



"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

I.B.O.C. NEWS

The Newsletter 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

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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FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

MID WEEK WALK: WINDANG AFTERNOON OUTING - Wednesday 4th February, 5.00pm

Our traditional late afternoon outing to Windang sandflats. Meet at 5pm under the pine trees on north side of Windang estuary, east of the bridge. At Windang take Acacia St. east off Windang Rd., then take the second right (south), Waratah St. Ahead of you should be the combined entrance to Windang caravan park and Windang Surf Club. Follow the arrow towards the surf club and meet at the eastern end of the Norfolk Pines.

CLUB MEETING - Monday 9th February 2004, 7.30pm

Our guest speaker will be Michael Jarman on the topic of the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program, for which he is the co-ordinator. The program is a community-based initiative funded by the NPWS and designed to enhance the breeding success of threatened shorebirds that nest on beaches and off-shore islands along the NSW South Coast. Species of special concern are the Hooded Plover, Little Tern and the Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. Just this past month nesting Little Terns at Perkins Beach have attracted media attention, and their presence is an indication of the program's success and the importance of volunteers in the conservation of shorebirds under threat. Don't forget to bring eats along for supper.

MONTHLY OUTING - Saturday February 14th - Upper Cordeaux River - Leader Chris Chafer

Meet at Mt. Kembla summit track car park at 8.30am. We will be travelling from here as a convoy into restricted catchment land (with locked gates) so don't be late. This walk will take us through restricted Sydney Catchment Authority lands around Upper Cordeaux No. 2 reservoir, through rainforest and tall moist eucalypt forest. The tracks we'll traverse are gently undulating to flat. Bring a carry lunch and morning tea. To get to the meeting place take the Cordeaux Rd off the Princes Hwy at Figtree, next to the rail overpass. Continue along Cordeaux Rd through the village of Mt. Kembla, past the Dendrobium Mine entrance until you come to a Y intersection. Continue along Cordeaux Rd which veers to the left here for just over a kilometre until you reach the major powerline easement with a car park and lookout.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 17 February 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.

MARCH 2004 NEWSLETTER

Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Tuesday 17th February**. Please ensure you don't leave submitting your contributions to the last minute and where possible please submit by email.

DRAFT IBOC Programme for 2004

FEBRUARY	4 (Weds)	Windang/ Lake Illawarra for Waders and Picnic Tea
	9 (Mon)	Shorebirds Recovery Program - Mike Jarman
	14 (Sat)	Upper Cordeaux River - Chris Chafer
MARCH	8 (Mon)	The Galapagos Islands - Col Markham
	10 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	14 (Sun)	Cave Creek Hilltop and Cecil Hoskins Reserve
	21 (Sat)	Senior Citizens Walk at Puckeys Estate
APRIL	10 (Sat)	Camp: Kangaroo Valley for 4-5 days No Meeting or Mid Week Walk
	17 (Sat)	Bulli Pass and Rixons Pass
MAY	10 (Mon)	Speaker TBA
	12 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	16 (Sun)	Miners Despair Track, Belangalo State Forest
JUNE	14 (Mon)	Speaker TBA
	16 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	19 (Sat)	Primbee Dunes & Korungulla Swamp
JULY	12 (Mon)	Birds of Windang - Chris Chafer
	14 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	18 (Sun)	Bush Bank Mill and Hoddles Track
AUGUST	9 (Mon)	Mystery Bird of Mount Annan - Alan Leishman
	11 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	14 (Sat)	Belmore and Carrington Falls
SEPTEMBER	13 (Mon)	Speaker TBA
	15 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	19 (Sun)	Picton Weir and Bargo River
OCTOBER	11 (Mon)	Speaker TBA
	13 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	16 (Sat)	Bangalee Reserve, Shoalhaven
	23-29	Camp Venue TBA
NOVEMBER	8 (Mon)	AGM - Speaker TBA
	10 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	14 (Sun)	Little Bourke River /Tourist Road SCA
DECEMBER	13 (Mon)	Christmas Meeting
	15 (Weds)	Mid Week Walk TBA
	18 (Sat)	Christmas Outing to Stingray Swamp, Penrose State Forest with BBQ/Picnic Tea

Shoalhaven Programme for 2004 - (Third Sunday, 8.30am)

15 FEBRUARY	Comerong Island, N.R.'	Meet Shoalhaven Heads Van Park
18 MARCH (Thurs)	Video/Picture Night at Barry and Susan's	7pm, pickies
21 MARCH	Boyd Lookout/ Granite Falls	Meet Bewong Rest Area
18 APRIL	Killalea SRA/ Kiama	Meet Berry Apex Park
16 MAY	Yalwal Picnic Area at the Creek	Meet Jet Pole
20 JUNE	Sanders, Bong Bong Road	Meet Berry Apex Park
18 JULY	Vincentia Water Tower/ Treatment Works	Meet Jet Pole
15 AUGUST	Wandandian/ Hawthorn Road	Meet Bewong RA
19 SEPTEMBER	Rocklowe Creek/ Dunmore	Meet Berry Apex Park
17 OCTOBER	Burrier, Ken Forbes	Meet Jet Pole
21 NOVEMBER	Barren Grounds NR	Meet Berry Apex Park
19 DECEMBER	Bamerang Water Treatment	5.00pm BYO

Contacts: Barry & Susan, 4464 1389; Dallas, 4448 8118; Peter and Julie, 4447 1318.

Recent Orange-bellied Parrot sightings in NSW - Judi Russell

The recent sighting of an immature Orange-bellied Parrot at Magic Point Maroubra 25 August-29 September that had been colour banded in Tasmania in February this year attracted a lot of attention when it was first sighted; initially some people doubted its authenticity. I was one of the people who posted a note to Birding-us when the bird was first reported and said not to dismiss the record because my husband Neil and I had seen one on Comerong Island on 8 June 1986, which basically went unreported at the time. The recent sightings first at Shoalhaven Heads and then at Magic Point brought back memories of our sighting of an immature bird. Following our observation we discussed it at length with the late Arnold McGill. He told us that John Hobbs, another noted ornithologist, had reported an immature Orange-bellied Parrot at Comerong Island 12-13 June 1986, and this was probably the same bird. At the time it was decided that John Hobbs would submit a description of the bird, however it would appear that the only report made was a brief note in the NSW Field Ornithologists Club Newsletter No 95 p.4 August 1986. The supporting description was in fact never published.

I cannot recall when John Hobbs died but it is possible that it was around that time and that may well be the reason why the note was never submitted to "*Australian Birds*" as was originally planned. The bird we saw was immature, although its back was quite distinctive green and the belly was noticeably pale orange, there was a dark blue edge along the folded wing. We flushed the bird on a small track at Comerong Island and followed it as it flew, it landed again and then flew again. The weather was rather cold and windy and we did try unsuccessfully to find the bird again the next day. It was apparent to us that this was an Orange-bellied Parrot. We were quite certain of the identification and were pleased to hear that a knowledgeable birdwatcher like John Hobbs had in fact seen the bird too and could corroborate our identification.

IBOC Club T-Shirts

Just a reminder that there are a number of club t-shirts ranging from Small to XX-Large available. They are forest green with the club logo on the pocket -just perfect for mid-week and weekend outings.

Cost is still \$30. Please contact Kerri Lewis (02 4285 2736)

IBOC Members Christmas Meeting - 8 December 2003 - Fae McGregor

President Darryl Goldrick welcomed a good number of members to this final meeting for 2003. Before getting into the Season's festivities normal business was taken care of. Coming events mentioned, special sightings recorded and thanks extended to all members for their interest and contributions to the club over the past year. Darryl especially thanked all for supporting and assisting him in his role of President which he had enjoyed over the past two years.

An interesting program was appreciated by all present:

- Brian and Barbara Hales led us in a *Cryptic Bird Name Quiz* which surprisingly I won (must have been helped by doing the daily cryptic crossword in the Mercury).
- Betty Hudson read poetry for our pleasure. She chose *The Bushman's Farewell to Queensland* and three of Pixie O'Harris short bird poems *Brolga, I'm Mrs Magpie* and *Lyrebird*.
- *Bird Sounds from my Garden* was the interesting quiz presented by Tera Wheway and Peter Fackender proved he knew more of the bird calls than anyone else present and won the prize.
- The Annual T-shirt parade and competition showed great creative talent by the entrants with Judy pipping Brian for the winner's prize. Both prizes were donated by Jack Hyslop.
- With great passion and enthusiasm John Cashman recited John O'Brien's *Ballad of Tangmalangaloo* and W Gibson's *The Match* much to the enjoyment of all.
- Usually we would choose our best bird photos to show to Club members but not Joan Zealey who presented a quiz to identify birds from her most obscure photographs. Amazingly Brian Hales was somehow the winner.
- President Darryl presented Awards to members for their contributions to the Club. The Literary Award went to Alison Foley, Poet Laureate Award to John Cashman, Rookie Camper Award to Bruce O'Brien, Quiet Achievers/ Club Persons of the Year 2003 Award to Joan and Tom Wylie and Social Directors Award to Fae and Kevin McGregor. Special thanks were extended to Norma Almond and Betty Hudson for their wonderful efforts in the kitchen at each meeting.
- The Lucky Door Prizes drawn by Jim and Gwen Robinson was won by Mark and second prize was won by Nancy.
- The final act of the evening was presented with great gusto by the Lake Cargelligo Tribe with their *Aputcha*.

Despite all the noise and fun the Club's newest member, one month old Keira Bourne was content to sleep in her comfortable capsule. A special festive supper was enjoyed and the talk and eating was only interrupted when Alison and David the proud parents of baby Keira were asked to cut the beautiful Christmas cake made by Norma Almond. Kevin also took advantage at this time to thank Darryl on behalf of all members for his commitment to the Club as President over the past two years. A happy evening was concluded by everyone being wished a Merry Christmas and happy safe holidays.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE: TWO BIRDS AUSTRALIA CONFERENCES IN EARLY 2004

For further information contact Lise Hobcroft, Birds Australia (SNAG)
Phone: 02 9436 0388 Fax: 029436 0466 Email: rosella63@bigpond.com

BIRDS AUSTRALIA – SOUTHERN NSW & ACT BRANCH

Scientific Day and Annual General Meeting
Saturday 3 April 2004 1.30-5 pm

“THREATENED NEW SOUTH WALES PARROTS & COCKATOOS”

Norman Nock Theatre, Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards, Sydney

Registration: Members' \$25, students/concessions \$20, non members \$30

BIRDS AUSTRALIA Members Day and Annual General Meeting Saturday 29 May 2004 9 am to 5.30 pm

General purpose Building, Callaghan Campus, University of Newcastle, Jesmond

Conferences Themes: “Managing the lower Hunter Valley Wetlands for Waterbirds” and “Birds Australia : Achievements & Future Directions”

Conference Dinner at University 7 pm

Registration: Members \$50, Students/Concessions \$40, Non-members \$60 Dinner \$40

Field Trip to Thirlmere Lakes - 13 December 2003
Chris Chafer

Only 11 members turned up for the December outing on a fine, sunny summer morn. I must admit that I was trepidatious about leading this walk, as six months earlier there was very little avian activity, the whole area having been burnt during an intense wildfire in December 2001. Research into the impacts of intense wildfire on birds are scarce, though the few studies that have been published suggest that it can take 3-10 years for an area to recover to pre-fire species diversity levels.

We began our walk from the Werri Berri car park in Thirlmere Lakes National Park. A quick scan of Lake Werri Berri produced Musk Duck and a few cormorants, while above the picnic ground toilet; a pair of Leaden Flycatcher were found nesting. Other species included Noisy Friarbird, superb views of a male Mistletoebird and Sacred Kingfisher. The group headed off east with the intention of circumnavigating the first three lakes in the chain of five large ponds, a distance of about 5.5km.

Being summer, one expects to hear the din of cicadas through the day (at least four different species were present), but nothing could have prepared us for the ear-shattering chorus that we had to endure for the few kilometres. For example, at one point along the walk a male Rufous Whistler was observed singing only ten metres from us, but all you could hear above the cicadas was a couple of very faint notes. In retrospect, this was an interesting experience, but at the time it was very frustrating as all birds observed had to be located visually. Nothing could be heard calling above the millions of buzzing cicadas, dominated by the vociferous Cherrynose *Macrotristria angularis*. For those interested in learning more on cicadas try visiting the excellent website at <http://www.zen.uq.edu.au/entomology/ins-info/> which illustrates and describes every species in eastern Australia.

Despite the aforementioned difficulties, the bird list began to grow as we circled around Lake Gandagarra including Wonga Pigeon, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Rosella, Olive-backed Oriole and the beautiful White-throated Gerygone.

After morning tea the day began to warm rapidly, the cicadas quietened down and the birds became harder to find, though we did encounter a Red-bellied Black Snake. We continued walking along the western shore of the three lakes before heading back to the cars for lunch, adding Satin Bowerbird, King Parrot, Grey Butcherbird, Variegated Fairy-wren and a party of Striated Thornbill. At lunch, the tranquil waters of the lake were too tempting for Jude and she went for a quick dip.

After lunch we drove west along Blue Gum Creek. to the car park at the entrance to Nattai National Park. Here we walked leisurely down the fire trail for a couple of kilometres before retracing our steps. This area is clothed in regenerating moist forest dominated by tea-tree, tall blue gums and tree ferns. Birds were however few, though we added Golden Whistler, White-throated and Red-browed Treecreeper, Eastern Yellow Robin, Red-browed Finch and Black-faced Monarch which was nesting.

So, despite my earlier reservations about the burnt environment, the summer heat and the best deafening efforts of the cicadas, the day produced some good birding. A total of 47 species were recorded; Musk Duck, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Australasian Grebe, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen, Wonga Pigeon, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Australian King-Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Eastern Rosella, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, White-throated Treecreeper, Red-browed Treecreeper, Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Spotted Pardalote, White-browed Scrubwren, White-throated Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Noisy Friarbird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Monarch, Leaden Flycatcher, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Olive-backed Oriole, Grey Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Satin Bowerbird, Red-browed Finch, Mistletoebird.

(A few noticeable absences included no raven, cuckoo-shrike, rockwarbler, magpie-lark, swallow or raptors!)

Access to Sydney Catchment Authority (formerly Water Board) Lands
Chris Chafer

In recent months a number of club members have told me of their exploits into Sydney Catchment Authority (formerly Water Board) lands, especially behind Mt Keira, Mt Kembla, off the Picton Rd and from the Tourist Road near Robertson. I advise you that access to SCA catchment lands is illegal to unauthorised persons and can lead to a fine of several thousand dollars and a criminal record. Additionally, IBOC is currently negotiating access to these areas with the SCA and illegal access by members may jeopardise the outcomes of these negotiations.

The SCA and NSW Parks are currently undertaking extensive patrols of access points and are keen to catch and prosecute as many trespassers as possible. Some locations have hidden cameras and silent infra-red alarms to aid detection and prosecution.

Take heed of this warning and do not enter SCA lands, the warning signs are not gimmicks.

The Second Australasian Ornithological Conference
Mike Morphett

Like the brief stopover of a migratory bird, the second conference has been and gone. And like the inaugural one at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, it was full-on from start to finish and well organised. It was held in the Manning Clark Centre at the Australian National University, Canberra from 11th to 13th December. There was so much information to take on board from the colourful and dynamic PowerPoint oral presentations and the wide range of posters arranged on screens in the reception area close to the very tempting bookstall. To stop myself from becoming brain-dead and sleepy from this information overload, I took copious notes; kept my consumption of alcoholic refreshment to a very moderate level; and took time-out on a regular, brief basis. That was largely by way of strolls through the sylvan grounds of the campus, where there was plenty of birdlife: Australian Magpies seemed to have the whole territory carved up, and the large flock of Gang-gang Cockatoos was a joy to see. I found relaxation along the Sullivan's Creek footpath out towards Lake Burley Griffin. There were organised early morning bird walks each day, but they clashed with my hot breakfast time at University House, situated just a ten minutes walk from the conference venue.

For our club's library I managed to acquire a spare copy of the 111-page conference program, which is a comprehensive document in itself, giving abstracts to both the spoken and poster papers. I hope my summary will serve as a kind of index so that readers can pursue their own line of enquiry on topics of special interest to them. The conference contained twenty main themes in addition to a session called 'A mixed bag':

Origins	Species' limits	Speciation	Geographic variation in life histories	Biodiversity & atlasing
Breeding biology	Honeyeaters: movements & feeding associations	People & birds: engaging land managers	People & birds: avoiding impacts	Reproductive & habitat enhancement for conservation, & rehabilitation
Mating strategies	Reproductive & dispersal strategies	Survival strategies	Influences on breeding, feeding & survival	Distribution & habitat
Microhabitats	People & birds: conservation & community participation	Ecological studies & indigenous perspectives	Birds & landscapes	Waterbird symposium

In all there were 79 spoken papers, but, because of double-timetabling, I could attend only 47 of them in their entirety, which made for some difficult choices at times. This had to be, I guess; otherwise, I'd still be there instead of at home composing this overview. A workshop on bird sampling techniques, which I found very helpful for my own local study, also coincided with a video session that included Painted Honeyeaters.

Below I have listed the various bird groups and species that received special attention, indicating in parentheses those that warranted more than one discussion paper. The Noisy Miner and Pied Currawong were often referred to and were generally regarded as the villains of the piece.

Albatrosses	Crested Tern	New Zealand Kiwi (2)	Robins Red-capped	Southern Scrub-robin
" Shy	Glossy Black-Cockatoo	" Robins (2)	" Western Yellow	Speckled Warbler
" White-capped	Honeyeaters (3)	" Rock Wren	Roseate Tern	Superb Fairy-wren
Australian Brush-turkey	" Black-headed	Parrot Orange-bellied	Rufous Bristlebird	Treecreepers
Australian Magpie (2)	" Melithreptus	" Swift	Seabirds	Waterbirds (5)
Barking Owl (2)	" Yellow-faced	Passerines	Shearwater Short-tailed	Wedge-tailed Eagle (2)
Black-eared Miner	Ibis	Penguins Subantarctic	" Wedge-tailed (2)	White-browed Scrubwren (2)
Black-necked Stork	Jacky Winter	Pheasant Coucal	Shorebirds	Woodland Birds (4)
Black Noddy	Magpie Goose	Robins Ground-foraging	Silvereye	
Button-quail	New Zealand Harriers	" Hooded	Southern Emu-wren	

As I expected, a wide spectrum of bird habitats was covered, and breeding was a major focus. Two new expressions I picked up: biodiversity hotspots and ecosystem engineer. The latter term was applied to the burrowing Wedge-tailed Shearwater.

Already the next biennial conference is in planning mode for early December 2005 in New Zealand's South Island. It looks like a toss-up between Blenheim and Christchurch, with Blenheim, a small rural town across the Cook Strait from Wellington, favoured because of its access to some of the best birding areas. Among these were mentioned Kaikoura for pelagics, St Arnaud alpine beech district, Maud Island wildlife sanctuary in Marlborough Sound, and Porirua Harbour reserve, north of Wellington. It is envisaged that field study day "trups" would be interwoven with the spoken papers. Sounds exciting, doesn't it? I'm already thinking of an additional sector: Stewart Island. Any chance of a club package tour?

The Australasian Shorebird Conference followed hot on the halluxes of the Ornithological Conference, and I had a glimpse that first evening of the Arctic tundra bird breeding grounds through the slides of Dr Evgeny Syroechkovski from the Russian Academy of Science. Volunteers are invited to assist in future projects there. The session was a real appetiser for a shorebird smorgasbord, but I had other fish to fry.

The next day Jack Holland of the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) took five of us round to four different local areas during a seven-hour period, which became increasingly hot. The outing was a most enjoyable way to top off the talkfest and so much the better for having someone with Jack's local knowledge to guide us. At Campbell Park in woodland adjoining Defence buildings there was much bird activity, confirming Jack's opinion of its being one of the best birding spots in the district. Other organisms present were kangaroos, hares and a fox, and deafening cicadas. For me the highlights were the close-up views of the Speckled Warbler, Weebill and Rufous Whistler; the contrasting calls and throat-hackles of the Australian and Little Ravens; and the very vocal and active White-winged Trillers, which seemed to deserve the alternative common name of Bush Canary more than do the White-throated Gerygones, of which a female was seen sitting on a nest. Among the waterbirds at the Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Works we had good sightings of Blue-billed and Pink-eared Ducks, not common in the Illawarra, and Hardhead. For my eyes the striped markings of the Pink-eared were much more distinguishable than its ear coloration, so I wondered why the name of Zebra Duck hadn't overridden Pink-eared; after all, we've chosen Zebra Finch rather than its Chestnut-eared alternative. In the cool of the two hides we scanned the pond of Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve. Notable for me were the three Red-kneed Dotterel, which barely moved at the far edge, and the Australasian Shoveler. Finally we walked through some sections of the Botanic Gardens, enjoying the cool of the rainforest gully, although it was very quiet birdwise. Out in the open area we watched a male Superb Fairy-wren feeding young in the nest, then station itself at the entry for a time until the female appeared with more tucker. This whole activity took a much shorter time than we did to get served in the lunch-time queue! Still, it was heartening to see so many people, especially children, connecting with this human-engineered natural environment hotspot.

Broken Hill Revisited

Alison Foley

In September 2002, Dave and I spent an unforgettable fortnight in outback NSW, based at The Hill - he, working at the hospital and I, lady of leisure, walking around town and hitching out to as many local landmarks as possible (we had no car), twitching uncontrollably! We spent four nights in Kinchega N.P. and saw a total of 56 bird species during the 18 days. So, when the opportunity came up last October 2003 to go back again for 17 days, this time with Tiviffy (our 4WD), we leapt at it, excited at the prospect of seeing some new species and, given the comparable circumstances (time of year, place, duration of stay), whether our bird-watching skills had improved at all.

We broke the outward trip into three parts, spending the first night at Federal Falls Camping Area in Mt. Canobolas SRA, a beautiful eucalypt forest on top of an unfortunately extinct volcano, unfortunate because we froze once the sun went down, despite a campfire. During the night, the air mattress deflated and at 4 a.m., I felt compelled to boil water on the gas stove to fill a hot water bottle and add a few more pairs of socks while Dave got warm by pumping up the air mattress again. Next morning brought our first new species, a red-browed treecreeper spotted by Dave, while I was absorbed in reading the information board about them, thus missing out on the actual sighting.

At Nyngan, we stopped at a little spot we know from a previous trip - in Rotary Park on the banks of the Bogan River. Our aim was a quick dip but, drying off lying on our backs under a shady gum, we spied, first, a tawny frogmouth and then, a pair of white-breasted woodswallows on their respective nests and a crested shrike-tit fluttering around the branches. We decided to stop there on the return journey and spend more time at this prime site. The long haul of the second day out from Wollongong saw us 40k short of Cobar as the red ball was consumed on the horizon and we spent the hours of darkness at a rest area which, as the brilliantly sequined night sky faded to dawn, produced mallee ringnecks, apostlebirds (so happy to see those pirates again!) and best of all, three grey-crowned babblers, exploring the fascinating world of the bases of a row of shrubs. Our lunch stop, Wilcannia, at a favourite spot, just right of the bridge over the Darling, afforded a great view of a rufous songlark which had decided to keep a vigilant eye on the equal distribution of sandwiches at our picnic.

The absurdity of bird-watching is that the birds are often somewhere they're not supposed to be or, at least, not where you expect them. How many of us have undertaken a long walk in a remote area, jittery binocs at the ready and seen virtually nothing only to return to the car park and picnic area and find a party of weird and wonderful species honking the car horn! A planned excursion specifically to see some in the most remote part of Australia has, more often than not, led us to less sightings than a ten-minute stop at a rest area or petrol station. We experienced this a few k east of Narromine, where we stopped at a rest area picnic table and, within moments, had seen cockatiels (described by me as black and white parrots before Dave saw them), white-winged trillers, red-rumped parrots, white-plumed honeyeaters, a nankeen kestrel and a little friarbird while next day, stopping to inflate a tyre at Little Topar Roadhouse (80k east of the Hill), we got a real thrill. Dave spotted a white-winged fairy-wren, an indigo inky splash on the fiery red landscape. To me, it looked like nature's brush had forgotten to finish painting it, leaving the wings immaculately white. Yet even as we oohed and aahed, something distracted us, as four multi-coloured little bundles crossed our binocs, right to left and settled on a bush. Zebra finches!! Simpson and Day do not do them justice - how pretty they are and what a sweet call, breathless whispers of children's mischief.

Once at Broken Hill, we settled into our daily routine - Dave going off to work from early in the morning till 3 p.m. and me at eight months pregnant, despite falling down the stairs on the first night, taking it very easy most days till he got home, whereupon we went on serious, planned bird-walks. Our excursions took us to the following, all highly recommendable, places for birds, though still not as gratifying as any of our unplanned sightings: Silverton, Umberumberka Dam, Stephen's Creek Reservoir, Twin Lakes, the Living Desert, White Rocks, the Sundown Trail, Mutawintji N.P. and the Pinnacles.

A gibber's throw from our house in Oxide St. was White Rocks Reserve, the site of the only WW1 skirmish on Australian soil, where two Turks, who ran an ice-cream cart, fired on a trainload of Sunday picnickers on

their way to Silverton. Here, at first wan light one 6°C morning, through scarves and fleecy hoods, we identified a speck no bigger than a full stop acting as if it had trouble deciding which sentence to put an end to - a 13 cm black honeyeater, whose plaintive descending call and busy flight led us to a pair of Horsfield's bronze cuckoos, distinctive with their green sheen and heavily-barred breasts.

The weekend sandwiched in our fortnight's stay was spent 200k north-east at Mutawintiji N.P., where Lucky Lucy, an orphaned red kangaroo joey brought up by the rangers, was our alarm clock on both mornings, attacking a corner of our tent with gusto (we were obviously camped right on top of her favourite breakfast herbs). Among many glorious birds seen on the creek-bed walks, I heard a strange, new, chirruping (no other way to describe it) call repeated ad nauseum and then spied a large, crested bird in a thicket. A quick glance at the bible revealed it to be the chirruping wedgebill no less and how appropriately named. Dave spotted the striated pardalote or striated the spotted pardalote, no, I think it was the former - and, driving out of the park, a group of banded plovers, like a more streamlined model of their so-familiar cousin, the masked lapwing, tiptoed slowly and deliberately across our path, temporarily distracting us from the perils of outback driving.

Perhaps the zenith on this trip from a birding p.o.v. was a late-afternoon walk on the Sundown Trail, 6k north of town. This two-hour circuit is designed to accentuate geology rather than ornithology, but our single-mindedness was rewarded. CRIMSON CHATS! Surely the most spectacular of the smaller birds in Australia. One wonders why so many birds of the deserts and plains, where hiding-places are few and far between, are so brilliantly coloured. These little chaps perched on the tips of needle-like grasses, defying gravity and fluttering round each other like poppy petals caught in a willy-willy. Having taken our breath away, we were totally unprepared for what popped up in their midst, in complete contrast to their fiery colour - a pied pair of hooded robins. I'm sure you will all understand the stuttering, blubbering and mutual clutching that went on.

The return trip had a couple of memorable bird-moments too. Back at our hot spot in Nyngan, we once again found the tawny frogmouth in the same tree-fork only this time, he had two fluffy, glove-puppet miniature versions of himself sticking out each side of him, all three pairs of eyes fixed upon us. And on the last morning, we woke up in Goobang N.P., north of Parkes, to a pair of white-bellied cuckoo-shrikes and, last but by no means least, a black-eared cuckoo.

The final stats? 17 new species seen, 65 species seen in Broken Hill alone and a grand total for the trip of 102 species! Improved skills? Alice Springs, here we come!

