transfer of vehicles to the east side of the mountain, we began our walk into the forest. The walk began in cool temperate rainforest, with a very open understorey and mystical fern-covered gullies. The track was wide and well maintained. Birds were admittedly few, but that's not uncommon for this time of year. Many had great views of busy Mistletoebirds feeding on the forest edge, and there were continuous flocks of Brown Gerygones. Several Wonga Pigeons were disturbed, and everyone had great views of a very obliging male Golden Whistler. Within the private property the rainforest continued, interspersed with moist eucalypt forest and a few open paddocks. Here we enjoyed great views of White-headed and Topknot Pigeons, another Mistletoebird, a Green Catbird, numerous Grey Fantails, Striated Thornbills, a spectacular Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Brown Cuckoo-Doves busily feeding on the purplish fruiting Giant Stinging Tree. Emerging onto Cambewarra Mountain Road, we piled into the vehicles and went back to the fire station for lunch in the sunshine.

After lunch we headed off to **Cambewarra Range Nature Reserve**, parked the cars and, using the four off-road vehicles present, drove out to Red Rock trig. Here you are rewarded with a majestic view of Kangaroo Valley from Mt Scanzi through Wallaby Hill, Mt. Carrialoo, Bendella Pondage and Upper Kangaroo Valley. While here we had great views of a male Brown Goshawk sweeping past the escarpment at great speed, we observed a flock of 50-odd Topknot Pigeons in the forest below and a distant Wedge-tailed Eagle. We wandered back along the track, but the afternoon had become breezy and birds were scarce. A few lucky observers did find an Eastern Bristlebird, while New Holland Honeyeater and Eastern Spinebill we added to the list, which totalled 36 species.

An excellent winter's outing to a new location and the brief sojourn into Devil's Glenn wet the appetite for further adventures in this part of the region. Thanks to our leader Bob for pursuing access to this spectacular corner of our beautiful region. Bob and Noreen run a very comfortable B&B set adjacent to rainforest for anyone interested in exploring the region further 02 4464 1574; www.theyurtatlothlorien.com

Birds observed were: Brown Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Wonga Pigeon, Topknot Pigeon, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Australian King-Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Laughing Kookaburra, Superb Lyrebird, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb Fairy-Wren, Eastern Bristlebird, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Lewin's Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Australian Raven, Green Catbird, Satin Bowerbird, Red-browed Finch, Mistletoebird, Silveryeye.



REGENT HONEYEATER TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

The weekend of 16th & 17th August will see another invasion of volunteer tree-planters in the Capertee Valley to help re-establish the habitat to boost the Regent Honeyeater population. With the aid of a Threatened Species Network grant, 3000 young trees are to be planted on two properties along the Glen Davis - Capertee Road, one of which, co-ordinator **David Geering** reports, is immediately adjacent to an area where the Regent spent much time foraging last summer. Last April over 4000 trees were planted by about 130 people, bringing the tally of trees and shrubs planted to over 49000 since 1994. As before, weekend accommodation can be arranged, be it camping, cottaging, hoteling or moteling, plus the usual convivial Saturday evening meal at the local community hall. In addition, there will be a Regent Honeyeater survey on the Sunday following the planting and a maintenance weekend in September (tentatively 20th & 21st). If you'd like to be involved in any of these activities, please contact David on 1800-621-056; fax 6884-9382; or email davidgeering@npws.nsw.gov.au, and he'll probably send you a registration form.



It's SNAG's 10th Twitchathon birthday this year! Celebrate the occasion on the weekend **25-26 October** by getting involved for the birds in the **Murray catchment**. For those of you with no idea what a Twitchathon is, it is a real fun activity. It's so simple. Find as many species of birds as possible over that weekend within a team category participation, and/or raise the most money by sponsorship and a great prize could arrive in your mail box. Whether you are 5 or 105 years old, you could be eligible to receive a multitude of prizes in many race categories. But above all, you really will have helped to make a difference for our birds. You will be very proud of yourself! What's the 10th Twitchathon project? The answer lies in the birds of the MIGHTY MURRAY CATCHMENT. We need just \$12,500, and I know we can all make it together, for we have raised more than this in a past Twitchathon. Go for it, friends - ask me for your 10th Twitchathon birthday kit TODAY! Contact details are: (T/F) 9872-4185. (E) secretarybird@bigpond.com

Measuring the outcomes of protecting remnant woodlands for birds in the Murray Catchment of NSW

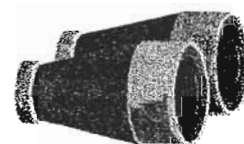
Background: Between 1997 and 2001, Greening Australia NSW facilitated the protection and enhancement of hundreds of woodland remnants in the highly fragmented Murray Catchment. Natural recovery of native vegetation or enhancement through tree-planting occurred at these sites, using incentive-funded fencing programs. The main types of vegetation that were protected were Grey Box and Yellow Box/Blakely's Red Gum woodland, which are now rare in the catchment, and White Cypress Pine woodland. Protection of native vegetation will provide long-term benefits to rural landscapes in terms of reducing erosion and salinity and improving ecosystem health. However, it is also vital to measure the biotic responses of habitat protection to provide encouragement to landholders and other community members to increase the effort and area for protection and enhancement. Some of the best environmental indicators of the success of habitat protection are our native woodland birds. Many species of woodland birds are now known to be threatened or declining significantly in many parts of Australia.

Project Outline: This project aims to measure the success of the Greening Australia NSW Murray Catchment Fencing Incentives Program in terms of benefits to woodland birds. A selection of sites that were fenced and protected in the last 2-7 years will be surveyed for all bird species to gain an understanding about the responses of birds to habitat protection and enhancement. In particular, the project aims to look at how size, shape, age of tree-plantings, tree species and shrub layer affect the responses by woodland birds. The results of this project not only provide a much needed audit of catchment-based woodland conservation, but also recommendations about how best to conduct future fencing programs. It will be critical to present the results of this project to the participating landholders and to use the results to hopefully encourage other landholders in the catchment to protect and manage their important remnant woodland patches.

Methods: It is anticipated that a project officer will, with the direction of the project manager, identify approximately 100 sites that have been stratified into categories based on size of remnant fenced, type of vegetation fenced, tree cover, understorey condition and age since fencing occurred. Each site is to be surveyed in Spring 2003, using a standardised 20-minute census technique. All birds seen or heard within or flying over the site will be recorded. Surveys will be undertaken only in the good weather conditions. Analysis and reporting of results will be undertaken in late 2003 with a report provided to Birds Australia in early 2004. The report will then be distributed to local landholders. It is also envisaged that local conservation or bird groups will continue to monitor some of these sites to gauge the long-term responses of woodland birds to habitat protection and enhancement. There is great potential for the production of community education material based around the findings of this project, which will be used by community groups and organisations whose focus is on conservation of remnant vegetation for birds and general biodiversity.

Send your records to: email: cchafer@ezy.net.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

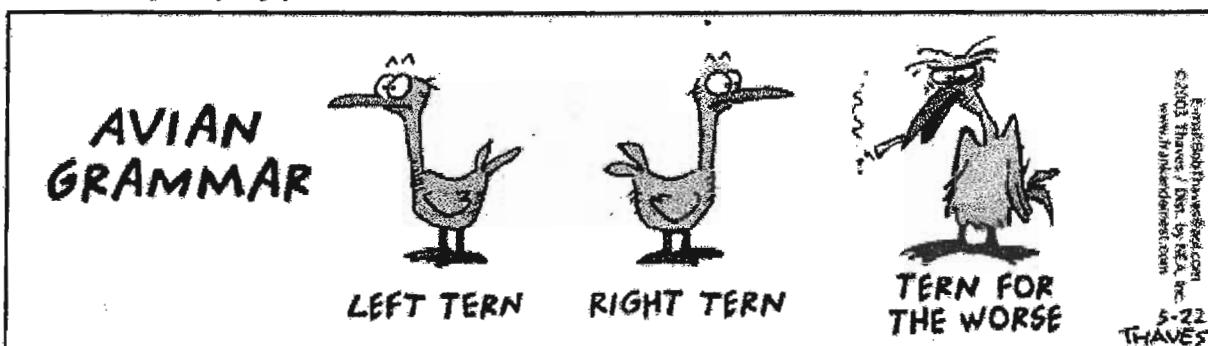
Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Brush-Turkey	1	21-Apr	Staffords Farm, Illawarra SCA	rainforest	GB
Brown Quail	4	2 & 27-May	Albion Park Rail	grassland	PF
Freckled Duck	7	26-31 May	Koona Bay wetland (Lake Illawarra)	wetland	NW, NJ, RS etc.
Freckled Duck	1	29-May	Tallawarra ash ponds	wetland	CB
Australasian Shoveler	10	5-Apr	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
Tahiti Petrel	1	26-Apr	off Wollongong	pelagic	GB
Buller's Shearwater	1	26-Apr	off Wollongong	pelagic	GB
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	3	26-Apr	off Wollongong	pelagic	GB
Masked Booby	1	24-May	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Pied Cormorant	50	7-May	Korrongulla Swamp (12 nesting)	wetland	GB
Little Egret	1	6-Apr	Orient Point	mud flat	GB
Eastern Reef Egret	1	21-Apr	Little Lake	mud flat	GB
Great Egret	36	6-Apr	Orient Point	mud flat	GB
Intermediate Egret	9	18-May	Crooked River	mud flat	CJC
Striated Heron	1	21-Apr	Cudgerre Bay, Lake Illawarra	mud flat	GB
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2	11-May	Fred Finch Park	mud flat	DW
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2	27-May	Calderwood	wetland	CJC
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	30-May	Terragong Swamp	paddock	KM
Whistling Kite	1	6-Apr	Orient Point	overhead	GB
Whistling Kite	1	31-May	Boonerah Point, Mt. Warrigal	overhead	PF
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	18-May	Bulli	overhead	RT
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	2	31-May	Boonerah Point, Mt. Warrigal	overhead	PF
Swamp Harrier	1	31-May	Comerong Island	wetland	CJC
Brown Goshawk	1	18-May	Bulli	overhead	RT
Grey Goshawk	1	3-May	Mt. Keira Rd.	forest	IM
Grey Goshawk	1	6-May	Red Rock Nature Reserve	overhead	BA, BV
Pied Oystercatcher	10	18-May	Comerong Island	sand flats	CJC
Grey Goshawk (1white, 1grey)	2	19-May	Windang Peninsula	dune forest	CB
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	2	21-May	Cordeaux colliery	overhead	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	31-May	Cudmirrah	overhead	KM
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	5-Apr	Killalea Lagoon	overhead	GB
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	6-Apr	Orient Point	overhead	GB
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	11-May	O'Brien's Rd. Illawarra SCA	overhead	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	22-May	Cordeaux colliery	overhead	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	31-May	Darkes Forest	overhead	JB
Brown Falcon	1	24-May	Darkes Forest	overhead	CJC
Australian Hobby	1	5-May	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Australian Hobby	1	10-May	Hanging Rock, Nowra	woodland	MPP
Peregrine Falcon	1	1-May	Wingecarribee Reservoir	overhead	CJC
Peregrine Falcon	1	10-May	Warrawong	overhead	CJC
Peregrine Falcon	1	19-May	Windang Peninsula	overhead	CB
Peregrine Falcon	1	25-May	Depot farm (Nowra)	overhead	BA
Buff-banded Rail	1	13-May	Wollongong University	pond	RM
Spotless Crake	1	5-Apr	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
Grey-tailed Tattler	4	6-Apr	Orient Point	mud flat	GB
Pied Oystercatcher	7	6-Apr	Orient Point	mud flat	GB
Double-banded Plover	218	18-May	Comerong Island	sand flats	CJC
Black-fronted Dotterel	12	5-Apr	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
Black-fronted Dotterel	3	9-May	Tom Thumb Lagoon	mud flat	DW
Red-kneed Dotterel	10	5-Apr	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
Great Skua	1	26-Apr	off Wollongong	pelagic	GB
Caspian Tern	83	16-May	Windang	estuary	CJC
White-fronted Tern	1	19-May	Windang	beach	CB
White-headed Pigeon	1	8-May	Jamberoo	urban	KM
White-headed Pigeon	1	27-May	Bulli Pass	garden	RM
White-headed Pigeon	1	31-May	Mt. Keira archery range	garden	JB



Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emerald Dove	1	12-May	Bellawongarah	rainforest	BA
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	31-May	Comerong Island	forest	CJC
Little Lorikeet	20	18-May	Gerroa	forest	CJC
Little Lorikeet	30	18-May	Shoalhaven Heads	overhead	CJC
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	50	6-May	Penrose Sate Forest	pine forest	KM
Azure Kingfisher	1	3-May	Fred Finch Park	estuary	DW
Azure Kingfisher	1	10-May	Nowra Creek	riverine	MPP
Azure Kingfisher	1	25-May	Depot Farm (Nowra)	riverine	BA
Azure Kingfisher	1	30-May	Berry Hospital	?	BA
Red-browed Treecreeper	1	1-May	Belmore Falls	woodland	CJC
Brown Treecreeper	2	3-May	Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, Bargo	woodland	GB
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	2	25-May	Bulli	beach front	RT
Red Wattlebird	30	2-May	Albion Park Rail	garden	PF
White-plumed Honeyeater	2	10-May	Kemblawarra	urban	CJC
Brown-headed Honeyeater	1	3-May	Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, Bargo	woodland	GB
Crescent Honeyeater	1	1-May	Belmore Falls	woodland	CJC
Scarlet Honeyeater	2	7-May	Korongulla Swamp	forest	GB
Scarlet Honeyeater	few	26-May	Primbee	dune forest	NW,NJ
Rose Robin	1	3-May	Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, Bargo	woodland	GB
Rose Robin	1	10-May	upper Cordeaux River	forest	GB
Logrunner	6	11-May	O'Brien's Rd. Illawarra SCA	rainforest	CJC
Varied Sittella	5	31-May	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
Crested Shrike-tit	1	10-May	upper Cordeaux River	forest	GB
Spangled Drongo	2	26-May	Primbee	dune forest	NW,NJ
Spangled Drongo	1	31-May	Windang	hind dune forest	DW
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	1	3-May	Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, Bargo	woodland	GB
Grey Currawong	1	24-May	Darkes Forest	forest	CJC
Tawny Grassbird	3	29-May	Tallawarra ash ponds	shrubland	CB
Bassian Thrush	2	21-Apr	Staffords Farm, Illawarra SCA	rainforest	GB
Bassian Thrush	3	8-May	Staffords Farm, Illawarra SCA	forest	CJC

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; JBI - John Blomstedt; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; PF - Peter Fackender; NJ - Nigel Jackett; MJ - Michael Jarman; IM - Ian McKinlay; PM - Peter Milburn; RM - Richard Miller; KM - Kevin Mills; JP - Joy Pegler; MPP - Martin & Penny Potter; RS - Ron Simcock; RT - Roger Truscott; BV - Barry Virtue; NW - Nathan Waugh; DW - David Winterbottom

Comment: A great spread of exceptional records from across the region for this time of year. And it even includes a new regional species, a most unexpected Masked Booby joined the monthly pelagic trip off Wollongong. The breaching of the lake entrance bar at Windang attracted the largest number of Caspian Tern recorded from the region. May also saw the largest number of Double-banded Plover ever recorded from Comerong Island. Up to 7 Freckled Duck turned up for an extended stay at the Koonah Bay wetland, with many observers getting their first look at this elusive species. Once the lake opened up, breeding commenced at Korrongulla wetland for three species of Cormorant, the most interesting of which is Pied as there are few known breeding locations for this species. The 36 Great Egrets at Orient Point and 9 Intermediate Egret at Crooked River are the largest congregations for both these non-gregarious species in the region since recording began in 1839. It's a long time since Grey-tailed Tattler were recorded from the Crookhaven estuary, one of only two places where this species frequents in the region (the other is Little Lake). The Brown Treecreeper record is on the eastern edge of the species NSW distribution and it's a long, long time since a White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike has been recorded from the region. Raptor observations increase every year at this time; nevertheless, it's great to see so many recorded. Although Red Wattlebird is a common species, a flock of 30 would attract everyone's notice. Tawny Grassbirds are known only from Yallah and Dunmore areas, but they haven't been recorded from Yallah for nearly ten years. Finally, Yellow-rumped Thornbills are rarely found on the beachfront! Hope they enjoyed the view.



- David Winterbottom's other contribution!



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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August 2003

The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Darryl GOLDRICK

Only a short segment this month. Firstly, a very warm welcome to our **newest members: Jeanette Walsh** from Mount Ousley; **Margaret Atkinson**, Wollongong; **Roselyn Costa**, Windang; and **Caroline Baum**, Wombarra. I trust you will get much pleasure out of your participation in the club's activities.

My telephone has been silent on members volunteering to 'do their thing' on the September **Members' Night** meeting. It may have to be that we cancel the night due to lack of interest! (That would be a first for the club.) – The ball is in your court, not mine.

You will notice in this edition that **Barren Grounds** is virtually closing down and will become simply a research centre – a sad state of affairs, if you ask me. Personally, I don't believe Birds Australia are dealing with the future management of the observatory in the best possible way.

We have ordered 50 copies of the Greening Australia publication **Bringing Birds Back: A Glovebox Guide** – a very compact booklet at a mere \$3.30 a copy.

I have been advised that the much publicised **Travelling Birds** movie is coming to Wollongong cinemas this month (August). It has had fabulous reviews since screening in Sydney. Keep your eyes on the *Illawarra Mercury* and perhaps we may be able to co-ordinate a group booking when it hits town.

Over the next three months there will be two public lectures on backyard birds and shorebirds and a **symposium** on our local lake. Read on for details...

-ooOoo-

FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events. 2...Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture. 3...Barren Grounds Bird Observatory. 3...Annual Ground Parrot Census. 3...Inaugural Annual Bird Week Lecture. 4...Speaking Swiftly: July Meeting – Swift Parrot Recovery Program. 5...Lake Illawarra Symposium. 6...Wollongong Botanic Gardens Outing. 7...Yalwal Outing. 8...Australian Seabird Rescue. 10...Unusual Records: June 2003.

CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 11th August** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. Our guest speaker will be **Lloyd Robinson**, giving us an insight into **Speleology** – people who are game enough to explore the cavernous mysteries of the darkened world below the earth's surface. Lloyd will be sharing his experiences with us into the Wild Caves (non-tourist) of Australia. Be there; it should be an enthralling evening.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round.

- Samuel Taylor-Coleridge: 'Kubla Khan' (1816)

Mind in its purest play is like some bat
That beats about in caverns all alone,
Contriving by a kind of senseless wit
Not to conclude against a wall of stone.

- Richard Wilbur: 'Mind' (1956)

MID-WEEK WALK will be on **Wednesday 13th August** along the foreshores of **Tuggerah & Koong-Burry Bays** of Lake Illawarra. Half a dozen Australasian Shovelers were seen in the latter location early last June (see the "back page"). The leader will be **Tom Wylie**. Meet him at **9 am** at the Boat Harbour, near the intersection of Northcliffe Drive and George Street, Berkeley. Parking should be available near the boat ramp on the eastern side of the fish shop.

FIELD OUTING is on **Sunday 17th August** on a property owned by a coal-mining company at **Maddens Plains**. This is a new site for a club field excursion. To get there take the F6 freeway to Bulli Tops. Take the *old* Princes Highway turnoff to Darkes Forest/Helensburgh and proceed north of Boomerang Golf Club. The entrance to the site is approx. 600 metres past the Club on the right/eastern side. Look for the IBOC sign. Under the leadership of **Darryl Goldrick**, we will assemble at **9 am**. Bring morning tea and lunch, plus wear to withstand the westerlies.

COMMITTEE MEETING will be on **Tuesday 19th August** at **7.30 pm** at the home of **Kerri & Alan Lewis** at 14 Tolson Place, Balgownie (Tel. 4285-2736). Please contact a committee member beforehand if you wish (to attend) to have an issue discussed.

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER: Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Monday 25th August**.

A free public lecture will be delivered by **Dr Richard Major**, Research Fellow, Australia Museum, and the topic will be **Welfare or Warfare: What controls the diversity of backyard birds?**

Date: Tuesday 16th September

Venue: UniCentre Function Room 1, University of Wollongong

The evening commences at 6 pm with a poster display and light refreshments, followed by the Official Welcome at 6.30 pm.

[Acknowledgement: Penny Potter & Richard Miller]

The Nature Reserve has been operating since Richard and Pat Jordan started it in 1982, but has incurred financial losses for the last three years. In an effort to keep the centre operating, Birds Australia Committee has proposed a new model to keep costs down: a small management committee to take an active role in the running of the Observatory and a roster of volunteer wardens. They are calling for expressions of interest for committee members and volunteers to take the position of warden for periods of at least a month acting as caretakers.

Apart from that I do not know what the requirements are, but have spoken to a number of people who have performed this task at Gluepot. It is as onerous only as you wish to apply your skills and is always enjoyable. If anyone is interested, then please contact Chris Tzaros on (03) 9882 2622, c.tzaros@birdsaustralia.com.au or myself (the proposed IBOC representative at Barren Grounds) on 4296 2837. Thanks.

The Annual Ground Parrot Census is coming up – on August 10th. For the uninitiated, this is a wonderful, rare opportunity to have a walk(?) through the heath (ie off the tracks) at one of our most striking Nature Reserves.

Barren Grounds Nature Reserve is a stronghold of the Ground Parrot, a species listed as threatened in NSW. Its responses to fire are virtually unknown in NSW, but a big fire in 1983 stimulated a research study – with annual monitoring of the populations of this beautiful bird. The results to date have been unexpected and contradict previous studies in Victoria.

What does monitoring entail? 60-120 volunteers, in a long straight line, 10m apart, ‘strolling’ through the heath, scaring up the birds from an 80 hectare area, and counting them. It will take the morning (9 am till 12.30 pm) of Sunday 10th August. There is a possibility of dropping out halfway through if you are tired or short of time. It is hard work (reasonable level of fitness needed) and a bit prickly (boots, jeans and long-sleeved shirts are the go – gardening gloves are a good idea too). It is much more challenging and picturesque than the City to Surf, and all the competitors have to start and finish at the same time – because they have to keep the line straight! Meet at 9 am at the Barren Grounds picnic area. Bring your picnic lunch and make a day of it.

For further information contact Dr Jack Baker (NPWS): 9585-6660 or Prof. Rob Whelan (UOW): 4221-3555 ext.3530 [Acknowledgement: Richard Miller]

Through the Sydney Olympic Park in association with the Cumberland Bird Observers Club, **Mark Barter**, past Chairman of the Australasian Wader Studies Group & the Asia-Pacific Shorebird Working Group, will deliver the inaugural lecture on the theme **Olympians of the Wetlands: Conserving migratory shorebirds in a resource-hungry world.**

Date: Tuesday 14th October 2003

Venue: Building 4, Newington Armory (sic), Sydney Olympic Park. Entry via Jamieson Street (off Holker St.) Free parking available at Blaxland Common car park.

Time: Gate opens 7 pm for 7.30 pm start. Refreshments provided.

Cost: \$15 (\$12 for concessions). Credit card facilities available.

Registration: Bookings essential & taken from 1st September on 9714-7509. Special prices available for groups of 20 or more. Enquire through the Bookings Coordinator.

Supported by: Australasian Wader Studies group; Southern NSW & ACT Group of Birds Australia; Birding NSW; Hunter Bird Observers Club; & IBOC. [Acknowledgement: Darryl Goldrick]

Guest speaker for the IBOC evening meeting of 14th July was Debbie Saunders, who is the mainland coordinator for the **Swift Parrot National Recovery Program**. This program has been established to help save the endangered Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) and has been going for some years now, since 1995. It receives Commonwealth funding through the Natural Heritage Trust, but is largely administered by the respective State agencies responsible for wildlife management, such as National Parks & Wildlife Service in NSW.

The Swift Parrot is an Australian endemic species, and as such, the National Recovery Program covers the entire species. The Swift Parrot is also recognised as a nationally endangered species: there are only about 2000 individuals or 1000 breeding pairs. The species has an interesting life history, as it is a migratory species, breeding in Tasmania during the summer months, and overwintering on mainland Australia, predominantly in Victoria and south-east South Australia. On the mainland the species is scattered widely, searching for flowering native eucalypts in a wide variety of locations, but in Tasmania the parrot is more consolidated, being mostly on the east coast and around Hobart, with a smaller colony in northern Tasmania.

Debbie spoke about the various problems facing the Swift Parrot, and about her role as one of the national coordinators of the recovery program, trying to saving this beautiful bird. Because the species breeds in Tasmania, but migrates to and spends the winter on the mainland, issues must be addressed in both locations if the species is to survive. On the mainland much of Debbie's time is spent studying, or receiving reports of, the Swift Parrot's feeding ecology. The parrot uses a number of flowering trees, including in our area swamp mahogany, and elsewhere it frequently uses box-ironbark woodland and grassy box woodland. It can also be found in spotted gum forest, red gum forest, red bloodwood woodland, blackbutt and occasionally banksia heath, although this last is usually regarded as a transitory habitat. Swift Parrots feed on nectar, but also important in their diet are lerps, a waxy secretion found on the leaves of some feeding trees, and providing the birds with an important carbohydrate food source.

Conservation threats for the Swift Parrot include habitat loss and habitat fragmentation. While Swift Parrots will use roadside vegetation, vegetation corridors, and even single trees, it is felt that the optimal habitat is larger areas of forest blocks. In common with other endangered and smaller bird species, the Swift Parrot suffers from intimidation from larger and aggressive species, such as wattlebuds and noisy miners. Swift Parrots do frequently associate with lorikeets, and Debbie spent some time pointing out some of the diagnostic differences between Swift Parrots and the lorikeet species, including that Swift Parrot tails are more streamlined, there is a bright red patch under the tail coverts and under the wings, with red on the face around a whitish bill. General plumage is similar to the lorikeet species, being more predominantly green on the back, and yellow-green on the breast. Males are more brightly plumaged than females, and juveniles are duller than either sex.

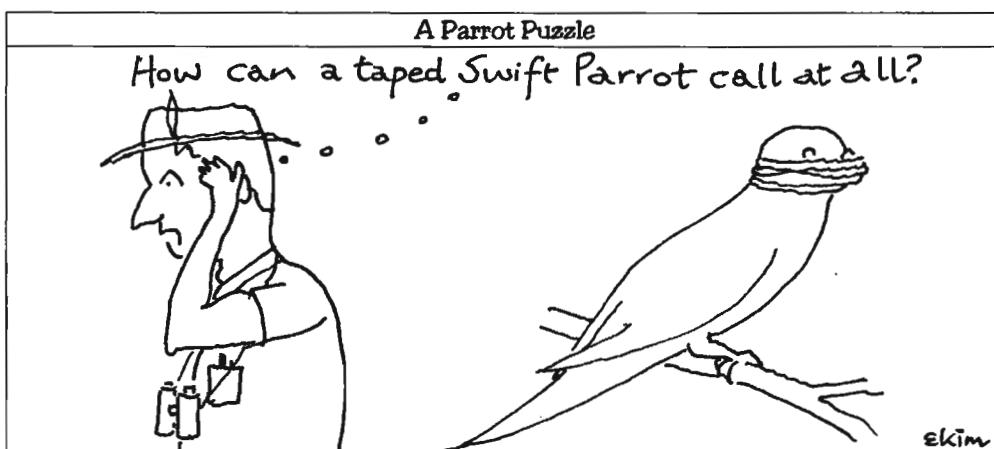
An interesting but unfortunate conservation threat for the Swift Parrot is the danger of collision. The Swift Parrot is aptly named, and flies swiftly, although its speed has not actually been measured by science. It is reputed to fly about 80 km per hour, and can be observed to fly quicker than the lorikeet species. In urban environments, and especially near breeding sites in Hobart, the Swift Parrot is literally in danger of colliding with buildings that contain reflective glass. This does not just stun the bird, for it is flying so fast that both the head and chest make impact, causing broken bones and death to unlucky individuals. With such a small population the number of known fatalities and injuries has a significant impact on the species as a whole, and the Swift Parrot is one of those bird species that WIRES and similar organisations are willing to put in much effort to attempt to return birds to the wild. There is also an effort to plant trees in front of offending buildings, and to tackle the problem of collision in other ways.

With the Swift parrot species on the mainland being so widespread each winter, the data provided by volunteers and amateur birdwatchers is invaluable to adding to the information that wildlife managers know about the species. The recovery program includes two survey periods each winter, one in May and one in August, when volunteers are asked to actively search for Swift Parrots and report on whether any were sighted.

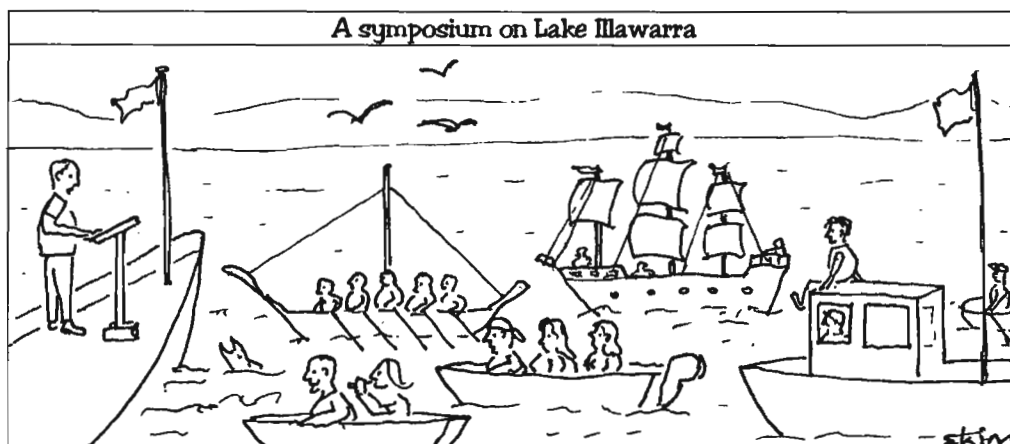
It is believed that Swift Parrots have a high fidelity for sites that they have used for feeding in the past, and absence in one year does not preclude the possible return in future years. One factor making Swift Parrots hard to spot is their habit of normally feeding quietly; however, when they do call they are noticeable. Debbie played the call for us and indicated that while they are normally quiet, she has found they will respond to a taped Swift Parrot call played back.

The next volunteer survey weekend, the 2-3 August 2003, will be over by the time you read this. However, be assured that Debbie is looking to receive information on Swift Parrot sightings at any time. Locally the traditional spot for Swift Parrots is the swamp mahogany forest of Primbee Dunes behind Port Kembla Golf Course, but in 2002 they spent considerable time in the grounds of Wollongong University. Swift Parrots have also been known to frequent suburban gardens on the Central Coast, so if you have the right trees in your backyard and they are flowering, you may receive a visit from this endangered species. If anyone does have information regarding Swift Parrot sightings, Debbie can be reached on freecall no. 1800 66 5766 or email at swiftparrots@yahoo.com.au. IBOC member Chris Brandis is also involved with Swift Parrot surveys in the Wollongong area and can be contacted on 4296-2837.

Thanks again, Debbie for a most interesting and informative talk. May the Swift Parrot Recovery Program succeed in its objectives so that we can all continue to enjoy this beautiful Australian bird.



The Oceans and Coastal Research Centre of the University of Wollongong and the Lake Illawarra Authority are jointly organising a symposium on Lake Illawarra to take place at the University on 13th & 14th November 2003. With assistance from Chris Brandis, Chris Chafer will be delivering a paper at the symposium, and we expect to have further details in a later edition of *IBOC News* when they are to hand.



After an unpromising windy night, the morning of Wednesday 16th July dawned calm and sunny for the mid-week outing. Fifteen birdwatchers, several like myself new members, gathered at the Murphys Road entrance of the Botanic Gardens. Our leader, **Judith Parkinson** introduced new to old members and proceeded to 'lead us up the garden path'. Waterbirds, such as Pacific Black Ducks, Purple Swamphens, Dusky Moorhens, and Eurasian Coots, were in great numbers on the pond and surrounds. As we made our way towards the Exhibition Centre, before the expected rush of school holiday visitors arrived for 10 a.m. activities, we sighted several Rainbow Lorikeets, Red and Little Wattlebirds, and a Musk Lorikeet as well as a large flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos enjoying a sunny spot on the grass. Rabbits were also spotted enjoying the ambience of this pleasant place.

On through the cactus garden and under a patch of tall trees, where a variety of sightings was made along the way –Welcome Swallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Currawong, and Australian Magpie. Then Judith showed us a well constructed bower of a Satin Bowerbird. Next we were off into the wilder sub-tropical rainforest in time to see several small birds twittering above a natural pond. Brown and Yellow Thornbills, Grey Fantails, Eastern Yellow Robin, Silvereve and others could be identified by their sounds by some of the more experienced members. At this point the group divided to take their own path through this part of the gardens. Morning tea was enjoyed by all in the sunshine on the timber stage, which has been constructed between the Botanic Gardens and Gleniffer Brae. The group again divided, with some climbing the grassy hill to Gleniffer Brae, where Judith was able to show us another bower. This one was obviously still in use, as it was surrounded by dark-blue 'trophies' and, while we were there, an impatient male Satin Bowerbird was hopping from branch to branch with yet another blue peg to add to his treasures. Meanwhile Kevin had noticed some busy Spotted Pardalotes in the rainforest and guided us to this place. Our morning finished back in the formal garden, observing more of these tiny, industrious creatures tearing paper-bark from a tree. Forty-four varieties of birds were recorded on this outing. Our thanks, Judith. As we left, several people remarked what a huge asset these gardens are. If you haven't been for a while, it's a great time to get out and explore while they are looking so lush.

Australian Wood Duck	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Rainbow Lorikeet	Red Wattlebird	Grey Butcherbird
Collared Sparrowhawk	Musk Lorikeet	Little Wattlebird	Australian Magpie
Purple Swamphen	Australian King-Parrot	Noisy Miner	Pied Currawong
Dusky Moorhen	Crimson Rosella	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Eurasian Coot	Eastern Rosella	Eastern Spinebill	Satin Bowerbird
Masked Lapwing	Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Yellow Robin	Welcome Swallow
Silver Gull	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Whipbird	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Spotted Turtle-Dove	Spotted Pardalote	Golden Whistler	Silvereve
Crested Pigeon	White-browed Scrubwren	Magpie-lark	Common Starling
Galah	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail	Common Myna

[Val also submitted the cinema leaflet for the film *Travelling Birds*. Among the 'stars' named are puffins in Iceland, bald eagles in the Grand Canyon, snow geese across New York City, turtle doves in Mali, ibis in Vietnam, cranes in Japan, penguins in Antarctica, macaws in the Amazon, Canadian geese across Monument Valley, pelicans in Senegal & India, albatross in New Zealand, sparrows in Montana, ducks & white storks in France, the humble pigeon from the Pyrenees, flamingos in Kenya, condors in Argentina & Chile, and swans in the Camargue. A cast of thousands, one could say.]

BINOCULARS GOING BEGGING

Kerri Lewis received a phone call from member, Helen Youll, currently living in Queensland and wanting to sell her binoculars: Jason Permafocuss 2000 – 8x40 field 6 degrees. If interested, contact Helen for price and further details on 07-5541-4152.

Perhaps it was a lack of attention to the weather forecast, which showed that although the view from one's bedroom window may have been cold, wet and dismal, a fine day could be expected further south. Or perhaps it was memories of the last joint meeting with the Shoalhaven Group a year ago, involving the forced march to Coppercup Point and the inadvertent imprisonment of some. Whatever the reason, IBOC members remained bedbound in droves and a mere three turned up on Sunday 20th July to augment the eight hardy Shoalhaven locals who assembled at Nowra for the Yalwal field outing. (I included Bob Ashford in the latter group although he does of course have a foot in both camps. He also has a Yurt, which I'm sure he would be pleased to tell you about; this was of interest to me as my brother has one...)

Our first port of call en route, 9 km westwards, was Bamarang Dam, the water supply for Nowra. From the water's edge Musk Ducks, Australasian Grebes and Black Swans were visible, but the more promising reed-fringed areas were off-limits. Apparently the Shoalhaven Group (through Peter) can access the rest of the dam foreshores, and this area would certainly be worth a return visit. Water-birds were generally sparse, and hoped-for Great Crested Grebes were conspicuous by their absence. Our walking commenced with a circumnavigation of the adjacent Bamarang Filtration Plant perimeter fence, an easy walk proving much more enjoyable than it might sound. Surrounded by woodland comprising a variety of Eucalypts, including Spotted Gum, the area revealed a range of woodland birds in spite of the still-low temperature and overcast sky. At the furthest point we were surprised by an excellent clifftop view of the Shoalhaven River, with Boyd's property *Bundanon* on the north bank. The cliff had the additional advantage of providing the elevation required to observe birds in the canopy without dislocating neck vertebrae. Those willing to go to the edge were rewarded with the sighting of a pair of Rockwarblers at the cliffs' base.

After completing the circuit, morning tea was taken by the Dam, and the IBOC ranks were swelled with the arrival of the Coytes. A blue hue started appearing in the sky and, with the Great Crested Grebe finally turning up, a good day was underway. We departed for Yalwal, which is 15 km further west via an unsealed road. The final kilometre offers magnificent views into the Budderoo National Park and descends sharply into the valley through which flows Yalwal Creek. We parked at the picnic area, where Peter remained as security guard on account of his bad leg and of reported car theft in the vicinity. The rest of us, led by Dallas of the Shoalhaven Group, commenced the main walk, which consisted of following the path along the banks of Yalwal Creek; within a few hundred metres a sign informed us that we were entering the Ettrema Wilderness Area. With the sun shining, the creek babbling and surrounded by a wide variety of natural riparian and woodland vegetation, this was an idyllic location. A wide variety of fungi attracted Bob's attention. And there were birds... 33 species in all, which, when added to the 13 other species seen at Bamarang, gave a respectable day's total of 46. Penny and I had to leave early on account of family commitments, and sadly missed the Diamond Firetails and Azure Kingfisher. However, on returning to the car park, I noticed a 'small brown bird' in a nearby tree; engaging binoculars my attempt to get a closer look failed, but instead I found myself looking at a radiant Rose Robin! From all accounts the walk was enjoyed by all with no victims of exhaustion falling by the wayside and no-one being detained against their will. Many thanks are due to the Shoalhaven Group, Dallas and Peter in particular, for hosting a most enjoyable day.

Bamarang (*=also at Yalwal)		Yalwal	
Black Swan	Brown Thornbill*	Pacific Black Duck	Rose Robin
Musk Duck	Red Wattlebird	Wonga Pigeon <i>H</i>	Eastern Yellow Robin
Australian Wood Duck	Lewin's Honeyeater*	Australian King-Parrot	Eastern Whipbird
White-faced Heron	Yellow-faced Honeyeater*	Crimson Rosella	Varied Sittella
Australasian Grebe	White Eared Honeyeater*	Fan-tailed Cuckoo <i>H</i>	Grey Butcherbird <i>H</i>
Great Crested Grebe	Golden Whistler*	Azure Kingfisher	Pied Currawong
Little Pied Cormorant	Grey Shrike-thrush*	Superb Fairy-wren	Satin Bowerbird
Laughing Kookaburra*	Grey Fantail*	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Red-browed Finch
Superb Lyrebird <i>H</i>	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike <i>H</i>	Yellow Thornbill	Diamond Firetail (2)
White-throated Treecreeper*	Australian Magpie	Striated Thornbill	Silvereye
Spotted Pardalote*	Australian Raven*	Yellow-tufted H' eater	
Rockwarbler	Welcome Swallow	Jacky Winter	<i>H</i> = heard

[On 23rd June this year ABC TV's *Australian Story* featured 'A Bird in the Hand' and focused on the work of Lance Ferris and Marny Bonner, particularly in their rescue endeavours of injured Australian Pelicans, and the formation of the Australian Seabird Rescue organisation. Chris Brandis suggested ASR's internet information, which runs into three pages, be included in *IBOC News*, so here it is in condensed form because of space restrictions. Readers can obtain further details from website www.seabirdrescue.com or by contacting ASR on 6628-1096 or PO Box 733, Alstonville, NSW 2477. – Ed.]



Based in Ballina on the far north coast of NSW, Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR) comprises a team of specialists, focussing on the rescue and rehabilitation of seabirds, shorebirds and marine turtles. **Mission Statement:** "Living together—reducing the human impact on marine wildlife."

OBJECTIVES

- To raise awareness of the effects of gross pollutants and unsafe fishing practices on coastal wildlife, with a specific focus on coastal birds.
- To reduce the suffering and rate of injury by pro-active public relations and specifically training wildlife rescue personnel in rescue and rehabilitation techniques.

It started in 1992, when Ballina resident, Lance Ferris, noticed a pelican with a fish-hook in its leg. He captured the bird, removed the hook and treated the injury. Seeing another pelican injured with a fish-hook later the same day, Lance's curiosity prompted to survey Ballina's pelican population. He borrowed a boat and counted 108 pelicans – 37 were injured.

Shocked by what he'd seen, Lance gathered several friends to ascertain the extent of fishing tackle injuries caused to pelicans in nearby estuaries to the north and south of Ballina. This soon extended to the entire north coast (as far south as Newcastle) and north to the Sunshine coast. It was found that in every major estuary, an average of 20% of pelicans were injured or entangled.

Alleviating the suffering was the first priority. Lance embarked on a mission to rescue the pelicans, studying them for many hours in order to develop effective catching techniques.

In the first year of operation 100 pelicans were rescued in the Richmond River, Ballina – from a resident population of 108.

To raise public awareness, Lance embarked on an education campaign via the media, public speaking and school talks, warning of the dangers to wildlife caused by unattended set lines, discarded fishing tackle, plastic bags and other pollutants. Community and volunteer support rallied and a cohesive rescue and research group was formed.

Financial assistance from the community enabled the establishment of suitable rehabilitation facilities at Lance's home on the outskirts of Ballina. Within six months of catching that first pelican, enough funds were gathered to purchase an aluminium runabout 25 hp dinghy.

As rescue and rehabilitation techniques were refined, they were documented into Australia's first *'Handbook for the Rescue and Rehabilitation of the Australian Pelican'*, for distribution to wildlife rescue volunteers interested in rescuing injured pelicans.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- **Rescue and rehabilitation** – the Ballina team responds weekly to an average of 40 calls per week concerning injured wildlife. Lance Ferris is dedicated to rescue and rehabilitation on a full time basis. The Ballina team alone has rescued over 600 pelicans throughout every major estuary between Sydney and the Queensland border, and more than 60 species of water birds, as well as land-based birds affected by fishing line entanglement.

- **Raising awareness** – hundreds of TV, radio and print media stories to raise awareness of the issues, including seven national television programmes. Just prior to the Sydney Olympics, ASR featured internationally on the BBC's 'Animal Hospital' with Rolf Harris. The Far North Coast community is also kept informed of ASR's adventures in the Saturday edition of the regional newspaper, *The Northern Star* (circ. 22,000), as well as frequent TV news stories.
- **Environmental Education / Direct Threat Abatement:** Lance has personally addressed approximately 16,000 people throughout the north coast through regular demand for public speaking by service clubs, as well as more than 8,000 primary and secondary school students.
- **Expanding rescue activities** – Our *Handbook for the Rescue & Rehabilitation of the Australian Pelican*, has been distributed to over 400 wildlife carers through 16 workshops conducted for coastal wildlife groups at every major estuary along 1,000 kms of coast, between Nowra in the south and Noosa in the north, including National Parks, Sea World and Currumbin Sanctuary personnel. Copies have also been requested by wildlife rescue personnel in the USA.
- **Assisting local authorities:** Our regular patrols are critical in alerting relevant authorities to problems, enabling rapid deployment of direct threat abatement.
- **Gross pollution reduction:** Following five years of lobbying by ASR, the NSW Parliament introduced an amendment to litter legislation (2001) to ban the mass release of helium balloons, the first Australian State to do so, and an important precedent for reducing pollution threats to marine wildlife.
- **Tangible results:** ASR's relentless local media campaign regarding the threats of gross pollutants to wildlife on the north coast has effected a 60% reduction of injuries to seabirds and shorebirds on the Far North Coast caused by accidental hooking by anglers, and discarded fishing line used by land-based birds for nesting material.
- **Documenting research:** Realising that authorities were not aware of the problems, a comprehensive report summarizing a decade of ASR's findings, *The Impact of Recreational Fishing on Estuarine Birdlife in Central and North Coast Districts of New South Wales*, was compiled by Lance and his daughter, Rochelle Ferris, BSc (Marine Biology). It has been favourably received by the Minister for Fisheries, executive officers of NSW Fisheries and Recfish Australia. The federal branch of the Amateur Fishing Association (AFFA) used the report in the development of the "Amateur Fishing Code of Conduct", published by AFFA and circulated widely.