Indian Myna	Silver Gull	Black Swan	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	White-winged Fairy-wren
Welcome Swallow	Common Starling	Crested Pigeon	Australian Raven	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Rock Dove	Australian Magpie	Noisy Miner	Yellow-throated Miner	Laughing Kookaburra
White-faced Heron	Red Wattlebird	Crimson Rosella	Masked Lapwing	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Willie Wagtail	Pacific Black Duck	Flame Robin	Masked Lapwing	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Australian Pelican	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Grey Fantail	Pied Currawong	White-browed Scrubwren
House Sparrow	Red-browed Finch	Common Blackbird	Spotted Pardalote	Red-browed Treecreeper
Pied Butcherbird	Nankeen Kestrel	Red-rumped Parrot	Superb Fairy-wren	Clamorous Reed-warbler
Tawny Frogmouth	Crested Shrike-tit	Mallee Ringneck	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Dusky Woodswallow
Great Cormorant	Rufous Songlark	Sacred Kingfisher	Dusky Woodswallow	White-winged Chough
Zebra Finch	Budgerigar	Richard's Pipit	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	White-winged Triller
Whiskered Tern	Eurasian Coot	Peaceful Dove	Chirruping Wedgebill	White-plumed Honeyeater
White-fronted Chat	Hooded Robin	Crimson Chat	Singing Honeyeater	Black-shouldered Kite
Rainbow Bee-eater	Musk Duck	Tree Martin	Variiegated Fairy-wren	White-breasted Woodswallow
Mulga Parrot	Apostlebird	Red-capped Robin	Striated Pardalote	Grey-crowned Babbler
Grey Butcherbird	Banded Plover	Blue Bonnet	Red-backed Kingfisher	Little Black Cormorant
Pacific Heron	Noisy Friarbird	Straw-necked Ibis	Brown Treecreeper	Little Pied Cormorant
Magpie Lark	Eastern Rosella	Little Corella	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	White-browed Babbler
Little Friarbird	Pink Cockatoo	Dusky Moorhen	Black Honeyeater	Black-tailed Native-hen
Cockatiel	Darter	Galah	Brown Goshawk	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
Emu	Black-eared Cuckoo		Common Bronzewing	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike

UNUSUAL RECORDS

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
Mottled Petrel	1	07-Dec	Bhrewerre Beach	beachcast	CJC
Eastern Reef Egret	1	09-Nov	Lake Conjola	rocky shore	CJC,KM
Eastern Reef Egret	1	28-Nov	Murray's Beach, Jervis Bay	rocky shore	BA
Eastern Reef Egret	1	07-Dec	Hole-in-the-wall, Jervis Bay	rocky shore	CJC
Nankeen Night Heron	4	26-Nov	Dunmore lakes	wetland	DG
Nankeen Night Heron	3	03-Dec	Mullet Creek, Dapto	wetland	DG
Nankeen Night Heron	1	06-Dec	Erowl Bay	lake shore	CJC
Black Bittern	1	15-Dec	Broughton Ck., Berry	creek	MW
Australasian Bittern	1	16-Dec	Cecil Hoskins Reserve	wetland	DAN
Square-tailed Kite	1	05-Nov	Vincentia west	overhead	BHy
Square-tailed Kite	1	09-Nov	Conjola NP	overhead	CJC,KM
Square-tailed Kite	1	09-Nov	Swan Lake	overhead	KM
Square-tailed Kite	1	06-Dec	Erowl Bay	woodland	CJC
Square-tailed Kite	1	30-Dec	Cudmirrah	woodland	KM
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	02-Dec	Warrawong	garden	CJC
Buff-banded Rail	1	19-Nov	Stuart Park, Wollongong	pond	AC
Eurasian Coot (nesting)	4	10-Nov	Blackbutt Res, Shellharbour	dam	CB
Painted Button-quail	1	21-Nov	Berry Mountain Rd.	dead on road	BA
Painted Button-quail	1	06-Dec	Boyd Lookout, Morton NP	heath	CJC
Sanderling	1	01-Nov	Windang	sand flats	CJC
Pied Oystercatcher	21	27-Nov	Black Head, Gerroa	rocky shore	BV
Grey Plover	1	16-Nov	Comerong Island	sand flats	AL, RT
Masked Lapwing	92	05-Dec	Nowra paper mill	paddock	MJ
Gull-billed Tern	4	01-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	SB
Little Tern	9pair	28-Dec	Windang (nesting)	beach	MJ
Whiskered Tern	7	09-Nov	Hooka Point, Berkeley	wetland	MC
Brush Bronzewing	1	17-Nov	Stone Bridge, Barren Grounds NR	heath	RJ
Brush Bronzewing	1	17-Nov	entrance, Barren Grounds NR	woodland	RJ
Brush Bronzewing	1	23-Nov	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC,CB
Brush Bronzewing	1	06-Dec	Kangaroo Hill, Morton NP	forest	CJC
Brush Bronzewing	1	12-Dec	upper Cordeaux River	forest	CJC
Peaceful Dove	1	08-Nov	Conjola NP	woodland	KM
Powerful Owl	1	01-Nov	Thirroul	garden	MM
Powerful Owl	1	07-Nov	Jamberoo Mountain	forest	RJ
Powerful Owl	1	20-Dec	Wog Wog Creek, Morton NP	forest	CJC
Tawny Frogmouth	2	22-Dec	Wollongong University	parkland	MPP
Eastern Bristlebird	1	07-Dec	Cave Beach car park, Booderre NP	woodland	CJC
White-cheeked Honeyeater	2	08-Nov	Conjola NP	woodland	KM
Hooded Robin	few	14-Nov	Bullio "Oakland" to Goodmans Ford	woodland	CB
Crested Shrike-tit	2	12-Dec	Bamerang Dam	woodland	BA
Leaden Flycatcher	2	23-Nov	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC,CB
Satin Flycatcher	1	03-Nov	Kangaroo Valley	forest	NJ
Satin Flycatcher	1	17-Nov	western Lake Wollumboola	forest	SBOC
Spangled Drongo	1	02-Nov	Blackbutt Reserve, Shellharbour	forest	MR
Spangled Drongo	1	09-Nov	Nth Wollongong	urban	PP
White-winged Triller	2	08-Nov	Conjola NP	woodland	KM
White-winged Triller	1	03-Dec	Mullet Creek, Dapto	wetland	DG
White-winged Triller	4	12-Dec	Yalwal	grassland	BA
White-browed Woodswallow	100+	16-Nov	Barren Grounds NR	overhead	RJ
Double-barred Finch	1	12-Dec	Bomaderry Creek	woodland	BA
Brown Songlark	few	14-Nov	Swamp Rd. Dunmore	paddock	CB

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; SB – Simon Blanchfellow; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; AC – Alan Cousins; GD – Gary Daly; PF – Peter Fackander; DG – Darryl Goldrick; BHy – Branden Haywood; NJ – Nigel Jacket; MJ – Michael Jarman; RJ – Richard Jordan; AL – Alan Lewis; RM – Richard Miller; KM – Kevin Mills; Mike Morphet; DAN – David & Ann Nicholls; MPP – Martin & Penny Potter.; PP – Peter Parker; MR – Michelle Rower; RT – Roger Truscott; SBOC – Shoalhaven Bird Observers Club; BV – Barry Virtue; MW – Mark Wittaker. **Comment:** There were many more records than above (3 pages in fact), however space has prevented their inclusion. A full list for the year (2003) can be found on the web site www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer/reports. It's great to see all the Square-tailed Kite records and Little Tern nesting at Windang after an absence of three decades.



"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

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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GREAT NEWS FOR THE CLUB!

Roger Bogaert, a past Vice-President, has kindly volunteered to be President rather than see the club without a figurehead and contact person. Congratulations and sincere thanks to Roger for offering to represent our members.

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

MID WEEK WALK: MT KEIRA SCOUT CAMP - Wednesday 10th March - Leader: Joan Wylie
Meet at 8.30am in the Mt Keira Scout Camp car park. If you are coming up to this popular bird watching spot take Mt Keira Road, and turn off to the left at the entrance to the Scout Camp.

CLUB MEETING - Monday 8th March 2004, 7.30pm

Our guest speaker will be Col Markham on the topic of **The Galapagos Islands**. Bring a plate for supper.

SENIOR CITIZENS WALK - PUCKEYS ESTATE - Sunday 21st March

As in past years David Winterbottom has extended an invitation to IBOC members to join this leisurely walk through Puckey's Estate followed by breakfast for only \$4. Please advise Denise Wright if you intend to go for catering purposes (tel: 4228 4855) Meet at 7.00 am on Sunday 21 March at Fairy Meadow Surf Club.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 16th March 2004 at 7.30 pm at the home of Joan and Tom Wylie, 4 Daphne Street, Bellambi (4284 2051). As usual, members are invited to attend.

APRIL 2004 NEWSLETTER

Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Friday 20th March**. Please ensure you don't leave submitting your contributions to the last minute and where possible please submit by email.

MONTHLY OUTING - Sunday 14th March – Cave Creek & Cecil Hoskins Reserve – Leader: Chris Chafer Meet at Cave Creek walking track car park at 9am. To get there from Wollongong via Picton, head west off Mt. Ousley Rd. to Picton on the Picton Road. At Picton, turn south (left) along the old Hume Hwy and proceed to Tahmoor. On the southern outskirts of Tahmoor is Bargo River Rd on your right (west). If you cross the Bargo River, you've gone too far. Follow the Bargo River Rd west to Couridjar and turn south (left) just after crossing the old railway line. Continue south through Buxton and Balmoral Village, then over the deepest rail cutting in Australia. Once over the bridge you will notice a large piece of artwork on the roadside. Approximately 1.5km from this object is the entrance to Cave Creek carpark. There is an obscure warning sign 170m before the entrance. If you enter Hilltop, you have gone too far. Allow 1.5 hrs travel from Wollongong. If you're coming from the south, make your way to Mittagong and head north onto the South Western Freeway. Almost immediately is an off-ramp to Hilltop, Colo Vale etc. Take this and head for Hilltop along Wilson Drive. The car park is about 300m north of last house. Bring a carry morning-tea, but lunch will be at the cars. Habitat is open woodland to Coachwood forest along the creek. We will have lunch at either Mt. Gibraltar or Lake Alexandra depending on weather. After lunch we will go to Hoskins Nature Reserve at Bong Bong in search of waterbirds.

Where Do Your Observations Go???????

Chris Chafer

Just a quick note to answer a recent question that came my way; what happens to the records submitted to myself and published on the back page(s) of this newsletter?

Well, firstly they go into the club's database which I maintain. Complete annual lists for the past several years are available on-line on my web site under the **reports** link (web address below). The data is also used to periodically update the on-line fully illustrated guide to Birds of the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Adjacent Tablelands, which is also on the my web site. A second edition of the hardcopy book of the same title is due for publication this year, hopefully April-May, as the 1st edition is now five years old and becoming outdated.

In addition to that, the data goes to Alan Morris who is records officer for Birds NSW, and notable observations are subsequently published in their monthly newsletter and annually in the NSW Annual Bird Report by that organisation. The data also goes to the NSW Bird Atlas group, NSW National Parks Wildlife Atlas and Birds Australia Atlas.

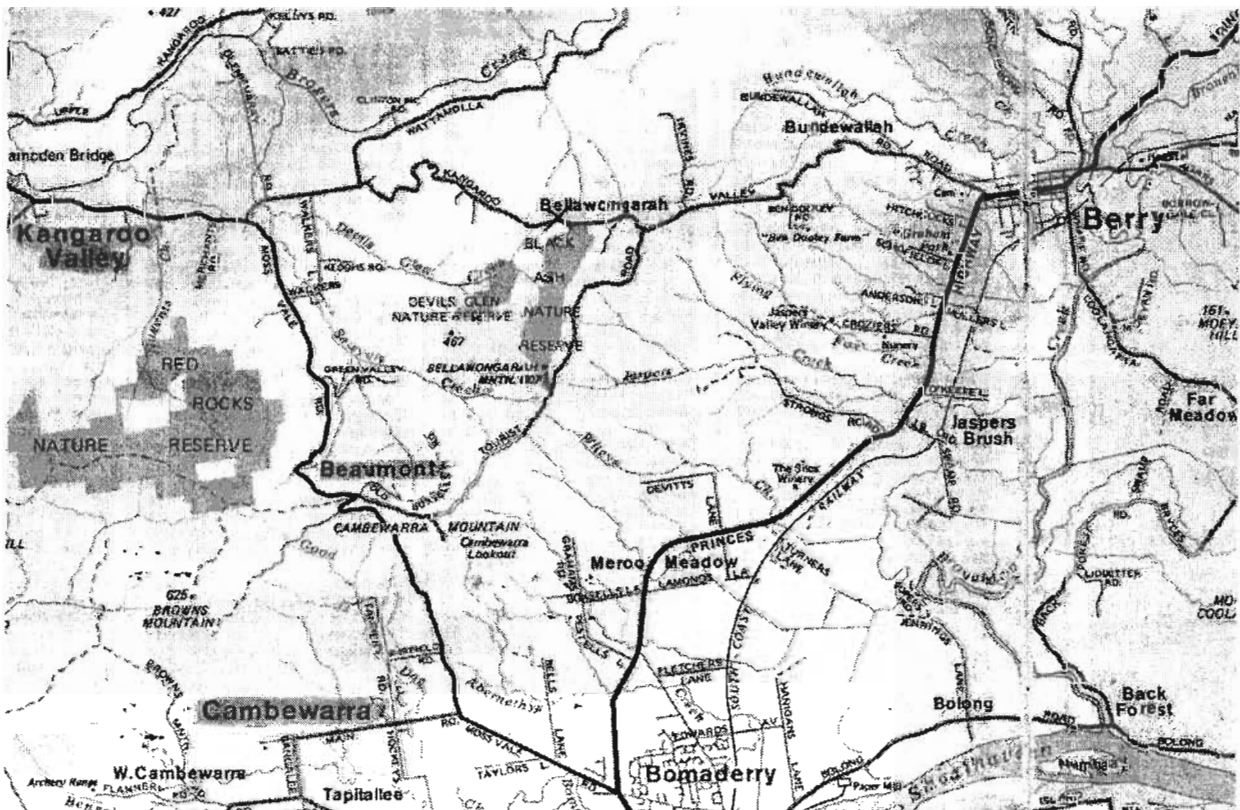
Cumulatively, the data is an extremely important contribution to understanding the distribution of avifauna in the local region and is used extensively by conservation bodies, environmental consultants, individual researchers, state and national government agencies, university students, etc. Some examples of its use include; the successful case against urban development around Lake Wollumboola via a Commission of Inquiry which led to the Lake and much of its surrounds being incorporated into Jervis Bay National Park. The data was used extensively in the recently published Bioregional Faunal Assessment of Wollongong local government area by NSW National Parks and in the Commission of Inquiry into development on the Illawarra escarpment. Shellharbour and Kiama Councils have also used the data for similar environmental investigations over the years. And finally data collected by IBOC members over the past two decades from the Lake Illawarra estuary was synthesised and presented in a recent symposium on the lake at Wollongong University. At the symposium's conclusion IBOC members received special mention by the symposium convener for their dedication to collecting data over a two decade period which has provided a unique insight to environmental change that is unparalleled by any other faunal group.

So as you can see, your periodic reporting can and does make a difference in a region that continues to grow in human population pressure. So please keep those records coming in, many people obtain pleasure by reading the monthly column, and I can only write it if you report what you see. If you need to know whether your observation is worthy of reporting, simply check the reportable species list on the web site above. For those interested in bushwalking, there are over 100 walks also described on the web site and some of the species you may encounter. The web address is; www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer Thanks again to everyone who submitted an observation in 2003.

EASTER CAMP – Saturday 10th April to Wednesday 14th April
 “Lothlorien”, Bellawongarah. Leader: Chris Chafer

We will be staying on the property of club member Bob Ashford. If you don't want to camp, Bob has a small B&B (a yurt) at very good rates, but there is only one double bed and it's first in first served. **His number is 4464 1574.** There will be water for showers but you need to bring your own drinking water. Berry and Kangaroo Valley are about 15-20 mins away and a variety of accommodation can be found there, but you will need to book. We will visit a variety of locations while there, possibly including Blackash NR, Comerong Is., Jacks Corner, Upper Kangaroo Valley, Browns Mountain or Tallowa Dam. The club shower and toilet will be provided.

To get there from Wollongong, head south to Berry. Easter traffic is notoriously bad, especially through northern Kiama and Minnamurra. Think seriously about going through Albion Park – Jamberoo – Kiama, then back onto the Princes Highway. Alternately, take Jamberoo Pass to Robertson, then head south to Kangaroo Valley via Barrengarry Pass. When you get to Berry take the Kangaroo Valley Road which commences at the southern end of the main street in Berry. Follow this for about 7km when you veer to right at a Y intersection. “Lothlorien” is about 1.6km from this intersection. We will be camping in a paddock and the entrance to the paddock is about 100m further on along Kangaroo Valley Road from the “Lothlorien” gate. Watch for the blue IBOC signs. For those with big caravans, the climb up Kangaroo Valley Road has a U-bend that may be tricky. An alternative route is the road up to Beaumont and Cambewarra Mountain lookout from Bomaderry (see map below). Then take the Tourist Road to Bellawongarah and turn left onto Kangaroo Valley Road. If you're coming from Barrengarry Pass - Kangaroo Valley with a caravan, I recommend you continue to Beaumont and take the Cambewarra lookout turn (Tourist Road) at the top of the pass. The Kangaroo Valley Road out of Kangaroo Valley is narrow with a couple of U-turns.



Location of the Easter camp at Bellawongarah. X marks the location of “Lothlorien”.

Barren Grounds Field Outing – Sunday 11 January 2004
Bruce O'Brien

Twelve adults and one infant turned up for the very first IBOC outing of 2004, the walk on the Griffiths Trail at Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. The day started out warm and humid enough, but perhaps a little cooler than would have been the case on the coast. This walk was a bit of an experiment, as though Barren Grounds is a popular venue for birdwatchers, mid-summer is a time when very few native vegetation species are flowering there. The unknown chance of possibly sighting one or two summer migrants was also one of the reasons for choosing this venue.

We opted for heading for the Illawarra Lookout first for a glorious view over the southern Illawarra. The morning was clear, and the ocean at Kiama and up and down the coast could be seen. Whilst Red Wattlebird, Little Wattlebird, White-browed Scrubwren and Eastern Yellow Robin were sighted around the picnic area, the walk to the Illawarra Lookout yielded virtually nothing. The day was warm with enough of a breeze to keep the birds hidden in their shelters. Perhaps surprisingly, not a raptor was spotted the whole day.

The real highlight of the day's birdwatching came about one kilometre east of the Illawarra Lookout, at the Glen. This is an area of the Griffiths Trail where the track dips down from the heath into a more wooded area, and we picked this shady spot for morning tea. The surrounding forest yielded several species, including Grey Fantail, Brown Thornbill, Eastern Whipbird, White-throated Treecreeper, Golden Whistler and Brown Cuckoo-dove. However, the most contentious sighting of the day, also seen in this area, was the Monarch. Whether it was the rare Spectacled Monarch, or the more usual Black-faced Monarch, was the subject of much debate. I think every person in the group saw the bird in question, but it of course was not co-operative except for the first three members on the scene, who remain adamant that it was, in fact, the rare Spectacled Monarch, given that it did not have a grey breast band, and the russet colouring on the belly reached up the throat to the bird's black mask. For those who lagged behind (such as myself) the bird never quite stopped and posed long enough to check the distinguishing features. I later checked the *Handbook of the Birds of the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Adjacent Tablelands* to find that the Spectacled Monarch is indeed a rare summer migrant to the Illawarra, being seen here once every few years or so. I wonder if anyone else has seen a Spectacled Monarch in these parts this summer? The Monarch was not the only debated sighting, as the weather conditions appeared not to be favourable to the birds showing themselves. A number of species were heard only, and not seen, while others gave tantalizing glimpses of themselves.

After morning tea most of the group returned to the picnic area to go home, or to see if the sightings were more worthwhile in that area. Meanwhile five of us carried on, thankfully in what became cooler conditions. Near the Saddleback Trig and the heath along the eastern escarpment it looked very likely that the fog was going to roll in any moment. It didn't, but the birds were still coy. One or two Eastern Bristlebirds were crossing the track rapidly without a moment's pause, and a Whipbird did the same. Despite the paucity of birdlife, there was a profusion of insect life, butterflies, flies and beetles of all descriptions, such that we wished we were on an entomology field excursion. Nevertheless the walk was enjoyable, and we came to the lunch stop at the Natural Stone Bridge. This is a pretty spot, but it was getting warmer again, much to the delight of the local resident, a fairly large Eastern Water Skink that obviously had a taste for egg sandwich and rockmelon. In fact my views of this animal were the closest I had of any species all day.

We finally made it back to the picnic area after the 8 kilometre walk, which is really quite an easy walk as it is generally rather flat. We rejoined those members who had stayed to wait for us, enjoyed a cup of coffee or juice, and mulled over the day. In the end a low 28 species was recorded for the day.

Brown Cuckoo-dove	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Australian King Parrot	Crimson Rosella
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Laughing Kookaburra	Superb Lyrebird	White-throated Treecreeper
Superb Fairy-wren	Variiegated Fairy-wren	Eastern Bristlebird	White-browed Scrubwren
Brown Thornbill	Red Wattlebird	Little Wattlebird	Eastern Spinebill
Eastern Yellow Robin	Eastern Whipbird	Golden Whistler	Grey Shrike-thrush
Spectacled Monarch	Grey Fantail	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Pied Currawong
Red-browed Finch	Beautiful Firetail	Sivereye	Bassian Thrush

such as Curlew Sandpiper and Grey-tailed Tattler are no more. The first to return flushed a Whimbrel from the waters edge but it did not oblige by stopping for all to see but flew off over the bridge.

As we finished and some were getting their picnic dinner ready a Black-shouldered Kite landed on a Norfolk Island Pine cone and proceeded to eat a mouse for it's dinner with Josh Coyte busily taking photos as it tore its prize into bite size pieces.

Shorebird List

Pacific Black Duck
 Little Pied Cormorant
 Pied Cormorant
 Great Cormorant
 Australian Pelican
 White-faced Heron
 Great Egret
 Australian White ibis
 Royal Spoonbill

Bar-tailed Godwit
 Whimbrel
 Red-necked Stint
 Red-capped Plover
 Lesser Sand Plover
 Masked Lapwing

Kelp Gull
 Silver Gull
 Crested Tern
 Little Tern

Report on February Meeting South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program - Kerrie Lowis

The guest speaker for this month was Michael Jarman who talked about his involvement in the South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program. This program is a community based initiative funded by the NSW Fox Threat Abatement Plan and operates through the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Michael has been involved for the past 3 years and the area he covers is south of Wollongong to Batemans Bay. Designed to curb the diminishing numbers of nesting birds on the south coast of NSW, the program has been a huge success. The main goals are to assist in the recovery of threatened shorebirds on the NSW South Coast, facilitate community involvement and to raise public awareness of the conservation of habitat and birds.

The main focus has been on four threatened species of nesting shorebirds. They are the Hooded Plover *Thinornis rubicollis* (endangered), the Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* (endangered), the Pied Oystercatcher *Haemotopus longirostris* (vulnerable) and the Sooty Oystercatcher *H. fuliginosus* (vulnerable). At present there are less than 50 Hooded Plovers remaining in NSW.

Major declines in the population numbers and distribution of all four species are attributed to a combination of natural and human induced threats, including habitat loss, flooding of nests, accidental trampling by humans and off-road vehicles. Also shorebird eggs and chicks are susceptible to predation by both native (eg. Australian Raven and Silver Gull) and introduced (eg. Red Fox, cat and domestic dog) species.

The program has involved a multitude of government agencies, local councils, local environment groups and individual members of the community including over 150 volunteers. Recovery actions include surveys to establish baseline data on the breeding activities and numbers of each species and monitoring to determine the location of nesting sites and the level of threat posed at each site. Habitat protection and management actions such as fox control and physical protection of nest sites are then implemented to alleviate threats.

This program aims to raise public awareness of the conservation status, recovery efforts, habitat importance and the biology of shorebirds, through publicity and active community involvement.

The success of the program can be measured through the increase in numbers of nesting shorebirds on the South Coast of NSW since the program began and the positive response by the local community and visitors to the areas. This is especially so for the Little Tern and Pied Oystercatcher which have increased substantially in number.

Bruce O'Brien thanked Michael for an interesting and very informative talk and for his continued efforts in the recovery program.

**Bi-Annual Meeting of The Bird Interest Group of NSW, BIGNET
20/21 March 2004 Killalea SRA**

IBOC is hosting this meeting of most of the bird clubs and associate groups such as National Parks, State Forests and Birds Australia and the Club will be represented by Chris Brandis and Roger Bogaert as the meeting room is limited in size. Anyone wishing to raise an item to improve the influence of birding and conservation should contact one of us and it can be raised with the group. We will be having dinner on the Saturday night at a Thai restaurant and any member interested in joining us can contact Chris Brandis for reservations.

Chris Brandis (Ph: 4296 2837)

**Nature's Wake Up Call
Roselyn Costa**

Having run around like every other Tom, Dick and Harry trying to get everything done for Christmas I was glad to fall into bed.

I was woken at piccaninny dawn by the most ungodly noise of screeching and squawking ---- LOUD ENOUGH TO WAKE THE DEAD!

Looking out the front door I soon located the culprits: six Black Cockatoos taking on the local Honeyeaters and Willy Wagtails. The huge black invaders decided they wanted the flowering gum tree and were not going to back off until they got it. The cockies settled for the trunk and lawn. These invaders proceeded to tap, tap, tap with their beaks up the trunk then with one almighty pull yank off huge chunks of bark from the poor tree. Next they ate the big juicy white grubs from under the bark. The poor grubs had no chance. Then the process of tap, trip, eat was repeated.

All the while the huge baby of the cockatoo family sat in the tree protesting at being left out of all the excitement. With their heads held high the cockatoos waddled across the lawn and in their loudest voices screamed at each other to get into formation. Slowly their majestic huge black bodies lifted then soared over the house. They were gone.

Peace and quiet filled the air. The Willy Wagtails and Honeyeaters celebrated their departure. I looked at the clock Just 5.30am. Oh well! Early to bed, early to rise. I DON'T THINK SO. I WENT BACK TO BED!

Windang outing - Wednesday 4 February 2004 - Chris Brandis

It was almost a picture perfect afternoon for the annual wader walk at Windang with some 32 people turning up. After some renewing of old acquaintances in the car park, the leader, Chris Chafer, took us around the board walk and then down the sand track to the edge of the Lake Illawarra channel, which is almost closed with only water coming in at the peak of high tide.

We spotted some Bar-tailed Godwit and a Red-capped Plover and could see the Little Terns roosting on the sand bar in the channel and some still sitting on ruined nests. A severe hailstorm on the Monday afternoon almost decimated the colony, which was the first nesting at this site for some 40 years, leaving only about 3 fledglings alive. There were several species of cormorants, a couple of Crested Terns and a few Silver Gulls.

We then wandered over towards the entrance where we could see quite a few Red-necked Stints and Red-capped Plovers with a lone Lesser Sand Plover loafing around the small sand mounds and on the edge of the beach. Three Kelp Gulls flew past Windang Island and continued towards Port Kembla and their roosting islands. The variety of wader species has been declining over the years and regular sightings of species

Birds around Berry – January/February 04 – Bob Ashford

It was the dawn dog-walkers and swimmers, types who habitually frequent Seven Mile Beach at Gerroa, who called me in the first week of December. 'There are lots of dead birds on the beach.' Indeed there were. Not just lots, but possibly up to 10,000 along the beaches from Kiama to south of Jervis Bay. In birdwatching jargon they had discovered a 'wreck'.

The vast majority of the birds were Short-tailed and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, with a few Sooty Shearwaters, all more commonly known as Muttonbirds. These are common seabirds around south-east Australia nesting locally at Bowen Island and other island breeding locations nearby.

A rare Mottled Petrel was also beach cast. This is a bird that breeds on islands off New Zealand's southern coast and regularly roams down to the pack-ice in Antarctica to feed. The storm that blew it off course was probably the final straw for the Shearwaters found on our beaches. However the real culprit in the whole affair was the EAC.

The dominant factor in the weather of eastern Australia is ENSO – the El Nino Southern Oscillation. But as summer approaches fishermen and sailors keep a watchful eye on the EAC. The East Australian Current (EAC) pushes south from the Timor Sea bringing with it warm tropical water very low in nutrients. Strongest in summer in some years it reaches as far south as Tasmania and all along the east coast it has a huge impact on marine biodiversity. The fish that the Shearwaters feed on need plankton rich cold water and as they flee the warm current the Shearwaters are forced to travel far greater distances for less and less food.

Already close to starvation caused by the relentless push of the EAC the Shearwaters were then caught in a storm generated by strong south easterly winds blowing up from Antarctica. It was this same deadly combination of circumstances, the powerful EAC pushing south and strong storm winds pushing north, that devastated the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. In both cases, skilled and experienced as both shearwaters and sailors were the forces of nature took a very heavy toll.

Nature is never static though. Every now and then the EAC 'unzips' from the coast and heads out into the Tasman Sea. Cold, nutrient-rich waters rush in from the south replenishing the deserted seas. On December the 30th, on the same beach at Gerroa, I was privileged to witness a very different story.

The fish had returned. Schools of migrating Australian Salmon (which is actually a Perch, but it reminded Captain Cook of a European salmon when he first saw it in 1769 and the name stuck!) were 'herding' their prey, shoals of smaller pilchard and whitebait, into the surf at the edge of the beach for an easier catch. Excited fishermen cast lines to do battle with the salmon and when, and if, they landed one emptied it like a Russian Doll to show me the smaller fish.

Behind the fishermen adults and children, equally excited, watched a rare and enthralling spectacle. In the shallows squawking Crested Terns hovered and dived for stranded fish. Just a few metres further out hundreds upon hundreds of Short-tailed and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters skimmed, swooped, weaved and dived in a remarkable feeding frenzy. Among them sparkling white Gannets tucked in their wings and plunged like sharpened arrows into the surf.

I swam out to be among the feeding birds. Shearwaters swooped past me or paddled a little closer, curiosity temporarily distracting them, and then ignored me. It was a celebration and one of the most memorable birding moments of my life.

I wish you great moments for 2004 and my special thanks to Les and Janet Crosby for their continuing sponsorship of this column

The Birds Australia 2004 Sydney Seminar



“One of the greatest environmental challenges facing humanity in the future will be the integration of conservation with production in the same landscape.....”



“Who’s a Pretty Boy then?”

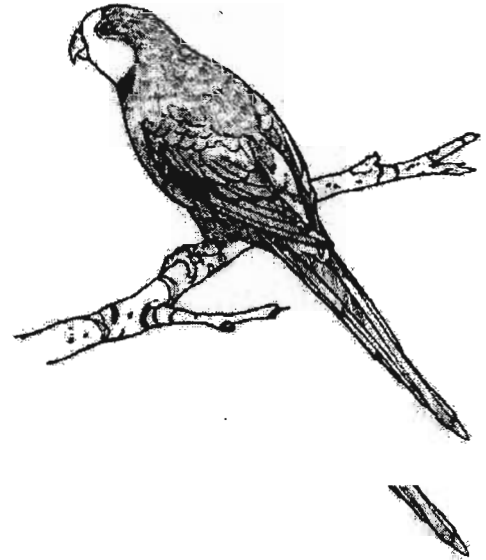
Parrots and Cockatoos in NSW and beyond...

Parrots and Cockatoos are among Australia’s iconic species and yet while some populations increase others are threatened with extinction.

This seminar will look at some of the issues affecting the parrots and cockatoos of NSW.

Discussion will include:

- ⇒ population trends and their meaning
- ⇒ case studies: Superb, Swift and Night Parrots
- ⇒ management strategies and the role of the volunteer
- ⇒ the integration of conservation with production in our landscapes.



SPEAKERS:

Dr Walter Boles	Australian Museum
Dr Jim Hone	University of Canberra
Matt Cameron	NSW Dept of Environment and Conservation
Debbie Saunders	NSW Dept of Environment and Conservation
Adrian Manning	Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (CRESS), ANU
John Huxley	Associate Editor of the Sydney Morning Herald

CONCLUDING SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION:

Chair: Professor Henry Nix, National President, Birds Australia.

WHERE:	Norman Nock Lecture Theatre, Royal North Shore Hospital, Pacific Highway, St Leonards, 2065
WHEN:	Saturday 3 rd April, 2004 commencing at 1.30 p.m.
COST:	Birds Australia Members: \$25, Non-members \$30, Students/concessions \$20
CONTACT:	Birds Australia Sydney Office: email: rosella63@bigpond.com Ph: 02 9436 0388, Fax: 02 9436 0466, PO Box 1322, Crows Nest, 1585

Registrations and payment must be received by the 29th March, 2004.

Receipts will be issued at the seminar.

Sketch of Superb Parrot reproduced with thanks to the Birds Australia New Atlas of Australian Birds

Proudly sponsored by the Wildlife Preservation Society.