GOALS As the recreational pressures on the coast steadily increase, so too does the inevitable clash between people and wildlife. The intense use of coastal resources by resident populations and tourists alike is clearly having adverse affects on coastal wildlife – unattended injuries inflict cruel suffering. However, ASR has proven that, with ongoing community awareness and trained personnel, the threats and injuries to native coastal wildlife can be promptly addressed, and gross pollution reduced.

Wildlife Education / Resource Centre: Ballina Shire Council has recently donated a house for removal plus an acre of land on the Pacific Highway entering Ballina from the north. The high profile, prominent location of the property represents an excellent opportunity to attract tourists as well as provide the community, especially school students, with an interactive educational and resource centre. Development plans for the "Coastcare Centre" include:

- highlighting the dynamics of the coastal environment;
- illustrating the ecology of, and threats to coastal birdlife;
- demonstrating ways to protect marine wildlife;
- providing resource packages for students and environmental educators; and
- establishing a gift shop to help fund a high professional standard of all resources and volunteers.

AUSTRALIAN SEABIRD RESCUE Inc.

"Volunteers preserving our Heritage"

Send your records to: email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Freckled Duck	5	2-Jun	Warrawong	wetland	CJC
Freckled Duck	2	17-Jun	Warrawong	wetland	BA
Australasian Shoveler	6	8-Jun	Koong-burry Bay (lake)	lacustral	DW
Hoary-headed Grebe	35	9-Jun	Swan Lake	wetland	KM
Great Crested Grebe	6	28-Jun	Swan Lake	lake	KM
Darter	1	8-Jun	Fred Finch Park	riparian	DW
Little Egret	1	4-Jun	Tom Thumb Lagoon	wetland	DW
Little Egret	1	6-Jun	Puckey's Reserve	wetland	DW
Eastern Reef Egret	1	28-Jun	Berrara	rocky shore	KM
Striated Heron	1	8-Jun	Fred Finch Park	riparian	DW
Royal Spoonbill	13	28-Jun	Jamberoo Rd., Albion Park		BA
Osprey	1	30-Jun	Lake Conjola	overhead	CJC
Whistling Kite	2	1-Jun	Bellambi Lagoon	overhead	CJC
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	22-Jun	Windang	overhead	CJC
Grey Goshawk	1	24-Jun	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Grey Goshawk	1	28-Jun	Mt. Ousley/Picton Rd.	overhead	JBI
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	4-Jun	Crooked River (Hwy)	overhead	BA
Little Eagle	1	27-Jun	Gerringong	rural	DG
Peregrine Falcon	1	1-Jun	Berry Hospital	overhead	BA
Peregrine Falcon	2	6-Jun	East Corrimal	hind dune forest	DW
Peregrine Falcon	1	17-Jun	Minnamurra	overhead	BA
Buff-banded Rail	1	16-Jun	Wollongong Uni	wetland	GB
Spotless Crake	1	28-Jun	Tallawarra ash ponds	wetland	IBOC
Pied Oystercatcher	5	8-Jun	Gerroa	beach	BA
White-headed Pigeon	16	13-Jun	Jamberoo	urban	BH
White-headed Pigeon	3	16-Jun	Tindall's Lane, nth Berry	overhead	CJC
White-headed Pigeon	4	21-Jun	Thirroul	garden	RM
Crested Pigeon	20	15-Jun	Jamberoo	roadside	KM
Bar-shouldered Dove	6	8-Jun	Bass Point	woodland	CJC
Bar-shouldered Dove	4	9-Jun	Windang	hind dune forest	DW
Topknot Pigeon	50+	15-Jun	below Red Rock trig	forest	IBOC
Gang-gang Cockatoo	25+	25-Jun	Corrimal	urban	JDe
Musk Lorikeet	100+	4-Jun	Warrawong	overhead	CJC
Little Lorikeet	4	3-Jun	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Red-rumped Parrot	3	5-Jun	Wollongong Golf Course	playing field	ME
Orange-bellied Parrot	1imm	26-30/6	Bass Point	grassland	GS
Powerful Owl	1	10-Jun	Wollongong Botanical Gardens	rainforest	MJ,JCl
Azure Kingfisher	1	all Jun	Fred Finch Park	riparian	DW
Azure Kingfisher	1	11-Jun	Puckey's Reserve	riparian	DW
Southern Emu-wren	2	28-Jun	Bellambi Lagoon	reedland	JW
Eastern Bristlebird	1	15-Jun	Red Rock trig	woodland	IBOC
Tawny-crowned H/eater	1	28-Jun	Yallah substation	woodland	IBOC
Flame Robin	2	30-May	Bents Basin Rd.	woodland	NJR
Spangled Drongo	1	5-Jun	Wollongong	urban	CB
Spangled Drongo	1	28-Jun	Windang	dune forest	DW
Richard's Pipit	11	17-Jun	Warrawong	field	BA
Beautiful Firetail	1	25-Jun	upper Wallandoola Ck.	woodland	CJC

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; JBI - John Blomstedt; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; JCl - Jean Clarke; JC - Josh Coyte; JDe - John Demol; ME - Mary Eskdale; DG - Darryl Goldrick; BH - Betty Hudson; MJ - Michael Jarman; RM - Richard Miller; KM - Kevin Mills; NJR - Neil & Judy Russell; GS - Gary Southwell; DW - David Winterbottom; JW - Joan Wylie.

Comment: The Orange-bellied Parrot was photographed, but its authenticity is still to be determined. The 11 Richard's Pipit is an unusual aggregation for this species. The Osprey has been observed at Lake Conjola several times now; will they become resident? The Tawny-crowned Honeyeater is rarely found on the coastal plain; this is only the second record.



I.B.O.C. NEWS

Issue No. 263

September 2003

The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: *to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them*

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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EDITORIAL

This opener is in lieu of the 'President's Column'. Unfortunately, **Darryl Goldrick** has been unable to write his usual piece on account of ill-health and the loss of his front porch (no reference made to his waistline) in the gales of Sunday 24th August. We wish Darryl and his porch a speedy resurrection. How did you fare in that most dramatic of weather conditions? And how well did our avian friends, especially the arboreal ones, survive the buffeting? So sad to see so many stately trees keeled over. Notwithstanding the declaration of a natural disaster, can we now anticipate a panic reaction and witchhunt with more trees decimated at the hands of the chainsaw?

Please note that this month there are two major changes to the timing of the **mid-week walk** and the **main field outing**.

October Camp at Lake Cargelligo on 18th – 25th October: Any late applicants should book accommodation at the local caravan park without delay and also notify **Darryl Goldrick** (4296-1316).

Club T-shirts: A reminder from **Kerri Lewis** that these are available with the club logo for \$30 each, and for an extra dollar each you can obtain them with polo neck and sleeves. Sizes range from medium to extra-large. If you want to sport your new forest green attire for the October camp, then contact Kerri on 4285-2736. Also, Kerri will receive any special orders and take on board any suggestions as to alternative colours.

Travelling Birds film: According to the 'Film Illawarra' website, this film will be screening at Wollongong Greater Union from 28th August and Warrawong Hoyts/Gala from 4th September. Members are encouraged to see this fascinating film and may want to take advantage of reduced prices through matinee screenings, or a group booking of more than 10, or through shopper docketts, or masquerading as a sexagenarian-plus. Don't leave it too late as the film may quickly be withdrawn if there's insufficient public interest.

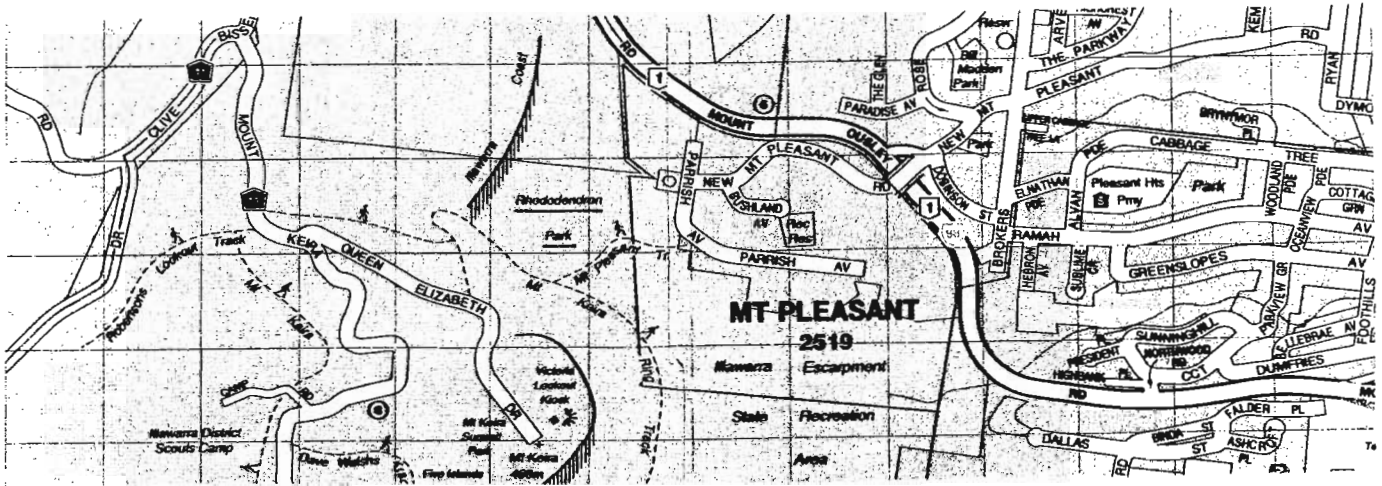
-ooOoo-

FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events. 3...Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture 2003 Program. 4...Great Spiel – August Club Meeting Talk. 4...Wild Australia Website. 5...Observers of the Berkeley-Hooka Point Walk. 6...Maddens Plains Outing. 7. Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos' Friend & Feral Bees' Foe. 8...Unusual Records: July 2003.

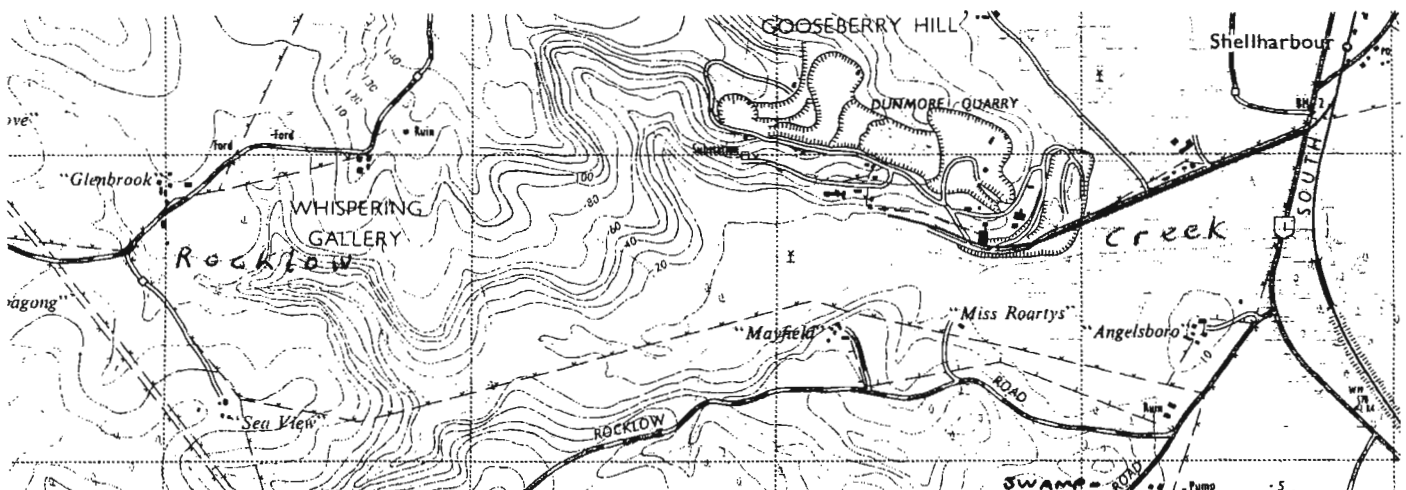
FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 8th September** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at 7.30 pm. It will be **Members' Night**, when, you, the members, are given a chance to present your own ornithological thoughts and/or doings. This could be a slide presentation, a song and a dance, anecdotal stories, travelogues, or presentations. All members are encouraged to participate. If you would like to be one of the presenters, please contact **Bruce O'Brien**, who will be co-ordinating the evening, on 4262-7529.

MID-WEEK WALK will be on **TUESDAY 16th September** through the **Rhododendron Park**. Meet at 8.30 am at the entrance to the park (which closes at 12 noon) in Parrish Avenue, Mount Pleasant (see the UBD map extract below). Our contact person for the walk is **Joan Wylie** (4284-2051).



FIELD OUTING is on **Saturday 20th September** to **Whispering Gallery and Rocklow Creek, Dunmore**. Meet the leader, **John Blomstedt**, at **Dunmore Railway Station** at 8 am for 8.30 am departure. The main visit will be on a private 'hidden valley' along Rocklow Creek. Morning tea and lunch will be taken at the cars, which can be taken down into the valley, weather permitting. If too wet, only 4WD vehicles will be taken down. Otherwise, tea and lunch will be carried. There are toilets at the rest areas. The extract below of a 1977 CMA Albion Park topographic map will give walkers an idea of the location of what promises to be an interesting outing.



COMMITTEE MEETING will be on **Tuesday 16th September** at 7.30 pm at the home of **Norma Almond** at 2 Shoobert Crescent, Keiraville (Tel. 4229-8612). Please contact a committee member beforehand if you wish (to attend) to have an issue discussed.

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER: With the October long weekend in mind, the deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Friday 26th September**.

DATE: Tuesday, 16th September 2003



**VENUE: UniCentre, Building 11
Function Room 1, Level 2
University of Wollongong**

The year's Lecture marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture Series. This year's function, therefore, attempts to link current work with activities undertaken by Allan Sefton.

- 6.00 pm Poster Display on Environmental Activities at the University of Wollongong
(Light refreshments available)
- 6.30 pm Welcome by Professor Margaret Sheil
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of Wollongong
- 6.35 pm A Legacy of Allan Sefton's activities – the Southern Oceans Seabird Study
Association. Speaker: *Mr Lindsay Smith*
- 6.55 pm **Presentation of prizes:**
- 7.10 pm Break
- 7.30 pm Introduction of the 2003 Allan Sefton Memorial Lecturer by
Lord Mayor Alex Darling, Wollongong City Council

2003 Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture
Speaker: *Dr Richard Major*
Research Fellow, Australian Museum

Topic: *Welfare or Warfare: What controls the diversity of backyard birds*

Birds are the most conspicuous components of the wildlife that share our suburbs. In some gardens they occur in large numbers, more numerous than in native habitats, indicating that this largely artificial habitat still provides abundant resources. However, the diversity of birds in urban areas is generally low, with a few species dominating. In this year's Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture, Dr Richard Major, a research scientist at the Australian Museum, will talk about a number of research projects that have helped shed light on the factors which control the diversity of the birds that occupy the back yards of Wollongong and other Australian cities. He will talk about the common or garden Currawong and its taste for berries and birds eggs, the dark side of the Miner, and the much-maligned Myna. He will talk from a small bird's perspective about the day to day trials of urban living including health, housing, security and getting meals on the table. The research results of students from the University of Wollongong, and the observations of local residents will feature in his presentation.



- 8.30 pm Vote of thanks by
Sharon Makin, Vice President Sustainability, BHP Steel.

For further information and RSVP (by 9 September 2003) contact Sandra Quin on (02) 4221 4134. Environmental Science

A report on the talk given by **Lloyd Robinson**, speleologist, at the club meeting on 11th August.

Speleology (henceforth to be called "caving" because of my problems with Spell-eology") is not something I have ever seriously considered trying because of suspected claustrophobia and, more importantly, the danger involved. On the latter score, however, despite 40 years of caving every weekend in Victoria, apart from bruising of their members(!), it appears that Lloyd Robinson's group has only ever had one serious injury, whereas three of them have been killed on the roads!

Described by Darryl as a "wild cave-dweller (or was that 'wild-cave dweller?)" for 35 years or more" and confessing to having eaten black swan (quite brave considering the talk was to a group of bird-lovers), Lloyd Robinson exhibited quite a healthy pallor and coiffured beard during his presentation. "Wild caves" to all us surface-dwellers means caves which are not accessible to the public and, from the host of spectacular slides we were treated to, there seems to be an abundant amount of these in Australia.

Lloyd's interest in caving developed from having been thrown into the mines as a young lad by his father to keep him out of the Second World War. There he has stayed ever since, surfacing briefly to marry the lovely Dorothy (Miss Illawarra 1962), who featured on some of his slides, which were absolutely delightful. "Artwork is a plus of caving", he told us, referring to the Aboriginal markings he has discovered at entrances; but, further back in the darkest recesses where no native dared to go, Lloyd has created his own photographic artwork.

From W.A. (Augusta, Wave Rock, Eucla, Mt. Barnett Station & the Nullarbor Plain), from N.T. (Coolong Island and the Lost City) to the Warrumbungles, to name but a few, we feasted on the sumptuous forms and colours of surface and underground Australia. Skeletal ghost gums like markers of burial sites on red hills, belying the presence of life in the form of deceptively blurry, furry-looking spinifex. Below, fig tap-roots running to the core of the earth as straight and streamlined as on an engineer's blueprint. Straw showers, the first stage in the formation of a stalactite, the crystal, veiled entrance leading on to Aladdin's treasure trove and truly, each image seemed to reveal a precious gem. My thanks to Al-Lloyd-din (sorry!) for providing an artist's portfolio of nature's beauty.

WILD ILLAWARRA WEB SITE - WHERE to LOOK for BIRDS

Chris CHAFER

Due to a major problem with the Ezynet ISP, the *Wild Illawarra* website has been moved. So please redirect your browsers to the new location: www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer

This free site now describes and illustrates about 415 species, with their historical and present distribution in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and adjacent tablelands. I have also added a new illustrated section on shorebird identification, which I prepared for shorebird identification courses that I run, and the soon to be released Geosciences Australia estuarine website.

I have also started to add more birding sites and bushwalks, and there are now 79 locations detailed, and this number will increase as I prepare material. You may find these useful for directing visitors to the region, or exploring places you've never been to.

The information on birds on the website is slowly being updated in preparation for the second edition of the printed *Handbook*, which will be ready mid-next year.

Enjoy and let me know of any errors, corrections, constructive criticism or broken links - my email address is on the back page of this issue.



On a sunny winter day (13th August) 14 IBOC members gathered at the Berkeley Boat Harbour at the top end of Lake Illawarra. Our erstwhile leader, Tom Wylie Esq. outlined the walk plan and we set off around a nearby man-made inlet off the lake. Jude soon provided light relief with a good imitation of a John Cleese 'silly walk'. She repeatedly leapt into the air while pushing one foot through long grass. It turned out that she was detaching an unwanted deposit from her shoe. But birds. There were birds aplenty. A lovely Darter posed on a fence: as good as any model. The nice thing about seabirds, at least for a novice observer, is that they so frequently stand, or swim slowly. You don't have to find them in the trees.

Joan pointed out some Hardheads. "They've got white eyes." Even with binoculars I couldn't see their eyes, but Alan and Ann, in their green Sevenoaks Group birdwatching tops, came to the rescue with a tripod-mounted 'scope. Yes, Hardheads have white eyes! Then Joan pointed: "That's a Great Crested Grebe. It's probably in the breeding season." "How can you tell?" "Their feathers are more prominent." "As though it's been to the hairdresser's?" "Eh, yes." Soon after, by way of comparison, the smaller Australasian Grebe paddled into view.

Peter set me right about the Welcome Swallows darting around, and Terri showed the difference between the Dusky Moorhens and the Purple Swampheens. As if on cue, one of the latter stepped up and posed before some long grass.

Then to Hooka Point for morning tea. During it, we managed to get Jude to talk about being an industrial chemist, then unemployed, until she eventually got a job she loved at the Wollongong Botanic Gardens.

Amongst the waterbirds in the lake were several Black Swans: so graceful and 'dead easy' to see. Later, in Morcombe's *Field Guide*, it was nice to read that our Black Swans are smaller and gentler than their introduced Mute cousins. I smiled too when Morcombe wrote, "Probably the only occasion that a Black Swan would present an identification difficulty would be at a great distance... against [the] sun".

Walking by the lake brought back memories. Tera and Jude both grew up nearby. Catching and eating prawns was great. For Tera this was sometimes from a boat with family members. For Jude it was with a drag or scoop net. She enthused: "I loved it, standing bare-footed in the lake with my scoop net and a light. My grandmother, my mother and me; we all loved catching and eating prawns."

Val remembered teaching at several primary schools around the lake. Later, after university, she became an ESL teacher, and, later again, had trips to Yugoslavia, before it exploded into war, and to Vietnam. "I wish I had gone sooner. There is nothing like seeing a country from a student's point of view." Barbara grew up in Hull, UK, in a fishing village, but now lives by Lake Illawarra. She said they are so lucky, having the lake and the bush nearby.