Significant Bird Event: From an Email by Jim Downey, Birds Australia CEO
(full text in our library)

One of the most extraordinary events associated with migratory waders in Australia is occurring right now in North Western Australia. On the 7th and 8th February, members of Birds Australia and a special interest group the Australian Waders Studies Group lead by Dr Clive Minton (BA Fellow) counted between 2.4 and 2.8 MILLION Oriental Pratincoles at 80 Mile Beach (Anna Plains Station). The previous estimate of the total Australian population of this bird was 60,000!!

UNUSUAL RECORDS for January 2004

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au; or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm.

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Shelduck	1	22-Jan	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB
Little Egret	6	20-Jan	Fred Finch Park, Berkeley	lake shore	DW
Eastern Reef Egret	1	7-Jan	Little Lake	estuary	CB
Striated Heron	1	25-Jan	Wollongong Harbour	shore	PP
Nankeen Night Heron	1	10-Jan	Stuart Park, Wollongong	pond	PP
Nankeen Night Heron	2	25-Jan	Maldon weir	riparian	CJC
Nankeen Night Heron	1	26-Jan	lower Macquarie Rivulet	riparian	RF
Osprey	1	7-Jan	Windang	overhead	CB
Pacific Baza	1	2-Jan	Bulli	overhead	RT
Square-tailed Kite	1	1-Jan	Cudmirrah	overhead	KM
Square-tailed Kite	1	25-Jan	Conjola National Park	overhead	KM
Swamp Harrier	1	29-Jan	Bomaderry	rural	BA
Brown Goshawk	1	14-Jan	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Grey Goshawk	1	14-Jan	Coolendel	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk	1	19-Jan	Regal Heights, Albion Park	urban	JC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	3-Jan	Foxground	rainforest	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	3-Jan	Saddleback Mountain	overhead	CJC
Little Eagle	1	17-Jan	Figtree	urban	JC
Australian Hobby	1	4-Jan	Albion Park Rail	overhead	PF
Peregrine Falcon	1	14-Jan	Coolendel	overhead	BA
Black-tailed Godwit	2	10-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	CJC
Eastern Curlew	53	18-Jan	Comerong Island	estuary	SB
Marsh Sandpiper	1	7-Jan	Why Juck Bay	mud flats	CB
Terek Sandpiper	1	5-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	NJ
Grey-tailed Tattler	2	7-Jan	Little Lake	mud flats	GB
Great Knot	1	10-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	CJC
Red-necked Stint	207	7-Jan	Windang	sand flats	CB
Red-necked Stint	305	10-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	CJC
Broad-billed Sandpiper	2	4-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	mud flats	DM
Pacific Golden Plover	192	4-Jan	Comerong Island	saltmarsh	CJC
Lesser Sand Plover	5	4-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	DM
Lesser Sand Plover	4	20-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	BA
Greater Sand Plover	1	4-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	KG
Hooded Plover	5	25-Jan	Berrara Beach	beach	KM
Common Tern	40	4-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	DM
Little Tern	60	4-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	DM
Little Tern	20+pr	20-Jan	Windang (nesting)	sand flats	MJ

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Whiskered Tern	1	9-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	GB
White-winged Black Tern	1	9-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	GB
Common Noddy	1	30-Jan	Black Head	rocky shore	NW
Common Bronzewing	4	14-Jan	Coolendel	woodland	BA
Brush Bronzewing	1	15-Jan	Little River	woodland	CJC
Brush Bronzewing	1	27-Jan	Stockyard Swamp	forest	CJC
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	6-Jan	Curramore	rural	KM
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	3-Jan	Bendalong Fire Trail	forest	IM
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	15-Jan	Allens Ck., Wilton	overhead	CJC
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	22-Jan	Sheys Ck., Nattai NP	forest	CJC
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	1	24-Jan	Cudmirrah	overhead	KM
Little Lorikeet	5	14-Jan	Coolendel	forest	BA
Eastern Rosella	50+	21-Jan	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Powerful Owl	1	25-Dec	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Sooty Owl	1	1-Jan	Jamberoo Mountain	rainforest	RJ
Azure Kingfisher	1	15-Jan	Coolendel	riparian	BA
Azure Kingfisher	1	22-Jan	Little River, Nattai NP	riparian	CJC
Rainbow Bee-eater	5	16-Jan	Meadow Ck., Burrier	rural	BA
Large-billed Scrubwren	4	28-Dec	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Large-billed Scrubwren	1	14-Jan	Coolendel	forest	BA
Weebill	3	27-Jan	Shellharbour hospital	parkland	CB
Bell Miner	100+	15-Jan	lower Little River / Center Ck.	riparian	CJC
Bell Miner	10	25-Jan	Maldon weir	riparian	CJC
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	2	14-Jan	Coolendel	woodland	BA
Rose Robin	1	14-Jan	Coolendel	forest	BA
Logrunner	2	31-Jan	Helensburgh	forest	CR
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	4-Jan	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Varied Sittella	6	16-Jan	Coolendel	woodland	BA
Crested Shrike-tit	4	16-Jan	Coolendel	woodland	BA
Spectacled Monarch	1	13-Jan	The Glen, Barren Grounds NR	forest	IBOC
Leaden Flycatcher	2	4-Jan	Stingray Swamp, Penrose SF	woodland	CJC
White-winged Triller	3	7-Jan	Macquarie Rivulet Arboretum	woodland	GB
Dusky Woodswallow	3	14-Jan	Burrier	rural	BA
Dusky Woodswallow	11	15-Jan	Coolendel	woodland	BA
Grey Currawong	2	28-Jan	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Skylark	1	3-Jan	Bushbank Mill ruin, Kiama	rural	CJC
Double-barred Finch	2	5-Jan	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Tree Martin	5	4-Jan	Stingray Swamp, Penrose SF	wetland	CJC
Fairy Martin	20+	2-Jan	Sandon Point	beach	RT

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; GB – Graham Barwell; SB – Simon Blanchfellow; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; JC – Josh Coyte; PF – Peter Fackender; RF – Richard Fackender; KG – Ken Gilmore; MJ – Michael Jarman; NJ – Nigel Jacket; RJ – Richard Jordan; DM – Darryl Mackay; IM – Ian McKinlay; KM – Kevin Mills; MM – Mike Morphett; PP – Peter Parker; CR – Chris Ross; RT – Roger Truscott; NW – Nathan Waugh; DW – David Winterbottom.

Comment: A good spread of interesting records for the start of the new year. The Common Noddy is the eighth regional record since 1937 and the second record from Black Head. The Terek Sandpiper is the 11th regional record since 1933 and the first since 1987, while the Broad-billed Sandpiper is the 6th regional record since 1955. Record numbers of Red-necked Stint from Windang and of course Little Tern have not bred at Windang since 1960s. The large flock of Eastern Rosella were feeding on grass seed along a fence line on the south side of the main pine forest, a most unusual occurrence. The Weebill is rarely recorded on the coastal plain, though they have been recorded at nearby Mt. Warrigal. The Spectacled Monarch is the 11th regional record since 1973. Don't forget, you can check the status and distribution of local species on my web site www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

"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**

Contents	2003-2004 Club Contacts
Monthly walk in the Upper Cordeaux River p 2	PRESIDENT: Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742
Birds and other Wildlife of the Galapagos Islands p 3	VICE-PRESIDENT: Position Vacant
Mid week walk to Mount Keira Scout Camp p 4	SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307
Cave Creek Hilltop and Cecil Hoskins Reserve p 5	Work email: bettyhudson@menziesgroup.com.au
Back the Albatross in their race for survival p 5	TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
Reccies to Bulli Pass and Rixons p 6	EDITORS: Penny Potter, Tel: 02 4284 6196
Birds Around Berry p 7	Email: penny_potter@iprimus.com.au
Unusual Records p 8	Val Dolan, Tel: 02 4229 6737

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

NO MID WEEK WALK OR MONTHLY MEETING

EASTER CAMP: SATURDAY 10 APRIL 2004 - "Lothlorien", Bellawongarah - Leader: Chris Chafer
Details of the camp were published in the last newsletter. Members wishing to visit for the day are able to do so from Sunday-Tuesday inclusive and should arrive by 9.00am.

MONTHLY OUTING – Saturday 17th April – Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area: Bulli Pass to Rixons Pass (and back again!). Meet the leader, **Mike Morphett** at 0845 hrs at the access gate north side of The Elbow on Bulli Pass Road. This spot is beside the large Bulli Pass Scenic Reserve sign, a tad over 2 km from the junction of Princes Highway and Lawrence Hargrave Drive. As parking space by the gate is limited, you should be able to park along the roadside or in the lay-by area further along on the opposite side, but watch out for the traffic; otherwise, folk may elect to car-pool. Bring comestibles and liquids for consumption on the walk, plus anti-leech accoutrements, although the little slimy things aren't likely to invade your lower parts as the track is wide enough for a bus in most places. For what to expect in the way of birdlife, please refer to Mike's article further on in the newsletter.

COMMITTEE MEETING - **Tuesday 20th April 2004 at 7.30 pm** at the home of Kevin and Fae McGregor, 10 White Place, Figtree (4271 3762). As usual, members are invited to attend.

MAY 2004 NEWSLETTER

Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Wednesday 21 April**. Please ensure you don't leave submitting your contributions to the last minute and where possible please submit by email.

Monthly Walk in the Upper Cordeaux River – 14 February 2004
Chris Brandis

While waiting for all to arrive at the first meeting place at the top of Mt Kembla a few birds were sighted and heard to start the day's list off like the White-throated Needletails overhead and the Brush Cuckoo calling in the thick forest. The leader for the day, Chris Chafer, a research officer with the Sydney Catchment Authority had obtained permission from them for the Club to go into an area. This area has had very restricted public access for a number of years, mainly due to the poor behaviour of a few and public liability concerns. The 29 members then travelled further on in convoy past the orchards, through a locked gate and into the catchment area to a parking bay over looking part of the old Cordeaux Dam. As we drove in, a White-bellied Sea-Eagle flew up to a high perch and then off again and a Swamp Harrier drifted away along a small incoming tributary. There were several species of water birds sighted using the very low levels of this backwater while we crossed the old wooden bridge and onto the fire trail system.

Judith Parkinson had walked the area extensively in the past and gave us some of the history of the earlier settlers that farmed and used the area. We went past an old home falling into disrepair, oak, pine and other trees introduced by the early settlers to an old cedar tree. It was so beautifully cool under its spreading branches that we could understand why this was an area used for a boarding house by Sydneysiders early last century with access from the old Cox Highway. The leeches liked the area too. We followed the track down to a small stream for morning tea sighting Southern Emu-wrens and Variegated Fairy-wrens on the way. After a short steep section it was downhill to the next creek crossing for lunch but unfortunately there was a rather smelly dead wallaby by the water so most went a little further on where the air was fresher.

The track eventually came out onto the road past the orchards where both Red-browed and White-throated Treecreepers were sighted. Sightings continued as we walked along the road through the tall eucalypts back to the cars. With plenty of sharp eyes along several hundred metres some 64 species and a lot of history was sighted. This was a very interesting and entertaining walk and we hope our behaviour will allow access to these largely unspoiled areas in the catchment in the future. We exited the area by another route to come out on the main road by the Mount Kembla motor cycle track and then wended our way back home.

Many thanks to our activities coordinator for arranging entry permission for this most interesting area and we hope to be able to continue to visit these areas again in the future.

Bird List

Musk Duck	Wonga Pigeon	Southern Emu-wren	Black-faced Monarch
Black Swan	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Spotted Pardalote	Leaden Flycatcher
Australian Wood Duck	Gang-gang Cockatoo	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Rufous Fantail
Pacific Black Duck	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Fantail
Chestnut Teal	Australian King-Parrot	Brown Gerygone	Willie Wagtail
Hardhead	Crimson Rosella	Brown Thornbill	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Little Pied Cormorant	Brush Cuckoo	Striated Thornbill	Cicadabird
Little Black Cormorant	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Little Wattlebird	Grey Butcherbird
Great Cormorant	Channel-billed Cuckoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
White-faced Heron	White-throated Needletail	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Raven
Swamp Harrier	Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Yellow Robin	Green Catbird
Collared Sparrowhawk	White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Whipbird	Satin Bowerbird
Masked Lapwing	Red-browed Treecreeper	Golden Whistler	Red-browed Finch
White-headed Pigeon	Superb Fairy-wren	Rufous Whistler	Welcome Swallow
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Variegated Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Silvereeye

Report on March Presentation - Val Dolan
Birds and other Wildlife of the Galapagos Islands – Col Markham

When a large number of club members turned up to listen to Colin Markham they were not to be disappointed. Our guest speaker's enthusiasm for bird life and his willingness to tolerate rough seas, precarious landings from a rubber ducky and long tramps over volcanic terrain was rewarded with some fine photographs.

Colin began his talk by showing a slide of the small boat he and Melissa spent 8 days on as they travelled to several sites in the Galapagos group of islands. On Rabida Island he photographed a new born Sea-lion with its mother. Significantly, the only raptor in the Galapagos, the Galapagos Hawk, was spotted in the background, ever watchful. Later we were shown a group of Galapagos Hawks feasting on a shredded Sea-lion pup that had apparently been left undefended.

On Hood Island Blue Footed Boobies were shown nesting, with chicks, and diving spectacularly. Nazca or Masked Boobies were also common. Colin remarked on the ease of getting close to the birds and animals of the Galapagos to photograph them as they have no reason to fear humans. We were able to compare the smaller Brown Pelican with our local birds and the white legged American Oystercatcher to our own Pied Oystercatcher.

The Tropicbird, in flight, was a shot every bird lover dreams of capturing, as was the male Frigatebird still in display mode. A variety of Herons are found in the Galapagos – Great Blue, Striated and the Lava Heron, which was shown with chicks, and hunting for food on the grey volcanic lava they are named for. There are also Lava Gulls as well as Swallow Tailed Gulls. Mockingbirds, of a type not found elsewhere, are here and Colin was able to demonstrate the natural curiosity of these birds by showing one inspecting his binoculars.

In 1835 Charles Darwin identified 13 different Galapagos Finches. Even the local naturalist accompanying the Markhams had difficulty in distinguishing the differences, which depend on a careful comparison of the beak. Col selected 3 of his shots of Finches to demonstrate this difficulty. Waved Albatross in courtship display, Whimbrels, Greater Flamingos and of course numerous sea birds added to this wonderful variety of bird life.

No trip to the Galapagos would be complete without seeing the very unusual Marine Iguanas, the brightly coloured Sally Lightfoot Crabs and the Giant Land Tortoises, who gave their name to these islands. The Charles Darwin Research Station is on Santa Fe Island and can be financially supported through membership of the Charles Darwin Foundation.

After a spectacular sunset on the final night in the Galapagos we moved ... 'north to Alaska' ... for 40 of Colin's favourite slides taken on other travels. One of a huge brown bear in a grassy field was snapped as the startled photographer admitted to backing off rapidly ... at the same time the surprised bear decided to do the same thing! Not a difficulty IBOC members have on any of our local expeditions.

Colin completed his presentation with scenic views of the valleys used by many thousands of migratory birds around Pickhandle Lake in the Yukon. He related an anecdote of one bird loving farmer who annually sowed a field with seed for these migratory flocks. When his farm came up for sale his town bought the field to continue the tradition. The world needs more such people!

Questions were asked about equipment used to photograph these slides and Colin replied that he uses an automatic focus Minolta with a 400 lens. He also carries a 24 to 80 lens on another camera body and of course his trusty binoculars. Colin thanked Lindsay Smith of SOSA for technical assistance in preparing his photographs on disc for showing and club members for their assistance and the opportunity to speak with a group with the same interest in birds. He invited people to look through his many photograph albums. Kevin

McGregor thanked Colin on behalf of the audience and remarked that the huge variety of birds photographed in such a short time was a credit to his tenacity.

Mid Week Walk – Mount Keira Scout Camp – 10 March 2004
Judith Parkinson

The last time Joan Wylie led a Wednesday walk in the Mt Keira Scout Camp it was extremely wet and only three persons showed. This time, by 8.30a.m., nine persons had arrived at the car park and were keen to see what they could see. Equipped with rain gear, morning tea and binoculars we were led up the garden path to meet the man in charge. He told us that a couple of groups were in residence but that they shouldn't bother us. One group was occupying tents and the second group was accommodated in the Cub facilities.

At times the young people's voices dominated the forest sounds and maybe that affected the bird visitation. The first bird, a Rufous Fantail, was sighted by Joan Wylie – I recall her being the first to sight Rufous Fantails on several occasions. We walked via the Lodge and swimming pool into the rainforest where we heard more birds than we saw. In fact it was fairly quiet in the rainforest. The light for viewing birds (and each other!) was so dark that even the silhouettes were difficult to see at times. Oh! The neck and eye strain!!

The return from the chapel was via another track which exited at the Cub lair facilities. It was here that we viewed Yellow Robins, Brown Gerygones, Whipbirds, Bowerbirds, Catbirds and one Brush Turkey high in a tree – “NOT a partridge in a pear tree ?” Alan kept saying. When we first emerged from this darkness into a clearing there were several screeches from people with leeches. What a flurry of activity to remove them! It's funny how we utter fear sounds! I'm sure leeches don't have ears. Alan and Anne have made their debut into the leech world.

Morning tea break followed and was enjoyed in the paved area north-east of the Lodge that is used for weddings. It was decided that we should walk back to the car park up the entrance road. I forgot to mention that we saw flocks (maybe it was the same flock each time?!) of Top Knot or Flock Pigeons high on the wing several times. The first time they were being pursued by a White Goshawk.

Brian, who left the group in the car park missed seeing a bevy of busy birds in the area near the old ruined structures. Of course the bulk of them were moving about restlessly in the high canopy of eucalyptus. We nearly went cuckoo trying to decide which cuckoo we saw. And what was that black? charcoal? white fronted? bird some of us saw? Decision much later was that it was a Satin Flycatcher and the other was a Brush Cuckoo. This area with its hyperactive, diverse birds provided a great finale to our morning mooch around. It added up to a total of 32 different species viewed and/or heard.

Thank you, Joan, and everyone for a delightful half day.

Grey Goshawk (White Phase)	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Fantail	Spotted Pardalote
Topknot Pigeon	Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Whipbird	Silvereye
Brown Cuckoo Dove	Eastern Yellow Robin	White-browed Scrubwren	Red-browed Firetail
Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo	Golden Whistler (F)	Brown Gerygone	Satin Bowerbird
Australian King Parrot	Grey Shrike Thrush	Brown Thornbill	Green Catbird
Crimson Rosella	Black Faced Monarch	White-throated Treecreeper	Pied Currawong
Eastern Rosella	Satin Flycatcher	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Brush Cuckoo	Rufous Fantail	Eastern Spinebill	Brush-Turkey

Ideas for walks and camps in 2005

Chris Chafer

If you have any ideas for walks or camp sites for 2005, don't hesitate to provide to myself (via email, address on back page) or any of the IBOC Committee members. All suggestions will be considered.

Cave Creek Hilltop and Cecil Hoskins Reserve – Chris Chafer 14 March

An overcast morning saw 10 members gather at the Cave Creek track car park at Hilltop. A quick look around the area produced a few common species and a distant view of the regionally uncommon Peaceful Dove. The 3 km walk begins in dry woodland with a heathy understorey. We descended the gentle graded track towards the creek gaining good views of White-eared Honeyeater and Golden Whistler. As we neared the creek the vegetation changed to tall, moister forest and here we added New Holland, White-naped and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Mistletoebird and Striated Thornbill. After a quick look at the cave entrance, we followed the track around to the cave exit, stopping for morning tea under a beautiful sandstone overhang in a fern-clothed gully that contains a stand of coachwood and other rainforest remnants. The walk back to the car park revealed Superb Lyrebird, a juvenile Black-faced Monarch, Rufous Fantail and fleeting views of an elusive but vocal Chestnut-rumped Heathwren.

We then journeyed on through Bowral to Hoskins Nature Reserve near Moss Vale. After a relaxing lunch in the picnic ground we wandered around the small woodland and along Wingecarribee River, looking in vain for the White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes and Nanakeen Night Herons that had been there a fortnight before. We then took the walk above the weir along the banks of the small reservoir, having good looks at Hoary-headed Grebe and a Darter at the walk's terminus. We returned to the car park stopping periodically to view the mostly common water fowl. A total of 57 species recorded for the day.

Cave Creek track: Peaceful Dove, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Australian King-Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Superb Lyrebird, White-throated Treecreeper, Spotted Pardalote, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Red Wattlebird, Little Wattlebird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Black-faced Monarch, Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail, Pied Currawong, Australian Raven, Satin Bowerbird, Red-browed Finch, Mistletoebird

Hoskins Nature Reserve: Black Swan, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Grebe, Hoary-headed Grebe, Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Masked Lapwing, Eastern Rosella, Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Yellow Thornbill, Magpie-lark, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Australian Magpie, House Sparrow, European Goldfinch, Welcome Swallow, Clamorous Reed-Warbler, Silvereve, Common Starling, Common Myna.

Fancy a Flutter? Back the Albatross in their race for survival

The world's biggest bookmaker has teamed up with the Conservation Foundation and the Tasmanian state government to launch an environmental project with all the excitement of the Melbourne Cup - the Ladbrokes.com Big Bird Race ('The Ultimate Flutter'). From the end of April, Tasmanian Shy Albatrosses (TSAs) begin their migration from small islands off Australia's mainland to South Africa. Ladbrokes.com has provided the funding for 18 of the birds to be fitted with satellite transmitters so their progress can be closely followed by scientists. Punters will also be able to follow their flight path and place a variety of bets on the 'race'.

Many thousands won't make it due to longline fishing techniques - thousands of baited hooks dragged behind boats - killing the birds. Around 300,000 seabirds die from longlining each year, with many albatross species facing extinction. The situation is as serious as the fate dolphins faced from tuna fishermen in the 80s before public awareness and pressure brought about a change in fishing techniques. Ladbrokes.com hope the project will help capture the imagination of the public and encourage more countries to sign the Agreement for the

Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). ACAP requires signatory states to take specific measures to reduce seabird by-catch from longline fishing and improve the conservation status of the birds. Any income generated from the race will be fed back into seabird conservation projects.

Bulli Pass to Rixons Pass Reccies - Mike Morphett

In preparation for the April outing I have recently twice explored the undulating track from Bulli Pass to Rixons Pass through the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area and what was Bellambi Collieries property, with a short detour to a dam in an area formerly owned by BHP Billiton. Both visits lasted four hours and were made in good weather. Immature birds of a number of passerines were seen on both occasions. The second reccy rewarded me with many extremely close observations of birds attracted by my teeth-sucking or mimicry, particularly a female Crested Shrike-tit, and of birds bathing in puddles dotted along the track, notably a pair of Golden Whistlers. At intervals four Superb Lyrebirds were advertising their patch. On the first journey I took the right fork to climb up Rixons Pass to the top of the escarpment, where I had great views of the coastline, and the second time the left fork took me down through a large patch of turpentine to a dam above the descent towards South Bulli Colliery. I hope the birds and weather will be just as cooperative on the April walk; if so, the newer members should be able to sharpen their identification skills of some of our local bush birds. Also, there should be much to compensate for the imminent departure of our visiting beauties: the Rufous Fantail and Black-faced Monarch – not least the possibility of *Accipiter* raptors. If in the meantime all the puddles dry up, I'll need some volunteers to take a water-cart well ahead of the group to refill them!

	3/2	15/3		3/2	15/3		3/2	15/3		3/2	15/3
Pacific Black Duck	☐		Superb Lyrebird	☐	☐	Lewin's Honeyeater	☐	☐	Rufous Fantail	☐	☐
Collared Sparrowhawk		☐	White-throated Treecreeper	☐	☐	Eastern Spinebill	☐	☐	Grey Fantail	☐	☐
Dusky Moorhen	☐	☐	Superb Fairy-wren	☐	☐	Eastern Yellow Robin	☐	☐	Pied Currawong	☐	☐
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	☐		Spotted Pardalote		☐	Logrunner		☐	Green Catbird		☐
Wonga Pigeon	☐	☐	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	☐	☐	Eastern Whipbird	☐	☐	Satin Bowerbird	☐	☐
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	☐		White-browed Scrubwren	☐	☐	Crested Shrike-tit		☐	Red-browed Finch	☐	☐
Rainbow Lorikeet	☐		Large-billed Scrubwren	☐	☐	Golden Whistler	☐	☐	Red-whisker' Bulbul	☐	☐
Crimson Rosella	☐	☐	Brown Gerygone	☐	☐	Grey Shrike-thrush	☐	☐	Silveryeye	☐	☐
Brush Cuckoo	☐		Brown Thornbill	☐	☐	Black-faced Monarch	☐	☐	Bassian Thrush		☐
Laughing Kookaburra	☐	☐	Red Wattlebird	☐		Leaden Flycatcher	☐	☐	Common Blackbird		☐

VALE

Our long time member Ronald Smart passed away peacefully Sunday March, 14, 2004. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Joy and the family.

Ron and Joy loved their birdwatching and attended meetings when able to throughout his illness and treatment. Ronald enjoyed club activities and particularly doing surveys at Lake Illawarra.

Books for Sale

The following books can be purchased from the club:

A Handbook of Birds found in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Adjacent Tablelands, C. Chafer, C. Brandis and D. Wright. \$20

Field Guide to Australian Birds, M. Morcombe. (Below retail price)

Glovebox Guide for Bird Identification & Habitat

Restoration in the ACT and SE NSW. \$3.50

Letters to the Editor

It has been suggested that some of you may wish to put forward your ideas and views

through a 'Letters To The Editor' section of our monthly newsletter. IBOC encourages members' participation. All constructive ideas are

welcome and will be published, as space permits, at the discretion of the editors.

The Editors

Birds around Berry – April 04 – Bob Ashford

Autumn is a wonderful time of the year. Bright clear skies and fresh breezes from the south bring relief from the steamy heat of Summer – though it is well over 30C as I write! Birds aren't fooled though and most of our summer visitors have already started their journeys northward to warmer climes. The Spangled Drongo is one species that generally migrates north, though each year a few individuals journey from the Central Coast to winter with us. We don't know why. Perhaps their navigation skills need development!

Koels and Channel-billed Cuckoos have already hitched rides north on cool winds. So have Black-faced Monarchs, Dollarbirds and Sacred Kingfishers. Small flocks of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters are building up and it won't be long before they too are streaming northward over Sydney in huge numbers. And using the same cool winds flocks of Tasmanian Silvereyes will soon be arriving around Berry.

Birdwatchers are particularly alert during migrations as they often produce unexpected birds. A lone bird may join a flock of other species for company or safety. Or good conditions may entice them to explore further. Quite often they are simply lost! Mention a sighting of a rare bird to a 'very keen' birdwatcher and you have discovered the origins of the expression 'to twitch'!

In the spring of 2002 a Canada Goose spent a few weeks among the Black Swans at Shoalhaven Heads. It probably came from New Zealand and was the very first wild one to be recorded in Australia! Within hours the nation's birding hot-lines were blaring out 'Scramble, Scramble' and throngs of tense Twitchers flocked to the Heads. This autumn migration has not produced anything quite as exciting yet though Twitchers in the area have reported Common Noddy (a tern of the Barrier Reef), Broad-billed Sandpiper (a wader most often seen in the north) and a Spectacled Monarch, the northerly rain-forest cousin to our Black-faced Monarch. Who knows what other unusual birds will visit us?

It really is remarkable the journeys birds undertake and how they seem to know exactly where they are going (give or take a Drongo!). Many of us know birds that, year after year, return to the same spot in the garden, or shed, to nest. How do they do it? Well, we know they use visual landmarks, including the sun and stars. They also have an internal compass and can use the earth's magnetic field to guide them. And, believe it or not, they follow main roads!

For over a decade researchers at Oxford University have been releasing pigeons between 16 and 32 kilometres from their lofts and tracking them. Initially the birds use their built-in compasses for guidance but after a couple of journeys they ignore their instincts and slip into a habitual route home following the roads. Some even fly around roundabouts before choosing the exit that will lead them back to their lofts. Researchers concluded that it is mentally easier for the pigeons, and possibly other day flying birds, to do this. Rather like humans really. 'This is the way I know, this is the way I go.'

Now I know why we have a healthy population of Peregrines along the Illawarra escarpment. They are watching the racing pigeons that habitually follow the Prince's Highway to their lofts in Wollongong and Sydney. For a Peregrine a pigeon is the tastiest treat of all! I bet smart pigeons realise this and fool the Peregrines by taking Bolong Road through the Heads or the back road through Jamberoo. I'll also bet my binoculars that with all the other challenges that birds face flying from A to Z that they don't have to cope with a navigator that can't read maps and a driver that won't ask for directions!

Correction to January Unusual Records

Chris Chafer

In the unusual records for January 2004, Nigel Jackett and Nathan Waugh reported a Common Noddy from Black Head. After examining photos of the bird and seeking expert opinion from others, it has been confirmed that the bird was in fact a Black Noddy. This is the second regional record, the previous record coming from a pelagic trip off Wollongong in September 1999.