Tom had recently canoed in the lake and caught four fish. From a high observation tower he and Peter, who compiled our bird list of 52 species, showed us numerous birds and pointed to the remains of a tank trap, built to protect the Steelworks in WW2. Interestingly, in the *Advertiser* of that day there was an article about the old tank traps and the huge concrete blocks placed around the lake to 'block' enemies. All the locals remembered the story of an old dance hall that was built on an island in the lake. And of a local rogue bull that was caught and dispatched to Coventry on one of the islands. Neil talked a little about his jobs in the mines. He is still called on to help out in stores. Terri, getting us back on track, pointed to some Eastern Rosellas. We have frequent visits from the Crimsons at our place. It was good to see their Eastern cousins. I felt there should have been some Arnott's SAOs to pass around. Joan was pleased to point out a Rose Robin to Robyn. Nice!

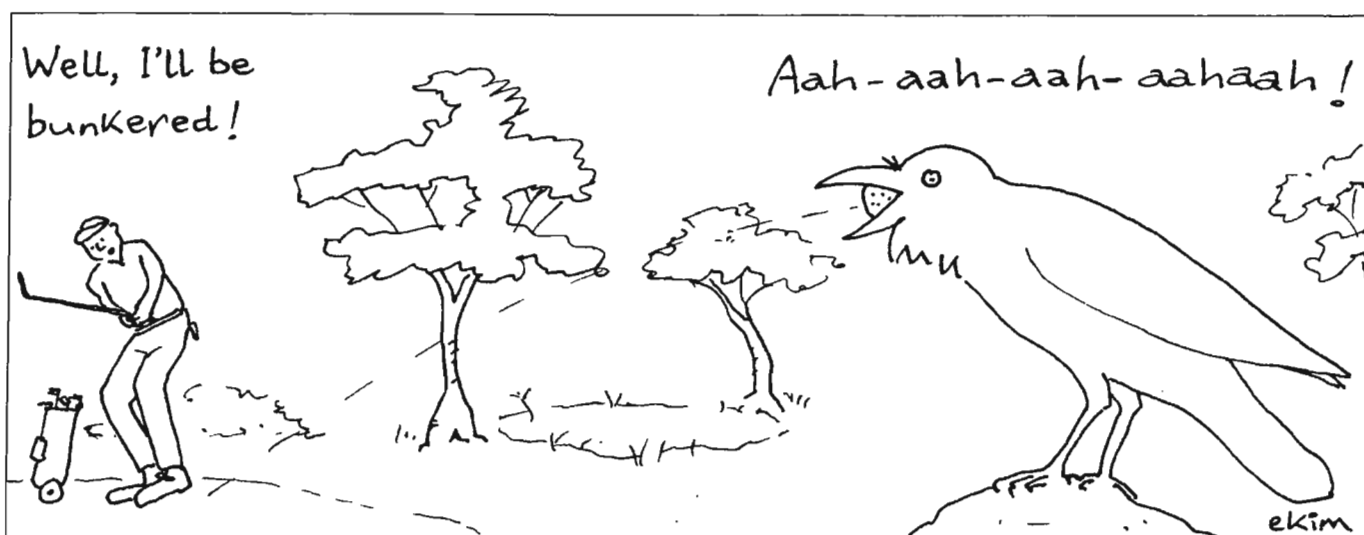
Back at the cars we watched Joan and Terri on either side of some long grass, apparently staring at each other. Was this binoculars at fifty paces? In fact these sharp-eyed ladies had each seen a lovely little Golden-headed Cisticola in the grass. We hastened down to see. A great way to finish. Special thanks to Tom, our happy, helpful and full of wry fun leader, and to the other experienced birdwatchers, Joan, Terri, Jude, Barbara, Val and Peter for being so patient, kind and helpful to the less experienced. It was a great day.



On Sunday 17th August seventeen members met at 9 o'clock just inside the entry gates to Sada Services' old coal mine property about half a kilometre north of Boomerang Golf Course along the Princes Highway. This was a new walk for the club, thanks to Darryl Goldrick's negotiations. Unfortunately, Darryl, who had reccied the area, couldn't attend owing to ill-health, and so the navigation fell to Roger Bogaert and Kevin McGregor. The weather was perfect, with bright sunshine and barely a trace of the customary westerly for this time of year, which made bird identification easy, apart from the raptors that appeared from the western and eastern skies. Brown Thornbills and New Holland Honeyeaters were by far the most common species in this part of Maddens Plains. The majority of the 31 species recorded during the five-hour period came before lunch, which was taken on the rock bed of the creek that flows down from Coalcliff Dam to join Stanwell Creek in the thickly vegetated deep gully. A flock of eight feeding Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos more than compensated for the paucity of bird-life during the steady ascent via a different track that mainly follows the powerline back to the parked cars.

The walk was filled with contrasts. Long stretches of minimal bird sightings were punctuated with spots where there was much activity, particularly among the passerines. Despite the prevalence of the drab coalwash surface, there were blazes of colour in the vegetation: a mix of low-lying flowers and the tall Gynea lilies; a mass of russet reeds that concealed a watercourse; and the vibrant green regrowth shooting forth from the trunks and branches blackened from the last bushfire. Here the continual drone of the freeway traffic; there the tranquillity. And, to offset the eyesore of wrecked vehicles, there were the splendid views to take in – across to the Hindu Temple, Bald Hill and the Tasman Sea. Along the way two golf-balls were found, presumed to have been raven-borne from the nearby course. Perhaps this bird deserves to be included in golfing terminology along with the albatross, birdie and eagle.

Australasian Grebe	White-throated Treecreeper	Little Wattlebird	Magpie-lark
Little Pied Cormorant	Variiegated Fairy-wren	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Australian Pelican	Spotted Pardalote	New Holland Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Raven
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Brown Gerygone	Eastern Yellow Robin	Red-browed Finch
Crimson Rosella	Brown Thornbill	Eastern Whipbird	Welcome Swallow
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Yellow Thornbill	Golden Whistler	Silveryeye
Laughing Kookaburra	Striated Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush	



The voice of the Australian Raven has been described as follows: a far-carrying, high-pitched, childlike wailing; throaty rattles; and a series of slow notes, descending and fading to a deep, muffled groan, gargle or gurgle, with a strangled, dying ending. Could a misplaced golf-ball be the cause of this bird's characteristic call?



How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!

- Isaac Watts: *Divine Songs for Children* (1715)



Cockatoo Care

After watching the 7th August edition of ABC TV's *Catalyst*, I doubt that Ron Johnstone would totally agree with this Wattsonian view when beholding the bellicose behaviour of European honeybees towards black-cockatoos in south-west Australia. Ron is the WA Museum Curator of Ornithology and in his long-term study of these birds has been concerned about the decline in their populations, particularly the subspecies Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus* [literally 'covered bill'] *banksii* [an error in Christidis & Boles' *Taxonomy*] *naso*), which was the focus of the television documentary. In his study area Ron has recorded 76 individual birds, of which there have been two casualties to the feral bees among the six breeding pairs during the past five years. And so Ron has been declaring war on this particular insect, which was introduced in the 1820s.

European bees have developed a strong liking for canola, which has become a prominent farmland crop in the district. The nutrient level of the flowers gives the bees a high energy boost and makes them excited. They leave the hives in swarms, heading for the eucalypt forests, where they become wild and take over the tree hollows that the black-cockatoos generally use. Other usurpers are the Australian Shelduck and Wood Duck. The favoured nest-sites of the Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo are the marri (also called widow-maker), jarrah and karri. These tall trees, in addition to the sheoak and snottygobble, also provide food in the form of seeds. In the breeding season a mated pair lays only one egg, rarely two, and this is incubated by the female alone for a month. Then for a similar length of time the hatchling is defenceless, especially to the bees by way of being stung to death or suffocated under the mass of the swarm.

War is being waged on three fronts by Ron and others to protect the endangered FRTBC. The bees are being killed off by insecticides which don't harm the birds. The queen bees are held captive in the hives by a narrow wired grid, designed by beekeeper Alan Baker, which allows free movement of the workers, and thus the formation of swarms is prevented. Imitation nest hollows are being constructed for the birds out of plastic piping and lined with peat moss. Their installation high in the trees is possible with the use of a cherry picker loaned by such organisations as the Water Corporation, which also sponsors the Cockatoo Care Program (its logo appears above) and the website www.cockatoocare.com. A wide range of individuals and community groups have offered their services for the black-cockatoo cause. Like the story of Lance Ferris and the plight of the Australian Pelican, as given on the televised *Australian Story* and last month's *IBOC News*, Ron Johnstone's work is an inspiration and demonstrates what can be achieved to protect our cherished bird-life through the development of one person's vision and passion into a full-scale collaborative effort. Is there any similar cause to be fought for on our local front?

Send your records to: email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Hoary-headed Grebe	90	27-Jul	Swan Lake	wetland	KM
Great Crested Grebe	1	20-Jul	Bamerang Dam	lake	BA
Striated Heron	1	20-Jul	Berry Canal (ferry terminal)	mudflat	BA
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	16-Jul	Terragong Swamp	paddock pond	KM
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	26-Jul	Jamberoo	paddock pond	CJC
Swamp Harrier	1	12-Jul	Cudmirrah	estuary	KM
Swamp Harrier	1	26-Jul	Korongulla Swamp	wetland	CJC
Brown Goshawk	1	16May	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	11-Jul	Cordeaux Colliery	woodland	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	4-Jul	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Collared Sparrowhawk	2	13-Jul	Albion Park Rail	urban	PF
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	2-Jul	Dunmore	overhead	JB1
Little Eagle	1	21-Jul	Figtree	overhead	KM
Brown Falcon	2	7-Jul	Oak Flats interchange	roadside	JC
Australian Hobby	1	3-Jul	Yallah substation	woodland	JC
Peregrine Falcon	2	14-Jul	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Buff-banded Rail	1	22-Jul	University of Wollongong	pond	MP
Eurasian Coot	5000+	27-Jul	Swan Lake	wetland	KM
Painted Button-quail	2	10-Jul	Upper Flying Fox No.3 Ck.	rail embankm't	CJC
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	31-Jul	Bass Point	rocky shore	NTW
White-headed Pigeon	3	20-Jul	Terara	rural	BA
Crested Pigeon	9	25-Jul	Kiama south	urban	KM
Bar-shouldered Dove	3	5-Jul	Windang	dune forest	DW
Bar-shouldered Dove	3	29-Jul	Killalea State Park	woodland	TE
Long-billed Corella	24	20-Jul	Greenwell Point	urban	BA
Little Corella	4	20-Jul	Greenwell Point	urban	BA
Musk Lorikeet	20	20-Jul	Nowra Cemetery	woodland	BA
Red-rumped Parrot	3	7-Jul	JJ Kelly Park, Coniston	field	DW
Red-rumped Parrot	1	29-Jul	McCabe Park, Wollongong	parkland	AF
Barking Owl	1	11/7	Puckey's Estate	Woodland	AF
Azure Kingfisher	2	6-Jul	Fred Finch Park, Berkeley	riverine	DW
Azure Kingfisher	1	20-Jul	Yalwal	riverine	BA
Rockwarbler	2	17-Jul	Fitzroy Falls	woodland	BA
Rockwarbler	2	20-Jul	Bamerang	woodland	BA
White-plumed Honeyeater	4+	20-Jul	Illawarra Yacht Club	urban	CJC
Brown-headed Honeyeater	11+	17-Jul	Fitzroy Falls	woodland	BA
Crescent Honeyeater	3	17-Jul	Fitzroy Falls	forest	BA
Crescent Honeyeater	2	29-Jul	Killalea State Park	banksia	TE
White-cheeked Honeyeater	1	22-Jul	Vincentia west	woodland	KM
Scarlet Robin	1	18-Jul	Russell Vale Golf Course	parkland	IM
Rose Robin	1	22-Jul	W'gong Botanical Gardens	rainforest	AF
Rose Robin	1	26-Jul	Minnamurra Rainforest	rainforest	CJC
Varied Sittella	6	27-Jul	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
Crested Shrike-tit	1	27-Jul	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
Spangled Drongo	1	5-28Jul	Windang	dune forest	DW
Grey Currawong	2	11-Jul	Cordeaux Dam Rd.	woodland	CJC
Diamond Firetail	2	20-Jul	Yalwal	woodland	BA
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	50+	19-Jul	Barrack Point STP	grassland	TE
Bassian Thrush	1	29-Jul	Killalea State Park	woodland	TE
Common Blackbird	1	22-Jul	Mt. Keira Ring Track	lantana	AF

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; JB1 - John Blomstedt; CJC - Chris Chafer; JC - Josh Coyte; TE - Terry Edwell; PF - Peter Fackander; AF - Alison Foley; RM - Richard Miller; IM - Ian McKinlay; KM - Kevin Mills; MP - Martin Potter; DW - David Winterbottom; NTW - Neil & Tea Wheway.

Comment: The large numbers of Coot were estimated between 5,000 and 10,000, an impressive and unprecedented number. The Barking Owl is a rare resident of the Illawarra, not often encountered on the coastal plain. The Mannikins were a great find and this is a new location. Crescent Honeyeater has not previously been reported from Killalea State Park. Painted Button -quail are now rare in the region.



I.B.O.C. NEWS

Issue No. 264

October 2003

The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Darryl GOLDRICK

A very warm welcome to our newest members, **Fay Mulhall** (Moss Vale) and **Chris Bellamy** (North Nowra). I trust you'll enjoy your membership and are able to join in many of our club activities despite your residency outside the Illawarra – I hope the distance is not too great an impediment.

Just a friendly reminder that meeting 'suppers' have been a bit lean of late, so I encourage members to bring along a plate so that everyone is able to partake in your tasty morsels. I'm not endowed with any supernatural powers that can replicate the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

Don't forget that there will be an **October meeting** (see overleaf) despite the time of the camp. We have two very special and interesting guest speakers – I look forward to a good attendance.

The **AGM** will take place at the **November meeting (10th)** and all committee positions are declared vacant. The nomination form is included in this newsletter and **nominations** need to be filled in and endorsed by a current financial member and submitted to the Secretary, preferably prior to the meeting but no later than 7.30 pm on the night of the AGM.

Due to personal reasons I will not be seeking re-election either as **President** or Committee member for 2004, and everyone needs to seriously consider the filling of this vacancy. It is critical that the club has someone who represents the 'face' of this organization. The position has, and will continue to be, greatly supported by an active and enthusiastic committee.

What a fabulous documentary was *Travelling Birds* —I hope everyone took the opportunity to see it at the cinema whilst it was showing in Wollongong.

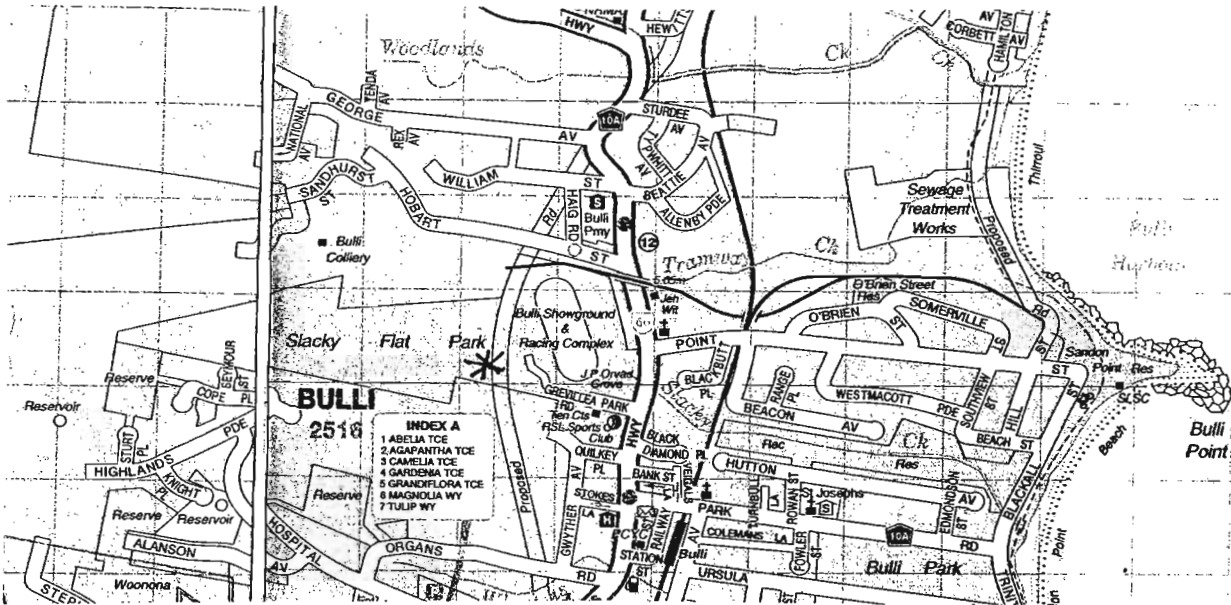
By way of advance notice (full details will be in the Nov newsletter), the **November midweek walk** will be to **Jerrara Dam** (Jamberoo area) and the monthly walk will be to **Shoalhaven Heads/Comerong Island**.

-ooOOoo-

FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events. 3&4...Sydney Olympic Park Bird Week. 5...Rhododendron Park Mid-Week Walk. 5...Scavenger-crested Cockatoo. 6...Field Trip to Rocklow Creek, Dunmore. 7...Birds around Berry in October. 8. Lives of Birds in Good Hands: Richard Major. 9&10...Unusual Records: August 2003.

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

MID-WEEK WALK will be on **Wednesday 8th October** through the **Bulli Grevillea Park**. Meet at the car park and gates at **8.30 am**. (See the UBD map extract below). **Kevin McGregor (4271-3762)** will hold the key for us to enter. Please note that this walk precedes the meeting night this month in order to avoid congestion with the October camp. Consequently, there is no field outing.



CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 13th October** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. It will feature two speakers: **Terry Outtrim**, who will talk about the **Birds of Prey of the South Coast**, in particular the Peregrine Falcon; and **Geoff Boxsall**, whose topic is the **Birds of Jamberoo**, focusing on those that nest on/at the local golf course. Please bring along some comestibles to "tea off".

COMMITTEE MEETING: There will be no committee meeting in October, so any member with a burning issue will have to hang fire. The next one is scheduled for **Tuesday 18th November** at **7.30 pm** at the home of **Joan & Tom Wylie** at 4 Daphne Street, Bellambi (Tel. 4284-2051).

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER: The deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Tuesday 28th October**. The position of newsletter editor will be vacant as from 1st January 2004. This role within the club should prove to be a creative, scientific and technical challenge for a member with computer and word-processing skills. Be ready to throw your hat in the ring before/at the AGM.

NPA BIODIVERSITY SURVEY

Noel Ryan advises that the Macarthur Branch of the National Parks Association of NSW will be conducting a biodiversity survey over the long October weekend **4th – 6th** on land owned by the Department of Planning between Campbelltown and Appin, that forms a link between the Georges and Nepean Rivers and is considered environmentally important. Accommodation, mostly in the form of camping, will be at the Cataract Scout Camp off the Bulli-Appin Road. Cost: about \$30 per head. Self-catering, but fruit and vegies available.

IBOC members who are interested in assisting in the survey should contact the Branch President, Beth Mitchie (4625-1583; michie@acenet.com.au), who will be looking after the flora side of things. Mammals will be the domain of Robert Close; fish and other aquatics Andrew Lo; and birds Michael Paul. Specialists in the fields of herpetology, 'batology' and entomology are needed. There could be some night spotlighting. Further information about this State organisation can be gleaned from website <http://www.npansw.org.au>.

How to get there

Newington Armory, Sydney Olympic Park.
Entry via Jamieson Street (off Holker Street).

Parking

Free parking available at Blaxland Common car park. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Newington Armory

The natural and cultural significance of Newington Armory will be the focus of conservation, education, research, arts, interpretation and community access programs. These programs will help us to acknowledge and understand the significance of this site from a range of perspectives: its important Aboriginal associations; its colonial history as part of the original 1807 land grant to John Blaxland; its naval and industrial past; and its ecological significance as a site featuring a variety of rare and important species of flora and fauna.

These programs for Bird Week have been developed, through the Memorandum Of Understanding with Birds Australia, to promote Sydney Olympic Park, Birds Australia and other bird clubs.

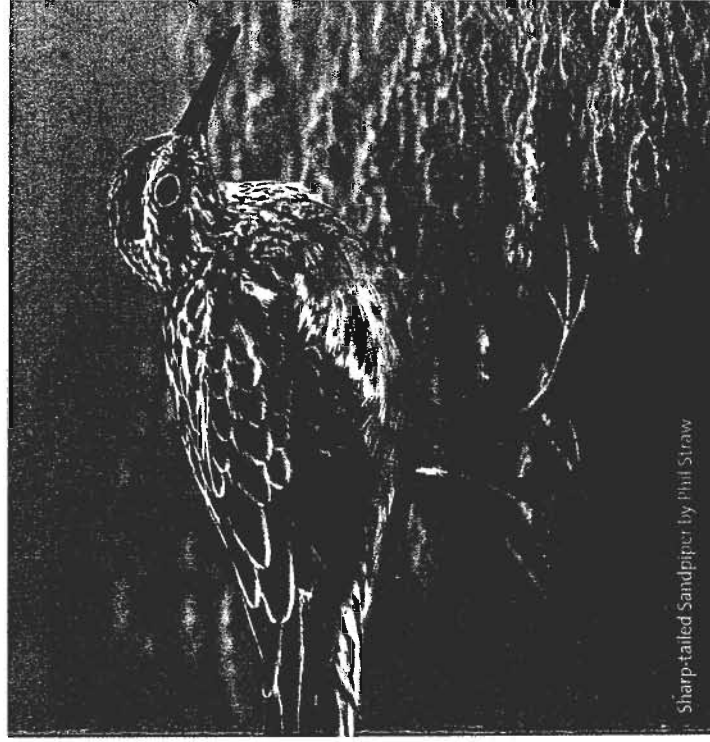
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NSW Wader Study Group



- Cumberland Bird Observers Club
- NSW Wader Study Group
- Australasian Wader Studies Group
- Southern NSW & ACT Group of Birds Australia
- Birding NSW
- Hunter Bird Observers Club
- Illawarra Bird Observers Club



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper by Phil Straw



Bar-tailed Godwit by Norio Kawana

Phone the Bookings Coordinator during business hours on

T: (02) 9714 7509 F: (02) 9714 7559

Or visit www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au

For more information visit
www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au

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Welcome to the Sydney Olympic Park
Sydney Olympic Park
Sydney Olympic Park

Acknowledgement: Richard Miller

The Inaugural Annual Bird Week Lecture

Sydney Olympic Park
in association with
Cumberland Bird Observers Club
presents

'Olympians of the Wetlands' Conserving migratory shorebirds in a resource-hungry world

By Mark Barter, past Chairman of the Australasian Wader Studies Group and the Asia-Pacific Shorebird Working Group.

Tuesday 14 October 2003

Venue Building 4, Newington Armory, Sydney Olympic Park

Time Gate opens at 7:00pm for 7:30pm start

Cost Adult \$15.00, Concession \$12.00
(Credit card facilities available)
Refreshments provided

Bookings Bookings are essential to reserve a seat.
Please call 9714 7509 from from 1 September.

Attention Activities Officers: Special prices available for groups of 20 or more. Please contact the Bookings Coordinator for more details on 9714 7509.

Parkland Tours

Special Bird Week Calendar

All tours start at 9:00am. A free coffee and tea will be provided. All tours are subject to weather conditions. If a tour is cancelled due to weather, a refund will be given. For more information, please contact the Bookings Coordinator on 9714 7509.

Date: Tuesday 14 October, 2003
Venue: Sydney Olympic Park

Birds At Dawn

Soak in the soft morning sun as shorebirds arrive at dawn. You will be able to see some of the birds before they have dispersed within the parkland.

Guided tour Binoculars provided
Tea or coffee included (Binoculars optional \$5.50 surcharge)

Time 7:30am - 9:30am
Cost \$7.00 per person (with bikes \$2.00)
Group rates \$15.00 per person (with bikes \$2.00)

Birds Of The Wetlands

A walk through the wetlands of Sydney Olympic Park. The quiet backwaters of the parkland at Sydney Olympic Park.

Guided tour Binoculars provided
Tea or coffee and water supplied

Time 10:00am - 12:00pm
Cost \$7.00 per person (group rates \$15.00 per person)

Birds At Twilight

Witness the magical twilight hours of the Sydney Olympic Park wetlands. Birds are beginning to roost and settling down to dusk in the natural parkland.

Guided tour Binoculars provided
Tea or coffee included

Time 5:30pm - 7:30pm
Cost \$7.00 per person (group rates \$15.00 per person)

All prices are inclusive of GST.

Migratory Shorebirds in the Field

Saturday 18 October

Venue Newington Armory, Sydney Olympic Park

The NSW Wader Study Group will hold a free workshop and field day looking at waders. The program will start promptly at 9:00am but coffee and tea are available from 8:30am to allow people to settle in and have a chance to meet other birders and the experts.

- What are shorebirds anyway?
- Where do migratory species come from?
- How do you tell the difference between those so-called difficult species?
- Tips of field identification and note taking.

Bring your own lunch and enjoy a picnic in the park.

Participants will be divided into groups to visit four shorebird sites in the area and given the opportunity to see up to ten species of migratory and non-migratory waders.

Walks and Talks Program

The Walks and Talks Program is a community education program for those who wish to discover the natural areas of Sydney Olympic Park, to develop skills and knowledge and learn about the wildlife and habitats of Sydney Olympic Parklands and beyond.

Sunday 26 October

Venue Bicentennial Park Visitor Centre

Free Talk Phil Straw will talk about migratory shorebirds and the fantastic journey they make to reach the parklands.

Time 2:00 - 3:00pm

Visit the Exhibition of works from the Natural
History Illustration Workshops



On a sunny, breezy morning's walk on 16th September last, 15 members recorded 36 bird species in the gardens and up the slopes, including (for some) the Rainforest Nature Walk with two lookouts affording fine views across to Wollongong Harbour. Hopes of glimpsing the Australian Brush-turkey and White-headed Pigeon were not fulfilled. The park looked fine with the various flower colours and different shades of greenery; however, it was sad to read a letter which appeared in the *Illawarra Mercury* two days later about damage done by vandals. One of Wollongong's beauty spots, its setting was a splendid start to the celebration of Carol's birthday. Like herself, the park needs protecting!

Australian Wood Duck	Laughing Kookaburra	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Pacific Black Duck	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Raven
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Spotted Pardalote	Rose Robin	Green Catbird
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Satin Bowerbird
Wonga Pigeon	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Whipbird	Red-browed Finch
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Brown Gerygone	Golden Whistler	Welcome Swallow
Australian King-Parrot	Brown Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Crimson Rosella	Red Wattlebird	Grey Fantail	Silvereye
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Little Wattlebird	Australian Magpie	Bassian Thrush

Gardeners fed up with vandals

THE Illawarra Rhododendron Gardens are maintained by a very small group of volunteers.

We find it very distressing to arrive on working mornings to discover seats smashed and thrown into the lake, rock walls destroyed, rocks in the lake, rocks and bricks jammed down into the chimneys of the barbecues which makes them unusable, sprinkler systems all turned on and tanks emptied, water to the toilets turned off, and signs identifying trees and shrubs twisted and broken.

A small mower and trailer used for mulching and moving plants was pushed into the lake and destroyed.

Why is there so much satisfaction in destroying what has been built and maintained for the enjoyment of the public?

- The Volunteers,
The Illawarra Rhododendron Gardens,
Mt Pleasant.



Packing up for the day

SCAVENGER-CRESTED COCKATOO

It's a mid-September late Sunday afternoon when I make a house call in Stanwell Park. The street is lined with garbage bins on the eve of waste collection day. One large bin has a house brick on top of the lid. As I pull up, a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo alights on the bin and 'noses' the brick forwards off the bin with just four shoves. Then quick as a flash it repositions itself to the front edge of the bin, grabs hold of the lid in its beak and lifts it up. At the third attempt it flips the lid back in a 270° arc, to expose the householder's leftovers. The cocky then switches to the hinge end of the bin and delves in one corner, pulling out shreds of polythene and paper and tossing them into the air. Reluctantly it takes flight as I get out of the car. I do the Good Samaritan bit by closing the bin up and replacing the brick.

The resident two houses up tells me this scavenging has become a common feature in the neighbourhood. Elsewhere it's usually the work of Silver Gulls and other people's dogs. Sure enough, as I walk back to the car, I see the not-so-White Cockatoo has returned to its treasure chest with fellow onlookers closeby: brick lying in the gutter, lid hanging down, more garbage contents scattered on the ground, and a right-angled bread crust with a smidgen of marge astride the rim of the bin. The birds take off before I do, no doubt soon to return to continue the forage. I imagine the householder will be flipping their lid again over the cocky's (only one? I wonder) flipping their lid open.

On 20th September twenty-two members met at Dunmore Railway station, anticipating the trip into a new location: the upper reaches of **Rocklow Creek**. Long-time members, **John and Monica Blomstedt** had secured access for IBOC into the Shellharbour Bowmen's property, and we were keen to explore this hidden valley on a spectacular spring morning. Promptly at 8.30am we headed off and a short distance later turned up Rocklow Road. We stopped after a kilometre to view a wetland and sample the ridge-top woodland. On the wetland we found nesting Black-winged Stilts, and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Black-fronted Dotterel, Great Egret, White-necked Heron, Royal Spoonbill, and a few duck. Overhead we were treated to spectacular views of the resident Little Eagle soaring in the gentle breeze. After another short drive we entered our destination and stopped to explore a large paddock bordered by dry rainforest and eucalypt woodland. Here we found a number of Green Catbirds, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Yellow Thornbill, Mistletoebird, and a suite of common passerines. A Red-bellied Black Snake was also observed. Overhead we were treated to a courting display by a pair of Brown Goshawk.

We then headed to the main area of the archery club, which was well set out with a spacious grassed picnic area, complete with amenities. After morning tea we split up into groups and explored the valley area along the numerous trails used by the bowmen. An amazing variety of habitat assured us of a steady stream of new species revealing themselves, including literally dozens of Grey Fantails which were clearly on their way back to southern Australia, more Cuckoo-Doves and Catbirds (10+), Eastern Rosella, Large-billed Scrubwren, Topknot Pigeon (50+), Variegated Fairy-wren, Bar-shouldered Dove (10+), King-Parrot, Golden Whistler, Rose Robin, and a nesting Brown Thornbill. Along the creek bed we found numerous fossil molluscs, several Eastern Water Skinks and a host of native galaxia fish. It was along the creek that we found several Wonga Pigeon, which was most unexpected, as this is several kilometres east of their nearest known haunts on Stockyard Mountain.

After lunch we headed up the valley's northern slope, through a vine forest, over an overgrown bullock trail and onto the ridge top. The fig trees we encountered here had some spectacularly contorted buttresses that spilt fluidly over the jagged basalt outcrops. Once on the ridge top, we walked west for several hundred metres before coming to a population of rock orchids lining a waterfall that plummeted 70m to the creek below. This vantage point bestowed panoramic views of the majestic Whispering Gallery, a rainforest-clad valley clothed with a plethora of fig trees, tamarinds, plum pines, giant stinging trees, cabbage palms and other rainforest delights. We sat here for some time admiring the wonder of nature's creation, and appreciative of our opportunity to view this superb vista. Oh, we saw some birds too: Olive-backed Oriole, Grey Goshawk, more Bar-shouldered Dove and Wedge-tailed Eagle, to name a few. We also found a strikingly marked orange and black banded caterpillar.

All too soon it was time to leave this magic spot, one we can hopefully visit again next year, but not before Crested Shrike-tit and a covey of Brown Quail had been observed by those who had not climbed the valley rim. A most excellent adventure, and once again I'd like to thank John and Monica for organising and leading us into this hidden jewel of the Illawarra. A total of 68 species were observed, which isn't bad for a single location.

Brown Quail	Black-winged Stilt	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Fantail
Australian Wood Duck	Black-fronted Dotterel	White-browed Scrubwren	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Masked Lapwing	Large-billed Scrubwren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian Pelican	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Brown Gerygone	Olive-backed Oriole
White-faced Heron	Crested Pigeon	Brown Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
White-necked Heron	Bar-shouldered Dove	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Great Egret	Wonga Pigeon	Little Wattlebird	Pied Currawong
Cattle Egret	Topknot Pigeon	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Royal Spoonbill	Galah	Eastern Spinebill	Green Catbird
Black-shouldered Kite	Long-billed Corella	Rose Robin	Satin Bowerbird
Brown Goshawk	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Eastern Yellow Robin	Red-browed Finch
Grey Goshawk	Australian King-Parrot	Eastern Whipbird	European Goldfinch
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Crimson Rosella	Crested Shrike-tit	Mistletoebird
Little Eagle	Eastern Rosella	Golden Whistler	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Brown Falcon	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Rufous Whistler	Silvereye
Nankeen Kestrel	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Starling
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Variegated Wren	Magpie-lark	Common Myna

In March this year 'Column 8' of the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a group of dedicated birdwatchers held a black tie dinner (wearing 'penguin suits'?) on the beach at Coffs Harbour to mark the departure of thousands of Muttonbirds after a successful breeding season. The Muttonbirds (Wedge-tailed Shearwaters) were leaving to spend the winter 'cruising' the Pacific Ocean, and the birdwatchers were there to celebrate their success and wish them 'bon voyage'. What fun and what a splendid gesture from the birdwatchers who know how risky breeding and migration is for the birds.

The devastating winds that killed so many trees around Berry in late August and early September will make it tough for many of our returning visitors to find safe shelter and breeding sites. Add to their woes the continuing lack of useful rain, and all the life it generates and supports, it might mean that for some this will be their last journey. So, inspired by the birders from Coffs, I am determined that our summer visitors will receive the warmest of welcomes. I've just got to organise a venue...

Among the birds that I am keen to see again are some of the cuckoos. They arrive around Berry during October, having flown from New Guinea and as far north as the Celebes. Two are small birds - the Shining Bronze-Cuckoo and Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo. Both have a bronze-green metallic sheen on their backs, wings and tails which makes them very handsome birds indeed when the sun catches them. The Shining Bronze-Cuckoo frequents wetter areas and lays its eggs in the nests of Brown Warblers while the Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo prefers drier country and typically parasitises the Superb Fairy-wren. Interestingly, recent research has shown that Fairy-wrens are learning to change the colour of their mainly white eggs so that the similar Horsfield's egg is easier to spot and abandon. Frustratingly, the same research also shows that the Horsfield's are quickly learning to rematch the colour of their eggs with those of the Fairy-Wrens!

Two other larger and very much more obvious cuckoos visit Berry for the summer. The first is the Koel, the male a glossy blue-black and the female a striking mixture of brown-bronze bars and dots. A pair of Koels regularly haunts Broughton Mill Creek, and you've probably heard them many times. Their most common call is a loud, strident and very repetitive 'koo-well', often heard at night when even the keenest birdwatcher, in a sleep-deprived nightmare, will seriously consider taking up a shotgun!

The second, and largest, cuckoo in the area is the Channel-billed Cuckoo. This grey and white bird has a huge pale-yellow bill, which I find reminiscent of a Hornbill or Toucan! It parasitises Pied Currawongs, and I'm delighted! In winter Currawongs hunt together in aggressive flocks, much like packs of bloodthirsty feral dogs, and are major predators of small birds. I shall be raising a glass to the Channel-billed!

And I shall raise a glass also to the shorebirds returning from a successful breeding season in the Arctic. Bar-tailed Godwits, Greenshanks, Red Knots, maybe even Ruddy Turnstones, Marsh Sandpipers and perhaps a Terek Sandpiper. They'll be returning to fatten up, take a break, perhaps enjoy Les Crosby's Shoalhaven Jazz Festival, or simply relax - on a beach.

On a beach. Comerong Island at Shoalhaven Heads. Now there's a great spot for a 'Welcome Back' dinner. Can anyone lend me a black tie, please?

[Bob writes a regular column for *The Town Crier*, Berry's local newspaper. Without being too serious, his intention is really to generate awareness and interest in those intrigued by the birds they see around them, but who are not committed birders. Bob is pleased to say it's attracting some converts! - Ed.]

Lives of birds in good hands



Attractive design: University of Wollongong student Trish Densmore and Australian Museum director Richard Major investigate a bowerbird's colourful structure, made to attract females.
Picture: HANK VAN STUIVENBERG

By DANIELLE WOOLAGE

INSPIRED by a childhood filled with safari documentaries and the adventures of undersea explorer Jacques Cousteau, Richard Major decided to pursue a science career.

Since there were no lions in Australia, following in the famous French film-maker's footsteps seemed like the next best thing.

But asthma meant Dr Major could not get a scuba diver's licence, so the focus of his studies shifted to the land.

Now a senior research scientist in terrestrial ecology at the Australian Museum, his passion is birds, particularly small birds.

Dr Major is the guest speaker at tonight's Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture at the University of Wollongong.

The lecture is held annually in honour of former steelworker and conservationist Allan Sefton.

Mr Sefton, an amateur botanist, died in 1989, just days before he was due to receive an honorary PhD from the university.

Dr Major's lecture, entitled *Welfare or warfare: what controls the diversity of backyard birds, looks at how feeding birds or growing certain plants contributes to the welfare but can often promote warfare between species.*

Dr Major, who is based in Coalcliff, conducts much of his ornithology observations from his back door, the escarpment one of his most valuable research resources.

In his spare time he enjoys "sitting down looking at the escarpment, noticing the birds around me".

"There are lots of birds in the bush and I am always finding new birds in the garden," he said.

It was his backyard observations which led to two very successful research projects with the

Trish takes them under her wing

TRISH Densmore's laboratory has fantastic views and lots of wildlife.

Since February, the University of Wollongong environmental science student has spent her time trekking through bush across 20 southern Sydney and Illawarra national parks.

All in the name of scientific research.

The fourth-year honours student is researching the impact of people on bird life in recreational areas, including camping and picnic areas.

"In general (humans) have a big impact on habitat," Ms Densmore said.

"Feeding birds or leaving

Australian Museum and Birds Australia.

The first was the Australian Museum nest test, where Dr Major and his colleagues constructed 2000 artificial birds' nests to find out what was preying on the eggs of small birds in gardens.

In 2000 a similar project, Birds in Backyards, funded by Birds Australia, began in the Illawarra, Sydney and Central Coast.

"The goal of the museum is to do research to help us understand fauna, but also to be able to communicate that to the general community," Dr Major said.

"Birds are fantastic for that because they are very visible. One of the best ways to get people involved in the environment is showing them what is in their backyard."

Now in its third year, the Birds in Backyards project is a major research area for environmental science students, particularly at the University of Wollongong.

rubbish in the park that birds can access can increase populations of pest birds or birds that predate native birds."

She said better planning of recreational areas and the education of those who used them was essential to safeguard habitats.

The 21-year-old is the only University of Wollongong environmental science student researching birds this year.

Students' work will be on display at tonight's Allan Sefton memorial lecture.

Australian Museum birds expert Dr Richard Major will be guest speaker at the lecture.

The survey has found Wollongong has the highest number of small birds in backyards.

"Small birds are the ones which tend to be declining in urban areas," Dr Major said.

"Birds like the blue wren, Eastern spinebill, New Holland honeyeater and willy-wagtail are all holding on strong down in Wollongong.

"Whereas, in places like Sydney's northern suburbs that take pride in being leafy areas, those small birds are particularly rare."

The Birds in Backyards project has found that noisy miners chased small birds out of their backyard habitat and native gardens attract native birds.

The Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture will begin at 6pm with a poster display by University of Wollongong environmental science students. The lecture will be held in the UniCentre, Building 11, Function Room 1.

ILLAWARRA MERCURY, Tuesday September 16, 2003

Send your records to: email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Black Swan	500+	10-Aug	Shoalhaven Heads	estuary	DM
Hoary-headed Grebe	10+	15-Aug	Bendella Pondage	lake	BA
Great Crested Grebe	2	15-Aug	Bendella Pondage	lake	BA
Eastern Reef Egret	1	30-Aug	Monument Beach	rocky shore	KM
Straw-necked Ibis	300+	10-Aug	Bomaderry	paddock	DM
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	11-Aug	Jamberoo	wetland	BH
Osprey	1	23-Aug	Berrara	overhead	KM
Swamp Harrier	1	10-Aug	Shoalhaven Heads	overhead	DM
Swamp Harrier	1	18-Aug	Bolong	paddock	BA
Brown Goshawk	2	3-Aug	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Brown Goshawk	1	10-Aug	Shoalhaven Heads	overhead	DM
Brown Goshawk	1	25-Aug	Excelsior Mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	11-Aug	Windang	dune woodland	DW
Grey Goshawk	1	17-Aug	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	2-Aug	Mt. Keira/Picton Rd	woodland	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	2-Aug	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	15-Aug	Welby	forest	KM
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	3-Aug	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	5-Aug	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	10-Aug	Barren Grounds NR	overhead	MPP
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	15-Aug	Budgong	overhead	BA
Little Eagle	1	15-Aug	Coomonderry Swamp	overhead	BA
Australian Hobby	1	3-Aug	Centenary Estate, Albion Park	urban	JC
Peregrine Falcon	2	3-Aug	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Peregrine Falcon	1	4-Aug	Albion Park Rail	urban	PF
Peregrine Falcon	1	15-Aug	Budgong	overhead	BA
Pied Oystercatcher	10	15-Aug	Gerroa	beach	BA
Double-banded Plover	80+	17-Aug	Comerong Island	sand flats	BA, DM
Gull-billed Tern	2	10-Aug	Comerong Island	sand flats	DM
White-headed Pigeon	3	2-Aug	Balgownie	garden	TE
White-headed Pigeon	2	18-Aug	Bulli	garden	RT
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	1	6-Aug	Ben's Walk, Nowra	forest	SE
Emerald Dove	1	29-Aug	Foxground	forest	RS
Common Bronzewing	3	18-Aug	Martins Ck., Nattai catchment	woodland	CJC
Bar-shouldered Dove	3	3-Aug	East Corrimal	dune woodland	DW
Bar-shouldered Dove	4	11-Aug	Windang	dune woodland	DW
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	24-Aug	Puckey's Reserve	woodland	DW
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	30-Aug	Bellambi Lagoon	dune woodland	TJW
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	3-Aug	Bulli	overhead	RT
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	28-Aug	Bulli (Highlands Pde)	overhead	RT
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	30-Aug	Cudmirrah	casuarinas	KM
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	160+	3-Aug	Wattamolla, Royal NP	overhead	RM
Gang-gang Cockatoo	20+	29-Aug	Balgownie	garden	AL
Long-billed Corella	30+	15-Aug	Bolong	paddock	BA
Little Corella	70+	15-Aug	Bolong	paddock	BA
Powerful Owl	1	25-Aug	Excelsior Mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Azure Kingfisher	1	6-Aug	Ben's Walk, Nowra	riverine	SE
Azure Kingfisher	1	7-Aug	Fred Finch Park, Berkeley	creek	DW
Azure Kingfisher	1	10-Aug	Blue Angle Creek, Gerroa	riparian	MJ
Azure Kingfisher	1	11-Aug	Hooka Creek, Berkeley	riparian	TW
Brown Treecreeper	2	31-Aug	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Rockwarbler	2	14-Aug	upper Wongawilli Creek	woodland	CJC
Rockwarbler	2	15-Aug	Bomaderry Creek	woodland	BA
Rockwarbler	2	18-Aug	Sheys Ck., Thirlmere	woodland	CJC
Large-billed Scrubwren	4	6-Aug	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Large-billed Scrubwren	1	14-Aug	Fitzroy Falls	forest	KM
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	4	18-Aug	Martin's Ck., Nattai catchment	woodland	CJC
White-plumed Honeyeater	3	7-Aug	Shellharbour Square	parkland	KM
White-plumed Honeyeater	3	9-Aug	McCabe Park, Wollongong	parkland	CJC
White-plumed Honeyeater	2	10-Aug	Berkeley shopping centre	urban	CJC

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
White-plumed Honeyeater	5	14-Aug	Warrawong	urban	CJC
Brown-headed Honeyeater	5	18-Aug	Fitzroy Falls	woodland	BA
Crescent Honeyeater	1	8-Aug	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
White-cheeked Honeyeater	1	3-Aug	Tramway Ck., Sandon Point	woodland	IM
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	4	21-Aug	Woronora catchment, Helensburgh	woodland	CJC
White-fronted Chat	20	10-Aug	Comerong Island	dune	DM
Scarlet Robin	1	2-Aug	Wollongong Botanical Gardens	garden	IM
Scarlet Robin	3	8-Aug	Penrose Sate Forest	woodland	CJC
Scarlet Robin	1	30-Aug	Cudmirrah	woodland	KM
Scarlet Robin	4	31-Aug	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Scarlet Robin	1	31-Aug	Bamarang filtration plant	woodland	MPP
Flame Robin	2	31-Aug	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Rose Robin	5	3-Aug	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Rose Robin	1	10-Aug	Fred Finch Park, Berkeley	riparian	DW
Rose Robin	1	15-Aug	Jacks Corner Rd., Bendella	forest	BA
Rose Robin	1	22-Aug	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	18-Aug	Martin's Ck., Nattai catchment	woodland	CJC
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	31-Aug	upper Longacre Ck. (Belanglo)	woodland	CJC
Varied Sittella	4	18-Aug	Fitzroy Falls	woodland	BA
Spangled Drongo	1	16-Aug	Primbee golf course	parkland	ME
Spangled Drongo	1	30-Aug	Berkeley High School	parkland	AL
Figbird	5	9-Aug	McCabe Park, Wollongong	parkland	CJC
Black-faced Woodswallow	2	18-Aug	Martin's Ck., Nattai catchment	woodland	CJC
Dusky Woodswallow	5	16-Aug	Kangaroo Valley	rural	BA
Pied Butcherbird	1	21-Aug	Woronora catchment, Helensburgh	woodland	CJC
Grey Currawong	1	11-Aug	Penrose	roadside	KM
Grey Currawong	1	18-Aug	Martins Ck., Nattai catchment	woodland	CJC
Grey Currawong	2	28-Aug	Cordeaux Dam Rd.	woodland	CJC
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	18	30-Aug	Bellambi Lagoon	dune edge	TJW
Tree Martin	30+	9-Aug	Comerong Island	dune	CJC
Bassian Thrush	1	6-Aug	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Bassian Thrush	1	10-Aug	Coachwood Park	garden	DP
Bassian Thrush	2	15-Aug	Bomaderry Creek	woodland	BA

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; CJC - Chris Chafer; JC - Josh Coyte; TE - Terry Edwell; SE - Shella Emery; ME - Mary Eskdale; PF - Peter Fackander; AF - Alison Foley; BH - Betty Hudson; MJ - Michael Jarman; AL - Alan Lewis; RM - Richard Miller; DM - Daryll McKay; IM - Ian McKinlay; KM - Kevin Mills; MM - Mike Morphet; DP - David Price; MPP - Martin & Penny Potter; RT - Roger Truscott; DW - David Winterbottom; TJW - Tom & Joan Wylie.