UNUSUAL RECORDS for February 2004

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Eastern Reef Egret	1	14-Feb	Little Lake	rocky shore	MR
Striated Heron	1	3-Feb	Brooks Ck., Kanahooka	riverine	MC
Nankeen Night Heron	2	4-Feb	Wingecarribee R., Burradoo	riparian	CJC
Nankeen Night Heron	2	8-Feb	Bong Bong weir	riparian	CJC
Black Bittern	1	10-Feb	Collins Ck., Woonona	reedbeds	KyM
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	3-Feb	Kanahooka	wetland	MC
Osprey	1	1-Feb	Minnamurra Spit	overhead	JC
Osprey	1	10-Feb	Albion Park Rail	lake	PF
Spotted Harrier	1	15-Feb	F3 Darkes Forest	overhead	JB
Swamp Harrier	1	3-Feb	2km sth Berry	rural	MC
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	28-Feb	Mt. Ousley Rd./Picton Rd.	rainforest	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	9-Feb	Cataract Dam	woodland	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	6-Feb	Cordeaux colliery	overhead	CJC
Little Eagle	1	1-Feb	Tallawarra	overhead	EV
Little Eagle	2	28-Feb	Wilton	overhead	CJC
Brown Falcon	1	1-Feb	Woodlands estate, Shellharbour	urban	JC
Australian Hobby	1	2-Feb	Bellambi	power line	JW
Australian Hobby	1	9-Feb	Albion Park	rural	JC
Peregrine Falcon	1	4-Feb	East Corrimal	dune forest	DW
Peregrine Falcon	1	9-Feb	Nowra bridge	overhead	MC
Black-tailed Godwit	1	12-Feb	Comerong Island	sand flats	NJ
Marsh Sandpiper	11	15-Feb	Comerong Island	mangroves	BA
Sanderling	1	4-Feb	Windang	sand flats	CB
Sooty Oystercatcher	10	1-Feb	Black Head	rocky shore	BA
Lesser Sand Plover	1	5-Feb	Windang	sand flats	CJC
Oriental Plover	1	18-Jan	Comerong Island	saltmarsh	CD
Gull-billed Tern	1	12-Feb	Comerong Island	sand flats	NJ
Grey Ternlet	1	28-Feb	off Wollongong	marine	CB
Emerald Dove	1	15-Feb	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Emerald Dove	1	20-Feb	Berry Mountain	forest	NJ
Common Bronzewing	1	29-Feb	Jamerboo Mountain	garden	RJ
Peaceful Dove	1	28-Feb	Bargo River, Bargo	woodland	CJC
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	15-Feb	Comerong Island	rural	MM
Topknot Pigeon	35+	22-Feb	west Cambewarra	overhead	CJC
Red-rumped Parrot	2	5-Feb	Wollongong golf course	parkland	DW
Red-rumped Parrot	2	25-Feb	Dawes Park, Barrack Point	field	MR
Powerful Owl	1	10-Feb	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Sooty Owl	2	28-Feb	Jamberoo Mountain	forest	RJ
Tawny Frogmouth	3	22-Jan	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Azure Kingfisher	1	1-Feb	Duck Ck	riverine	EV
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	2	28-Feb	Bargo River, Bargo	riparian	CJC
Rose Robin	1	22-Feb	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Logrunner	4	26-Feb	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Crested Shrike-tit	4	26-Feb	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Leaden Flycatcher	2	4-Feb	Berrima Weir	woodland	CJC
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	4	28-Feb	Hoskins Nature Reserve	woodland	CJC
Pied Butcherbird	1	23-Feb	Farmborough Heights	power line	MC
Grey Currawong	1	5-Feb	Cordeaux colliery	woodland	CJC

Double-barred Finch 4 28-Feb Bargo River, Bargo riparian CJC

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; JB – John Blomstedt; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; JC – Josh Coyte; Chris Dyer; PF – Peter Fackender; NJ – Nigel Jackett; RJ – Richard Jordan; DM – Darryl Mackay; KyM – Kylie Madden; MM – Mike Morphett; PP – Peter Parker; MR – Michelle Rower; CR – Chris Ross; RT – Roger Truscott; NW – Nathan Waugh; EV – Edwin Vella; DW – David Winterbottom; JW – Joan Wylie.

Comment: Highlights are the Osprey, Black Bittern, Oriental Plover, Pied Butcherbird and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes. Check out their regional significance at www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer .



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

"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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Easter Camp 10-14 April p 3	SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307 Work email: bettyhudson@menziesgroup.com.au
Report on BigNet Meeting p 5	TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
Birds on W.I.R.E.S. p 5	EDITORS: Penny Potter, Tel: 02 4284 6196 Email: penny_potter@iprimus.com.au
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FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING - Monday 10th May 2004, 7.30pm, Fairy Meadow Community Hall

Our guest speaker will be **Jack Baker** on the topic "How are all the Bristlebirds going?". After studying bristlebirds for 15 years, Jack claims to be on first name terms with all of the bristlebirds. Come along and find out how the Eastern Bristlebirds are going and also get an update on the Rufous and Western Bristlebirds too. Jack will have some bristlebird radio-tracking gear to demonstrate which may of interest to the children. Bring a plate for supper.

MID WEEK WALK: Blackbutt Reserve - Wednesday 12th May – Leader: Chris Brandis

Meet at 8.30am at the parking lot on Wattle Road opposite Brunderee Road, Blackbutt.

MONTHLY OUTING - Sunday 16th May 2004 - Miners Despair Track, Belangalo State Forest

Meet at the Gordon VC rest area on the Hume Highway at 9am. This rest area is on the western side of the highway at the intersection of Bunnigalore Road which leads to Belanglo State Forest (small green sign on highway). We'll be driving from this point into the forest, so don't be late. Take the Picton Rd. west from Wollongong, turn south onto the Hume Freeway towards Goulburn and Canberra. Just south of Mittagong the freeway continues on as the Hume Highway. Watch for the the Wingecarribee River crossing after the Berrima offramp, but keep on the highway. Approximately 2.5km further on you cross over Medway Rivulet, then after another 1.7km you cross Wells Creek and you should **be in the right hand lane** of the highway as **the turn off for the rest area is 600m after crossing Wells Creek, watch for the small green sign pointing to Belanglo State Forest.** The rest area entrance is 100m along Bunnigalore Rd. If you're coming from the southern suburbs up Macquarie Pass, the turn off to the rest area is approximately 6km north of the Illawarra Highway / Hume Highway intersection. Allow 1.25 hours travel from Wollongong via Macquarie Pass / Illawarra Hwy or Picton Rd. / Hume Hwy. Bring a carry lunch.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 18th May 2004 at 7.30 pm at the home of Kevin and Fae McGregor, 10 White Place, Figtree (4271 3762). As usual, members are invited to attend.

JUNE 2004 NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Wednesday 19 May.**

Order of Australia

Club member Lindsay Smith who runs the Southern Oceans Seabird Study Association (SOSSA) has been awarded the Order of Australia for his long and effective research on Seabirds. This is a well deserved award and the club congratulates Lindsay on his achievement.

And Some More Special Recoveries of Banded Birds	Dave Thomson
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In earlier newsletters, most recently June 2002, we listed some interesting records of birds banded and then turning up a long way from the banding place or a long time after banding. *Corella*, the journal of the Australian Bird Study Association, from which these records were taken, has since then shown quite a few more interesting records and below are a few of them. As before, "oldest" means the longest time since original banding and "furthest" means the greatest distance from the banding place, both for the species concerned. The website of the ABSA, www.absa.asn.au, lists the oldest/furthest records for bird species banded and recaptured.

Osprey Nestling banded on Rottnest Is, WA, in 1982 and recovered dead on Rottnest Is 19 years and 6 months later. Oldest. (*Cor.26/2*)

And another nestling banded near Broadwater, Clarence River, NSW, in 2001 and identified in the field by colour marking in 2003 at Narrabeen Lake, NSW, 504 km SSW from banding place. Furthest. (*Cor.27/4*)

Brown Goshawk Immature female banded at Werribee Sewage Farm, Vic, in 1988 and recovered dead near Linton, Vic, 14 years and 10 months later. Oldest. (*Cor.27/2*)

Eastern Curlew Adult banded near Queenscliff, Vic, in 1981 and recaptured near banding place 19 years and 1 month later. Oldest. (*Cor.26/2*)

Sanderling (A bird about the weight of a Grey Shrike-thrush). Banded at Killarney Beach, Vic, in 1991 and recaptured at Funabashi City, Japan, 12 years and 5 months later and 8,232 km north of banding place, presumably having taken the return trip each year in between. Oldest. (*Cor.27/4*)

Masked Lapwing Banded at Kingston, Tas, in 1988 and identified by colour marking at banding place 13 years and 10 months later. Oldest. (*Cor.26/4*)

Emerald Dove Banded in Iron Range NP, Qld, in 1990 and recaptured at the banding place 12 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.27/1*)

Rockwarbler Banded at Munghorn Gap, NSW, in 1996 and recaptured at banding place twice since, most recently in 2003, 6 years and 11 months after banding. Oldest. (*Cor.27/4*)

Red Wattlebird Banded near Mt Compass, SA, in 1989 and recaptured 21 km to the SE, 13 years and 3 months later. Oldest. (*Cor.27/2*)

Rufous Fantail Banded in January, 1993 at the Rhododendron Park, Wollongong, NSW, and recaptured at the banding site (in the same net) in November 1994, presumably after spending two winters in New Guinea or the north of Australia. (*Pers.*)

Australian Magpie Adult female banded in 1956 at "Gungahlin", ACT, and recaptured, unable to fly, in 1980 near the banding place. Given TLC, she survived for a year in captivity, eventually dying in 1981, 24 years and 5 months after banding. Oldest. (*Cor.27/3*)

White-winged Chough Juvenile female banded at Mt Ainslie, ACT, in 1988 and recovered dead at Campbell Park, ACT (taken by a fox) 14 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.27/1*)

Satin Bowerbird Banded at Urbenville, NSW, in 1977 and recaptured at the banding place 19 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.27/1*)

Clamorous Reed-Warbler Banded at Somers, Vic, in 1995 and recovered dead (hit window) at Somers Camp, Vic, 7 years later. Oldest. (*Cor.27/2*)

Grey-headed Flying-fox Banded at Gordon, NSW, in 1990 and recaptured at Indooroopilly Is, Qld, in 2002, 11 years and 11 months after banding and 715 km north. Oldest. (Can't find this species in the field guides or in Christidis and Boles). (*Cor.26/4*)

(Note that the database for banding is managed by the federal Australian Nature Conservation Agency in Canberra. The system is called the ABBBS, Australian Bird **and** Bat Banding Schemes, thus the Grey-headed Flying-fox record, just for fun).

Easter Camp 10-14 April 2004

Nancy Urban

There were 10 adults and 6 children that spent 4 nights camping on Bob Ashford's beautiful property, Lothlorien at Bellawongarah. We also had 12 day visitors over the 5 day camp period. Bob's property is a beautiful part of the Shoalhaven, and we were very lucky and grateful to be able to camp in such a quiet and beautiful place. Thanks Bob!

People started arriving and setting up their tents or caravans on Saturday. It was really nice and we appreciated the help that was offered to put tents up! We then went for a walk through Bob's property and saw a Bower, Bowerbirds, a Brown Cuckoo-Dove and a Large-billed Scrubwren. A Boobook Owl was heard in the night.

The second day we drove through Nowra to Comerong Island and missed the ferry by five minutes. We ate our morning tea by the shore and a Nankeen Kestrel was observed by someone in the group. Once the ferry man's morning tea was finished, we were transported over to the island. We saw two White Bellied Sea Eagles sitting in a tree and we were able to get reasonably close before a Currawong moved them both along by swooping close to their perch. We walked through the forest lined road and spotted Spinebills and other little birds. It was well worth the visit to the Island to see three Lesser Sand Plovers in breeding plumage, Red-kneed Dotterels and Pied Oyster Catchers. We ate lunch at the car and a Mistletoebird was spotted in a tree. We then drove to The Grotto at North Nowra. The view was spectacular, and so was the drop!! We spotted two Rockwarblers and a Rufous Fantail. Some of us walked the steep stairs to the bottom. A Catbird was spotted by one of the group members. It is well worth a trip to The Grotto, the rock formations are beautiful and the view of the river is great! We also saw rock climbers, their plumage was spectacular against the cliff, but we preferred the stairs!!



Club members looking at the view over Tallowa Dam

The next day we stayed around the Kangaroo Valley area and we drove to a fire trail near the Tallowa Dam. This is when things went 'down hill' - Bob Ashford and his jokes, which set off a 'ripple effect' and others joined in. This is a taste of the humour: "What do fish say when they run into a wall?" - "dam!" and "An Irishman walked into a bank with a balaclava and a gun, the cashier asked him if he was Irish. He wanted to know how you could tell. She said the gun is sawn off at the wrong end." Ha - ha. Plus someone had a leech on their hand, "that was handy".

This was a great walk and finished with a spectacular view of the Shoalhaven River and Tallowa Dam. The rock formations and landscape were just beautiful and breath-taking. We saw White-naped Honeyeaters, Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, New Holland Honeyeaters, Yellow Robin and a White-eared Honeyeater. We ate our lunch at the Dam and saw three lace monitors hanging around to be fed by the picnickers. We then drove to Kangaroo River and walked over a suspension bridge. I saw my first Whipbird run quickly over a log. We also stopped on the way back to camp and spotted an Australian Grebe in a dam. Gang-gang

Cockatoos were spotted by someone remaining at camp. Most of us stopped and ate a really big apple turnover or cake from the bakery. We all swore they were a lot smaller in the window, but we had no trouble finishing our cakes off before rolling back to camp.

Lyrebirds, Coots and two Masked Lapwings were spotted on the way to Currarong. This was probably a sign of all the great birds we saw that day. We arrived at Abraham's Bosom (the name created a great laugh for the girls). These are some of the birds observed: White-cheeked Honeyeater, White-faced Heron, Superb Fairy Wrens, a male Scarlet Honeyeater, a Rose Robin, Yellow Robin, Ruddy Turnstone, a Wandering Tattler, a Crested Tern, a Reef Egret and Emu Wrens. We then went for a walk around Point Perpendicular and saw a Red-browed Finch and someone spotted a Painted Button-quail run across the road. The views from the cliff face were breath-taking, and we were lucky enough to be able to walk into the Lighthouse area. On our last day we went for a rainforest walk along the Fire Station Road. We saw lots of leeches. We saw a Whipbird, a male Golden Whistler and a Yellow-throated Scrubwren. Unfortunately we didn't see any Logrunners, but two were spotted on a previous day by two of the campers. Apart from the two Sea Eagles and the Nankeen Kestrel, we didn't see any birds of prey. That was a shame.

We had great weather and a great time spotting approximately 160 bird species (See Chris Chafer's list below). I think most of the group got to see a bird they haven't seen before (or rare one). It was also nice meeting people that we don't see at the meetings. We had a laugh around the camp fire. Every time I turned around there was a stick with marshmallows in my face. We also saw lots of wombats in the field at night. On the last night we spotted a mother with her baby. The biggest wombat hole I have seen was just behind a caravan. I couldn't coax any of the kids down into the hole to see if anyone was home. We also saw small lizards on our walk and a blue tongue lizard sunning himself on the dirt road heading out of Honeymoon Bay. All six children were a lot of fun and were a pleasure to be around. They are a credit to themselves and their families!

Species list for Easter 2004 camp (total 118 species)

Black Swan	Red-necked Stint	Superb Fairy-wren	Logrunner
Australian Wood Duck	Pied Oystercatcher	Variiegated Fairy-wren	Eastern Whipbird
Pacific Black Duck	Sooty Oystercatcher	Southern Emu-wren	Golden Whistler
Chestnut Teal	Red-capped Plover	Spotted Pardalote	Rufous Whistler
Australasian Grebe	Double-banded Plover	Rockwarbler	Grey Shrike-thrush
Australasian Gannet	Lesser Sand Plover	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Maggie-lark
Little Pied Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	White-browed Scrubwren	Rufous Fantail
Little Black Cormorant	Silver Gull	Large-billed Scrubwren	Grey Fantail
Great Cormorant	Caspian Tern	Brown Gerygone	Willie Wagtail
Australian Pelican	Crested Tern	White-throated Gerygone	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
White-faced Heron	Rock Dove	Brown Thornbill	Dusky Woodswallow
Little Egret	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Yellow Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
Eastern Reef Egret	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Striated Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Great Egret	Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird	Pied Currawong
Cattle Egret	Bar-shouldered Dove	Little Wattlebird	Australian Raven
Australian White Ibis	Wonga Pigeon	Noisy Friarbird	Green Catbird
Straw-necked Ibis	Topknot Pigeon	Noisy Miner	Satin Bowerbird
Whistling Kite	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Richard's Pipit
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Gang-gang Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Collared Sparrowhawk	Galah	White-eared Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Nankeen Kestrel	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	European Goldfinch
Purple Swamphen	Rainbow Lorikeet	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
Dusky Moorhen	Australian King-Parrot	White-naped Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Eurasian Coot	Crimson Rosella	New Holland Honeyeater	Tree Martin
Painted Button-quail	Eastern Rosella	White-cheeked Honeyeater	Silveryeye
Bar-tailed Godwit	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Spinebill	Bassian Thrush
Eastern Curlew	Southern Boobook	Scarlet Honeyeater	Common Starling
Wandering Tattler	Laughing Kookaburra	White-fronted Chat	Common Myna
Ruddy Turnstone	Superb Lyrebird	Rose Robin	
Red Knot	White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Yellow Robin	

Bird Interest Group Network of NSW (Bignet)

Chris Brandis

The meeting was held in pleasant surroundings at Killalea State Park over the weekend of the 20th to 21st of March with some of the delegates staying on site at the bunkhouse or in the camping ground, basic but clean and very reasonable.

Conservation issues from other clubs were raised and the success of the Canberra group in having one of the new suburbs, adjacent to a critical habitat reserve, declared cat containment areas was applauded. COG have formed alliances with other groups and are politically very active to ensure the best interests of nature are considered in the political processes.

Legal ways around the move towards STWs being declared work areas and therefore not allowing access for birdwatchers are being assessed by CBOC and the findings will be published to all.

The future of Barren Grounds Bird Observatory was discussed at length with Birds Australia letting the support of this popular birding site lapse and be taken over by the Department of Environmental Conservation, NPWS. As the site is a Nature Reserve development it is extremely limited and the facilities are not quite up to scratch.

Roger Bogaert offered IBOC to be a key liaison group with DEC and other interested parties to ensure that the use of facilities developed with the help of many volunteers are optimised. The last warden, Jamie Harris, and the first warden, Richard Jordan, have spent a lot of effort recently in trying to maintain a birding interest in the facility. Hopefully the visitors centre will continue to function in some form or other to assist in the education of the public on nature but accommodation on site appears to be a thing of the past.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Clubs has been signed by all participating clubs and draft code of bird watching ethics is to be prepared.

After two half days of interesting discussion the delegates headed off to their various home areas around the state thanking IBOC for being this meeting's hosts.

Birds on W.I.R.E.S.

Alison Foley

We recently celebrated our first anniversary – of being members of WIRES, that is, as I'm sure most IBOC members know, a voluntary organisation whose members rescue and care for injured native wildlife and, in best case scenarios, release them back into the wild. Over the course of our first year as members, I kept a log of all the little patients we had come into our care and thought it'd be interesting for people to read the facts, figures and stories. We had 39 critters chez-nous, 31 of which were birds. The others were 5 blue-tongue lizards, 2 brush-tail possums and an eastern grey kangaroo joey. The breakdown of birds according to species was:

Rainbow Lorikeet	8
Australian Magpie	3
Crested Pigeon	3
Crimson Rosella	2
Sacred Kingfisher	2
Grey Butcherbird	2
*STD (a.k.a. Spotted Turtle Dove)	1
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	1
Tawny Frogmouth	1

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	1
Eastern Spinebill	1
Common Koel	1
Pacific Black Duck	1
Sun Conure (aviary escapee)	1
Australian Wood-duck	1
New Holland Honeyeater	1
Laughing Kookaburra	1
	1

Of the 38 animals, 21 were released or went on to further care (WIRES keep a record of the ultimate fates) and 17 died or were euthanased. Although some were in our care for so short a time that a nickname was not forthcoming, most were affectionately called something suitable and, in a few of the following cases, the reason for our choice of name can be guessed at with a high degree of accuracy. We loved little Squeaky, Mighty, Bandy, Stacky, The Twins, Waggy, Shadowfax, Tootsie, Tammy, Tiger, Bitey, The Three Loriteers, Dopey, Bluey, Ozzie, Roadrunner, Big, King, Spike, Fluey, Stumpy, Quentin, Sweeney Todd, Goldie, Wodger, Gobble, Woody, Bobby and Kookie.

Our first ever rescue was an exciting and stressful experience. Squeaky, an Ozzie Magpie, that fell out of his nest once too often, and introduced us to the delights of being bitten, making raw mince and mashed insect meatballs, getting up at dawn to feed him and ultimately, accepting that he had to be euthanased. But more of him some other time. We persevered.

Two of our patients opted for auto-release. King, a crimson rosella, took advantage of a briefly open cage door to flutter off the balcony down to the carport where he found a tailor-made bar to sit on and ultimately, ducked under the 4 cm gap between the fence and cement floor into Cabbage Tree Creek and freedom! Fluey, a female common koel, used brute strength to snap the hook on the cage door and disappeared during the night.

The Twins, day-old doves, came complete with nest which had fallen (or was it pushed?) from a tree and, despite repositioning the nest in it, the parents had seemingly abandoned their babies. They came into our care around Christmas 2002 and New Year's Eve saw us at a rave party disappearing at two-hourly intervals to feed them, good practice for this year with Keira, our own baby. They had to be fed a warm gruel from a syringe till their crop was bulging at which point it looked bigger than the bird itself. Just like the new parents we would become, we worried over nest temperature, frequency and consistency of poo, amount of feed and distressing crying (well, cheeping). When, on January 2nd, the smaller brother died, we decided to hand senior over to a more experienced carer but it made little difference. They were too young for us to tell whether they were crested pigeons or STDs.

Bendy was a juvenile crimson rosella which seemed to have been born with neurological damage compounded by slamming into a window in Mt. Ousley. We cared for him for five days on the off-chance that his permanent position of head cocked to one side was purely the result of injury to neck muscles. He had to be force-fed and rehydrated from above, was extremely docile and looked very endearing.

Dopey, a tawny frogmouth owl, was apparently uninjured according to the vet who chucked him into the air in his surgery to test his wings. We went to a park to release him half an hour before dusk to give him time to acclimatize to approaching night. Although I tipped his box on its side, he refused to come out and had to be manhandled and plonked on the grass where he sat eyes closed and oblivious until the dot of dusk o'clock. Then, he transformed. Those huge amber eyes opened wide and with a nudge in the rear end, he took to the air and majestically soared to the top of a nearby tree, missed his landing and crashed through various branches to the base. Hauled out to the central launching-pad, take-off was repeated and this time successful, although the following day, we received a call about a tawny frogmouth on the ground, unmoving, in that very same park! It turned out Dopey had an eye problem but was cared for and released successfully.

With so much lovely fauna, these stories could go on and on so I'll finish with my favourite – Goldie, a sun conure and cage escapee found in a backyard at Bellambi. Goldie's owner, from Nowra, was seeking a mate for him and had rendezvoused in Bellambi. As she opened the cage to put Goldie's new pal in, he flew out and went off adventuring and ended up nosing (or should I say sticky-beaking?) in a lady's verandah flowerpots. This curiosity was to be his trademark during his stay with us. Very used to people, he would happily spend the day on our shoulder, head or belt, loved apples, looking at himself in the mirror and biting and chewing. He bit the operate button off the remote, bit Dave's favourite necklace in half, bit buttons off my blouses, the zip off a jacket...He hated it if he couldn't see at least one of us at any time and what a screech he let out if left alone. He loved grooming us – my long hair and ears and Dave's stubble and chest hair, which was very painful. In fact, he was quite a handful (who would want him back?) but he was so beautiful, sun-golden, scarlet and emerald (and of course, worth \$1000) that within a week, his owner called and he was returned (earning a \$50 donation for WIRES!)

For every success story, there are at least two heartaches. It's not so bad when a seriously-injured animal is relieved of its suffering by euthanasia but death after a length of time in care (whether by euthanasia or from natural causes), when there has been emotional investment and especially when it has been the result of an error on your part, that tears your heart and makes it bleed. We are told, as WIRES members, that any animal coming into care is already compromised and so, the most likely outcome is death but, somehow, I feel responsible and all-powerful, a saviour of all wildlife everywhere, like superwoman – and, despite bashing my forehead against the window-pane of reality (like many of our winged patients) time and time again, once the bruise is gone, I'm ready to fly again.

Birds Around Berry, May 2004

Bob Ashford

Over Easter members of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club camped in our paddock and spent several days birding around the northern end of the Shoalhaven. For me the bird of the camp was spotted at Whale Point, Currarong. Evocatively named the Wandering Tattler it is a wader and a rare bird around here at any time. It was just starting to change into breeding plumage and was almost certainly heading back to the Arctic to breed.

However, it was the campers' reports of 'screeches' during the night that really grabbed my attention. The general consensus was that it was an owl, or owls, but which species? Seeing and identifying owls is a challenge and of the eleven species in Australia I have only seen four. Of the six that have been recorded around Berry I've seen only one!

I've had a thing about owls for years. As a young kid in the UK I would search for them in the local woods at dusk until a sudden rasping screech would send my skinny little legs hurtling towards home! Myth had it, I later learned, that to hear an owl call meant another young girl had lost her virginity! These days lovers have more comfortable choices and peeking owls don't get to hoot as often!

As we sat around the campfire and discussed 'the screech' we eliminated Australia's smallest and commonest owl – the Boobook. Their call is often heard in the spring and summer and I've seen them around the Berry tennis courts, at Shoalhaven Heads, Bomaderry Creek and regularly around our house. But they don't screech, they 'boo-book'!

Australia's largest owl, the Powerful Owl, while far from common is also reported in the area, the closest being the forests of East Cambewarra. It is a huge bird that includes in its prey Kookaburras, Currawongs and cats. They start breeding during May and if you are lucky you might hear their irregular 'woo-hoo'. But that's not a 'screech' either!

I have heard a Sooty Owl on Woodhill Mountain. Its most recognisable call sounds like a long descending whistle, often described as 'a bomb dropping'. These are birds of dense, wet forest and very hard to see.

The beautiful ghostly white Barn Owl is another owl you might see around Berry. Like most owls it's a night bird but may also be seen during the day sometimes. Several locals have told me of ones they have seen, particularly around the open woodlands and paddocks near Coolangatta Mountain. Hay barns and cattle feed sheds are irresistible to mice which in turn are very popular with Barn Owls, but try as I have to spot an Australian Barn Owl I have yet to see one. Besides, they don't screech, they hiss!

Possibly the bird the campers heard was the rare Masked Owl. Also known colloquially as the Screeching Woman Owl its call is guaranteed to clear the woods of hesitant lovers!! On the other hand I've watched Possums fighting around the house and they have let rip some blood curdling screeches. Without sighting the source of the screech the mystery remains unsolved.

That's the frustrating thing about owl watching. It requires a particular dedication, very unsociable hours and you are so rarely successful. I gave up my dedication after a particularly onerous trip some years ago.

Three of us were searching for a reported Sooty Owl north of Sydney. This required a long drive after a long day at work. En route we grabbed some dubious take-away and a few beers. An hour's scramble through dark thick bush got us to the spot the owl was reportedly seen. After many hours of freezing cold, playing tapes to attract the bird and being rewarded with just a few enticing calls we called it quits at 1.30am.

The combination of beer, bad food and bad attitude played havoc on the long haul home. One particularly bad culprit necessitated the windows being kept open all the way and he was instantly and forever after known as 'The Powerful Bowel'.

Bulli Pass to Rixons Pass, Saturday 17 April

Martin Potter

IBOC members assembled at The Elbow on Bulli Pass on what promised to be a perfect day for a bird walk, more like summer than mid-autumn. Indeed as we set off down the wide, sun-dappled track with shady trees, babbling creeks and a cool breeze, just walking was a joy in itself and any birds a bonus. We were following a service trail along an elevated geological bench below the top of the escarpment. The predominant vegetation was wet sclerophyll forest with some clearings and much evidence of human disturbance; Lantana and other exotics were abundant. Familiar bush birds were present in varying concentrations along the way. Our leader Mike Morphett had promised that you could drive a bus down this track, and sure enough a vehicle soon arrived; fortunately it was a friendly NPWS ute with the ranger inside bearing gifts, copies of a new guide to the escarpment. We took a diversion down to the left in search of a dam; we had to negotiate a locked gate with a sign which was unfortunately obscured by graffiti but which presumably said something to the effect of 'IBOC members welcome'. The dam, adjacent to a large mobile phone tower, yielded only Dusky Moorhens and as we prepared to clamber back over the gate our friendly NPWS ranger helpfully reappeared with a key! Rejoining the main track it was soon time for tea, which we took sitting on the track. After sustenance and socialising a small leech appeared on Terry's hand to announce it was time to move on.

As we progressed along the track we were serenaded almost continually by Lewin's Honeyeaters, Grey Fantails, Eastern Spinebills, Eastern Yellow Robins, Whipbirds, Lyrebirds and many others; the avifauna was obviously enjoying the day as much as we were. Mike was able to converse with many of them, and he seemed particularly fluent in Bowerbird. One of the highlights of the day was an obliging Crested Shrike-tit which perched right above the path giving many, including me, their best-ever sighting of this uncommon bird. As we arrived at the second set of powerlines which traverse the escarpment it was midday, and we settled slightly gingerly in the long grass there. Sure enough I was soon accompanied on my plastic bag by a creature wishing to quite literally join me for lunch. As much as I love nature, I regret that I had to wield my Tropical Strength Aerogard and the creature is now firmly attached to that great blood vessel in the sky.

A few steps to the east brought us to the escarpment edge, and views over the northern suburbs of Wollongong; I could see my house from here! Also visible briefly was a raptor, probably a sparrowhawk but much too quick to positively identify. From this point a path leads straight down the escarpment to Gahan's Avenue, Woonona, but we continued south, the track now getting narrower and damper. This section produced for me the best sighting on the day - the humble Spotted Pardalote! I could see a group of small birds on the path ahead comprising Red-browed finches and Superb Fairy-wrens. What I didn't realise was that there were also three Pardalotes nearby in the foliage, and I stumbled within a metre of them at eye level. Having seen them many times before only as dots in the canopy, I was stunned by their radiant, jewelled plumage; at such close quarters and bathed in sunlight their beauty is exquisite.

By now the temperature had risen considerably and many members had started wending their way back. The hardy few continued until we attained our objective - the steep incline to the right which was Rixon's Pass. On a cooler day we might have been tempted to follow it to the top of the escarpment, but time and stamina were running out. We returned whence we had come and disbanded merrily on our way. A most enjoyable day was had by all and many thanks are due to Mike for leading us. The walk illustrated how fortunate we are to have such a wonderful habitat right on our doorstep; let us hope that the recently unveiled management plan for the escarpment is able to successfully protect it for future generations.