Comment: A great spread of records for late winter, with raptors dominating the non-passerines as expected for this time of year, an Osprey from Berrara being the outstanding record. The Pied Butcherbird is just outside the reporting region (1km), so I included it. The Black-faced Woodswallow is only the second regional record; the previous record was from Barralier in 1975. Yet another location for Mannikins, but where do they go between wetlands??? One theory is that they follow seeding grasses along the Illawarra rail line. White-plumed Honeyeater has now extended its range along the northern shore of Lake Illawarra from Kemblawarra to Berkeley, while the population in Wollongong's CBD continues to survive. It's great to see that the isolated White-cheeked Honeyeater colony in Thirroul is still about. Emerald Dove is now rarely observed in the region, especially during winter. The pair of Glossy Black-Cockatoo continue to hang around Bulli, but I found none in locations through Nattai catchment where they were comparatively numerous before the 2001 wildfires. Although the Royal NP is outside our reporting area, I thought Rogers' mob of black-cockatoo was quite impressive.

ENTANGLED FAUNA

All too often we hear of albatrosses or pelicans getting entangled in fishing lines. From the letters of the word 'entangle' can you disentangle six common names of birds, each word containing four letters or more and using each letter only once? The birds are two water-birds, a seabird, bird of prey and a juvenile, and a passerine. The sixth one can be rearranged to form a troublesome insect. Also caught up is one of the cat family. Answers, if you need them, in the next newsletter.



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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November 2003

The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56,

FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519
"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

CLUB'S AIM: to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Darryl GOLDRICK

It is hard to believe that the end of the year is all but upon us, but alas, it is and the upcoming A.G.M. will see the elections of club officials for 2004.

I believe that 2003 has been a very successful and enjoyable year. The guest speakers have been of a very high calibre presenting a broad range of topics and, given the members' reception, have proven to be both popular and most entertaining.

The two camps were also well attended and it was pleasing to see many newer members joining in with the 'old hands' - stronger friendships have developed in these relaxed and very sociable environs. A very special thank-you to Tom Wylie and Kevin McGregor for their camp leadership duties.

I trust that I have succeeded in also programming interesting and productive monthly walks. In this regard, I would like to thank all participants for your patronage and all those who acted as 'leaders'.

The Committee has been wonderful and I am especially grateful for its support particularly during those periods when I was indisposed. Members should know that no one individual makes decisions within the club - agreement 'to do or not to do' is by Committee consensus.

I would especially like to thank all those who work behind the scenes, preparing supper, setting up the hall and library, preparing name tags at meetings - thank you Betty Hudson, Norma Almond, Tom/Joan Wylie, Roger Bogaert, Kerrie/Alan Lewis, and Richard Miller.

A special thank-you to Peg McKinlay and Norma Almond in assembling and posting the newsletter. Mike Morphett, I am sure you will all agree, has continuously produced a fabulous, high quality and interesting newsletter - bravo Mike. The club is also appreciative of Chris Chafer for his ongoing contribution to the Sightings Page and club database and to everyone who has contributed to general newsletter articles.

I am confident that 2004 will be as successful as previous years under the new President and I would like to express my personal thank-you to all of you for your support and friendship during my past two years as President and I look forward to your company and fellowship during future club activities.

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FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC EVENTS. 3&4...September Club Members Night. 5...October Club Meeting talks by Terry Outtrim & Geoff Boxsall. 6...Grevillea Park Mid-week Walk. 7...Rhododendron Mid-week Walk. 8...Unusual Records: August 2003.

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

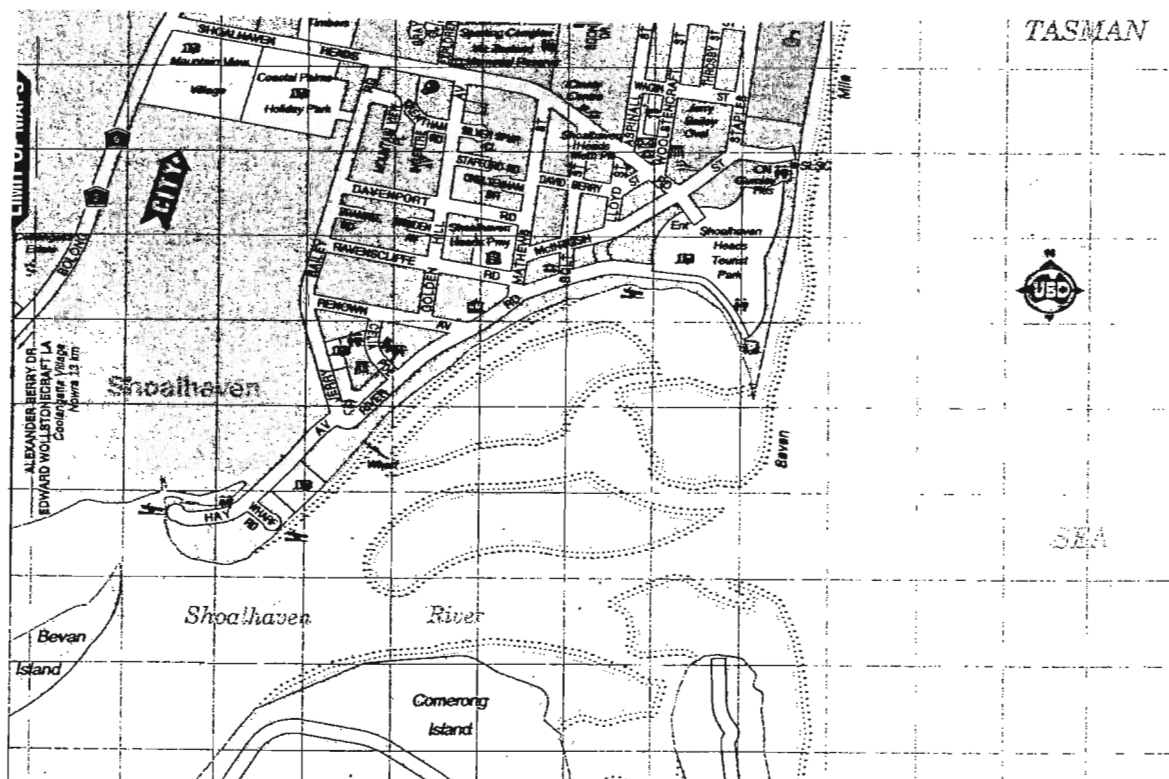
CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 10th December** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. Our guest speaker is **Phil Straw**, whose topic is **Wader Identification and their Migration Patterns**. Phil, from Cronulla, is team leader of the Australasian Wader Group for banding programs of coastal waders. At the meeting new Committee members will be elected for the coming year.

MID-WEEK WALK will be to **Jerrara Dam** on **Wednesday 12th November**. **Barbara Hales** will lead the outing to this very pleasant location. Meet at the Jamberoo Hotel in the main street at **9 am** sharp. You will then travel in convoy to the dam some 20 minutes drive away. Bring your eats and usual refreshments.

MAIN OUTING will be at **Shoalhaven Heads/Comerong Island** under the leadership of **Chris Brandis**. Meet at **9 am** sharp in the River Road foreshore car-park at the eastern end, adjoining the Holiday Haven Tourist Park (see UBD map extract). Bring your eats, drinks etc and also **insect repellent** in case of sandflies. Be prepared to roll up your trousers/slacks/jeans for wading to get close views of waders/shorebirds and to test your identification skills acquired after Phil Straw's talk.

COMMITTEE MEETING will be on **Tuesday 18th November** at **7.30 pm** at the home of **Joan & Tom Wylie** at 4 Daphne Street, Bellambi (Tel. 4284-2051). Any club member is welcome to attend to raise any issue for the new Committee members to cut their teeth on and get their teeth into in addition to Joan's culinary fare.

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER: The deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Tuesday 25th November**. This current edition is a bit rough around the edges and those readers that go through the newsletter with a fine toothcomb will likely find some errors. Apologies: the editor's computer is up the putty, and other means have hurriedly been adopted to get the newsletter out in reasonable time for members' information.



MEMBER'S NIGHT

Step Right Up! Step Right Up! Enjoy the show!

The IBOC Meeting on the night of 8 September 2003 was the annual member's night event, when various members are able to express their creativity, whether it be by putting on a play, reciting a poem, or displaying one's photographic skills and patience when filming birds.

This year there was an assortment of members who were willing to stand before the rest of us and let us know what they have been up to. The evening commenced with Brian Hales, our former club President, showing some of his favourite slides from his extensive collection. In particular, we were treated to some excellent shots of many of the Australian robins. As always, it is lovely to see an attractive bird taken in a perfect shot.

Brian was followed by Nancy Urban, who is a special education teacher at the Peterborough School. Nancy has been teaching some of her charges about our native birds, and she and her class have special signs to represent them. Nancy showed some of the children's work, thereby demonstrating the importance of educating those children with particular learning difficulties.

Next was committee member Tom Wylie. Tom had an interesting yarn to tell, of a time about 15 years ago when he was working in a coalmine at Oakdale, and discovered a stone slab containing fossilised footprints. His colleague also discovered a similar stone slab nearby with matching footprints. Some time later Tom was at the Wollongong University where he met an archaeologist from Sydney University. Tom told this man about the footprints in stone, the man came to look, and asked if he could borrow the stone slabs for examination. It turned out that the footprints belonged to a Labyrinthodont, an amphibian creature that walked the earth about 200 million years ago, during the Triassic Period. The original stone slabs are now in the museum, and Tom was given a plaster mould model, plus a booklet with information about the creature.

A play was the next item. Alison Foley and friends delighted us all with a skit involving two couples having tea together, while the audience participated by trying to guess how many bird names were incorporated into the script. Many birds were easily spotted (Was that the *buzzard*, Bill?). Nevertheless, only one member on the night was able to come close to the right number, which was 56 bird names (take a bow, Kerry). One other thing about the play; it was absolutely hilarious, and had all the audience in stitches.

One of our relatively newer members, Joshua Coyte, then took the stage. Josh is quite an accomplished photographer, and brought along some of his many slides of birds that he has taken over the years, many close to his home in Albion Park. Josh is keenly interested in raptors, and is quick to follow the telltale signs of the noise of bird mobbings to see if he can obtain a worthwhile shot. Those present were suitably impressed with Josh's achievements, and it was clear from the nature of the slides that Josh spends a considerable amount of time in the field to get his photos.

Vice President Roger Bogaert was next, to inform about his doings at the Spring Creek Wetland, between Kiama and Bombo just west of the highway. Roger informed us that over 50 odd bird species have been sighted at this site, where he undertakes surveys. Roger also let us know that Spring Creek has a bird hide (unfortunately now vandalised), and is a good place to take the family for a picnic.

We were then treated to a sobering rendition of a bird poem from John Cashman. The poem was titled 'The Quails' penned by Francis Brett Young, and described the feelings of the poet as he listened to quails being prepared for the dinner table, and how other people were insensitive to the suffering being experienced by our fellow creatures.

Our last slide presentation was presented by Peter Fackender. Peter, and his brother Richard, usually make one or more trips each year to a site around NSW with the specific aim of taking bird photographs. Peter showed some of his favourite slides of a wide range of species, including the Willie Wagtail, Grey Fantail, Fairy Martin and Spotted Pardalote. Peter described some of the difficulties photographing some species. For example, a good Willie Wagtail shot should have the eyebrow showing, and be shot against a relatively light background. Peter indicated that it took him years to get a good shot. Another good sequence of slide involved a Pallid Cuckoo chick trying to scrounge a meal out of a Willie Wagtail parent (who had *not* raised the chick). The Willie Wagtail found the Pallid Cuckoo to be most tiresome, but to have some peace went to find a grub, brought it back to the chick, and then promptly ate the grub itself. Peter also showed slides of the equipment he and Richard use, in particular the bird hide that allows them to get the feet wet, perch high in the air, and get into cramped spaces. Oh, the dedication.

That was the end of the night, except that Tera Wheway brought in a magpie nest to show. The nest had been blown down in the wind, but was fully formed having a delicate interior, but the outside was made up of scratchy wire and other materials from the urban setting.

I would once again like to give my heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in the night, and for making it an unforgettable occasion. Congratulations all.

Bruce O'Brien

Beware the traumatised magpie

By FRANK WALKER

MAGPIE attacks are one of the signs of spring – but with one elderly man dying after an attack and a tourist in hospital, this year has got off to a tragic start.

With the menace of a scene from Alfred Hitchcock's classic movie *The Birds*, a magpie swooped on a 74-year-old man and attacked his eye last weekend in Mildura. The man collapsed and died after being operated on in hospital.

The same bird attacked the eye of a second man, a South

Korean tourist, severely damaging the cornea before police destroyed the creature.

Dr Geagan Khannah, the director of accident and emergency at Sydney Eye Hospital, said: "We see one or two people every spring after magpie attacks, but mostly the eye wounds are superficial abrasions."

A baby lost an eye to a magpie that attacked him in his pram in Canberra in 1997.

Esther Blank of Coogee is swooped upon by a nesting magpie every spring as she rides

her horse Ransom Bid at Malabar. "He seems to go just for me and a couple of other riders," she said. "It doesn't matter what I wear or do, he just seems not to like me."

She said it always attacked from behind on the right – and only when she was on her horse.

Dr Darryl Jones of Griffith University spent seven years studying magpies. He found the birds will fixate on individuals and attack them year after year.

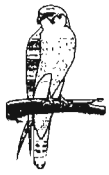
Some only go for posties on bikes, others attack only ped-

estrians and others hate cyclists.

"They can remember individuals' faces and attack them even if they grow a beard, wear different clothes or put on different hats," Dr Jones said.

He found only 12 per cent of male magpies attacked people. He believes the attacking birds have had an early traumatic experience. The males attack in the spring nesting period.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service co-ordinator Kelly Waples said they had a new policy this year of destroying magpies deemed dangerous.



Speakers for the October meeting were **Terry Outtrim** on 'Birds of Prey of the South Coast', followed by **Geoff Boxsell** who showed slides and spoke on 'Birds of Jamberoo Golf Course'.

Of the 24 species of raptor found in Australia 18 can be found on the South Coast, with the Illawarra providing excellent habitat for them. The strip of land between the escarpment and the ocean makes an ideal hunting ground. It is also a flight corridor for that tastiest of raptor treats the racing pigeon. Unfortunately this is also proving to be the raptors' undoing as they in turn are hunted by the pigeon racers. Some areas where raptors are regularly spotted are: Black Falcons at Macquarie Pass, Brown Falcons at Jamberoo, and Osprey at Gerringong. Whistling Kite, Kestrel, Brown Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Black Shouldered Kite and Peregrine Falcon are still all common to this area.

Terry has a great love of Peregrine Falcons in particular, which developed from a very young age. However while Terry is happy to spot raptors safely from the ground, Geoff has a love of undertaking death defying climbs up tall trees to reach the nests with only the assistance of a rope ladder. In one case it took him two hours to get up the tree to see and photograph the nest and its contents. He showed us a fascinating selection of nests he had found. One belonged to a White-Breasted Sea Eagle and measured 6 ft deep by 5 ft long x 7 ft across – bigger than the nest of a Wedge-Tailed Eagle.

Peregrine Falcons have become a good indicator of the health of the environment around the world, and after a serious decline in numbers through the effects of pesticides in some countries, a huge effort has been made to re-establish them in places like America and parts of Europe. Australia had no notable decline in raptors as a result of the pesticide problem. After the last rough census it is thought that there are approximately 10,000 pairs of Peregrine Falcon in Australia, with established pairs every 1-2 miles along the escarpment, and Terry generally spots Peregrines every week. Two excellent places to watch them are from the Robertson Lookout on Mount Keira, and the railway bridge at Coalcliffe. The first two weeks in November being a particularly good time to observe them as the young will have just fledged and be practicing their flying and hunting skills with their parents.

Terry's main tip for finding Peregrines is to 'Listen, Watch, and Feel'. Listen for the alarm calls of birds like Noisy Miners and Starlings; watch their prey species (particularly where there is an increase in their prey e.g. where parrots are being fed or when you notice single prey in flight, especially the pigeon), and to observe when everything goes silent. In time he says you develop a feeling for when they are about.

Jamberoo Golf Club used to be a dairy farm and Geoff has been closely involved with transforming it into a rich bird habitat. A broad selection of native flora has been planted around the course and for the last two years he has undertaken a habitat survey for Birds Australia on the effects of habitat improvement. Since it started 88 species have been spotted, some of the more unexpected species being the Satin Flycatcher, the Olive-backed Oriole, White Winged Triller and the Rufous Fantail. Interestingly he has never seen a Noisy Miner on the golf course although they are very common in Jamberoo itself.

All who attended the meeting had a very informative and absorbing evening and a vote of thanks was given on behalf of all by Bruce O'Brien.

- Penny Potter

Mid-week Walk through the Grevillea Park on Wednesday 8 th of October

Thanks to Kevin McGregor we had the key to visit this small park that is only open to the public a few days of the year. The Park is council owned but run by volunteers and the range of grevilleas and other native plants set in the foothill forest is a haven for birds. 14 members arrived for the 8:30 start in fine weather with lots of Little Wattlebirds and Eastern Spinebills darting about the flowers as honeyeaters do. We thought that a VW that arrive with flowers all over it would attract honeyeaters out of the Park for easy viewing but they were not to be fooled. A few New Holland Honeyeaters and a party of Superb Fairy-wrens greeted us as we walked through the gate and up to the old church past magnificent blooms.

A little way up the track we were watching a Grey Butcherbird when Noisy Friarbirds and Magpie Larks were noted to have nests above us, the Magpie Lark with hungry chicks judging by the number of visits made by the parents. A pair of Glossy Black-Cockatoos were glimpsed flying just over the tree tops, a little further along a Spotted Pardalote was noted acting in an agitated manner, so Graham waited a little way away and saw her dart into a tunnel just under the track with a beak full of food.

Into the rain forest section where we missed seeing the regular Green Catbirds but the Brown Cuckoo-Doves were obliging and a Brown Gerygone nest was spotted hanging off a palm frond with it's little verandah. During a rest for morning tea Superb Fairy-wrens were again spotted and a Fan-tailed Cuckoo perched overhead trilling loudly. Back to the old church and a few were lucky enough to see a male Scarlet Honeyeater in full brilliant breeding colour but he quickly darted off in typical honeyeater fashion. In all 37 species were recorded and will be atlased with thanks to the organiser and all the attendees for a good morning's birding.

Chris Brandis

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Spotted Turtle-Dove | Brown Gerygone | Black-face Monarch |
| Brown Cuckoo-Dove | Brown Thornbill | Magpie Lark |
| Glossy Black-Cockatoo | Little Wattlebird | Grey Fantail |
| Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | Noisy Friarbird | Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike |
| Rainbow Lorikeet | Lewin's Honeyeater | Grey Butcherbird |
| Australian King-Parrot | New Holland Honeyeater | Pied Currawong |
| Crimson Rosella | Eastern Spinebill | Australian Raven |
| Fantailed Cuckoo | Scarlet Honeyeater | Satin Bowerbird |
| Laughing Kookaburra | Eastern Yellow Robin | Welcome Swallow |
| White-throated Treecreeper | Eastern Whipbird | Silvereye |
| Superb Fairy-wren | Golden Whistler | Common Starling |
| Spotted Pardalote | Grey Shrike-thrush | Common Myna |
| White-browed Scrubwren | | |

Twitchers in flap over 'Hedwig'

A MAGICAL visitor has been leaving bird enthusiasts spellbound. The flutter of excitement has been caused by the rare appearance in the UK of a snowy owl - a bird better known as Hedwig to millions of Harry Potter fans. The majestic bird arrived in North Uist, in the Outer Hebrides, 10 days ago, sparking an influx of twitchers to the island. One thought is that the young bird may have wandered south after being forced from its Arctic home by an adult bird. Jamie Boyle, RSPB Scotland's Uist reserve warden, says the snowy owl of Harry Potter fame is a female, which is not as white as this bird. "This male has brilliant white feathers and just looks magical."