Dusky Moorhen	Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Spinebill	Green Catbird
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Yellow Robin	Satin Bowerbird
Wonga Pigeon	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Whipbird	Red-browed Finch
Topknot Pigeon	Spotted Pardalote	Crested Shrike-tit	Mistletoebird
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren	Golden Whistler	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Rainbow Lorikeet	Large-billed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Silvereye
King Parrot	Brown Gerygone	Rufous Fantail	Common Blackbird
Crimson Rosella	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail	
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail	
Laughing Kookaburra	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	

'Who's a Pretty Boy, then?' - Seminar

Mike Morphet

The BA-SNAG seminar on parrots and cockatoos in NSW and beyond was well attended on 3rd April in the Norman Nock Theatre in the grounds of the Royal North Shore Hospital, where Pied Currawongs were very active atop the taller buildings. The only parrot I spotted had very bold colours - a new species I fancy - in a bus shelter across from the theatre. It was in a large advertisement for 'Parrot Hairdressing', with a balloon from the bird's beak with the slogan: "Helping you to feel better sooner". The seminar papers made me feel better, knowing what good work is being done for the Cacatuidae and Psittacidae families in the Land of Parrots, but mindful too that we can't afford to be complacent about the survival of these "colourful characters". A step in the right direction could be 'Karak', the mascot chosen for the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006: the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo of western Victoria. That sports fans may ultimately become sick of the sight of it was the suggestion in the day's edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Journalist John Huxley quipped that this bird and the current prime minister, posing for the launch of the mascot, could both be regarded as endangered species. During the seminar break, John Huxley signed copies of his recently released crime novel *Dead Parrot*, set in the birdwatching fraternity, the genesis of which he earlier related to us.

Parrots and Cockatoos: Population trends and conservation impacts. Dr Jim Hone spoke of ways of determining trends in populations of these birds by comparing demographic and census methods and exponential versus linear growth. Within the dynamics of bird populations, increases and decreases in abundance can be plotted over time, along with finite growth rates. To illustrate, he compared the rise of the Crimson Rosella with the apparent stability of its Eastern counterpart and the downturn of the Red-rumped Parrot in the ACT. Ongoing research and surveys are important in regard to conservation considerations. Where a decline is registered, an appropriate course for treating the problem should follow. It was agreed that extinction rates can be on a local or regional basis.

Glossy Black-Cockatoos: The impact of drought upon their foraging ecology in NSW. From his 4-year study in the Goonoo State Forest, near Dubbo, Matt Cameron illustrated the Glossies' complex foraging ecology, typical of black-cockatoos. He has kept his eyes peeled for 'chewings': signs where the birds have been feeding on varieties of *Allocasuarina* seeds housed in hardwood cones. There is a close relationship between rainfall and cone production, which in turn affects the breeding pattern of the Glossies. A decline in food supply, mirrored by a decline in the proportion of juveniles in the population, force the birds to use older, less profitable cones. As the young red cones are critical for breeding, the birds choose when to breed, so maximising their chances of success.

Night Parrots: Past, present and (?) future. Dr Walter Boles traced the historical records of this elusive nocturnal species of the arid zones, also known as the 'midnight cockatoo'. Highlighting his chance finding of a dead bird in 1990 near Broulia, West Queensland, he urged us all to be alert. We could turn up with something good while looking out for something else. The specimen, although flat, was a complete skeleton and the last confirmed record of this critically endangered, perhaps extinct, species. He speculated on the possible threatening processes for its demise and called for contingency plans in regard to further reports of Night Parrot sightings, sites, the birds themselves, and captive breeding.

Swift Parrots: Volunteer surveys in NSW. I had missed Debbie Saunders's similar talk to our club last July and refer readers to Bruce O'Brien's comprehensive article in *IBOC News* #262. Debbie described the Swift Parrot as the longest migratory parrot in the world, covering routes of up to 2500 km, and referred to its site fidelity on a cyclic basis. She stressed the vital role volunteers play in the recovery program.

Superb Parrots: A multi-scale study: Implications for landscape-scale ecological restoration. Focusing on the Murrumbidgee River slopes of SW NSW, Adrian Manning's surveys of the Superbs have comprised three levels: macro, meso and micro-scales. Bird losses he attributes to the clearing of trees with hollows, poor regeneration, illegal trappings for aviculture, and roadkills, when birds alight for seed spilt from trucks. His suggestions for their restoration and survival included tree plantings, natural regeneration, nestboxes, and compatible methods of conservation and food production.

UNUSUAL RECORDS for March 2004

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Stubble Quail	4	29-Feb	O'Hares Ck	?	GB
Eastern Reef Egret	1	14-Mar	Killalea SRA	rocky shore	MC
Black Bittern	1	3-Mar	International House, N W'gong	creek	NJ
Black Bittern	1	13-Mar	Cudmirrah	estuary	KM
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2	21-Mar	Kanahooka	wetland	MC
Square-tailed Kite	1	9-Mar	Bomaderry	overhead	NJ
Square-tailed Kite	1	22-Mar	Bomaderry	overhead	MPP
Whistling Kite	1	16-Mar	Whale's-tail Bay, Lake Cordeaux	overhead	CJC
Brown Goshawk	1	8-Mar	Gerroa	overhead	BA
Brown Goshawk	1	28-Mar	Kanahooka	overhead	MC
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	7-Mar	Minnamurra rainforest	rainforest	KM
Grey Goshawk	2	14-Mar	Balgownie escarpment	overhead	RT
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	14-Mar	Windang	dune woodland	DW
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	15-Mar	Albion Park	garden	PF
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	31-Mar	Mt. Ousley Rd./Picton Rd.	rainforest	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	7-Mar	Box Vale trk, Mittagong	overhead	GB
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	10-Mar	Coolangatta Mountain	overhead	NJ
Australian Hobby	1	5-Mar	Lake Heights	overhead	CJC
Australian Hobby	1	14-Mar	Killalea SRA	overhead	MC
Australian Hobby	1	28-Mar	Kanahooka (taking young swamphens)	wetland	MC
Peregrine Falcon	1	5-Mar	Kentish Creek	forest	CJC
Peregrine Falcon	1	14-Mar	Berrara Beach	overhead	KM
Peregrine Falcon	1	20-Mar	Upper Kangaroo Valley	overhead	BA
Peregrine Falcon	1	23-Mar	East Corrimal	dune woodland	DW
Buff-banded Rail	1	18-Mar	Berry	roadside	BA
Painted Button-quail	1	26-Mar	Barren Grounds, Cooks Nose	woodland	RJ
Sooty Oystercatcher	11	28-Mar	Crookhaven Heads	rocky shore	SE
Hooded Plover	1	12-Mar	Lake Conjola	sand flats	MJ
White-headed Pigeon	2	3-Mar	Jamberoo golf course	rural	KM
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	16-Mar	Sanctuary Point	urban	PF
Musk Lorikeet	2	14-Mar	Cudmirrah	overhead	KM
Musk Lorikeet	6	28-Mar	Albion Park Rail	garden	PF
Pheasant Coucal	1	25-Jan	Barrack Heights	garden	PD
Tawny Frogmouth	4	1-Mar	Albion Park Rail	garden	PF
Rockwarbler	2	23-Mar	Cordeaux Creek	woodland	CJC
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	15-Mar	Cave Creek, Hilltop	woodland	IBOC
White-plumed Honeyeater	1	28-Mar	East Corrimal	urban	GB
Scarlet Honeyeater	2	28-Mar	Windang	dune woodland	DW
Flame Robin	1	28-Mar	Budderoo fire trail	woodland	GB
Rose Robin	2	16-Mar	Goondarin Ck. (w O'Briens drift)	rainforest	CJC
Logrunner	1	7-Mar	Minnamurra rainforest	rainforest	KM
Satin Flycatcher	1	2-Mar	Bellambi	dune woodland	AC
Restless Flycatcher	1	22-Feb	Goodmans Ford	woodland	GB
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	30+	28-Mar	Windang	dune woodland	DW
Cicadabird	2	5-Mar	Kentish Creek	forest	CJC
Figbird	2	21-Mar	Lake Heights	urban	CJC
Grey Currawong	1	23-Mar	FR 6C, Cordeaux catchment	woodland	CJC
Tree Martin	50+	26-Mar	Barren Grounds, Cooks Nose	overhead	RJ
Bassian Thrush	1	5-Mar	Kentish Creek	forest	CJC
Bassian Thrush	1	26-Mar	Barren Grounds, Cooks Nose	forest	RJ

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; GB – Graham Barwell; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; AC – Anne Cousins; PD – Pauline Duren; SE – Sheila Emery; PF – Peter Fackender; NJ – Nigel Jacket; RJ – Richard Jordan; KM – Kevin Mills; MPP – Martin & Penny Potter; MR – Michelle Rower; RT – Roger Truscott; DW – David Winterbottom.

Comment: Highlights are the Pheasant Coucal, a rare visitor, the Square-tailed Kites, chestnut-rumped Heathwren and Painted Button-quail. Check out their regional significance at www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer.



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

"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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From Your Committee p 2	PRESIDENT: Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742
How are all the bristlebirds going? p 3	SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307
Report on walk to Blackbutt Reserve p 4	Work email: bettyhudson@menziesgroup.com.au
Where no vultures fly p 5	TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
Reports on Belanglo State Forest Outing p 5 & 6	EDITORS: Penny Potter, Tel: 02 4284 6196
Squeaky p 6	Email: penny_potter@iprimus.com.au
Birds you won't find in the field guide p 7	Val Dolan, Tel: 02 4229 6737
Unusual Records for April p 8	

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING - Monday 14th June 2004, 7.30pm, Fairy Meadow Community Hall

Ron Imisides is a long time club member who has travelled around and across Australia birding and atlassing. He has a long standing interest in photography and specialises in natural rather than hide photography of birds. He will choose a selection of his favourite slides to show members some of the delights away from home. Please bring a plate for supper.

MID WEEK WALK: Wednesday 16th June – Leader: Kevin McGregor

Meet at Byarong Park, off Mount Keira Road, at 9.00am in the car park and bring morning tea. Home by lunch.

MONTHLY OUTING - Saturday 19th June 2004 - Primbee Dunes and Korungulla Swamp

Leader: Chris Chafer

Meet at the gate to Korungulla Swamp, which is in Nicole Rd, Primbee at 9.30 am. We will walk around the swamp before heading over to the hind dune forest behind Primbee Golf Course, heading south via the swamp mahoganys, and if they're flowering maybe some Swift Parrots. Lunch will be in the Heritage Park near the Oasis Caravan Park. Bring a carry lunch.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 22nd June 2004, at 7.30 pm at the home Norma Almond, 2 Shoobert Crescent, Keiraville (4229 6812). As usual, members are invited to attend.

JULY 2004 NEWSLETTER The deadline for contributions for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 24th June**. Where possible please submit material by email (but handwritten material is just as welcome!).

From Your Committee

Finance

Balance of IBOC account @ 30.04.04 was \$2,348.24. Approved expenditure is approx \$750.

October Camp

This will be on a property half way between Barraba and Bundarra where the road crosses Ironbark Creek. The camp will be held here subject to rain falling to provide an adequate water supply. At present it is dust dry. A visit will be made in late August for a final decision. An alternative venue will be arranged if necessary.

Lake Illawarra Entrance, Northern Breakwater

The club has had correspondence with the Lake Illawarra Authority regarding the impact of storing rock for the northern breakwater at the southern end of the Windang side of the entrance. Chris Brandis reviewed the information provided and agreed that there would be minimal impact on the waterbirds including the Little Terns.

Barren Grounds

The club is conducting negotiations with Birds Australia and the NPWS regarding the future of Barren Grounds Bird Observatory and the volunteer shop. To date the only information received has been that NPWS is trying to get a ranger to live permanently on site, and that Birds Australia are leaving Barren Grounds.

Library

The club library has bought a DVD copy and is buying a video copy of "Travelling Birds". These will be available for members to borrow at the next meeting.

Bungonia: Sunday 25 July All Day Outing, Canberra Group

A winter's day's birding is planned for the spectacular area around Bungonia Gorge. Hopefully many of the wildflowers will be in bloom by then and this should mean a big range of honeyeaters should be seen. While there in April we also saw Superb Lyrebirds from the picnic table and a Peregrine Falcon gliding through the gorge - we saw 30 odd species in the half day we were there.

After meeting at 9.15am at the Visitor's Centre (\$7 park use fee applies), we will head down to the look-outs to see the view (and birds) before heading off on one of the easy walks. After a picnic lunch, at a different lookout, we will walk along a woodland track where Koalas have reportedly been seen.

There is a good camping area at Bungonia (including a new camp kitchen etc) for those that wish to make a week-end of it (or sleep-in a little bit longer). Bungonia can be accessed via Tarago on dirt roads or it is approximately 30 minutes east of Goulburn on a sealed road. Contact John Goldie on 6241 7639 (h) for more details. The usual warnings about the weather, footwear etc apply for being out all day in winter.

Jack Holland, Canberra Ornithological Group

E-Newsletter

If any club members would like to receive an electronic copy of IBOC News, please email me and I will put you on my mailing list.

Penny (penny_potter@iprimus.com.au)

SERENGETTI, NGORO-NGORO, ALDUVAI, KILIMANJARO

We are going on a self-drive, camping safari to Tanzania in early September 2005, looking for both the birds and the animals.

Is anybody interested in joining us, driving in tandem and sharing campsites?

David & Elizabeth Winterbottom, phone 4227 3451, fax 4227 3169 or mail localplan@iinet.net.au

Report on May Meeting
How are all the bristlebirds going? Bruce O'Brien

At the IBOC meeting on 10 May 2004, club member and intrepid ornithologist, Jack Baker, gave a presentation on his passion, the Australian bristlebirds. There are three species of bristlebird, the Rufous Bristlebird, the Western Bristlebird, and the Eastern Bristlebird. All three species are endangered and of concern to naturalists, and all three need to be subject to intensive management if they are to survive.

Jack showed us slides of each of these species, as well as informative graphs and photos of research undertaken in the field. Of the three, the Rufous Bristlebird is the boldest, sometimes being spotted in or near car parks in national parks, and sometimes even in backyards. The Rufous Bristlebird is also the largest and the easiest to distinguish, given the reddish or russet colouring around the head and cheeks. There are approximately 800 bristlebirds in South Australia and 17 home ranges in the Coorong National Park. The status of the Otways Rufous Bristlebird is vulnerable with numbers uncertain.

All three species tend to be restricted to protected areas, and this is especially true for the Western and Eastern Bristlebirds. The problem is that there are only tens of pairs or less in most areas, causing the species to be located in disjunct populations that are unable to take advantage of any natural corridors. This is because bristlebirds are not strong fliers and tend to run away through the undergrowth when disturbed rather than fly. It is also because bristlebirds are basically restricted to areas of natural heath, which tend to be located in coastal pockets or upland areas. A real problem for the bristlebirds is the misadventure of fire, as it can wreak havoc with particular populations, and reduce their numbers so low that a viable sustainable population no longer exists.

The Western Bristlebird of Western Australia has experienced all these problems, and is probably the species in the most precarious position. Officers from the WA Wildlife Service have actively been involved with relocating individual birds into particular areas to enable better management, although the threat of fire continues to be very real. Today the Western Bristlebird has only 509 home ranges in the Two Peoples Bay/Mount Manypeaks area with 2-3 birds in each, and less than 100 home ranges in the Fitzgerald River National Park.

A species especially close to Jack's heart and mind is the Eastern Bristlebird, as he has spent many hours studying this species at Barren Grounds and Jervis Bay, and much of our current knowledge is from Jack's work and dedication, as well as that of his partner, Jean Clarke.

The Eastern Bristlebird ranges from south-eastern Queensland to far eastern Victoria, but, as indicated above, in small far-flung populations. In most areas it is doubtful whether the population is sustainable, as only a few breeding pairs are left. Many colonies were in the Sydney Basin, but these were all extinct by the end of the 1930s, and today the main populations of the Eastern Bristlebird are located at Barren Grounds and Jervis Bay. While Jack's early work has been undertaken at Barren Grounds, where there are less than 1,000 individual birds, he has been undertaking more recent work at Jervis Bay. One interesting fact has been that the Eastern Bristlebirds have been found only on the Bherwerre Peninsula (Booderee National Park) and the NSW Jervis Bay National Park to the mouth of Bherwerre, with none found on the Beecroft Peninsula near Currarong. Accordingly, Jack and a research assistant have undertaken to relocate a number of individual birds to suitable habitat on Beecroft Peninsula, and study their movements and behaviour. Like the Western Bristlebird, the Eastern Bristlebird is also normally shy and retiring, and Jack long ago discovered that the best way to follow a Bristlebird is to use radio tracking devices. Jack brought along some radio tracking equipment in order to demonstrate how easy it is to track a bristlebird, and informed us that a relay beacon is placed at the top of special-purpose towers to increase the range of the frequency.

There was a sad twist to the tale of the Eastern Bristlebirds at Jervis Bay last summer when most of Booderee National Park was burnt by a bushfire. Pre-fire (December 2003) the numbers were conservatively estimated at 700 individuals. Post-fire the number has been reduced to approximately 450. Nevertheless, the

effort to relocate birds to the Beecroft Peninsula is likely to continue, if only because it is important to have as many viable populations as possible for this vulnerable and endangered bird.

Our thanks must go to Jack, Jean, and others involved in the management and research of the bristlebirds. It is only through such dedication and hard work that we are able to increase our overall knowledge of these birds. It is also important to recognise that only through the endeavours of people like Jack can our endangered birds have any hope of ultimately surviving, and that it behoves us all to assist if and when we can in such key environmental areas as the protection of endangered species.

Mid Week Walk to Blackbutt Reserve, 12 May

Chris Brandis

It was a windy and threatening morning when 12 members and an overseas guest headed off up the hill after looking at some bird photographs taken by local birder, Michelle Rower, from around the area with one brown job a bit of a mystery. An early Grey Fantail and Lewin's Honeyeater were welcome as birds appeared to be scarce. The area where we normally see a lot of bird activity had been cleared of lantana and was rather quiet. The clearing has been carried out by day release prisoners and, although the lantana has gone, lots of other weeds have now sprung up. Near the northern entrance a flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Rainbow Lorikeets took off with a brief glimpse of a raptor passing behind the tree tops and a Kookaburra obligingly sat out in the open for our guest to see. We walked down the power line track and Mike Morphett spied a raptor fly onto the wires and we were surprised to see a juvenile Pacific Baza which then flew off to the left. As we got nearer, great views of the bird were had as it perched in the sun just off the track, until it flew off into the forest but this sighting had made our day. This is the first sighting I know of for the Blackbutt area but records indicate that the species may be working its way down the coast. The overseas guest was using an interesting German/English electronic translator for bird names but most could not be translated except in the broadest of family names such as hawk, with no Baza.

A Satin Bowerbird's bower just off the track appeared to be in a state of disrepair but a few blue objects still remained. We had a look at the dam as a Darter flew over and the rain started in earnest forcing us to head for the car park, shelter and morning tea.

The area looks great for birds but the lack of small birds and birds such as Eastern Whipbird, Grey Shrike-thrush and White-throated Treecreeper could be an indication of the isolation effect where no recruitment from surrounding areas can occur.

Bird List

Black Swan	Little Corella	Magpie-lark
Hardhead	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Fantail
Australasian Grebe	Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey Butcherbird
Darter	Musk Lorikeet	Australian Magpie
Pelican	Crimson Rosella	Pied Currawong
White-faced Heron	Laughing Kookaburra	Australian Raven
Pacific Baza	Spotted Pardalote	Satin Bowerbird
Purple Swamphen	Red Wattlebird	House Sparrow
Dusky Moorhen	Lewin's Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Eurasian Coot	Golden Whistler	Silvereye

Where No Vultures Fly

Dave Thompson

The Australian Financial Review is not where you'd look for a conservation story, but here's one to open your eyes. In its "Waiting Room" column on 1/4/2004, the Fin. Review had the following story under the above heading –

"Vultures on the Indian sub-continent are in trouble. They are feeding off the carcasses of cows that have been fed anti-inflammatory medication to reduce fever and lameness. While the drugs are good for cows, they cause kidney failure in birds, often killing them within 24 hours. According to a report in *Nature*, this is the first known case of a pharmaceutical causing major ecological damage over a huge geographic area. About 95 percent of the South Asian Oriental white-backed vulture (the White-rumped Vulture ? dt) population in Pakistan and India has disappeared over the past decade."

95% in a decade. And I wonder the effect on those humans who drink the milk or eat the flesh.

Belanglo State Forest Outing, 16 May

Chris Chafer

Only nine hardy members turned up on a chilly morning for the walk in Belanglo State Forest. A stroll down to the large dam near the rest area produced excellent views of a pair of Australian Shelduck, Black-winged Stilt, Black-fronted Dotterel, a mob of Australasian Shoveller and Yellow-rumped Thornbill. From here we drove through the forest to the memorial site for the backpackers who were so tragically murdered there in the late 1980's. We then began our walk around the Miners Despair track which a month earlier had been quite productive when I took a group of Sydney birdo's out there. Not so this time, with very few birds found along the 4.5km stroll. Highlights were a Spotted Quail-thrush, White-eared and White-naped Honeyeaters. The lack of rain west of the escarpment is clearly having a negative effect on the plant life and there were many signs of stressed shrubs and dropping herbs. Nevertheless it was a great walk through some rugged sandstone country and diverse forest. We then drove to the picnic ground in the centre of the pine forest gaining glimpses of Grey Currawongs along the way. After lunch we walked around the north-eastern corner of the forest, where again there was very little birdlife and no Emu which can sometimes be found there. Fortunately on the forest edge we found a group of six Flame Robins, who disappointingly kept their distance in the adjacent farmland. Common Bronzewing and a couple of Buff-rumped Thornbills were also recorded. By the time we returned to the cars the wind had picked up and we decided to abandon the unproductive forest. We headed for Robertson Nature Reserve and did the 600m track with a Wonga Pigeon and Eastern Whipbird being the only notable species. Despite the poor weather and lack of forest birds we ended up with 50 species for the day.

Species list

Australian Shelduck	Crimson Rosella	Eastern Yellow Robin
Australian Wood Duck	Eastern Rosella	Eastern Whipbird
Pacific Black Duck	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Spotted Quail-thrush
Australasian Shoveler	Laughing Kookaburra	Golden Whistler
Grey Teal	White-throated Treecreeper	Rufous Whistler
Australasian Grebe	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush
Little Pied Cormorant	White-browed Scrubwren	Maggie-lark
White-faced Heron	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Straw-necked Ibis	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Black-winged Stilt	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Black-fronted Dotterel	Striated Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
Masked Lapwing	Red Wattlebird	Pied Currawong
Common Bronzewing	Noisy Miner	Grey Currawong
Wonga Pigeon	White-eared Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-naped Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Galah	Eastern Spinebill	Common Starling
Australian King-Parrot	Flame Robin	

Belanglo State Forest Outing, 16 May

Chris Brandis

Nine members met in rather chilly, compared to the coast, and windy conditions at the Gordon VC rest area with a flock of Yellow-rumped Thornbills feeding on the grass verge. A quick look at the small wetland revealed a pair of Australian Shelducks and some well coloured Australian Shovellers with water levels appearing to be quite low and the countryside very dry. A rather late Rufous Whistler was feeding in the roadside wattles and later a Golden Whistler appeared.

Chris Chafer, the leader for the day, then took us into the forest along some tracks through the pines to the memorial site for the slain backpackers. This of course led to some light hearted comments on our safety and our actions if we stumbled over some bodies still unaccounted for. We followed a fire trail down through sandstone woodland with some great views into moister valleys but birds were a bit scarce. One site was of an old coal mine with only the concrete base for the bucket line left and some spilt coal waste. Looking across at a now dry waterfall we could see seams of coal on the cliff face and some ancient fern species clinging to the moister rocks. A few motorcycles shared the tracks and we could hear others in the distance at this popular weekend site. Chris heard a Spotted Quail-thrush just off the track in some denser under-story and following the high pitched calls eventually glimpsed the bird as it flushed over the top of the ridge. There were several glimpses of what could have been Rockwarblers but we could not get a positive sighting amongst the jumbled rock and piles of leaf litter.

We later lunched in the picnic area to the tune of unsilenced motor bikes before going to another part of the forest where, again, birds were rather quiet until we got to a cleared area where we saw about four Flame Robins, including two males, on a fence line. Unfortunately they were some distance away but when the sun came out from behind a cloud they just glowed.

On the return home we stopped off at the Yarrawa Brush reserve at Robertson which was full of Cockatoo Run passengers enjoying the peaceful surroundings. After a quick walk around this interesting remnant of thick rain forest with tangled vines hanging down we headed home after thanking Chris for a most interesting day out away from our usual coastal haunts.

(Bird list as per Chris Chafer's report on previous page.)

"Squeaky"

Alison Foley

Our first ever rescue for WIRES was a nerve-racking experience. The much-anticipated, and simultaneously dreaded, call came through about a young Australian magpie limping around in a backyard, still too juvie to fly. As we didn't have a car, we set off on foot for "Damien's house" with a large cardboard box, our plastic laundry basket, which is lidless, a towel and some hastily torn-up rags. On arrival, we could see our patient just inside the gate. Squeaky was almost as big as an adult but still had his downy, fledgling feathers, though they were being displaced by adult plumage. He was hopping around in a forlorn manner. Damien let us in and actually did the hard work of catching him for us and putting him in the box, as Dave's first attempts with the towel were too tentative. On closer examination, the pink skin around Squeaky's beak also denoted his teenage status. We covered him completely with the towel and started walking to the nearest vets.

It was a very long walk along the Princes Highway and two other main roads and, as the fundamental tenet, which was drummed into us over and over again by WIRES members, is that stress is highly detrimental to the health of an injured bird, we tried to keep as quiet as possible during the 2.5k walk. That's when we noticed how loud everything is. Traffic, music, children ... our sensitized ears were ringing with the cacophony. Squeaky, quite early on, found his way through the towel/rag maze and broke the surface, squeaking (hence the name – Houdini was our second choice) and head-butting the plastic roof created by

the upturned laundry basket. We stopped a couple of times to tuck him in again, anxious to stop his movements but terrified he'd escape.

We finally reached the vet's modern enclave, where his assistant, after throwing her eyes up to heaven, saying "These WIRES people!", took him inside. In hindsight, we should've insisted on accompanying him. After a quick examination, the vet came out and said that Squeaky's long bones weren't broken, so it was probably his hip which was damaged or dislocated. However, an x-ray to confirm this would cost \$90. Miss Sweetness and Light put the poor fellow, whose squeaks were now squawks and had increased in pitch and volume, back into his people-propelled vehicle and we headed home. Squeaky now became very subdued and was lying down – a lot of the fight had been taken out of him. I was convinced the Dark Angel had hurt him even more with her brutish management.

At home, we put him in the quiet, dark and warm laundry room and spent half an hour on the phone getting advice. We appeared hopelessly ill-equipped to care for Squeaky. We had neither a hot-water bottle nor wheat bags to keep him warm and, as vegetarians, had nothing to offer our little carnivorous guest. A possibility was some worms dipped in warm water for his supper but I didn't fancy digging up the few rocket and parsley plants we had in pots on the balcony in search of non-existent protein. Since, in any case, Squeaky would require a full breakfast of mince-mix, we decided it'd be best to go out and buy the hot-water bottle and half a kilo of mince. Lean roo was recommended but all Dave could find at that hour was turkey (it's a bird-eat-bird world!). Our mince mix consisted of:

500g turkey mince
 ½ cup of insectivore
 1 boiled egg (including shell)

We made this into thirty little cling-wrap meals and froze most of them. Squeaky was really tired so we put the hot-water bottle, wrapped in a towel, in the bottom of the box and left him there till morning. At 7.30 a.m., I held his wings while Dave forced most of a meal into him by opening his beak and pushing it down with his fingers. He got bitten a lot (Dave, that is) but it didn't hurt. At 9 a.m., another WIRES member (with a car!) arrived to take him to Cannon & Ball where he was diagnosed with a broken leg. It had apparently healed wrongly. This coincided with the magpie family history told to us by Damien. The nest which Squeaky was born in blew down from a tree when he and his siblings were very small. One died and the other two were put back up in a makeshift nest. Squeaky must've broken his leg in that first fall. Then, at a later stage, he found himself on the ground again (did he fall or was he pushed?), which was when Damien found him and transferred him to his backyard. For some reason, Squeaky was not euthanased but ensconced with two other baby magpies and two echidnas, his name changed to Bandy and he seemed to improve in health and strength, even making it to the flight aviary at Killalea, the last stage before being released. Unfortunately, however, a decision had to be made about his ability to survive in the wild and it was felt that he wouldn't have a chance there and so, was put to sleep. Despite the outcome, we persevered and thank good ol' Squeak for giving us our first experience!

Birds you won't find in the field guide

Alison Foley

Star Spangled Drongo
 Rough-bumped Thornbill
 Hartu Swallow
 Molly Ringwald Parrot
 Grebeous Bodilii Harmus
 Sugar-coated Glider

Nasty Tern
 Wrong Tern
 Topknotch Pigeon
 Common Kold
 Superb Liarbird

Brown Gerringong
 Cosy Chat
 Drugrunner
 Chinchilla
 Gibberish Bird

(These birds are best observed after a jug or two of the amber nectar! Have any other members had similar observations? If so please send them in. *Eds*)

UNUSUAL RECORDS for April 2004

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	7	17-Apr	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Australian Shelduck	2	17-Apr	Belanglo State Forest	farm dam	CJC
Eastern Reef Egret	1	13-Apr	Whale Point, Currarong	rocky shore	BA IBOC
Spotted Harrier	1	12-Apr	5km E Moss Vale	rural	CB
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	4-Apr	Jamberoo	overhead	MR
Australian Hobby	1	12-Apr	Haywoods Bay, Lake	overhead	GB
Peregrine Falcon	3	10-Apr	East Corrimal	dune woodland	DW
Peregrine Falcon	2	17-Apr	Pheasants Nest	overhead	CJC
Buff-banded Rail	1	22-Apr	Berry	garden	BA
Painted Button-quail	1	13-Apr	Point Perpendicular track	heath	JC
Wandering Tattler	1	13-Apr	Whale Point, Currarong	rocky shore	CJC IBOC
Sooty Oystercatcher	10	11-Apr	Berrara Beach	beach	KM
Sooty Oystercatcher	8	26-Apr	Sussex Inlet	rocky shore	KM
Black-fronted Dotterel	4	12-Apr	Haywoods Bay, Lake	shore	GB
Hooded Plover	3	10-Apr	Monument Beach	beach	KM
White-headed Pigeon	7	7-Apr	Jamberoo	urban	KM
Swift Parrot	13	25-Apr	Cudmirrah	urban	KM
Rockwarbler	5	17-Apr	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
White-cheeked Honeyeater	10+	13-Apr	Abrahams Bosom Res Currarong	woodland	IBOC
Scarlet Honeyeater	7+	20-Apr	Abrahams Bosom Res Currarong	woodland	NJ
Scarlet Robin	5	17-Apr	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Rose Robin	1	3-Apr	North Nowra	parkland	BA
Rose Robin	1	4-Apr	Bens Walk, Depot Farm (Nowra)	forest	BA
Rose Robin	1	9-Apr	Keiraville	garden	ME
Rose Robin	1	11-Apr	Albion Park Rail	woodland	GB
Rose Robin	1	18-Apr	Curramore	garden	KM
Logrunner	2	12-Apr	The Grotto Reserve, Nth Nowra	rainforest	CJC
Logrunner	2	17-Apr	Black Ash NR	rainforest	BA
Spotted Quail-thrush	3	17-Apr	Belanglo State Forest	woodland	CJC
Varied Sittella	12	17-Apr	Belanglo State Forest	forest	CJC
Leaden Flycatcher	1	9-Apr	Keiraville	garden	ME
Figbird	10	19-Apr	Warrawong	urban	CJC
Grey Currawong	2	17-Apr	Belanglo State Forest	pine forest	CJC
Green Catbird	3	12-Apr	The Grotto Reserve, Nth Nowra	rainforest	CJC
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	2	12-Apr	Korongulla Swamp	wetland	MR

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; GB – Graham Barwell; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; JC – Jessika Chafer; PD – Pauline Duren; SE – Sheila Emery; PF – Peter Fackender; NJ – Nigel Jacket; RJ – Richard Jordan; KM – Kevin Mills; MR – Michelle Rower; RT – Roger Truscott; DW – David Winterbottom.

Comment: A rather quiet April as the cooler wet weather descended upon the region. The Mannikin record from Korrongulla is interesting. This species is generally recorded from rank grasslands near the Illawarra rail line, the species appears to use the railway network to move around. The Wandering Tattler record is a new location for the region for this rare visitor. Swift Parrots have begun to pass through the region, so keep your eyes open at regular sites such as Bass Point and Bellambi Lagoon. Black-fronted Dotterel appear to have declined in the region over the past decade. You can learn more about the regions birds on my Wild Illawarra web site at www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer.



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

"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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From Your Committee p 2	PRESIDENT: Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742
A Trip Down Memory Lane p 3	SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307 Work email: bettyhudson@menziessgroup.com.au
Mid-Week Walks p 4	TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
More Birds You Won't Find in the Field Guide p 4	EDITORS: Penny Potter, Tel: 02 4284 6196 Email: penny_potter@iprimus.com.au
Mid-Week Walk to Mount Keira p 5	Val Dolan, Tel: 02 4229 6737
Travelling Birds Review p 5	
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FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING - Monday 12th July 2004, 7.30pm, Fairy Meadow Community Hall

Our guest speaker will be **Chris Chafer** on the topic of **Waterbird population changes at Windang** over the past 20 years. Waterbird populations in the Windang estuary have been monitored by various researchers since 1980. In recent years IBOC has been engaged to continue this monitoring by the Lake Illawarra Authority. In November 2003 a symposium on the estuary was held at Wollongong University where Chris presented results from twenty years of monitoring, with some surprising findings. Come along and see what has changed. Following the 30 minute talk, Chris will present a selection of bird images captured with his recently acquired digital camera.

MID WEEK WALK - Wednesday 14th July - Bellambi Point, Harbour, Lagoon, Dunes and Sewage Treatment Works - Leader: Mike Morphet Meet Mike Morphet at the Coastguard Station car park (public convenience available there) at 8.40am for 8.45am departure, for a hexagonal (rather than circular) anticlockwise walk, taking in the different environments, which should make for a good mix of birds. Morning tea will likely be at the southern end of the lagoon. The rendezvous is reached via Robert Cram Drive, off Rothery Street. Anyone keen to go, but who needs transport, should seek help at the club meeting.

MONTHLY OUTING - Sunday 18th July 2004 - Bush Bank Mill and Hoddles Track,

Leader: Chris Chafer A bit of history and birding combined, weather permitting. Meet at Kiama blowhole carpark at 9am sharp. We will be driving from here so try not to be late. If you are late the first stop will be Bushbank Mill walk which is just south of Kiama on the Kiama bends. The parking area is very hard to see and there is no way of getting back to if you miss it. From the blowhole, drive south through Kiama until you rejoin the by-pass at Kiama Heights. From here stay in the left lane and look for the parking bay which is about 700m on. Look for the blue "High Wind Area" warning sign, the turnoff to the small parking area is just past the sign. We will walk down to the old mill ruin, which dates from the mid 1800s, along what was the old south road. After morning tea we'll drive from Bushbank through Foxground to the 'saddle' west of Saddleback Mountain. From here we'll walk up Hoddles track which was constructed in early 1800s as a route to the southern highlands.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 20th July 2004, at 7.30 pm at the home of Kerri Lewis, 8 Tallawong Crescent, Dapto (tel: 4262 0204). As usual, members are invited to attend.

AUGUST 2004 NEWSLETTER The deadline for contributions for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 22nd July**. Where possible please submit material by email (but handwritten material is just as welcome!).

From Your Committee

Finance

Balance of IBOC account @ 31.05.04 was \$1,731.14. Approved expenditure for June is approximately \$30.

October Camp

Are there any suggestions for an alternative venue if Barraba is too dry?
Please contact Betty Hudson (tel: 02 4236 0307; email: bettyhudson@menziesgroup.com.au).

2005 Program

The committee are starting to look at next year's program and would welcome suggestions for guest speakers, walks and midweek walks, as well as camp sites for Easter and October. Please send to committee

2004 Twitchathon

This is an annual event held by Birds Australia to raise money for a specific project. This year the money raised will go to the Regent Honeyeater recovery program in the Capertree Valley. It will be held over the last weekend in October. Get your teams together and your sponsors. More details from Bruce O'Brien.

IBOC Web Site

The Committee is looking for somebody to help out with the Club's website. Originally set up through a training organisation, it is no longer maintained and needs updating. Are there any members with the necessary expertise who would be able to advise or assist? If you are able to help in even a small way, please contact any Committee member (contact info on front page) as soon as possible.

E-Newsletter

If any club members would like to receive an electronic copy of IBOC News, please email me and I will put you on my mailing list.
Penny (penny_potter@iprimus.com.au)

Report on the Shorebirds of Port Stephens

Hunter Bird Observers Club has recently produced a detailed report about the shorebirds of Port Stephens NSW, considering both recent and historical perspectives. This includes the results of the February 2004 comprehensive survey of Port Stephens by HBOC, when over 2000 waders (14 species) were recorded and also nearly 2,500 other waterbirds. The results of monthly surveys at Worimi Nature Reserve since September 2000 are also described, and records from a large number of other sources dating back to 1971 have been analysed. 22 migratory wader species and 10 Australian waders are known to have been recorded around Port Stephens. The report clearly shows the importance of Port Stephens for some species of migratory shorebird (such as Eastern Curlew, with at least 1.7% of the total population present each year) and also for some of the Australian resident waders (for example, Pied Oystercatcher).

Copies of the 65 page report are available at a cost of \$20 each plus \$2.50 postage and handling (for 1-3 copies), by sending a cheque or postal order to:

*The Secretary, Hunter Bird Observers Club,
PO Box 24, New Lambton NSW 2305.*

Futureworld

National Centre for Appropriate Technology

Col Markham, a regular speaker at the club, would like to make members aware of Futureworld, a non-profit organisation, which fosters and demonstrates Ecologically Sustainable Technologies. Its 'Eco-Technology Exhibition Centre' is under development at Coniston and will soon be open to the public for visits.

Tel: (02) 4226 9147; Fax: (02) 4226 9130.
Website: <http://www.futureworld.org.au>

REPORT ON JUNE MEETING

A Trip Down Memory Lane

Bruce O'Brien

IBOC members were treated to a trip down memory lane at the June 2004 meeting, courtesy of long-standing club member Ron Imisides. Ron, and a small group of fellow-IBOCers, including Ron's wife Rita, Laurie and Nola Williams, Wal and Hazel Emery, Bob and Lydia David, and Dave Thomson, went on a trip round Australia from June-November 1994. It was a big adventure, about 26,000 kms driving, and approximately 375 bird species sighted. Ron is a marvellous bird photographer, and he showed us many slides of the birds that were seen on the trip, most of which were his own or Dave Thomson's slides taken on the 1994 trip itself. Most of Ron's shots were apparently taken with a Nikon camera using a 200 mm lense.

The group camped in a wide variety of places such as roadside rest areas, national parks, formal camping sites, etc. As well as birds they took in the sights, going to a number of scenic places, and, particularly in Western Australia, looking at the abundant wildflowers. Reptiles and mammals were also featured in some photos. From Wollongong the intrepid travellers went inland up the Mitchell Highway to Bourke and into Queensland, traversing through Longreach and Mount Isa. Some of the early species sighted included the Grey Falcon, White-browed Treecreeper, Hall's Babbler and Varied Lorikeet. The entire group were pleased to see Letter-winged Kites in the Northern Territory at the Barkly Roadhouse, and at Borroloola not only birds but also the Black-headed Python and the Little Red Flying Fox were observed.

Ron and co. visited Elsie, Litchfield and Keep River National Parks in the Northern Territory's Top End, sighting special birds like the Yellow Oriole, Hooded Parrot and Gouldian Finch, before heading into Western Australia around Kununurra and the Kimberleys. Many sites were visited, but according to Ron one of the most special in Australia is Parry's Lagoon. Some more of the birds included Long-tailed Finch, Brown Honeyeater, Magpie Goose, Golden-headed Cisticola and Rainbow Bee-eater, but, as any traveller to northern Australia knows, one has to be wary of Estuarine Crocodiles when near water. And yes, the group did get a sighting of both this and the less dangerous Johnston's Crocodile.

In Western Australia the group split up while in the Kimberleys region before meeting up again to continue the journey southwards. While in the Kimberleys the Gibb River Road, Mitchell Plateau, Bungle Bungles and Windjana Gorge were all visited, some of the special birds sighted being the Purple-crowned Fairy-wren, Black-breasted Buzzard, Rufous-throated Honeyeater, and Barking Owl. Of course, Roebuck Bay, the site of the famous Broome Bird Observatory, was visited, with its literally thousands of migratory waders. A very special sighting for the group here was the Broad-billed Sandpiper, trying to hide amongst the Red-capped Plovers. Also in the Broome vicinity was the White-breasted Whistler and the Broad-billed Flycatcher.

Travelling southwards through WA, Ron took some truly stunning sunset photographs. A few of the places visited were Marble Bar, Karijini National Park, Millstream-Chichester National Park and Tom Price. In the Pilbara region some of the birds included the Australian Bustard, Red-capped Robin, Spinifex Pigeon, Grey Honeyeater, and Weebill. Further south was Kalbarri National Park, Exmouth and Carnarvon. In the Cape Range National Park was the beautifully marked Black-footed Rock Wallaby. Ron also took photos of reptiles such as the Thorny Devil and Military Dragon, and also Kangaroo Paw, WA's floral state emblem.

In the southwest of WA Perth, Dryandra State Forest, Pemberton, Albany, Stirling Range National Park, Esperance and Kalgoorlie were all visited. Just a few of the birds included Western Yellow Robin, Mute Swan (at Northam), Port Lincoln Ringneck, Inland Thornbill, Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Rosella, and Rock Parrot. It was then time to head home across the Nullarbor, with one last special sighting made at one of the roadhouses where two lone birds were spotted, a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and a Long-toed Stint.

Of course, there were many more places and birds than have been mentioned here. Ron's presentation displayed the immense variety of Australia's birdlife, and that it just takes some good planning and imagination to set off and see the birds, and the places, yourself. Some of the audience had participated in the trip, and no doubt felt a real sense of nostalgia. For the rest of us, it was an interesting and rewarding trip down memory lane. Thank you once again, Ron.

THE MID-WEEK WALKS

Mike Morphett

In response to the Committee's invitation, I have drawn up a program of Wednesday morning walks for the second half of this year. I firstly searched through the back issues of *IBOC News* to see what ground had been covered since March 1999 and noted that of the twenty locations the most popular walks (i.e. the most visited) had been Macquarie Rivulet, Puckeys Estate, Bulli Grevillea Park, Wollongong Botanic Gardens, and Blackbutt Forest. I then scanned the *UBD Wollongong Street Directory* for possible new alternatives and came up with six areas, which I have now surveyed. Unless other commitments overrule, I intend to lead these walks, two of which (the last two in fact), I envisage, will be made easier with cars at both ends. I have given the gist of each proposed walk so that folk will have some idea of the route in the event of my absence. I hope club members and their significant others will derive as much pleasure from these walks as I have had so far in my 'reccyng'. They should provide an interesting contrast to Chris Chafer's main monthly outings – thanks, Chris, for your input – and some great views of the Wollongong region. Hopefully, there'll be a good mix of seabirds, water-birds, bush birds and introduced birds, with the odd raptor or two.

- July 14: Bellambi** - Circular route from the harbour to the lagoon, beach, & sewage treatment works.
- Aug 11: Kemblawarra-Port Kembla** - Circular route from Harry Bagot Park to Coomaditchy Lagoon and dunes towards Port Kembla Beach. Then drive on to Fishermans Beach.
- Sept 15: Kanahooka** - Human-made lagoon at Forest Grove Estate. Then drive on to Kanahooka Point. From Murra Murra Road walk round Purrah Bay to Jerretts Point and west along Mullet Creek to Lakeline Retirement Estate.
- Oct 13: Dapto** - Mount Brown Reserve: track from Wyndarra Way near the bus stop across from Churinga Circle and ascent to the reservoirs with detours to the west.
- Nov 10: Primbee-Windang** - Along east side of Lake Illawarra from Purry Burry Point to Windang Peninsula Heritage Park.
- Dec 8 or 15: Unanderra-Berkeley** - From Berkeley Pioneer Cemetery, across the vacant area of Unanderra Industrial Estate to Nolan Street and then through the grounds of Fokuangshan Nan Tien Temple and Wollongong City Memorial Gardens to Berkeley Road. This should be a dead good ending to this year's mid-week walks!

MORE BIRDS YOU WON'T FIND IN THE FIELD GUIDE

Martin Potter

Glamorous Reed-warbler	Bare-faced Lyrebird	Wondering Albatross
Butch Stone-curlew	Leaden Petrel	Bludgerigar
Unwelcome Swallow (eg fishbone)	Fruit Crake	Paradise Triflebird
Rainbow Brie-eater	Strangled Drongo	Noisy Spitta
Letter-winged Kite aka Epistlebird	Fish Fryerbird	Miming Bushlark
Fabulous Fairy-wren	Softhead	Wringneck

MID WEEK WALK TO MOUNT KEIRA, 16 JUNE

Terri Edwell

It was a very windy start to our walk at Mount Keira. Eleven of us arrived all rugged up. There were Kookaburras and Butcher Birds in the car park as well as a couple of Maggies and Crimson Rosellas. Kevin led the walk and we set off into a very windy forest. It was also extremely dry, with no leeches thank goodness, but we really need lots of rain as the ground is bone dry. None of the creeks are running and the ferns etc are suffering.

The first bird spotted was a Yellow Robin. It was difficult to see or hear much at the start for the noise and movement due to the wind, but about quarter of the way round it stopped much to our relief. Some of the group saw a couple of Wedge-tailed Eagles. Mike called down some Brown Cuckoo-doves. Then we saw and heard a small flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. Bower Birds were very busy and we saw a Cat Bird. The Whip Bird started its call after the wind died down and morning tea was accompanied by a few jokes from Jude and then we started back.

A few of us straggled behind and came across a Lyre Bird scratching around with a very busy Yellow Robin having a meal at his expense. We also saw a female Rose Robin a bit further on. Back at the car park it was lovely and sunny with lots of Kookaburras and male and female Bower Birds. Jude and I had a bit of a wander around the Guide Camp and saw four Bassian Thrush and a Grey Shrike Thrush. All in all it was a very enjoyable morning and our thanks go to Kevin and to Mike for leading the walk.

Wedge-tailed Eagle	Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Yellow Robin	Australian Raven
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Whipbird	Green Catbird
Wonga Pigeon	Spotted Pardalote	Golden Whistler	Satin Bowerbird
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Red-browed Finch
Australian King-Parrot	Brown Gerygone	Grey Fantail	Silvereye
Crimson Rosella	Brown Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird	Bassian Thrush
Laughing Kookaburra	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	
	Rose Robin	Pied Currawong	

TRAVELLING BIRDS: An adventure in flight Not a documentary , not fiction just a natural tale
Review by Fae and Kevin McGregor

The mystery of birds' long migration routes across all continents, in all seasons, was revealed in this film by a dedicated team of 400 who over 4 years got up close and personal with their subjects. The film crew began this adventure in 1998, and from the start till the finish, 4 years later, needed to be a real "team" as they worked in all conditions, in all weather, to bring this natural tale to the screen for our enjoyment. They had to be patient, flexible and unobtrusive as they followed the birds and looked into their secret lives with respect for their natural behaviour. The team needed to improvise and be creative as they designed equipment, vehicles and crafts that would enable them to "fly with the birds" with all their subjects' unpredictable behaviour.

It was a thrilling, dangerous, emotional and heartbreaking 4 years for the film crew as they followed the birds through all terrains of deserts, mountains, rainforests, beaches, farmlands, rivers through cities and across oceans. The 12 pilots and 15 cameramen used all types of craft to get their unbelievable "shots" and needed to film in all conditions whether it was a heatwave, snow storms, hurricanes or rain. Where the birds went they followed!

The hospitality and help of the locals was invaluable as many months would be spent in various locations and in many countries. Gaining permission to film in some situations took months of negotiations and patience. The editing and the soundtrack bring the film crew's efforts to a wonderful conclusion so that we may sit back, relax and view this relationship between man and bird in the comfort of our homes.

DVD now available in IBOC Library with special features showing the making of the movie.

PRIMBEE DUNES AND KORRUNGULLA SWAMP OUTING, 19 JUNE

Betty Hudson

On a very windy cold morning 15 members met at the entrance to the wetlands. All had the same comment "We thought we would be the only ones here"!

Even at the entrance it was evident that there were birds moving in the lee of the trees. New Holland Honeyeaters were very numerous. As we walked around the wetland we had a few laughs at the plight of the larger birds trying to fly into the wind. Going with it they were little rockets. The casuarinas on the islands were already filled with Little Pied Cormorants nesting. A good sighting was also made of a pair of Darters.

Dodging the cars on the bypass helpfully slowed by two police cars at the kerbside, we made our way to the forest behind the golf club. Here we stopped for a pleasant morning tea in the sun, and sheltered from the wind. There was plenty of bird activity including a pair of Scarlet Honeyeaters. A good start.

Walking down the track birds were plentiful low down in the shelter of the forest; again many, many, New Holland Honeyeaters. Despite there being plenty of eucalyptus blossom we saw no birds in them. Instead of continuing to the end of the track and on to the Heritage Park, we took a track towards the sea. A good decision. Over the outer dunes some intrepid raptors were battling the wind. A Swamp Harrier gave us good sightings, and the others fleeting glimpses as they swept past with the wind. Our list grew steadily.

Returning to the main track we were attracted by lots of activity in a tea tree. Close investigation found us at least 12 Scarlet Honeyeaters and a nest. Chris had meanwhile heard what he thought were parrots but could not find them. Mary and Terry persisted, walking further into the forest, and found a pair of Little Lorikeets in a fork of a tree not too high up. Everyone got a good look. We had just finished lunch when the clouds and spots of rain arrived.

We had a great morning with plenty of birds despite the unpromising weather. Despite the uncomfortable conditions we managed to observe a creditable 50 species for the morning's effort. Species recorded were:

Australian Wood Duck	Brown Goshawk	Superb Fairy-wren	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Nankeen Kestrel	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Chestnut Teal	Purple Swamphen	White-browed Scrubwren	Pied Currawong
Hardhead	Dusky Moorhen	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Raven
Australasian Grebe	Eurasian Coot	Little Wattlebird	House Sparrow
Australasian Gannet	Rock Dove	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Darter	Spotted Turtle-Dove	White-naped Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Little Pied Cormorant	Bar-shouldered Dove	New Holland Honeyeater	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Pied Cormorant (nesting)	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Eastern Spinebill	Silveryeye
Little Black Cormorant	Galah	Scarlet Honeyeater (12+),	Common Starling
White-faced Heron	Rainbow Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	Common Myna
Australian White Ibis	Little Lorikeet (2),	Magpie-lark	
Swamp Harrier	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Grey Fantail	

BIRDING ABROAD: Hortobagy Steppes

David Winterbottom

Over the past few years David and Elizabeth Winterbottom have been going overseas to look at birds and other things. Here is a vignette from a voyage in May 2000.

Hortobagy Steppes is part of Hungary that is one of the last great areas of open Steppe in central Europe, holding a wide range of grassland and wetland habitats. The Tisza river flows through it and we were there soon after the apparently catastrophic cyanide spill. Fishing was still not allowed. However, the river

appeared to have recovered and we saw Herons catching fish, White Storks searching for frogs in the meadows, both Montagu's and Marsh Harriers quartering the wetlands.

Also in evidence at various ponds and lakes were Sedge, Reed and Savi's Warblers; Spoonbills and Purple Herons. Ferruginous Duck, Pochard, Garganey, Teal and Gadwell were among the wildfowl identified, together with Black-necked Grebes.

At one point a Marsh Harrier was too sharp for a pair of Lapwings and made off with a chick.

The sun shone, but the wind was freezing! On the grasslands, Skylarks sang overhead, a Roller hawked from a hummock, and a flock of White-winged Black Terns flew around feeding. On the roof of an old barn, still in use, was a Little Owl – apparently they almost always use buildings for nesting and roosting. Also almost “house-bound” are the White Storks nesting on the village chimneys. One Stork set a record here recently by fledging eight chicks rather than the more usual three or four.

Another highlight was the sight from an ancient burial mound of three Great Bustards, Europe's heaviest bird and one of its most endangered. One took off, with a lumbering flight, for pastures new. Birds of prey were plentiful – Saker (that most ferocious of small raptors), Montagu's Harrier, Hobby, Red-footed Falcon and Kestrel, Long-legged Buzzard and Common Buzzards.

Adjacent to the open areas is farmland. Fortunately, Hungary has been spared the agro-industrial revolution of most of Europe with its devastating consequences for flora and fauna. As a result, most species are stable or increasing. It is most noticeable that copses, hedges and field corners have been preserved without ‘road to road’ monoculture.

Moreover, Hungary has enlightened conservation measures. For example, Collared Pratincoles were nesting in an arable field. The farmer had been visited by national park staff, and compensated by the government for any changes in crop management requested to protect the threatened colony.

UNUSUAL RECORDS for May 2004

Chris J. Chafer

Unusual Records for May 2004

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	2	15-May	Sassafras	rural	BA
Buller's Albatross	1	22-May	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Darter	1	19-May	Puckies estate, N W'gong	wetland	DW
Little Egret	1	30-Apr	Bellambi lagoon	wetland	DW
Eastern Reef Egret	1	8-May	Barrack Point	rocky shore	MR
Striated Heron	1	8-May	Hooka Creek	riparian	DW
Striated Heron	1	17-May	Minnamurra River	mangroves	CJC
Nankeen Night Heron	3	8-May	Warilla Bowling Club	parkland	MR
Pacific Baza	1	4-May	Mt. Ousley	garden	BN
Pacific Baza	1	12-May	Blackbutt Res. Shellharbour	forest	CB
Pacific Baza	6	17-May	Kangaroo Valley	garden	NJ
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	3juv	1-May	Balgownie	overhead	AL,PH
Brown Goshawk	1	8-May	Nowra mall	urban	BA
Brown Goshawk	1	11-May	Bellawongarah	garden	BA
Brown Goshawk	1	16-May	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	overhead	MC
Grey Goshawk	1	20-May	Albion Park	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	26-May	Yellow Rock	overhead	JC
Grey Goshawk	1	28-May	Mt. Brown Reserve	overhead	MM
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	28-May	Allen Ck., Cataract catchment	forest	CJC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	29-May	Nth Nowra	parkland	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	5-May	Curramore	overhead	KM
Little Eagle	1	7-May	Figtree	overhead	KMg

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Hobby	1	27-May	Warrilla	overhead	BA
Sooty Tern	1	1-May	Jervis Bay	?	per NJ
Bar-shouldered Dove	4	26-Apr	Minnamurra Spit	woodland	MR
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	25-May	Curramore	rural	KM
Bar-shouldered Dove	3	28-May	west Albion Park	forest	JC
Topknot Pigeon	50+	10-May	Byrong Rk., Mt. Keira	rainforest	BHa
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	8-May	Shoalhaven Heads	overhead	NJ
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	1	28-May	Allen Ck., Cataract catchment	forest	CJC
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	20	10-May	Mt. Ousley	overhead	JyB
Long-billed Corella	20+	28-May	Albion Park	rural	JC
Little Corella	20+	28-May	Albion Park	rural	JC
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	few	25-May	Albion Park	rural	JC
Musk Lorikeet	few	19-May	Windang	parkland	MR
Musk Lorikeet	14	21-May	W'gong Botanic Gardens	parkland	MPP
Musk Lorikeet	few	25-May	Albion Park	rural	JC
Musk Lorikeet	40+	26-May	Wollongong University	parkland	RM, DP
Musk Lorikeet	40+	30-May	W'gong Botanic Gardens	parkland	CJC
Swift Parrot	30+	6-May	Warrawong	overhead	CJC
Powerful Owl	1	23-May	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Sooty Owl	1	20-May	west Cambewarra	rainforest	GD
Tawny Frogmouth	1	2-May	Balgownie	garden	PM
Tawny Frogmouth	1	7-May	Wollongong CBD	urban	RB
Azure Kingfisher	1	18-May	Hooka Creek	riparian	DW
Southern Emu-wren	4	13-May	Red Rocks NR	woodland	BA
Eastern Bristlebird	1	13-May	Red Rocks NR	woodland	BA
White-plumed Honeyeater	3	30-Apr	East Corrimal	woodland	DW
White-plumed Honeyeater	few	1-May	Towradgi railway station	urban	JBk
Scarlet Honeyeater	2	26-Apr	Windang	dune woodland	DW
Scarlet Honeyeater	2	11-May	Bulli	garden	JM
Scarlet Honeyeater	5	30-May	Windang	woodland	DW
Scarlet Robin	2	11-May	Cordeaux Dam	parkland	CJC
Rose Robin	3	28-May	west Albion Park	forest	JC
Leaden Flycatcher	1f	8-May	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	parkland	MC
Restless Flycatcher	1	12-May	Jacks Corner, Tallowa Dam	woodland	BA
Restless Flycatcher	1	29-May	Avondale	rural	AL
Spangled Drongo	1	27-Apr	Barrack Point	garden	MR
Spangled Drongo	1	6-May	Berkeley High School	parkland	MR
Spangled Drongo	1	20-May	East Corrimal	dune woodland	DW
Figbird	3	5-May	Wollongong CBD	figtrees	CJC
Figbird	1	21-May	Killalea SRA	figtrees	MR
Pied Butcherbird	1	11-Mar	near Bundanoon	rural	NJ
Pied Butcherbird	1	7-May	near Marulan	woodland	CB
White-winged Chough	11	25-May	w of Penrose	roadside	KM
Bassian Thrush	1	24-May	Thirroul	garden	MM

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; JBa – Jack Baker; JyB – Judy Baker; CB – Chris Brandis; RB – Roger Bogaert; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; JC – Josh Coyte; GD – Gary Daly; PF – Peter Fackender; BHa – Brian Hales; PH – Pam Hazelwood; NJ – Nigel Jacket; AL – Alan Lowis; PM – Peter Milburn; RM – Roger Miller; KM – Kevin Mills; KMg – Kevin McGregor; PM – Peg McKinlay; MM – Mike Morphett; BN – Bette Neal; MPP – Martin & Penny Potter; DP – David Price; MR – Michelle Rower; RT – Roger Truscott; DW – David Winterbottom.

Comment: Some pretty interesting observations for May, the number of Baza observations is quite startling considering there were only three regional records prior to 1992. This species continues to expand its range south and now breeds annually in the region. A similar trend was exhibited by Square-tailed Kite through the 1990s and as both species are at the top of the food chain, it's probably a function of increasing forest health through the region. Although the Pied Butcherbird records are just outside our area of interest, I've included them to illustrate the increasing probability of this species returning regularly to the region. Plenty of lorikeets visiting the region this winter, but so far only two records of Swift Parrot. White-plumed Honeyeaters appear to have made another increase in their coastal range with two new locations reported this month. Bar-shouldered Dove also continues to expand its range and has now established on the hills around Albion Park. You can always check species' information at www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

"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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Birding Abroad: Chobe via Victoria Falls p 6	TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
July's Monthly Walk p 7	EDITORS: Penny Potter, Tel: 02 4284 6196
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FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING – Monday 9th August 2004 - Mystery Bird of Mount Annan: Alan Leishman, 7.30pm, Fairy Meadow Community Hall. Alan is a well-known amateur ornithologist and bird-bander who has performed much of his work at Mount Annan Botanic Gardens and has spoken to IBOC on several occasions previously. He has been employed by the Royal Botanic Gardens for the past 13 years, and currently co-ordinates volunteers in the herbarium there. His topic will be 'A Mystery Bird of Mount Annan', in which he will discuss the movements of an individual species around a relatively small public space, that of the Mount Annan Botanic Gardens.

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 11th August – Coomaditchy Lagoon Reserve, and Hill 60 Park. **Leader: Mike Morphett.** Meet at 8.40am, for 8.45am departure, beside Harry Bagot Park at the western end of Parkes Street, near the junction with Shellharbour Road, Kemblawarra. There is a public convenience close by. The walk will first take in the vegetated southern bank of the lagoon (unfortunately, a recent fire has again destroyed part of this section) and veer off over some of the dunes area towards Port Kembla Beach and return along the lagoon's exposed northern side. Walkers will then drive to Hill 60 Lookout for morning tea and magnificent views and follow tracks to and from the headland on the northern side of Fisherman's Beach. It should be interesting to see if these two combined locations produce anything significantly similar or different, birdwise, from last month's Bellambi Lagoon area walk.

MONTHLY OUTING - Saturday 14th August 2004 - Belmore & Carrington Falls, Leader: Chris Chafer. Meet at Robertson Nature Reserve car park, Robertson, at 9.30am. We will walk around this small reserve's walk before moving on to Bellmore Falls and then Carrington Falls for lunch which will be at the cars. At Robertson, turn south at the pub then left after crossing the railway line to the small car park at the Nature Reserve.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 17th August 2004, at 7.30 pm at the home of Norma Almond, 2 Shoobert Crescent, Keiraville (4229 6812). As usual, members are invited to attend.