Flying pig lands on her feet

A PIGLET grabbed from its litter by a hawk last week has fallen on good times. Rotorua SPCA adoption centre manager Nick Thomson said the piglet was seen to fall from the talons of a hawk into a bush. It was retrieved and handed to an animal rescue centre. "She's just like a little baby and we are demand-feeding her at present," Thomson said. "She has taken a real liking to one of the volunteers and follows her around grunting and squawking whenever she wants a feed." Mr Thomson said it was unusual for a hawk to pick up live animals. "I think maybe once it realised it had hold of something live, it dropped it," he said.

August 20, 2003
ILLAWARRA MERCURY

ILLAWARRA MERCURY 30/9/03

On Tuesday 16th September the Rhododendron Park provided a sunny, sheltered environment for our group of 15 bird observers. Joan Wylie led us from the attractive artificial pond, where a couple of pairs of ducks were swimming, the Pacific Black and Wood, to the central path, which soon changes from formal gardens into native bushland as you climb the foothill. Several people remarked that they could hear more than they could see as the birdlife were in fine voice. This park offers a variety of environments, from sunny clearings to magnificent old growth cedars and a thick understorey with a mixture of vegetation, including palms.

In the first sunny clearing many small birds entertained us. I was able to try out my new binoculars on a very active Spotted Pardalote. An Eastern Whipbird rushed from one side of the path to the other and dived into the undergrowth, but not too fast for Joan, who pointed out its prominent crest. A small flock of Red-browed Finches landed to feed and just as quickly disappeared. Eastern Yellow Robins were plentiful and put on a great show flitting around us.

I've always thought that observing meant watching, but I now realise this also means listening and learning to identify calls. We were all frustrated by the many yowling sounds from Green Catbirds because not one could be seen. However, as we moved from the clearing into some heavier growth, with a lot of native tobacco plants, some of these elusive birds were spotted. Several female or immature Satin Bowerbirds were in this same area. Some people saw three raptors perched high above a clearing.

As we were discussing whether to proceed up or down, I spotted a single Wonga Pigeon scurrying across the track directly behind Joan's back. Others were identified later by their distinctive loud clatter as they flew away. Decision made, some continued up with Tom whilst others down the track with Joan. Mike Morphett heard a Rose Robin and eventually sighted it. Joan identified the call of the Brown Cuckoo-Dove and, after persistent searching, found it perched high above her. However, a search of the southern end of the park, which is known to provide shelter for White-headed Pigeons and Brush Turkeys, proved fruitless, except for an old turkey feather to show us we were on the right track.

A busy contingent of volunteers spread mulch on the garden beds while we enjoyed morning tea in the sunshine. Conversation included suggestions for buying binoculars, where to have old binoculars cleaned, coming club events, and the recent film *Travelling Birds*. Mike Morphett then read out the list of birds we had seen during the morning: a total of 36. Carol had taken a birthday call from their daughter in Canada, so Jude led our singing to celebrate.

The Rhododendron Park is looking at its best at the moment. It is open from 8.30 am to 12 noon each weekday and until 4 pm on the weekend. It costs just \$2 to park and is a particularly good spot to see small birds. Thanks to the Wylies for their organization.

ENTANGLED FAUNA

The answers to the word puzzle in last month's *IBOC News* are: nene, teal, gannet, eagle, eaglet, tang; gnat; genet.

Unusual Records August 2003 Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	7	8-Sep	Sassafras	paddock	KM
Australian Brush-Turkey	1	19-Sep	Mt. Keira	garden	CK
Darter	4	10-Sep	Macquarie Rivulet	riverine	RS
Pacific Baza	1	14-Sep	Broughton Vale	rural	NJ
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	1-Sep	Albion Park Rail	urban	PF
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	14-Sep	Kiama Bends	overhead	NJ
Grey Goshawk	1	18-Sep	Lady Fuller Park, Thirroul	forest	MM
Collared Sparrowhawk	2	1-Sep	Albion Park Rail	urban	PF
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	22-Sep	Bulli	garden	JM
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	14-Sep	Belanglo State Forest	overhead	CJC
Little Eagle	1	16-Sep	Yerrinbool	overhead	CJC
Peregrine Falcon	1	8-Sep	Bulee Mountain	overhead	KM
Little Button-quail	1	13-Sep	Unanderra	Dead on road	WB
Little Button-quail	1	26-Sep	Park Rd., Bulli	dead on road	JM
Little Button-quail	1	28-Sep	Thirroul railway station	trackside	JM
Sooty Oystercatcher	5	6-Sep	Gerringong	rocky shore	PMM
White-headed Pigeon	11	4-Sep	Jamberoo	urban	KM
Common Bronzewing	2	8-Sep	Nerriga east	woodland	KM
Brush Bronzewing	2	16-Sep	Fire Rd. 5, Nepean catchment	forest	CJC
Peaceful Dove	1	16-Sep	Fire Rd. 5, Nepean catchment	woodland	CJC
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	2-Sep	East Corrimal	dune woodland	DW
Topknot Pigeon	30+	27-Sep	Bulli Pass	overhead	RM
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	2-Sep	Bulli (Highlands Pde)	overhead	RT
Long-billed Corella	27	18-Sep	Helensburgh	parkland	MM
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	10-Sep	Curramore	overhead	KM
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	18-Sep	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	18-Sep	Lake Heights	garden	JC
Channel-billed Cuckoo	3	20-Sep	Bulli Pass	overhead	RM
Powerful Owl	1	6-Sep	West Cambewarra	forest	GD
Powerful Owl	1	21-Sep	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Sooty Owl	1	7-Sep	West Cambewarra	forest	GD
Eastern Bristlebird	4	3-Sep	Vincentia west	heath/woodland	GD
Pilotbird	1	14-Sep	Box Vale track, Welby	forest	KM
Pilotbird	2	16-Sep	Fire Rd. 3C, Nepean catchment	forest	CJC
Large-billed Scrubwren	4	13-Sep	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
White-throated Gerygone	6	19-Sep	Avondale	rural	DG
White-cheeked Honeyeater	3	2-Sep	Tramway Ck., Sandon Point	wetland	JM
Scarlet Robin	1	16-Sep	Fire Rd. 5, Nepean catchment	woodland	CJC
Rose Robin	1	10-Sep	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Rose Robin	1	14-Sep	Box Vale track, Welby	forest	KM
Logrunner	4	10-Sep	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Varied Sittella	2	14-Sep	Box Vale track, Welby	forest	KM
Cicadabird	2	12-Sep	Cordeaux Dam	forest	CJC
Figbird	5	7-Sep	Windang	woodland	DW
Dusky Woodswallow	10	10-Sep	Macquarie Rivulet	riverine	RS
Grey Currawong	2	2-Sep	Cordeaux Dam Rd.	woodland	CJC
Grey Currawong	1	14-Sep	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Grey Currawong	1	16-Sep	Nepean Dam	woodland	CJC
Bassian Thrush	2	15-Sep	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM

Contributors: WB – per Walter Boles; CJC - Chris Chafer; JC – Jessika Chafer; GD – Gary Daly; ME – Mary Eskdale; PF – Peter Fackander; DG – Darryl Goldrick; NJ – Nigel Jacket; MJ – Michael Jarman; CK – Cath Kirby; RM – Richard Miller; KM - Kevin Mills; JM – Jill Molan; Mike Morphett; MPP – Martin & Penny Potter; RS – Ron Simcock; RT – Roger Truscott; DW - David Winterbottom.

Comment: Three Little Button-quail records from the region would tend to indicate a minor influx of this species. The Powerful Owl and Sooty Owl records are also good. It's interesting to note that the small White-cheeked Honeyeater population at Tramway Creek continues to survive and the Glossy Black-Cockatoo pair continue to inhabit the Bulli area. But generally its been a quite start to spring.



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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December 2003

The CIRCULAR of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519

www.wcet.org.au/websites/IBOCinc

"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

CLUB'S AIM: to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$25 SINGLE \$20 JUNIOR \$5

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Position vacant

VICE-PRESIDENT
Position vacant

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OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

- > Congratulations, **Alison and David** on the arrival of baby **Keira!** And a warm welcome to new member, **Martin Crocker** from Kanahooka.
- > **Membership fees** are due once again, but the good news is there is no increase. Please make a beeline for our treasurer, **Bronwyn**.
- > Whilst there is a scheduled walk on 13th December (however, read on), we will be concluding the year's meetings with a **night of entertainment** on the previous Monday evening. A number of members are hosting special items for your pleasure; it should be a fun night. A T-shirt competition will be held with fabulous prizes on offer. The usual bird or environment theme are the only eligibility criteria that need to be satisfied. Any late entrants who wish to present an 'item' on the night are more than welcome. Please contact me so that you can be scheduled on the program.
- > The Club's activities will officially resume with the traditional '**wader wander**' at the Windang Lake's entrance on Wednesday 4th February at 5 pm. It is usual that we meet in the car park – surf club end- do the walk and return for a picnic 'high tea'. Members will receive their newsletter in the week prior, but mark your calendar now. The first **meeting** of 2004 will be on Monday 9th February.
- > The Committee would welcome suggestions for **walks** and **talks** for the 2004 calendar year. Please get your suggestions in prior to Christmas as the program is usually published in the February newsletter.
- > There are two new (revised) **field guides** just released: Slater and Pizzey-Knight, should you be looking to replace an old and worn edition.
- > **Joan Wylie** has ample supply of the bird **Glovebox Field Guide** (Greening Australia) for the bargain price of \$3.50 – they would make a great Christmas gift.
- > Again, my thanks to all those who have assisted me in my presidential term over the past two years, and I wish all members and their families a very Merry Christmas and a safe holiday. I look forward to your fellowship in the New Year.

-ooOOoo-

FEATURES: 2...Forthcoming IBOC Events & Editorial. 3...November Club Meeting – Phil Straw: Wader Identification 4&5...Jerrara Dam Mid-Week Walk. 5&6...Lake Cargelligo October Camp. 7...Shoalhaven Heads-Comerong Island Outing. 8&9...Going West. 9...Lake Cargelligo Appreciation. 10...Unusual Records: October 2003.



CLUB MEETING will be held on **Monday 8th December 2003** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Princes Highway and Cambridge Avenue, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 pm**. We will be staging our usual **Christmas get-together**, so come prepared with props and victuals. Please refer to Darryl's column for further details.

MID-WEEK WALK will not be until **Wednesday 4th February**, when we start the new year with the traditional late afternoon journey along the estuary of Lake Illawarra. There will be full details in the next newsletter. Again, Darryl has made mention of this event on the front page of this issue.

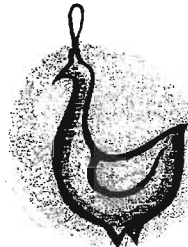
MAIN OUTINGS (1) was to have been to Thirlmere Lakes on Saturday 13th December;

SEE LATE NEWS - STOP PRESS INSERT

(2) On **Sunday 11th January 2004** to **Barren Grounds**, where **Bruce O'Brien** (Tel 4262 7529) will lead the group along the Griffith Trail. Meet at **9 am** at the Barren Grounds car park and take along your usual items for survival. After reading the Shoalhaven Heads/Comerong Island outing report, you may wish to nominate someone to be Bruce's alarm clock!

COMMITTEE MEETINGS will be on **Tuesday 16th December 2003** at **7.30 pm** at Joan & Tom Wylies' home at 4 Daphne Street, Bellambi (Tel 4284 2051) and **Tuesday 13th January 2004** at **7.30 pm** at the home of Kerri & Alan Lewis, 14 Tolson Place, Balgownie (Tel 4285 2736). As usual, members are invited to attend, particularly to help plan club meetings and activities for 2004.

FEBRUARY 2004 NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Tuesday 20th January**. Please ensure you don't leave submitting your contributions to the last minute, particularly handwritten ones, which will help our brand new editors with planning the layout of the newsletter and with accuracy of content.



OUTGOING EDITOR'S COMMENT- I thank those people who have made favourable remarks about the presentation and content of *IBOC News*. I don't profess to take full credit at all. I owe much to all the hard work done by my forerunners for me to build upon and to improvements in computer (word-processing and reproducing) technology, which open the door for greater creativity and, hopefully, accuracy. The quality of items submitted, I think, has increased. My only disappointment has been that we haven't had that many contributors, given the size of club membership. I'm sure each one of us has had, and will continue to have, some interesting birding account to relate or theory to sound out or query to raise, even if it's no more than a paragraph in length. *IBOC News* provides a significant ongoing historical record not only of us club members and our activities, but also, and perhaps more importantly, of the birdlife within our region and beyond. Such documentation should prove to be a drawcard for visitors to the Illawarra and people to join the club and also provide a sound basis for argument for the preservation of birds and their habitat. Whilst the newsletter's 'back page' of unusual sightings compiled by Chris Chafer and his predecessors goes a long way to achieving these ends, I still feel there is a gap that can be filled with snippets of information, like the anecdotal stuff mentioned at club meetings, that should be recorded as well – not simply confined to unusual birds, but to include any observed unusual and interesting avian behaviour. In that way we can gain even greater knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around us, which is our club's basic aim. I wish my successors, Penny and Val, every success with future editions. May they be swamped by the mass of forthcoming newsletter articles and items. For it to take two females to accomplish what just one bloke has done, or tried to do, must be a first!

The evening started with Brian Hales showing some slides of some of the species sighted during the October camp to **Lake Cargelligo**. Highlights included the Black Honeyeater and Crimson Chat with a full write-up to be in the Newsletter.

The **AGM** was then held to elect the **Executive** to run the Club over the next 12 months, Kevin McGregor being the Returning Officer. Nominations had been received for –

Secretary: Betty Hudson, unopposed

Treasurer: Bronwyn Wilson, unopposed

Committee of Tom Wylie, Bruce O'Brien, Kerri Lewis and Kevin McGregor, all unopposed, with Joan Wylie standing down, but still running the library.

Vice-President: no nominations, Roger Bogaert standing down

President: no nominations, Darryl Goldrick standing down

Editor, a non-executive position: no nominations were received, with Mike Morphett standing down. Penny Potter and Val Dolan agreed to try and share this position to the best of their ability.

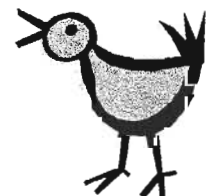
As the Club is again without a President to provide guidance and arrange outings and speakers, the Committee will attempt to cover the position until someone volunteers their services. If not, the Club may fold in its present form, an outcome that has been discussed at previous BIGNET meetings due to the number of NSW clubs and the difficulty in getting enough leaders.

The speaker for the evening was **Phil Straw**, who had recently conducted a **wader identification** course and who also conducts these overseas for Wetlands International. Phil has been interested in birds for most of his life and provides consultancy expertise for waterbird habitats and is heavily involved in the Australian and NSW Wader Study Group. Over the years some Club members have participated in surveys of estuaries and beaches initiated by Phil, who has been tireless in trying to slow the decline in migratory waders world-wide.

These amazing birds vary in size from the 600 gm Eastern Curlew to the 30 gm Red-necked Stint and many have a round-trip of around 25,000 km annually. The birds summering in Australia fly to Siberia and Alaska to have a frantic 2-month breeding season while food is plentiful and predators are scarce. They have various builds, bill shapes and sizes to exploit the various food sources in both summer and winter habitats. Many are declining, most from habitat loss as the developing world fills in huge areas of the rich tidal zones, depriving these birds of top-ups for their long journeys. Even in Australia areas such as the Coorong are in danger as the Murray River never floods any more and wetlands are drained for agriculture. Other species have declined for no apparent reason, which will require studying them during their annual cycles; hence the need to train people in other countries on the flyways to identify and record details of their life.

Phil had a presentation of most of the waders we can expect to see, both migratory and nomadic, and a few tips in identifying them. Although they can be a bit difficult with their various plumage changes, they generally are out in the open for easy viewing and, by getting used to the common species in the area, you soon spot one that is different. The next outing at Comerong Island will give members a chance to practice what they have learnt.

Peter Nolan gave the vote of thanks from us all for this most interesting, and worrying, insight into a group of birds that that many find great enjoyment working with.



A report on the mid-week walk at Jerrara Dam on Wednesday 12th November 2003

Eleven IBOC members, including leader, Barbara Hales, congregated opposite Jamberoo Pub; resisted the temptation to sample its beverages; and promptly at 9 am left in convoy. Jerrara Dam turn-off is a short distance east of Jamberoo township and a few kms west of Kiama. I imagine it was like most of Jamberoo Valley former dairy-farming country, evidenced by remnant coral trees here and there.

The day was overcast and warm; hence plenty of flies on the wing as well as lots of insects keeping birds busy. What a surprise to see this dam and the reserve surrounding it! A lot of work has been done in replanting trees; removing weeds, viz lantana, coral trees; installation of picnic tables and seats; construction of a car park and a composting toilet. The area is owned and maintained by Kiama Council.

Birdsong welcomed us: that of the Grey Shrike-thrush and Eastern Whipbirds. The thrush was the first bird sighted immediately upon our exiting the cars, followed by our old favourite, the Golden Whistler. Someone was overheard saying: "Now we can go home. We've seen the whistler." We were serenaded continuously by bird calls during our visit and we tolerated the intermittent noise of chainsaws and tractor mower. Despite the noise we managed to talk to each other and hear the hum of bees throughout the reserve. They were feasting on the hundreds of black wattle tree blossoms. At one stage we heard voices of lots of children, which turned out to be Riding for the Disabled on the property next-door.

On the outward journey Tommy was the only person to hear and see a Rufous Fantail. And he saw it only once. "Ooh?!" with a sound of disbelief seemed to be the response to his news. But... keep tuned!

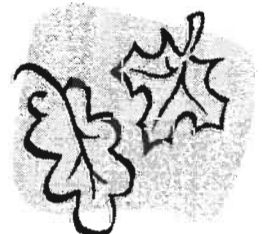
We saw the usual little birds – you know the ones: LBBs, and some of us heard Green Catbirds, who remained elusive. We went up a hill to a picnic table overlooking the dam and had morning tea with the flies. Tera and Neil set up Tera's 60th birthday present of a spotting scope. Not a lot of birds to be seen on the water. The Clamorous Reed-Warbler could be heard almost as continuously as the whipbird, and, unlike the secretive whipbird, was seen by a few members.

We were not able to access the water's edge of the dam, but cattle came down to drink on the other side of the boundary fence from 'picnic table hill'. Here there was also a remnant stone fence.

On our return journey Barbara led us to the opposite side of the creek. We were in several little groups, looking at different birds in differing directions, when someone noticed Barbara frantically gesticulating with her arms. The gestures were interpreted as "Come this way, quickly, but carefully." Barbara could not have orchestrated a better setting to peer at two plump Pigeons (White-headed) perfectly perched about one to two metres apart, if she had paid a prop master with pet pigeons to do it. One pigeon was facing us and the other was facing 180° in the opposite direction. No binoculars were needed for this viewing; the tree branch perch was quite low.

Not long after that, Anne saw a "little bird with a red bill" and was clutching her nose in an attempt to describe it. It turned out to be a Red-browed Finch. I don't know what gestures she may have made had she viewed the red tail first! Grey Fantails, Lewin's Honeyeaters, Golden Whistlers and Grey Shrike-thrushes were abundant. We returned to the cars and sat at the table to have another cuppa and count the bird species seen: we ended up with 43.

Four people had departed, when suddenly I saw a Rufous Fantail through a window in the trees in the area where Tom had sighted it earlier. I no sooner had exclaimed my find, when everyone jumped up with binoculars, but it was gone again. Joan, unannounced, walked off into and around the trees, returning a little while later, saying, "I saw not one, but *three* Rufous Fantails all together at once within half a metre of each other." Of course, everyone went stalking off into the trees immediately and was rewarded by seeing all three birds at once. What a lovely end to an extremely enjoyable few hours in congenial company and in a rewarding reserve! Thank you, Barbara, and to all who attended and to those who gave lifts to others. I look forward to the next shared experiences.



Australian Wood Duck	White-headed Pigeon	Little Wattlebird	Australian Magpie
Pacific Black Duck	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Little Pied Cormorant	Bar-shouldered Dove	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Little Black Cormorant	Galah	Eastern Spinebill	Green Catbird
White-faced Heron	Crimson Rosella	Eastern Whipbird	Satin Bowerbird
Cattle Egret	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Golden Whistler	Red-browed Finch
Black-shouldered Kite	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Welcome Swallow
Brown Falcon	White-browed Scrubwren	Magpie-lark	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Purple Swamphen	Brown Gerygone	Rufous Fantail	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Dusky Moorhen	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail	Silvereye
Eurasian Coot	Yellow Thornbill	Willie Wagtail	Common Blackbird

LAKE CARGELLIGO OCTOBER CAMP

Jim & Gwen ROBINSON

The late October Camp for 2003 was held at Lake Cargelligo from 18th to 25th with 16 members attending.

Gwen and I enjoyed the trip there from Wollongong, the country showing few signs of the recent drought. Between Yass and Temora on a bright sunny morning the countryside on either side of the road was a picture, with the bright green of planted crops and pastures, the brilliant yellow of the Canola crops, and the striking purple of flowering Patterson's Curse.

We all stayed in the Caravan Park, which was well equipped with excellent facilities. It was also convenient for the six non-campers, including two new members, Roselyn and Fay, who were staying in the cabins. No bush campfires of course, but we were quite happy with the undercover BBQs with seating and tables, where we could cook and hold our nightly get-togethers for birdlisting, next day's agenda and general socialising – such an essential part of our bird camps.

The park was in sight of the lake – only a short stroll to the lake's edge, where Great-crested Grebes and Whiskered Terns were nearly always in evidence. In the park itself resident birds were aggressive Yellow-throated Miners, nesting Pied Butcherbirds and Crested Pigeons, with visits from such birds as Major Mitchell Cockatoos and Blue-faced Honeyeaters.

Things got underway after lunch on Saturday with a visit to Deadman's Point on the lake foreshore just a few kms outside town. 33 species were recorded: Osprey, Black Honeyeater, White-winged Triller, Black Kite, Whistling Kite, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Silver Gull being just a few of the birds sighted.

Sunday morning was hot and windy. We made an early start to spend a couple of hours at the sewerage ponds. There was a profusion of birds: 25 species being seen here with quite a few being firsts for most members. A flock of Red-necked Avocets was a beautiful sight. Then there were Inland Dotterel, Glossy Ibis, Australian Hobby, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Australian Shelduck, and Little Grassbird. Some of the other birds included Black Swan, Pink-eared Duck, Darter, Black-winged Stilt, Red-kneed Dotterel and Grey Teal. The lovely White-winged Fairy-wren was also observed before we went back for morning tea at the park.

That afternoon we drove to the Cargelligo State Forest, which largely comprised Cypress Pine with some Eucalypts. Birding was difficult under the windy conditions, but we still managed to see a fair number of birds and add to our rapidly growing list – Speckled Warbler, Red-capped Robin, Yellow Thornbill, Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Inland Thornbill, Superb Parrot, Grey-crowned Babbler and others. Monday was a full day's outing as we headed towards the Mallee 40 kms away in Round Hill and Nombinnie Nature Reserves. On the way we stopped at the river crossing, where we sighted Sacred Kingfisher, Grey Shrike-thrush, Rufous Songlarks in full voice, White-naped Honeyeater, Peaceful Dove, Brown Treecreeper, Eastern Yellow Robin and Jacky Winter.

Then on to the Mallee following a mud map and directions supplied to Tom and Kevin. At the first stop we all had a good look at the Splendid Wrens, a sight worth travelling a long way for and which makes birdwatching so rewarding. The few other birds were Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater and White-eared Honeyeater. At the second stop the Red-lored Whistler was heard as soon as we alighted from the cars, but nobody caught sight of the bird. Kevin McGregor had played the tape not long before, so identification appeared beyond doubt. Replaying the tape failed to attract the bird back; disappointing since we had come to this spot specifically, hoping to see this bird. The few other sightings in the Mallee were Yellow-rumped Pardalote, Diamond Dove, Rainbow Bee-eater, Chestnut Quail-thrush and Rufous Whistler. On the way back to camp further sightings included Brown Songlark, Spotted Harrier and Crested Shrike-tit.

Monday night's BBQ was special: a surprise 60th birthday party for Tera Wheway. We drank her health in champagne while Brian Hales presented her with a vase of Patterson's Curse. Others gave bouquets of wildflowers and weeds. This put us in a party mood for a fun "concert" organised by Fae McGregor. A couple of acts, some poetry reading, but the hit was Ed Youll reciting and acting John O'Brian's 'Said Hanrahan'. Tera blew out the candles on the cake to the singing of 'Happy Birthday'. The lovely decorated cream cake was made by the local bakery. That and our patronising the town's stores made us well known to the local community.

The lake's topography comprises a man-made canal from a weir on the Lachlan River to Sheet-of-Water, another canal to Curlew Water (both small lakes), then to Lake Cargelligo itself – a large lake of 1620 ha – and finally a channel back into the Lachlan River. Flow of water and lake-level control is by regulator gates at entry and exit to the Lachlan River. The lake was full during our visit.

On Tuesday we spent the day circumnavigating the lake via Curlew Water, the weir, Sheet-of-Water, back along the Lachlan, the abattoirs and town. The list steadily grew to over 100 as we added such birds as Little Friarbird, Western Gerygone, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, White-breasted Woodswallow, Blue Bonnet, and finally Crimson Chat. This last one was one of the "must-see" birds we all had on our list. While at the weir we met a farmer who invited us to his property nearby and particularly recommended watching the parrots come in to drink at the dam just before dusk. We took him up on his offer and returned late that same afternoon to see such birds as Mulga Parrot, Common Bronzewing and Black-tailed Native-hen.

Wednesday was a free day in which everyone did their own thing. That night we went to the local pub for dinner: extra large helpings, cheap, but good quality. On Thursday, we revisited the State Forest in the morning, and in the afternoon went back to the weir property. Birds of note for the day were Hooded Robin, Striped Honeyeater, Banded Lapwing, Brown Goshawk, Inland Thornbill and Buff-rumped Thornbill.

Friday came and the McGregors and Hales departed for home while the rest of us took a run north to Euabalong. An extra 3 new birds were recorded: Zebra Finch, Dollarbird and Restless Flycatcher. Other birds were 9 Banded Lapwings, Little Corella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike. On Saturday a flock of Budgerigars brought the grand total to 131 species sighted for the week.

In conclusion, our warmest thanks to Tom Wylie and Kevin McGregor for their leadership duties, and Kevin for compiling the bird lists. Their hard work helped make this camp a most enjoyable and successful one for us all.



A report on the main club outing on Sunday 16th November 2003

On arriving at the Shoalhaven Heads eastern car park, it was obvious that this outing had attracted considerable interest given the large numbers that had already assembled. It was plainly obvious that the group were birdwatchers with binoculars either slung over necks or shoulders and a fine array of spotting scopes all standing erect and ready for action.

Darryl welcomed Phil Straw and his wader group from Sydney and even as far afield as Newcastle and handed over proceedings to our leader of the day, Chris Brandis, who briefed all on the proposed itinerary. In all there were 11 visitors and 14 IBOC members (not including Bruce O'Brien, who arrived to start when the group had finished for the day – something to do with a sleep-in being more important than starting on time – Bruce's words, not mine!)

The tide was out, so, with the exception of a small group of Bar-tailed Godwits, there were few birds at the 'entrance' section. Phil Straw reminded us not to be too complacent and check that we had not overlooked the possibility that there may be a Black-tailed amongst them. Most of the waders were found in the far south-western section of mangroves. Pacific Golden Plovers were plentiful, as were the Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Red-capped Plover, and 4 Pied Oystercatcher. A group of 12 Red Knot, some with trace vestiges of breeding plumage, was spotted up a small tributary away from the main group of birds. What a spectacular sight was the group of about 50 Eastern Curlew as they flew overhead and came to earth fifty metres away from the group.

The Sydney group bade us farewell, and the IBOC members proceeded to explore the hind-dune forest on Comerong Island after lunching in the Reserve picnic ground. Roger and Allan, who we thought had pressing matters back in town to attend to, solved all their problems over a few beers at the Shoalhaven Heads pub!!!

The forest walk didn't yield anything spectacular, though Mike almost convinced us that 'that' call was almost certainly a Crested Shrike-tit. We did hear (several times) the Brush Cuckoo calling, but didn't actually get a glimpse of it.

The walk back along the beach seemed endless with the southerly behind our backs. Large numbers of Gannets and Shearwaters were patrolling the waters not too far offshore. The bird species tally for the day was 64.

A very pleasant outing and a welcome opportunity to socialise with other birders from outside the Illawarra. Our thanks to Phil Straw and his comrades and Chris Brandis for his great leadership.

Black Swan	Red-necked Stint	Australian King-Parrot	Eastern Yellow Robin
Chestnut Teal	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Crimson Rosella	Eastern Whipbird
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	Pied Oystercatcher	Eastern Rosella	Grey Shrike-thrush
Short-tailed Shearwater	Pacific Golden Plover	Brush Cuckoo	Magpie-lark
Australasian Gannet	Red-capped Plover	Common Koel	Grey Fantail
Little Pied Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	Sacred Kingfisher	Willie Wagtail
Little Black Cormorant	Silver Gull	Superb Fairy-wren	Olive-backed Oriole
Great Cormorant	Crested Tern	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Butcherbird
Australian Pelican	Little Tern	Brown Gerygone	Pied Currawong
Little Egret	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven
Australian White Ibis	Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird	House Sparrow
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Bar-shouldered Dove	Noisy Miner	Welcome Swallow
Bar-tailed Godwit	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Eastern Curlew	Galah	New Holland Honeyeater	Silvereye
Common Greenshank	Little Corella	Eastern Spinebill	Common Starling
Red Knot	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-fronted Chat	Common Myna



It is many years since I first heard of the **Eulo Bore** and **Macquarie Marshes**, so it was with much excitement and anticipation that my husband, Tony, and I set off for the north-west last September. Our first stop was Nyngan, and our first and only day there was to be spent exploring the Macquarie Marshes. Once we left Nyngan the signs were non-existent and it was just by chance we met a ranger, who directed us to the edge of the marshes, where we saw little more than a red-bellied black snake! By this time we had to find our way back to Nyngan; so in one word - disappointing.

The next day we travelled to Bourke for lunch and then proceeded to **Cunnamulla** and from there to **Bowra Station**, a sheep and cattle property several kms west, where we met up with four members of my family, who live in the Gladstone - Rockhampton areas. We stayed in the cottage at Bowra and were well looked after by Ian McLaren, owner of the property. His family have had this property since the late nineteenth century. Ian provided us with a mud map along with information as to what birds may be found where! We had a great two days there (not long enough), finding the Hall Babblers and Spotted Nightjar (male & female), Black-tailed Native-hen - all new finds for me!

From there we went on to **Eulo** for two days, staying in fairly new units at the hotel there. En route to Eulo we called at the "Bore" just a short distance off the main road from Cunnamulla. My two sisters had been there twice before and were dismayed to find how changed the 'watering holes' were! A rectangle-shaped dam has been built beside the "turkeys' nest", and the area of water where the birds had previously come to drink was dry. Nevertheless, we returned later in the afternoon with our seats, but without much hope of seeing any of the local birdlife! (None of those birds to be seen or heard, as you remember, Ron!) While we were there, a Noisy Miner and one Common Bronzewing attempted to have a drink, but the sides were too steep for them to do so. We were very disappointed, but our thoughts were also for the businesses of Eulo - if the birdwatchers do not come to the area, it would make a big difference to these people and their livelihood?!

So the next day we visited the Council in Cunnamulla, but failed to see Mr White, the CEO or Mr White, the Engineer. However, we did speak with the deputy CEO, who gave me a hearing and assured me they would investigate the situation. We then spoke to the people in the General Store and to Nan Pike, owner of the Palmgrove Date Winery, all of whom voiced their concerns about the changes. The next day we met a Councillor in the local store - she was on her way to a Council meeting in Cunnamulla, some 60 kms away, having just travelled 100 kms from home south-west of Eulo. She was most interested in the 'Bore situation' and promised to do all she could to help. Luck was on our side when it came to finding the Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrash. We were driving along the road north of the Bore, intending to look for the said birds, when I spotted two under a small tree not far from the road. With the help of the telescopes we managed to have a nice view of them and follow them from one stack of logs to another!

As we had a sedan, we were not sure whether or not we'd be able to venture into the **Currawinya National Park**, but after my husband had chatted to some of the locals at the bar, they assured him the road was much improved since the influx of people for the opening of the Bilby Enclosure in April. So the next morning off we went in a cloud of red dust and with high hopes of good twitching! About 80 kms to the Ranger's Office and a short distance further on to our cottage. We spent most of our two days there at the freshwater lake - a huge expanse of water surrounded by white sand - an incredible sight in the middle of the mulga, saltbush and endless red soil! Our first day there was extremely hot, but we managed to see the Freckled Duck amongst hundreds of other more common water-birds - through the telescope, of course! The weather turned cold that night and quite windy when we arrived at the lake next day, hoping for a closer look at the "Duck". However, the birds were even harder to see because of the choppy water. We had been there for about ten minutes when we observed two people walking our way along the lake's edge. They were the only people we had seen in the park and, as there was no vehicle in the car park, we assumed they must be camping somewhere near. As they neared, we could see there were two men; they were wearing shorts and carrying cameras and binoculars. We wasted no time in asking what birds they had seen and where. They were German tourists and, after they had tried to give us some idea of what they had seen - in broken English, they told us they had been lost in the "wilderness" without food or water for two nights! They said they were very afraid

they were going to die, but had found creek water to drink and the previous night had dug a hole in the sand to keep warm. Their car was parked near the salt lake, which is almost dry, 7 kms away, and as they had visited the freshwater lake before going there, they must have been relieved to see the latter! We drove them back to their car, and they told us they had gone for a half hour's walk to check the birds, when they became lost - very easy to do in that country! After leaving the park, we visited **Thargmondah** and on the way near **Lake Bindagolly** we saw the White-winged Wren - a beautiful little fellow! I have to say, although the birding was disappointing, it was such a great experience to be on the edge of the Red Heart of this beautiful country.

P.S. I must add that the area was experiencing a three year drought, which may account for the poor bird numbers. Also I have had correspondence with Nan of the Palmgrove Winery in Eulo, and she tells me that the Bore is being restored to its original state; that is, the turkeys' nest etc is, so, hopefully, the birds will return to their old watering hole. I know I will one day!

LAKE CARGELLIGO APPRECIATION Neil WHEWY

Lake Cargelligo is in central NSW and at the time of the camp it was a very pleasant drive to get there. The countryside was a picture of paddocks full of Patterson's curse, canola, wheat, with a myriad of veggies, grape vines and fruit trees. Driving into town it seemed pretty much like many other small country towns, only here the locals knew we were coming. Reception from the locals was incredible: "Are you birdos?" You had to be there to appreciate the warmth and friendliness of the townsfolk as well as their interest in what we were doing.

First official morning our fearless leaders informed us we were off to the local sewage ponds. What's this? I thought. They have to be kidding. No, I found out they were fair dinkum. It was explained to me this type of environment has abundant and varied bird populations. There were birds everywhere, and after a little while you forgot where you were and concentrated on the birdlife. I won't go into the species that were seen during the camp as our official recorder has the list and the Robinsons have highlighted them in their report.

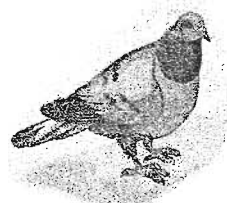
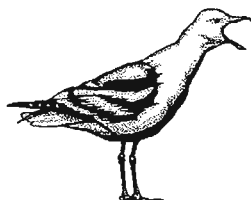
A day trip out to Round Hill and Nombinnie Nature Reserves proved good spots. It was at the latter we saw what we thought was an insect trap. Morning trips to Cargelligo State Forest and Euabalong on the Lachlan River were again good spots. Drives from the weir following the Lachlan River and canals back into town were wonderful excursions with plenty of bird sightings along with other fauna and flora. On the weir road conversation was struck up with a local cocky, John Chanter, who said we were welcome to drive to one of his dams to observe the birds coming in for a late afternoon drink. Such was the friendliness of the locals. A call in to say g'day to Lynne Aubrey, who has compiled a bird list for the area, gave us a glimpse of her idyllic property on the bank of Curlew Water.

Going on camps such as this I feel are excellent ways to observe birds in detail as well as seeing them in a different habitat from that in the Illawarra. The different species observed never ceases to amaze. I felt the camp was a huge success; everyone was friendly and got on well and had an enjoyable time - I can't wait for the next one. I would like to thank Tom and Kevin, our fearless leaders, for organising trips and looking after us. Kevin didn't have to blow his whistle too often. To all the participants who performed at Tera's 60th birthday: thank you. A special thank-you to Fae and Kevin, who put on a surprise party for Tera. I had a measure of trouble with Tera keeping it a secret; she wanted to know why I had to see Kevin so often. After Gwen asked me if I wanted ice, I was running out of excuses and reasons. All was well on the night, the secret secure and the party enjoyed by the birdos and some residents from the caravan park. Thank you, all.

Gulls may be put on the pill

THE Scottish city of Aberdeen is considering feeding contraceptive pills to its estimated 7000 seagulls, which have gained a reputation for aggression, The Times newspaper has reported. Kevin Stewart, leader of the Scottish National Party group on Aberdeen City Council, said contraceptives could be the answer. "It would be no problem getting them to eat the pills. Seagulls are not fussy creatures. They will eat anything and everything," he said. Aberdeen has tried removing the birds' nests from buildings and towing a rubbish-filled barge out to sea to lure them away from the city, but these measures failed to work.

ILLAWARRA MERCURY 15/11/03



Pigeons still rule the roost

FEEDING the pigeons in the shadow of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square is now illegal, with those caught facing a \$117 fine. The move follows the city's failure to reduce the mess generated by the birds by employing a Harris hawk called Harry to chase them away. The measures have cut the number of pigeons from around 4000 to 200, but a few diehards persist in scattering seed. London Mayor Ken Livingstone estimates pigeon droppings have caused damage worth \$330,000 to the square and to Nelson's Column, which marks the 1805 victory by the British admiral over the combined French and Spanish fleets.

ILLAWARRA MERCURY 19/11/03

Send your records to: email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph:4276 1015 or 29 Minnegang St. Warrawong 2502

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	8	28-Oct	New Haven Gap, s of Sassafras	woodland	GD
Great Crested Grebe	4	19-Oct	Swan Lake	lake	KM
Fluttering Shearwater	1000+	12-Oct	off Windang Is.	marine	CJC
Striated Heron	1	4-Oct	Purry-Burry Pt., Primbee	wetland	MPP
Striated Heron	1	29-Oct	Huskisson	creek	BA
Nankeen Night Heron	1	6-Oct	Berrara	lagoon	KM
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	6-Oct	Tallawarra ash ponds	wetland	DG
Square-tailed Kite	1	24-Oct	Berrara beach	overhead	MJ
Swamp Harrier	1	19-Oct	Pyree	paddock	KM
Swamp Harrier	1	19-Oct	Vincentia west	overhead	KM
Brown Goshawk	1	29-Oct	Huskisson	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk	1	11-Oct	West Cambewarra	overhead	GD
Brown Falcon	1	6-Oct	Tallawarra ash ponds	overhead	DG
Eurasian Coot	1000+	19-Oct	Swan Lake	lake	KM
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	7-Oct	Brooks Ck., Kanahooka	lake shore	MC
Sanderling	1	29-Oct	Windang	sand flats	CB
Red-necked Stint	73	14-Oct	Windang	sand flats	CB
Red-necked Stint	200+	27-Oct	Windang	sand flats	DG
Grey Plover	2	7-Oct	Windang	sand flats	CB
Red-capped Plover	50+	27-Oct	Windang	sand flats	DG
Lesser Sand Plover	1	13-Oct	Windang	sand flats	CJC
Greater Sand Plover	1	7-Oct	Windang	sand flats	CB
Sooty Tern	100+	12-Oct	off Windang Is.	marine	CJC
Whiskered Tern	2	4-Oct	Purry-Burry Pt., Primbee	wetland	MPP
Whiskered Tern	1	6-Oct	Brooks Ck., Kanahooka	lake shore	MC
Common Bronzewing	5	19-Oct	Sanctuary Point	roadside	KM
Peaceful Dove	1	19-Oct	Conjola NP	woodland	KM
Topknot Pigeon	40+	15-Oct	Mt. Ousley	overhead	CJC
Topknot Pigeon	15	17-Oct	Keiraville	garden	ME
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	7	6-Oct	Box Vale track, Welby	forest	RM
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	20	28-Oct	New Haven Gap, s of Sassafras	woodland	GD
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	100+	28-Oct	Porters Creek Dam	overhead	NJ
Musk Lorikeet	20+	29-Oct	Huskisson	woodland	BA
Ground Parrot	15	28-Oct	Porters Creek Dam area	heath/woodland	GD
Powerful Owl	1	11-Oct	West Cambewarra	forest	GD
Sooty Owl	1	11-Oct	West Cambewarra	forest	GD
Sooty Owl	1	28-Oct	Porters Creek Dam	forest	GD
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	19-Oct	Conjola NP	woodland	KM
Striated Fieldwren	2	28-Oct	New Haven Gap, s of Sassafras	heath/woodland	GD
White-plumed Honeyeater	1	24-Oct	Shellharbour Square	parkland	KM
Scarlet Honeyeater	7	21-Oct	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Rose Robin	2	20-Oct	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Logrunner	3-4	late-Oct	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	rainforest	MM
Olive Whistler	1	28-Oct	Porters Creek Dam area	forest	GD
White-winged Triller	1	19-Oct	Conjola NP	woodland	KM
Figbird	3	5-Oct	Werri Lagoon	urban	PMM
Skylark	4+	10-Oct	Swamp Rd. Dunmore	fields	DG
Zebra Finch	12	24-Oct	Shellcove	grassland	DG
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	4	24-Oct	Shellcove	grassland	DG
Bassian Thrush	2	17-Oct	Bellawongarah	forest	BA

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; GD – Gary Daly; ME – Mary Eskdale; PF – Peter Fackander; DG – Darryl Goldrick; NJ – Nigel Jacket; MJ – Michael Jarman; RM – Richard Miller; KM - Kevin Mills; MM - Mike Morphet; MPP – Martin & Penny Potter.

Comment: It's good to see that not everything was killed by the bushfires that swept through the New Haven Gap area a couple of years ago, and a flock of 20 Glossy Black-Cockatoo is impressive anywhere. Chestnut-rumped Heathwren are hard to find and restricted in their distribution. Ground Parrots are likewise difficult to detect, so this recent survey of the Porters Creek area is a valuable contribution to our local knowledge. The Sooty Terns were part of a feeding frenzy that occurred during a strong southerly squall.



STOP PRESS

Field Trip to Thirlmere Lakes Saturday 13th December.

Head from Wollongong up Mt. Ousley Rd., then west along Picton Rd. to Picton. At the main intersection in Picton turn left (south) towards Mittagong and Thirlmere. Do NOT turn south on the freeway intersection. Head south out of Picton under a railway bridge for about 2 km, then turn right to Thirlmere along Thirlmere Way which takes you under another railway bridge. Follow this road for around 7km until you arrive in Thirlmere at a round-about. Turn right here over the railway, then immediately left (south) on to Barbour Rd. This road takes you past the Thirlmere railway museum. Continue south for about 2km until you come to Slades Rd. on the right hand side. Follow this for 1.5km into Thirlmere Lakes National Park to the Lake Werri Berri picnic area. **Meet here at 9 am.** Allow 1.5 hours travel time from Wollongong. Carry morning tea, late lunch at cars.