AUGUST 2004 NEWSLETTER The deadline for contributions for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 19th August**. Where possible please submit material by email (but handwritten material is just as welcome!).

From Your Committee

Finance

Balance of IBOC account @ 31.06.04 was \$1,806.14. Approved expenditure for July is approx \$55.

October Camp

We have received an offer of a viable alternative, in the same general area, if the Barraba venue is too dry. Thanks Roz.

The camp list will be passed around at the August meeting. Anyone unable to be there, should notify Betty if they think they may come, due to possible last minute change of venue.

Please contact Betty Hudson (tel: 02 4236 0307; email: bettyhudson@menziesgroup.com.au).

2005 Program

Some suggestions have been received. Please keep them rolling in.

Birding for Beginners

Pittwater Council are again running a "Birding for Beginners" weekend on 22-24 October 2004 at the Coastal Environment Centre. This includes a session on photography. Details from the Club library or notice board. Also pamphlets on Bird Watching trips in 2004 from Pittwater Natural Heritage Association See library.

IBOC Web Site

We have had an offer from Martin Potter to maintain the IBOC web site. He will be attempting to contact the organisation which ran it before.

Membership Form

This is being revised and the new forms will be available at the next meeting.

E-Newsletter

If any club members would like to receive an electronic copy of IBOC News, please email me and I will put you on my mailing list.

Penny (penny.potter@iprimus.com.au)

Club Polo T-shirts and Fleecies

Anyone who would like a club T-shirt or fleecy please contact Kerri Lewis (4262 0204 after hours) to place an order. A minimum of 10 orders is needed to keep the cost down to \$30 (T-shirt with club logo on pocket) and \$31 (Fleecies with club logo and pockets). She currently has two people keen to get a fleecy so please let her know by the next club meeting in August.

Birdwatching Birthday Party

Club members are invited to Wally Hurst's **84th Birthday Party**

3/79 Page Avenue
North Nowra

On Sunday 8 August from sun-up

Bring chair and lunch.
RSVP Tel: 4422 8182

Twitchathon

30-31 October 2004

The club is trying to get a Twitchathon team together so if you are at all interested please let somebody on the Committee know. The idea is that a team goes out to spot as many birds as possible within an allotted time frame and over the route of its choice. Individual team members are sponsored per individual bird. At the moment the plan is to go out on the Sunday – time and route to be decided. If you are unable to be part of the team please consider sponsoring the club in this worthwhile endeavour.

The money raised from this year's Twitchathon fundraising will go towards the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program in the Capertee Valley.

REPORT ON JULY MEETING

Bronwyn Wilson

Waterbird Population Changes at Windang over the past 20 Years

Numbers were down a little at the July meeting unfortunately, however those in attendance learned much from the informative talk given by Chris Chafer. This was then followed by a short presentation of pictures.

The Chris' (Chafer and Brandis) prepared a paper that was presented at a Symposium held at the University of Wollongong in September 2003. The title, *Temporal Dynamics of Waterbird Populations in the Lake Illawarra Estuary: 20 Years of Knowledge*.

For the study, waterbirds was defined as "birds that are ecologically dependent upon wetlands". Chris reported that waterbirds are easy to monitor which is quite an advantage. They are visible, easy to identify and easy to count. Their ecology is understood and they respond to changes in the environment. Many waterbirds migrate from the North following breeding, to our Australian shores for the summer.

There have been a number of engineered changes to Lake Illawarra over the last 20 years. In the 1980s dredging and land reclamation were carried out on the southern shores of the lake entrance to provide recreational and picnic facilities. A breakwall and tombolo have been constructed and this has reduced the mudflats. Reports in the media suggest the construction of a further breakwall and tombolo is being considered.

There have been a number of surveys and records kept on the bird species and their numbers over this time. Some of the first records were kept by Doug Gibson. Doug Gibson was one of the founders of the club. He is described by those who knew him as a wonderful birdo. He loved his birdwatching and had an unassuming knowledge which he was very ready to share with others. I feel privileged to have met him. Studies were also done by Kevin Wood, another club member. Data from the surveys completed by our club members for the Lake Illawarra Authority was also used. Regular counts were done over a period of time. Several members participated - well done, and thanks to those that gave up their time to participate.

For the study, birds were grouped into categories from an ecological perspective of foraging techniques and food:

- Fish eaters – swimming (cormorants, pelican, grebes); stabbing (egrets, herons) and diving (terns).
- Invertebrate eaters – probing (godwits, curlew, oystercatcher, ibis) and pecking (plovers, sandpipers).
- Omnivores (gulls) and grazing herbivores (swans, ducks)

Data was presented statistically on impressive graphs which showed seasonal, temporal trends (summer: September - March; and winter: April - August) and species trends. The data indicated:

Australian Pelican - numbers are greater in summer and have increased over time. This is consistent with the commencement of breeding on Five Islands Nature Reserve.

Little Black Cormorant - is mainly a summer visitor, no significant change in numbers.

Little Pied Cormorant - a winter visitor has increased over time.

Great Cormorant - a summer and winter visitor, numbers have increase slightly in summer.

Great Egret, Striated Heron and White-faced Heron have shown an increase in population.

Little Egret showed no significant change.

Crested Tern breeds locally on Five Islands. There has been little change, but is more common in summer.

Little Tern – was a regular summer breeder and there has been a significant decline.

Australian White Ibis and *Royal Spoonbill* were mainly winter visitors and have increased.

Eastern Curlew and *Bar-tailed Godwit* are summer visitors and have decreased in numbers. This may be a consistent trend throughout Eastern Australia.

Grey-tailed Tattler was a summer visitor that has gone with only 1 pair being sighted at Barrack Heights.

Pacific Golden Plover was a summer visitor that has gone.

Red-necked Stint - changes have been noted that were consistent with the population crash in the arctic region.

Common Greenshank – is a summer visitor that has gradually declined.

Double-banded Plover – is a winter migrant that has increased.

Red-capped Plover – has increased and is now around all the time.

Silver Gull and *Kelp Gull* breed on Five Islands and are present year round although the Kelp Gull more recently has been absent in summer while the Silver Gull has increased in summer.

The grazers, ducks and swan, have increased.

In general terms there has been a dramatic decline in the invertebrate carnivores with changes in the preferred intertidal habitat. There has also been an increase in the grazing herbivores and many fish eaters with the increase in the seagrass/algae beds. Other factors may also influence the changes such as global climatic changes, human disturbances, dogs may be a problem, birds being harvested in other countries, or external factors.

Slide Show

On a lighter note, Chris then enjoyed showing us some very impressive images, including birds. Chris has recently purchased a digital camera, a Fujifilm Fine Pix S5000 with 3.2 mega pixels. It has a built-in macro zoom and can take 450 images on the memory card. It has both an automatic and manual setting.

Chris is very pleased with his new toy and the results achieved (he assured us he was not being paid by Fuji!!). After many years of taking photos of birds with limited success, Chris has been very satisfied with the pictures he has obtained. Although the photos lack the quality required for winning photo competitions, the results show good detail. Being able to view the shots and delete the mistakes is also a positive feature. The photos can then be loaded into the computer and are available for use without delay.

Thanks Chris for the informative talk. It was good to learn about the trends of the birds in our area, and particularly in relationship to the environmental changes. The slide show was a fitting finale. It was not only enjoyable but also informative. I suspect a digital camera may go on a few wish lists. I am considering working on the identification of waterbirds since I have so much trouble with the birds that flit about so quickly, particularly all those LBB's.

Thanks also to Kerri Lewis for organizing the equipment, and to Lindsay Smith and Sossa for the backup.

MID WEEK WALK TO BELLAMBI POINT, 14 JULY

John Cashman

Under the eyes of 6 pelicans, 15 birdwatchers gathered at Bellambi Point, for the first of Mike Morphet's new walks: Mike, Val, Terri, Tera and Neil, Jude, Michelle, Graham, Kerrie, Judy, Peter F, Ann, Lisa, Robyn and John. There were some mild differences as to whether the walk was hexagonal, round, or figure of eight, but whatever the shape, it was a lovely winter day, as warm as spring, and the walk gave us 'pieces of eight' pleasure.

We walked out to the Point. Sparkling crystalline waves made you almost think of having a dip. 15 to 20 sea birds sat on a rocky outcrop surrounded by the surf: sootys, cormorants, silver and kelp gulls. Was it a Kelp or a Pacific Gull? Tera whipped out her bird book; Kelp! Interesting, after seeing Chris Chafer's photos at the last meeting.

Walking back past the sewage works we saw a giant crane -sadly not a Jabiru - just the steel variety. 'I thought they were closing these works down!' 'No,' Neil responded, 'they're being upgraded and will be kept in reserve'.

While walking to the bike track a White Breasted Sea Eagle was spotted in a tree. They are huge birds. A pair of Richard's Pipits were seen on an oval. 'You can tell they are pipits by the way they bounce their rumps up and down,' Jude said. Then she gave us a demonstration. Robyn saw some New Zealand Honeyeaters! (Well NZ isn't that far from Tasmania, and it was once called New Holland!) She was mercilessly ragged throughout the rest of the walk. As we followed the bike track a White Faced Heron elegantly kept pace with us. 'You see the plumes on its back,' Peter remarked, 'it's probably their breeding season'. Then to the wetland and lagoon. Lots of estuary birds: ducks, moorhens et al; easy and pleasant viewing.

A Pelican sat high up on a large vent pipe. Smelly feathers? Yes, but from the other side we noticed a length of fishing line trailing from it. 'Was the hook still embedded in the pelican?' Ouch! I remember an ABC feature about a chap in Queensland who caught damaged pelicans by jumping and diving on them, and then fixed them up. An eccentric chap, but you had to admire his dedication to free pelicans from human entanglements. The things we idiots do?

Morning tea was enjoyed on a sunny dune overlooking the lagoon and the beach. We were all in good spirits and enjoyed the rich sightings. Val told some of us of her trip to Darwin on the Ghan and the great bird observing in Kakadu.

Then along the beach. Some fellows in their wetsuits were out there with their boards. Mike led us up a steep track over the dunes and down behind them through a eucalypt and banksia forest. It had been burnt out some time previously, but the trees were coming back. Bitou bush unfortunately was also much in evidence. Lots of birds, and excitement as some saw Emu Wrens, then to cap it all for those at the rear, a Spangled Drongo, provocatively switching its tail. Robyn was elated. For two years running, a Drongo had perched on the same branch of our paperbark trees in Balmain. We felt cock a hoop when we identified it, and were disappointed when it didn't return the following year.

Near the end of the walk Mike announced, 'We've seen 49 species so far - it would be nice to make it 50! There's always that New Zealand Honeyeater! 'Who said that?' As it was, three more species, including a Magpie Lark were seen on the way to the cars.

Full marks to Mike for this walk: wonderful weather, companionable company and bountiful bird sightings.

PS Bird watchers are conservation minded, so its nice to know that Alan and Ann from our Club join with others in bush regenerating in the dunes round Bellambi Lagoon. Nice one.

Bird List for Bellambi Point, Lagoon and Dunes Area

IBOC Survey 14 July 2004 (with additional species recorded during recesses made on *24 May 2004 & † 25 June 2004)

Mallard	Purple Swamphen †	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Fantail
Pacific Black Duck	Dusky Moorhen	Superb Fairy-wren	Willie Wagtail
Grey Teal †	Black-tailed Native-hen	Variegated Fairy-wren	Spangled Drongo
Chestnut Teal	Sooty Oystercatcher	Southern Emu-wren	Grey Butcherbird *
Black-browed Albatross	Red-capped Plover	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Australasian Gannet *	Masked Lapwing	White-browed Scrubwren †	Australian Raven
Little Pied Cormorant	Kelp Gull	Brown Gerygone *	Richard's Pipit
Pied Cormorant *	Silver Gull	Brown Thornbill	House Sparrow
Little Black Cormorant	Crested Tern	Yellow Thornbill	Red-browed Finch
Great Cormorant †	Rock Dove *	Red Wattlebird	European Goldfinch
Australian Pelican	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Little Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
White-faced Heron	Crested Pigeon	New Holland Honeyeater	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Little Egret	Galah	Eastern Spinebill	Silvereye
Great Egret †	Rainbow Lorikeet	Eastern Yellow Robin	Common Blackbird
Australian White Ibis *	Crimson Rosella	Eastern Whipbird	Common Starling
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Magpie Lark	Common Myna

BIRDING ABROAD: Chobe via the Victoria Falls**David Winterbottom**

Over the past few years David and Elizabeth Winterbottom have been going overseas to look at birds and other things. Here is a vignette from a voyage in October 2000.

The Victoria Falls Safari Lodge is a magnificent affair where we had a two storey lounge and balcony overlooking a waterhole, and a sort of loft bedroom with en suite.

Lots of Helmeted Guineafowl about, and a Maroubu Stork, Heron and Queleas at the waterhole, with warthogs grazing all over the well watered lawns in the lodge. Dinner was at a nearby restaurant with dancers and African music for entertainment and Warthog, Kudu, Crocodile and Mopani grubs on the menu – all but the grubs a little overrated!

A visit to the Falls rain forest gave great views as always. We had never seen the Falls so low. Very little water over the Main Falls and none over the Eastern Falls at all. The beautiful Heuglin's Robin was much in evidence as were Rattling Cisticolas, both Red-eyed and Black-eyed Bulbuls, Drongos and Pied Wagtails. Plenty of Baboons and vervet monkeys are still around.

Next day we found the Ihaha bush camp site (communal loo, no fences or facilities) on the edge of the Chobe river with hippos right in front of us. Lots of Kudu and Impala on the way. Along the river and nearby were African Skimmers with their incredible beaks, a terrific Martial Eagle, the familiar Greenshank and its smaller look-alike the Marsh Sandpiper, little Kitlitz and Three-banded Plovers and, of course, the inevitable Blacksmith and Crowned Plovers. The many, gaudy, confiding Carmine Bee-eaters helped make it a memorable place.

We were awakened to the sound of rushing water and feared that the river had come up in the night. Not so. As dawn broke we found the site alive with buffalo which were still crossing the river from the Namibia Caprivi Strip in their hundreds. Later, we found what seemed like thousands of them on either side of the road through which we drove very slowly. Intent on chewing the cud they took no notice of either us, the ever hopeful Cattle Egrets, or the baleful looks of the White-backed Vultures peering down from dead trees.

We saw Brownheaded Kingfisher, Redbilled Woodhoopoes (with their long, thin, curved, scarlet beaks), Senegal Coucal and dainty Little Bee-eaters to add to the bird list for the day. On our way to Savute we continued the drive through dry Mopani woodland in deep sand, fortunately without getting stuck.

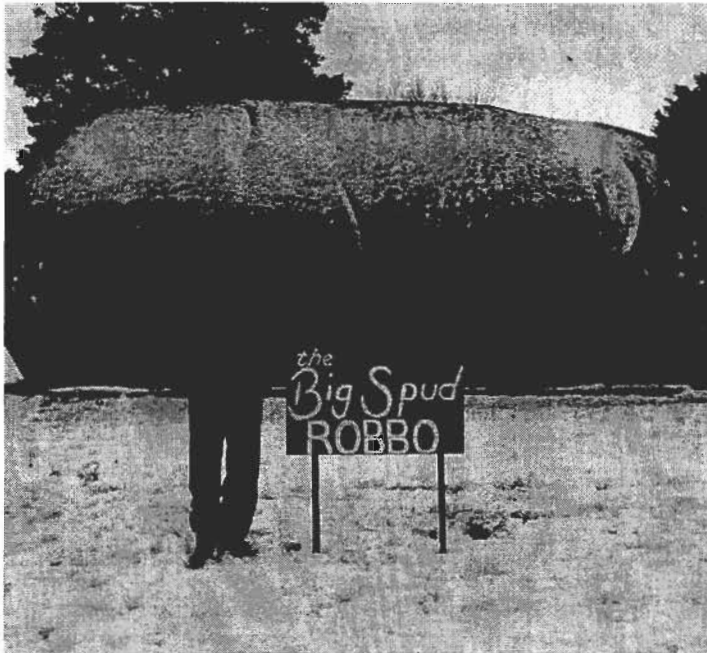
JULY'S MONTHLY WALK

Neil Wheway

It was with more optimism than pessimism that Tera and I left a blustery cold but sunny Dapto, to meet at Kiama lighthouse for the monthly walk. Driving south to Albion Park we noticed a fairly rare occurrence on the top of the Illawarra Escarpment - SNOW. This didn't deter our optimism unduly, but the further south we drove the more our enthusiasm waned. Kiama skyline was becoming inky black and spreading.

Arriving at the car park were cars, none of them recognised. We were a little early. The wind was at gale force with sleeting rain making it difficult to don our jackets, the blowhole was pumping away. With the arrival of Betty our optimism soared again, only to be dashed again with her news. Chris Chafer had contacted her unable to come and asked her to lead the walk. Because of the inclement weather with only two foolhardy walkers there to walk, it was cancelled. After all the birds would not be bird brained and venture out in weather such as this.

Tera and I decided the order of the day was a drive up to the snow. Jamberoo Mountain road was closed we reasoned fallen trees and branches were the logical explanation for the closure. Driving up in the calm of Macquarie Pass we were unprepared for the sight to behold us after leaving the trees. Coming into the cleared potato paddocks of the famous Robertson Spuds, it was a winter wonderland everywhere white. Driving past the "Kingdom of Lairds Corner" - now the pie shop - cars were parked with people photographing and playing in the snow. What really amazed was the sight in Robertson, of cars parked bumper to bumper on both sides of the main street. In the front yard of the motel were about 10 snowmen standing proudly erect, people were getting their photos taken in front of the "Frozen Big Spud". We confess we did too. A drive in virgin snow a first for me to the Robertson cemetery, alighting from the car to photograph the hinterland we noticed a name on one of the headstone plaques with the nickname of "Snow".



All day the only birds seen were currawongs bunched up sheltering in the lee of rocks. At the blowhole Betty also spotted a very large brown bird toward the sea entrance of the blowhole, but it was not to be seen again and thus not identified. Others sighted by us on our drive around the Robertson area were a flock of mudlarks scratching in the snow, one female wren that flew in front of the car, one grey thrush sitting in a bush looking at us with a sorrowful eye. A group of Straw-necked Ibis were hopefully poking in the snow. Our trip concluded with a late morning coffee with delicious orange cake at Raneleigh House. It is a beautiful grand old building with roaring open fires. Driving back home we could hardly believe the traffic coming up Macquarie Pass one continual stream moving very slowly all keen to get to the snow.

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE NANKEEN NIGHT HERON

Michelle Rower

I'd seen the Nankeen Night Heron in the field guide and hoped one day to see one. A friend had seen one and he'd told me how beautiful it was.

One summer evening I stopped off at the Little Lake with my mum to "see what was around". As I looked through my binoculars towards the traffic bridge I saw it. A Nankeen Night Heron was perched on a log watching the water in the rock pools. I asked mum to watch it carefully and if it flew to keep an eye out for where it went. I rushed home to get my camera sure that when I got back it would be gone.

It was still there!! I snapped a few quick shots then got as close to it as I could. Mum and I watched entranced as it jumped from the log and grabbed an eel from the rock pool below. The eel escaped several times and we watched the heron give chase, grab it back and hit it against the rocks to stun it. I was madly taking photos and ran out of film. The heron took several minutes to swallow the eel dipping it in a nearby pool a few times (probably to help it go down – it was 2-2½ feet long). The heron returned to its perch and sat looking at the water. Mum and I were amazed and mum said that watching the heron was better than any wildlife documentary. Several people had walked by, and a couple had stopped to watch the heron, so I supposed it was used to people as we were fairly close to it and it did not seem worried about us. I had one of the photos enlarged and it hangs on my wall – a bit blurry as I was really excited as I took it, but I love it all the same.

My next encounter was last October when we were staying at Soldiers Point at Nelsons Bay. My husband and teenage son had gone night fishing on a jetty across the road from the caravan park we were staying at. They came back raving about this big bird that kept flying to and walking up and down the jetty. My son said he thought it was a Nankeen Night Heron. I was skeptical. The next night armed with my camera I went to check it out. I sat with them in the freezing cold wind wondering if I was mad – if it WAS a night heron surely it would not come back again. It did. It silently appeared on a jetty railing and observed the fishermen. If anyone walked past it, it took off with a loud croak and landed on a nearby buoy until the coast was clear again. I watched it for several nights and spoke to a local fisherman who said it was always there. When everyone was gone it scoured the jetty for leftover bait. I wondered if it used the lights on the jetty to help it hunt and the people were just an inconvenience.

In between these encounters I was lucky enough to see and photograph a heron at Korrungulla Swamp. Lately I have had many encounters as I have found a tree where up to three Nankeen Night Herons roost regularly. My son was playing tennis at Warilla Bowling Club courts when I saw a big rufous coloured bird fly into a pine tree in the middle of the playground behind the courts. I investigated soon after and could not see anything. When I went back to the tennis I was sure I could see the shape of a large bird in the tree- it was sitting in the direct sun so was hard to miss! I went back to the tree again and found two herons sitting happily oblivious to the teenagers and little kids playing in the playground only meters below. I took my friend to look and she spotted a third heron. I now routinely check the trees along the little lake and often see the herons roosting. They watch me intently as I stare up at them. They are such beautiful, serene birds and I feel privileged to be able to see them so close to me so often. I hope they stay around for a long, long time.

MORE BIRDS YOU WON'T FIND IN THE FIELD GUIDE

Danie Ondinea

I'm a new member and thought you might enjoy a story from my time as a birdkeeper at Taronga Zoo (second half of 1980's):

A man once congratulated the bird department on breeding "those giant Andean Condoms"!!!

ATLASSING AND YOUR BIRDING RECORDS**Chris Brandis**

Have you ever thought of how to make your bird sightings useful?

Currently your unusual sightings are used in the preparation and updating of the IBOC publication "The Birds of Illawarra and Shoalhaven" and the "NSW Annual Bird Report" published by Birding NSW, was NSW FOC, while most normal records are never kept. Some members were atlassing for the Birds Australia National Atlas for the last 4 years and a few are still recording for the NSW Bird Atlassers. I am currently atlassing many of the IBOC unusual sightings and bird lists from club outings as well as my own sightings around NSW.

The Birds Australia Atlas has been published and is still accepting records from all over Australia, but an easy way of ensuring your records are stored is to complete atlas sheets for the NSW Bird Atlassers, who also share their records with other entities such as BA. The data base is the largest record set for NSW and is used for research, conservation etc with many commercial organisations actually paying for the service.

It is a very easy way to record your sightings and can be based on specific sites such as your home, favourite birding spot or over 10 minute squares through periods of up to a calendar month. A GPS unit is helpful in getting the coordinates for the site but they can also be obtained off available maps and recording the vegetation of the site habitats is optional.

If any one is interested in recording their sighting data I can supply the sheets where you just cross off the bird name and later give them back for me to vet and enter into a computer program before sending off to be loaded into the master data base. If you later wish to join the NSW Bird Atlassers I can also arrange that and you can be sure your sightings are being put to valuable use.

Pretty Boy Invasion

Taken from the (UK) Daily Mail 25 June 2004

"The squawk of parrots could soon drown out the traditional birdsong of the English country garden. Experts say the wild parrot population has exploded, with numbers expected to reach 100,000 by the end of the decade.

Ring-necked parakeets that have escaped or been released by their owners are building thriving colonies in parks and gardens. Because the species is robust and highly adaptable it can survive English winters – and numbers are now increasing by 30% every year.

There are fears that established species such as starlings, jackdaws, kestrels and little owls, could suffer as the more aggressive parrots muscle in on them. Wild parrots currently number around 20,000 in Britain, it is thought. One roost in Esher, Surrey, is home to 6,900 of the birds and there are at least 10,000 in London alone.

One vineyard in Southern England was recently so hard hit by the birds, which are particularly partial to fruit, that wine production fell from 3,000 bottles to 500.

Research has revealed that they are breeding much faster than previously thought. Rather than rearing just one chick a year, he found they actually produce two. Because parrots can live for up to 34 years, it means each female could produce some 60 offspring."

UNUSUAL RECORDS for June 2004

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Brown Booby	2	18-Jun	Bass Point (photo provided)	rocky shore	NW
Nankeen Night Heron	3	8-Jun	Warilla Bowling Club	parkland	MR
Nankeen Night Heron	1	11-Jun	Kembla Grange golf course	riparian	JS
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	16-Jun	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	wetland	MC
Osprey	1	29-Jun	Tallawarra ash ponds	wetland	CB
Pacific Baza	1	15-Jun	Cabbage Tree Lane, Mt. Ousley	garden	BN
Pacific Baza	1	18-Jun	Mt Ousley Rd.	overhead	CJC
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	29-Jun	Bellambi Lagoon	wetland	AC
Swamp Harrier	1	2-Jun	Nowra	parkland	BA
Brown Goshawk	1	2-Jun	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	overhead	MC
Brown Goshawk	1	27-Jun	Windang	overhead	MC
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	28-May	Regal Heights, Albion Park	overhead	JC
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	30-Jun	Primbee	dune woodland	MR, DW
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	19-Jun	Cordeaux Dam	overhead	CJC
Little Eagle	1	29-Jun	Yattheyattah (Lake Conjola)	overhead	MJ
Peregrine Falcon	1	30-May	Regal Heights, Albion Park	urban	JC
Peregrine Falcon	1	5-Jun	Berry	urban	BA
White-headed Pigeon	4	30-May	Farmborough Heights	urban	NU
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	6-Jun	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	27-Jun	Minnamurra spit	forest	MR
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	50+	28-Jun	Picton Rd.	overhead	CJC
Long-billed Corella	1	9-Jun	Wollongong Botanic Gardens	parkland	CJC
Musk Lorikeet	100+	16-Jun	Wollongong Botanic Gardens	parkland	CJC
Little Lorikeet	3	19-Jun	Primbee	dune woodland	IBOC
Red-rumped Parrot	2	26-Jun	Barrack Point	parkland	MR
Tawny Frogmouth	1	14-Jun	Lake Heights	urban	TF
Australian Owllet-nightjar	1	30-May	Avondale	woodland	AL
White-plumed Honeyeater	5	14-Jun	Cabbage Tree Ck., Fairy Meadow	urban	CJC
Scarlet Honeyeater	12+	19-Jun	Primbee	dune woodland	IBOC
Scarlet Robin	2	17-Jun	Cordeaux Dam	parkland	CJC
Rose Robin	1	4-Jun	Regal Heights, Albion Park	woodland	JC
Rose Robin	1	9-Jun	Wollongong Botanic Gardens	rainforest	CJC
Rose Robin	1	16-Jun	Jamberoo	garden	BH
Rose Robin	2	18-Jun	Jerrara Creek Dam	forest	MR
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	10-Jun	Burke River	woodland	CJC
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	19-Jun	junction Avon & Nepean R	woodland	CJC
Restless Flycatcher	1	30-May	Avondale	rural	AL
Restless Flycatcher	1	6-Jun	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	urban	MC
Spangled Drongo	1	4-Jun	East Corrimal	dune woodland	DW
Spangled Drongo	2	6-Jun	Windang	woodland	DW
Spangled Drongo	1	20-Jun	Primbee	dune woodland	MR
Spangled Drongo	1	24-Jun	Primbee golf course	parkland	ME
Figbird	25	27-Jun	Kiama	urban	CJC
Grey Currawong	1	10-Jun	Alpine, nr Mittagong	forest	CJC
Little Raven	10	13-Jun	Moss Vale	rural	CJC
Green Catbird	1	28-May	Scarborough	garden	DO

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; AC – Alan Cousins; JC – Josh Coyte; ME – Mary Eskdale; TF – Tracey Flanagan; BH – Betty Hudson; MJ – Michael Jarman; AL – Alan Lewis; BN – Bette Neal; DO – Danie Ondinea; MR – Michelle Rower; JS – Jim Sligar; RT – Roger Truscott; NU – Nancy Urban; DW – David Winterbottom; NW – Neil Whewey.

Comment: The Brown Booby was a most unexpected winter record. The first Owllet Nightjar record from the coast, overwintering Pacific Baza, the first Frogmouth for Lake Heights, the Osprey and two coastal Restless Flycatchers were this months highlights.

You can always check species' information at www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

"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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FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING – Monday 13th September 2004 – Biodiversity in the Illawarra Region: Peter Ewin, 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall. Peter works for the Department of Environment and Conservation (formerly National Parks and Wildlife Service). DEC recently published a report on regional biodiversity that included a comprehensive survey of remnant vegetation in the Illawarra coastal plain and along the escarpment forests, as well as reviewing published literature which included data collected by IBOC members. This is a chance to see how your unusual records that are published monthly in IBOC News are used in proactive conservation activities by DEC.

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 15th September – Kanahooka & Jerretts Points & Mullet Creek – Leader: Mike Morphet. Near the end of Kanahooka Road, meet at 8.30 am near the public toilet block in the car park in Kanahooka Park. After exploring the headland, we will walk down Murra Murra Road, turning right beside the playground, and proceeding along the walk/cycleway bordering Purrah Bay. From Jerretts Point we'll head westish alongside Mullet Creek as far as Lakeline Retirement Estate. Morning tea will be up the creek somewhere! Retracing our steps back to the cars, we will then head back along Kanahooka Road, turning right into Stanthorpe Drive to circumambulate the human-made lagoon in the Forest Grove Estate.

MONTHLY OUTING - Sunday 19th September 2004 - Bargo River - Leader: Chris Chafer. Surely after three windy months we'll get a pleasant day for a change! The club hasn't been on this walk before, and I can assure you it's fantastic. Starting in shale woodland we walk south along the fire trail that hugs the river, eventually entering moist blue gum forest and a 50m high sandstone gorge. The track terminates at the disused Picton weir, but I doubt we'll get that far. The birding is excellent. Goodies that I have seen here include Bell Miner, Yellow-tufted, Crescent and Brown-headed Honeyeater, Pilotbird, Rockwarbler, Double-barred Finch and Mistletoebird. We will meet at a small reserve adjacent to Bargo River south of Tahmoor at 9.30am sharp. To get there from Wollongong, head west along Picton Road to the Hume freeway and turn south towards Goulburn. Drive south and take the first off ramp to Avon and Nepean

Dams and Bargo. Turn right and proceed to Bargo, cross over the railway bridge, then follow the signs to Tahmoor and Picton. Approx 6.3km north of Bargo you cross over a large bridge that traverses the main southern railway and Bargo River. After crossing the bridge watch for Bargo River Road on your left. Take this and cross over the railway again, then a small wooden bridge on a sharp bend, then take the street to the left and the un-named reserve is by the river.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 21st September 2004, at 7.30 pm at the home of Kerrie Lewis, 8 Tallawong Crescent, Dapto (tel: 4262 0204). As usual, members are invited to attend.

September 2004 NEWSLETTER The deadline for contributions for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 23rd September**. Where possible please submit material by email (but handwritten material is just as welcome!).

From Your Committee

Finance

Balance of IBOC account @ 31.07.04 is \$1,798.94
Approved expenditure for August is \$600 for Insurance.

October Camp: 23-30 October 2004

The October camp will go ahead at the original Barraba Camp Site. Final details will be in the October newsletter. If you will be away when this is due, please phone either Chris Chafer or Betty Hudson for details.

The camp list will be passed around again at the September meeting. Anyone unable to be there, should notify Betty if they think they may come. To date we have nine people indicating that they will be coming.

2005 Program

Some suggestions have been received. Please keep them rolling in.

Birds Australia Twitchathon

This will be held on the weekend of 30th October. If you wish to take part in the IBOC team, please contact Bruce O'Brien

Noise at Meetings

A letter is to be written to the Maori group regarding the noise problem during our meetings, especially when we have a guest speaker.

Annual General Meeting

November is the AGM of the club. Nomination forms for the new committee will be included with October's newsletter. Please take the time to think about who you would like to run the club for the next 12 months.



QUIZ

1. What is a baby pigeon called?
2. How many toes does an ostrich have?
3. What is the area between a bird's bill and its eye called?
4. What group of birds are also called whalebirds?
5. What is the colour of an adult Common Tern's bill?

(Answers at bottom of page.)



E-Newsletter

If any club members would like to receive an electronic copy of IBOC News, please email me and I will put you on my mailing list.

Penny (penny_potter@iprimus.com.au)



Quiz Answers:

1. Squab
2. Two
3. Lores
4. Prions
5. Black.

REPORT ON AUGUST MEETING

Val Dolan

The Mystery of the Silvereye

Alan Leishman, a well know amateur ornithologist and bird-bander, attracted an audience of over 30 members to his talk at the August meeting. Having confessed that this club was the site of his first public speaking engagement ... he had been so nervous that he was physically sick Alan began by changing the advertised topic and proceeded to confidently educate us into the mysteries of the life of the Silvereye/White-eye.

There are 94 species of *Zosterops* distributed throughout the world, 37 of these having sub-species. They are birds of the trees and shrubs, feeding amongst the foliage and rarely approaching the ground. Silvereyes are small birds all less than 15 cm and usually between 10 and 12 cm long, weighing between 8.5 and 12.5 grams. Their beak is sharp and rather short and their tongue is forked and brush-like. The name is a misnomer as the iris is dark in most species, however, the distinctive white eye-ring varies in width and, in the African species, covers most of the side of the face.

Local birds breed from September to January with peak egg laying in November. The nest is a finely constructed suspended cup, 65mm in diameter, built of grass, thistledown, moss, spider's web and sometimes leaves, usually found one to four metres above the ground. Two to four pale blu-green eggs may take between 12 and 14 days to incubate. A Western Australian study has shown that one Silvereye pair nested four times in one season and raised ten fledglings. However the birds are particularly vulnerable to predators in the first year of their life and have a high mortality rate. A maximum longevity of 10 years 7 months has been recorded from birds banded within Australia.

Large scale movements of Silvereyes take place in eastern Australia during Autumn and Winter. Most of the movements are nocturnal at the rate of 30 to 35km/h ... possibly to avoid predators. It is thought that this speed can be maintained for the 12 hours of darkness. The maximum distance recorded by a banded bird is 2,022 km and they regularly move over 200kms in a night.

There are 3 sub-species of Silvereyes found in Sydney and these have a broad overlap of regions. Some individuals from these populations do not migrate but remain in the breeding areas. Alan feels this behaviour is in need of further study. He spoke of the contribution made by University of Technology students to the mist netting and banding programs at Mount Annan Botanical Gardens and their use of the collected information.

Information about opportunistic feeding on berries, fruit, nectar, a wide range of insects and their love of grapes was accompanied by slides of Mount Annan olive, a favourite fruit. Alan talked of the moult period of 75-100 days as being one of stress. He showed some slides of the dangers of Avian Pox with deformities to the eye, beak and feet of the diseased birds. He believes orderly gardens and the urban sprawl can be blamed for decreased numbers of Silvereyes. He also mentioned lack of funding for the important work being done through Mount Annan where only one and a half people are now involved in this study.

Martin Potter thanked Alan Leishman for his entertaining talk and informative slide show. Alan then invited us to handle several different species of Silvereyes and to observe the differences at close quarters.

ERRATUM: Bellambi Point, Lagoon & Dunes Area Bird List

An error appeared in last month's issue of *IBOC News* #273. The Black-tailed Native-hen should be deleted from the Bellambi bird list. This species is not to be found at all in our region and does not appear in the *Handbook*. My apologies for this inaccuracy, particularly as I cannot account for its inclusion in the list at all. My thanks to David Thomson for pointing out this error to the Club. David readily fulfils the not insignificant role of club watchdog for ornithological correctness, akin to Don Chipp's memorable Democrats policy slogan of keeping the b...s honest!

- Mike Morphet

COOMADITCHIE LAGOON & HILL 60 PARK, 11 August

Mike Morphet

The mid-week morning walk on 11th August went according to plan. Thirteen walkers turned up beside the Maritime-Peace Park, well jacketed against the fresh westerly, but, as the morning wore on, walkers wore less in bright sunshine and temperature rising to a reported 20°C. The first thing to capture their eyes was the ceramic artwork on the east wall of the public toilet block, which was unveiled the day before and had the theme of “communities together against crime”. According to the *Illawarra Mercury* (11/8/04), the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation artists’ co-op is seeking further funding to create another ceramic picture on the other side, featuring the life of Coomaditchie Lagoon.

The group had then progressed only a few metres, when a sole White-plumed Honeyeater was spotted moving across the top of a casuarina before taking flight. There was much avian activity in and around the lagoon. There seemed to be a never-ending traffic of Silver Gulls, circling round or more often in east/west flight-paths. On last month’s recce some 150 of them had been bathing in the lagoon while another 50-odd were preening themselves over on the north-western grassed area. Later on that day, over the other side of Hill 60, the outline of Big Island had almost been obliterated by the thousands of gulls, swirling round like a locust plague. This day it was the turn of a few Australian Pelicans to bathe and splash in the lagoon. Others rested on the islands amid Great Cormorants, which had two nests in a paperbark that seemed to be labouring under continuing pressure from these birds and the westerlies. On the southern bank only the Superb Fairy-wrens seemed to be profiting out of the charred vegetation. At the eastern end a pair of Golden-headed Cisticolas flew out from the reeds across to the base of the island, where Pacific Black Ducks were resting. Then a pair of Nankeen Kestrels was seen hunting over the dune area, one of which rested quite a while on the horizontal bar of a stink-pipe in clear view. Kestrels had been seen on earlier recces on the northern side of Hill 60, but not this day. One might assume they were the same birds. Great views too were had of the coastline south to Bass Point.

Morning tea was taken on Hill 60 lookout area, one of the best vantage points in the district, followed by a walk down to the headland on the northern side of Fisherman’s Beach, which offered a closer view of the Five Islands amid the calm blue. As on the first stage of the outing, Welcome Swallows kept pace with the walkers, darting back and forth, and Willie Wagtails allowed them to approach almost to the point of up close and personal. Down on the rock platform an Australian Raven began pecking at the carcass of a Silver Gull lying in a fissure and then joined four others of its kind with interests elsewhere. Close-by a pair of Sooty Oystercatchers rested unconcerned. Shells lay exposed on and beside the sandy tracks, indicating a huge midden. On the strength of Val’s related Aboriginal story, it seems this promontory should be named Mulletwatchers’ Point. Such could form the theme for a further ceramic composition.

IBOC Survey 11 August 2004: 37 avian species
(with additional species recorded during recces made on *3 June & †22 July 2004)

Black Swan*	Dusky Moorhen	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie
Pacific Black Duck	Eurasian Coot	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Raven
Grey Teal	Sooty Oystercatcher	White-browed Scrubwren	Richard’s Pipit
Australasian Grebe	Masked Lapwing	Little Wattlebird	House Sparrow*†
Little Pied Cormorant	Kelp Gull	White-plumed Honeyeater	European Goldfinch**†
Great Cormorant	Silver Gull	New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Australian Pelican	Spotted Turtledove	Eastern Yellow Robin†	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Great Egret	Crested Pigeon	Golden Whistler†	Golden-headed Cisticola
Australian White Ibis	Galah	Magpie-lark	Silveryeye
Nankeen Kestrel	Rainbow Lorikeet*	Willie Wagtail	Common Starling
Purple Swamphen	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Common Myna

BELMORE & CARRINGTON WATERFALLS OUTING 19th August

Chris Chafer

Once again, cool (OK, cold) and windy conditions greeted the 21 members who met at Robertson Nature Reserve for the monthly outing. We proceeded to walk around the reserve's 600m track, admiring the grandeur of this rainforest remnant. Understandably, birds were few in the chilly conditions, though we managed a close encounter with a group of Brown Gerygones and Silvereye, and most got reasonable views of Satin Bowerbird. From here we drove eight kilometres to Belmore Falls, and after morning tea headed for the lookouts. Much to our surprise, the windy conditions were not as severe here and we even encountered a Kestrel foraging over the escarpment edge – a most unusual environment to find this species in. We looked out over Upper Kangaroo Valley, checked out the two waterfall lookouts and then walked to the edge of the falls themselves, adding a few species such as Golden Whistler, Crimson Rosella and Red Wattlebird. From here we drove back through Robertson (with an obligatory stop at the pie shop) to Carrington Falls for lunch. After lunch, the wind picked up and I decided not to take people on the Missingham track, so after viewing the most spectacular falls in the region we wandered down Stevo's track. The wind continued and birds were few and far between and after a while we unanimously decided to head back to the car park at 2.30. The highlight of the day was found where the track briefly skirts an adjoining farm, there uncharacteristically, a Bassian Thrush posed in the field for all to see. A disappointing total of 28 species was all that could be mustered from the day's enjoyable wanderings.

Species recorded:

Australian Wood Duck	White-browed Scrubwren	Magpie-lark
White-faced Heron	Brown Gerygone	Willie Wagtail
White-necked Heron	Brown Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Straw-necked Ibis	Striated Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Nankeen Kestrel	Red Wattlebird	Australian Raven
Wonga Pigeon	Eastern Spinebill	Satin Bowerbird
Crimson Rosella	Eastern Yellow Robin	Silvereye
Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Whipbird	Bassian Thrush
White-throated Treecreeper	Golden Whistler	
Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush,	

WHERE WERE ALL THE BIRDWATCHERS?

Bruce O'Brien

Sunday 18 July 2004. I was driving down to Kiama for the IBOC weekend outing, admittedly running a little late. Oh, well, I thought. I know where the car park for the first track is. If I'm late for the meeting at the Kiama Blowhole, I'll just go there. On the radio came the weather report. 'There are six severe weather warnings for NSW. For the Illawarra, winds averaging 60km per hour, with wind gusts up to 90km per hour. Rain also forecast. Children should be kept inside and away from windows. Damaging seas.' Well, my 8 year old daughter had already opted out of this outing, so that was okay. The radio continued; 'Snow on the higher peaks, down to 700m.' Hang on, did they say snow? Then, driving through Albion Park Rail, I saw it. Yes, it had definitely snowed at Robertson, you could see it glinting in the sunlight. Well, this was going to be an interesting day's birdwatching, and no mistake.

Sure enough, I was late at the rendezvous point. The strong winds and damaging seas combined to create some spectacular activity at the Blowhole, but not seeing anybody I recognised, I opted for continuing my journey to the first morning's walk at Bushbank Mill. But when I got to the carpark I was the only one there! What to do? The carpark was quite exposed, perfect for those 90km wind gusts. I decided to do the walk anyway.

The Bushbank Mill track is basically on private farmland, with a right of way for walkers. It is relatively short too, just down from the highway to the ruin of the Bushbank Mill, built in the 1850s. Excellent views northward to Kiama and out to sea, but a bit hard to appreciate in the gale. Oh, did I mention that I'd rugged up, as if I was going to the snow. Good thing I did too. The track worked its way down into a valley, from where I could no longer see the carpark. In such an exposed area on such a day birds were few, but as I got into the more sheltered parts beside the Bushbank stream there was quite a flock of Superb Fairy-wrens. I also spotted Rainbow Lorikeet, Eastern Rosella and Willie Wagtail in this location. After an hour on the track I returned to the car, contemplating my next move. Thank goodness those wind gusts had not affected my car.

The newsletter had said Foxground. The only real direction was the saddle west of Saddleback Mountain. Maybe they've gone there, I thought to myself. It might be more sheltered, more forested, more promising. I was getting more hopeful. Foxground is not an area for which I can claim familiarity, and I relished the idea of doing some exploring. So I headed for Foxground Road, and ended up driving just about as far as I could go, through a wildlife refuge where I spotted both Superb Lyrebird and Eastern Grey Kangaroo from the road. I initially drove past the right hand turn marked Hoddles Road, but noted its presence as being a likely place for the track. I kept on driving ahead, crossed a cattle grid, but then seemed to end up on a fire trail. As I was driving a 2-wheel drive proceeding further seemed a bad idea - I reversed, turned around, and headed for Hoddles Road. This end of Foxground Road was high in hills, surrounded by rainforest and also paddocks, and it was not completely clear whether I was on a public thoroughfare or in private property. It was also starting to rain by this time. Back at Hoddles Road I noticed a sign saying Hoddles Track. Aha, I thought, this will be it. Up the steep road I drove, but again came to a point too much like a fire trail to be able to continue with confidence. I decided to see if I could find anybody at the farm buildings I'd just passed to ask where the most sensible parking spot was to do the walk. Do you think I could find a soul? No chance. I gave up, promising myself to find out more about this apparently elusive track. On the way back to the highway I noted flocks of Straw-necked Ibis and Cattle Egret in the farmland.

Not to be deterred from my day's birdwatching I decided to try the Spring Creek Wetlands at Kiama. It had stopped raining by the middle of the day, and while the wind was still blowing the location was in a valley and sheltered. Our club President, Roger, frequents this spot quite a bit, so I was curious to see what it was like. There is a bird hide there (although it seems the birds can nevertheless see you), and several walking tracks. Being an open space with several native vegetation types and wetland habitats (both fresh and brackish water) encourages a range of species. I ended up walking from one end of the reserve to the other having a pleasant time of it. Nothing noteworthy was sighted, but there were Black Swans and Australasian Grebes on the water, and Little Pied and Little Black Cormorant sunning themselves beside one of the small lakes. Despite the weather conditions a number of smaller species were sheltering in this area, including Silvereye, Grey Fantail and Yellow Thornbill. I eventually returned to my car pleased with both my day's birdwatching and the opportunity I'd had to explore areas that I had not previously visited.

And what had happened to everyone else? I later discovered that Chris as leader had decided the original plan should be abandoned due to the inclement weather, Bushbank Mill being decidedly exposed and Foxground being extremely dubious in the wet. Others who were going to do the outing planned other options (I think visiting Robertson was popular that day), but of course I didn't know that at the time. However, I can say that the original planned outing was fun-filled, adventurous and rewarding, and a great time was had by those who were there -me.

Black Swan	Nankeen Kestrel	Little Wattlebird
Pacific Black Duck	Purple Swamphen	Magpie-lark
Australasian Grebe	Dusky Moorhen	Grey Fantail
Little Pied Cormorant	Spotted Turtledove	Willie Wagtail
Little Black Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet	Australian Magpie
Cattle Egret	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Raven
Australian White Ibis	Yellow Thornbill	Silvereye

THE GONG TO THE GHAN VIA THE GANG-GANG (Part 1)

Alison Foley

Hello to all our friends in IBOC. Well, the overlanders made it to the Alice and are happily ensconced in their new abode. I just thought you'd like to hear about the birding and other adventures experienced such as smoking brakes coming down Kosciuszko, camping underground and breast-feeding kangaroos over the 33 days of our journey.

Baby and 127,000 accessories on board, the 4WD heaved out of Wollongong on February 17th, laden also with our hopes and dreams of visiting five key places. We chose the coolest route to the Red Centre, hugging the coastline as far as Port Augusta and then the mad dash inland trying to avoid the spit-roasting desert sun as much as possible. The five major planned stops were Kosciuszko N.P., Wilson's Promontory N.P., the Great Ocean Road, Kangaroo Island and Coober Pedy and everything else would be a bonus. As it turned out, it was the unplanned stops on the whole which stole the show and not only for birding reasons.

After a lunch stop at Narawallee Creek R.A. and a swim at Conjola Beach (in a sea so turbulent it was like washing-machine suds) with fantastic seascapes of aquamarine, white-crested water and golden sand spreading to green points in both directions, our first stop was Pretty Beach in Murramarang N.P., arriving at dusk to the sight of dozens of almost tame eastern-greys grazing on the lawns. A short but leafy gum overhanging the tent provided great shade and even better bird visitors – 27 species in 24 hours including Dave's first sighting of glossy black cockatoos; we noted their small size, thick beaks and brown heads. A red wattlebird, the dominant species here, came close enough for us to see his beautiful yellow vent, fleshy-pink legs and famous wattles. Next morning, we had a visit from a lorikeet party (the apostlebirds of the east coast, flying in for breakfast) who obligingly sat along Dave's arm, eyeing his Weetbix (what do they put in it that makes native fauna crave it?) while giving Keira a great view. She needed no toys on this trip with animals, birds and trees - nature's mobiles - to look at. A family of grey butcherbirds inhabited a lone tree in the middle of the campground. Mum and Dad were teaching baby his carols. On the two moonless nights we spent there, we dragged our chairs to this tree and stargazed while munching on banana cake and a steaming mug of billy tea. Wow, I'm even making myself envious!

At dawn, we were awoken by what sounded like a whole flock of shrieking masked lapwings, then our wattlebird going off on cue followed by a range of honeyeaters, butcherbirds and kookaburras. We took a heathland walk to Merry Beach in the morning and spotted a sea-eagle cruising the shallows in search of lunch. That evening, we did a delightful walk to the summit of Mt. Durras through spotted gum forest. The trees, standing tall and straight, seemed almost to have been planted they were set so evenly apart. Cloud had gathered and the temperature was just right. With no wind, we could have heard all the bird calls. Surprisingly, there were very few. It took ages to spot a pied currawong for all its singing. Similarly, with a flock of creaky doors or should I say a gang-gang gang which flew in, settled in a tree for all of ten seconds and then scarpered. The best sight was eight yellow-tailed black cockies feeding. One, probably a juvenile, was making a ferocious racket like a cicada baritone! It was so peaceful in that forest with Keira drinking it all in. The lorikeets came back next morning but scorned my proffered Vitaweat in favour of a photo opportunity before flitting off.

Mimosa Rocks N.P. provided the first new sighting for both of us. As we made our way down the bumpy 4WD track to our campsite at Gillard's Beach, a thousand pings accompanied us. A thousand bell miners – of which we saw quite a few. The day's high point was the discovery of Wallaga Lake (Dave's first sighting of an eastern curlew) with its beautiful, blue water and throngs of shorebirds. We also discovered three hooded plovers nesting on the beach about 50 metres from our camp. It was the complete protection set-up as described to us by Michael Jarman. I walked down the steps to the beach and for every step I approached the edge of the enclosure, the plover took a few steps back until she was almost out of sight. Then as I backed off, she came forward at the same rate – like a strange dance or as if she were repelled by my force-field. She was probably repelled at any rate. A beautiful creature with bright red eyes and beak and sooty head and back, otherwise immaculately white. Our camp, amongst lush, green grass and beach shrubs, was a more permanent home to Jumpy the male kangaroo, Charlie the goanna (who leaps to great heights to bring down bait bags and open rubbish, scratching eskis in an attempt to enter them) and friendly scrub-wrens,

fairy-wrens and whipbirds, swallows flitting about and a brown bush-rat which explored the corners of our air-mattress.

On to Kozciuszko which I found disappointing in comparison to Alpine N.P. Perhaps it was the time of year, places we chose, effect of bushfire, infrequency of bird sightings or too many TV images of bare mountainside bedecked in spring flowers galloped over by brumbies and views stretching to infinity. However, the Waterfall Track at Sawpit Creek appeased these pangs as, accompanied by white-eared and white-naped honeyeaters, four magpies that went everywhere together and a lone representative of the red wattlebird clan, we discovered how the truly beautiful forest is recovering from last year's fires. Among the charred remains of some trees and logs, shiny and scaled like a black mamba or a croc were majestic old gums of huge girth, singed around the edges but still standing tall, strong and mighty, and thinner, younger trees with trunks of coal yet sprouts of new growth burst, green and lush, from the knots. The walk seemed long because we walked so stealthily, trying to sneak up on a host of unsuspecting winged ones. However, we saw very few birds in number and only a handful of species. Most prolific were the crimson rosellas (but green i.e. juvenile), red wattlebirds and yellow-faced honeyeaters. Striated pardalotes made a splash.

We did the Riverside Walk in Thredbo which wound its way round the golf course. The air was crisp and invigorating and the sky deeply, madly blue. Our walk, as the name suggests, was along the river's edge most of the way, through more burnt-out forest regenerating and we saw quite a few birds, mostly repeats. The best sighting was a flame robin, for which we had Keira to thank as she'd been screaming unmercifully for food and so we had to stop at Flamey's bench. His vermilion vivid chest all the way to his neck gave him away as did the lack of white splash on his head. Another interesting bird was amongst white-eared honeyeaters on Crackenback Drive, some kind of cuckoo or cuckoo-shrike or shrike-thrush. It had a very brown head and long, horizontally-stripped tail (any ideas?). At Thredbo Diggings, I saw currawongs, superb fairy-wrens, flame robins, brown thornbills, silvereyes and yellow-faced honeyeaters all within the space of ten minutes.

Despite the tension felt by smoking brakes, we made it over the peaks of Alpine National Park with liberating views and through the aptly-named town of Bright with its beautiful avenue of trees on the way into the town centre. At a rest area between Bright and Mt. Hotham, in the forest, we saw a grey currawong messing about in the tops of the alpine ash, scabbling under loose bark. We figured he was hunting insects. His cousin, the pied, was much bolder, coming down to our picnic site and staying only a discreet distance away, looking for fallout.

Birdlife around the caravan park at Paynesville was very reminiscent of the Gong – galahs, rainbow lorikeets, sulphur-crested cockies, noisy miners and silver gulls. The high point was a walk we did to Eagle Point Reserve seeing the rufous fantail and rufous whistler as well as a huge flock of yellow-rumped thornbills which stayed on the ground close in front of us thus giving me my first really good sighting of them. We saw something small and brown with a bit of red on the tail. Dave thought they were firetails but let's hope they were red-browed finches because they disappeared from view immediately.

In the early afternoon, we drove along the Mitchell River Silt Jetties (the second longest in the world after the Mississippi Delta). They're like long, narrow fingers of land stretching out into the sea and the tip (or fingernail if you like) was a haven for pelicans, little black cormorants, silver gulls, pied cormorants and black swans.

On the way to our second planned highlight of the trip, we discovered a little-known gem of a place called McLeod's Morass near Bairnsdale, complete with boardwalk out over the swamp to a sophisticated bird-hide, nestled among reeds and bullrushes stuffed with birds, well worth a visit if you're in the area. Here, we are officially able to say, we identified a swamp harrier unaided.

Our initial delight in the Prom with its spectacular granite rocks, white sandy shores, serene blue waters and perfect sunshine turned to utter devastation as we awoke around 11pm the first night to bitter cold, horizontal rain and gale-force winds ripping the tent pegs from their grip in the sand and breaking the tent pole. Needless to say, Keira was terrified by the sounds and flapping fly, none of us got any sleep and news in the

morning was to expect three more days of it. "A Night at the Prom" – now I understand why it's only the one! We shall return.

Another place we thoroughly enjoyed and which was described to us as "the secret jewel of Mornington Peninsula" was a tiny hamlet called Balnarring and a stone's throw up the road, Coolart Wetlands and Homestead, now owned by Victoria Parks and turned into a bird sanctuary. A former owner, Tom Luxton, loved birds and created a lagoon, swamp, observatory with huge one-way glass panes and a double-decker hide as his legacy. Here, we saw the mystery bird of the holiday – as big as a magpie, all black except for the head, neck and shoulders which were a rusty red and a face like a lyrebird... (to be continued)

Decline in Migratory Shorebirds locally and globally-can we help?

Phil Straw, Editor, Newsletter for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway

The majority of shorebirds of known population trend are in decline all round the world – a matter of international conservation concern. Of populations with known trends, 48% are declining, in contrast to just 16% which are increasing: thus three times as many populations are in decline as are increasing. The reasons for these declines are diverse and poorly understood.

There are enormous human population pressures in East Asia and Australasia, a region which contains over a third of the world's human population as well as some of the world's fastest growing economies. This has major direct consequences for the shorebirds of this region: over 80% of wetlands in east and south-east Asia are classified as threatened, with over half under serious threat. Asia is also the region holding the highest number of shorebird populations, and the highest proportion for which we lack information on numbers and trends of populations. Asia and Oceania between them hold 32 globally threatened species, which is 58% of the entire world's globally threatened shorebird species.

Of the 12 globally threatened species in the East Asian – Australasian flyway, one is possibly extinct, six are in active decline and the status of the remaining five is unknown. None are recovering their status. The development of non-binding international mechanisms for conservation and monitoring is a welcome step forward, although there are huge challenges to secure the conservation of wetland of global significance to shorebirds so as to reverse the current negative trends in shorebird populations.

Although some of the biggest threats to migratory shorebird populations lie within East Asia, loss of habitat and disturbance of feeding habitat and roost sites are of major concern in Australia, especially south eastern Australia. The loss of habitat, and the threats of further losses, on coastal New South Wales is higher than in any other state as a whole. Although some of the key sites for migratory shorebirds have been identified these are not protected, despite the fact that some of these include Ramsar listed wetlands.

The loss of wetlands, including shorebird habitat, has been the result of incremental landfilling and development. This continues at an alarming rate. It is common for development applications to be lodged with local councils with little or no regard for shorebird feeding habitat or roost sites. As councils must take into consideration available published information it is the intention of the NSW Wader Study Group to map every one of the coastal estuaries that provide habitat for migratory birds, as well as beaches occupied by threatened species of shorebirds (including the Little Tern). This information will be made available as a publication to the Department of Environmental Conservation and all local governments.

This summer (2004/2005) a combined force of bird groups, National Parks Service of DEC and many individuals throughout New South Wales will be conducting two major surveys requiring all the help we can get from anyone interested in birds and their conservation. There are two distinct projects, though there will inevitably be some overlap for some species.

Project 1 – Beach Nesting Bird Survey

The NSW Wader Study Group in association with most bird groups in NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Bird Interest Group Network (BIGnet) and many individuals will be conducting the next Beach

Nesting Bird Survey along the entire coast of NSW over the weekend of 16/17 October 2004. This survey has been conducted every second year since 1994.

Two hundred volunteers needed!

A survey will be carried out over the weekend of 16/17 October 2004 and covers every beach in NSW. This biennial count was initiated in 1994 as an extension of the national Hooded Plover Survey. The main objective is to count Hooded Plovers, Beach Stone-curlew, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, Little Terns and Red-capped Plovers and record any nesting activities. However as part of a day at the beach volunteers are encouraged to record other birds of interest including birds of prey and any beach washed birds. What better way to add to the pleasure of walking along a beach of your choice by helping to protect our coast nesting birds?

Project 2 – Adopt an estuary

The second survey is longer term and covers all species of shorebirds (waders) at all of the NSW estuaries. Ideally we are looking for small teams to adopt an estuary or group of estuaries (some estuaries are very small and will have relatively few birds) and count the shorebirds there at least each quarter, monthly if possible, for one year. However one-off counts are useful at any time.

Every participant in either of the surveys will be issued with a kit including a map/maps of the area chosen, simple instructions of how to record the information, suggestions of what to look for, contact details of regional and state coordinators and where to send your completed data sheets. Information from both surveys will be plotted onto maps and used for conservation and management plans, showing where the threats are, areas that need protecting and lots more information for land managers and conservation agencies.

If you are interested in taking part in either of these surveys and learning about shorebirds please contact the state coordinator: Phil Straw, NSW Wader Study Group, P.O. Box 2006, Rockdale Delivery Centre, NSW 2216. 02 9597 7765 or email: wadersnsw@optusnet.com.au who will put you in touch with your nearest regional coordinator and arrange for your beach or estuary survey kit to be sent to you.

BIRDING ABROAD: Etosha

David Winterbottom

We had been brought up on tales of the fabulous Etosha Pans in Namibia. The long drive through the near desert was more interesting for its animals than birds, most of which were larks of one kind or another – a most difficult group to identify. We saw small numbers of Springbok, Zebra, Greater Kudu and the endemic Black-faced Impala on the way.

The fenced camp sites have floodlit waterholes which are a magnet to both birds and animals. Three-banded Plovers, Little Stints and Purple Swamphen were a surprise but Egyptian Geese and Double-banded and Namaqua Sandgrouse, and the odd Maribou Stork, more the norm. Red-headed Finches, Grey-headed Sparrows, Masked Weavers and Violet-eared Waxbills seemed to live in the camp. Black Rhinos, Lions and their perennial enemies the Spotted Hyenas (one of which was killed overnight), Elephant, Kudu and masses of Oryx, Springbok, Wildebeest, Zebra and Impala watered of an evening.

Game drives yielded more Larks, both Red-crested and Black Korhaans, Spotted Thick-knee, Double-banded Courser and, best of all, Blue Cranes. As always the raptors were in evidence. Bateleur (seemingly tailless), African Hawk-eagle, Brown Snake-eagle, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Gabar and the ever present Pale Chanting Goshawks. We also saw Lanner and Red-necked Falcons as well as a Shikra.

The animals did not let us down. A herd of elephants coated in white chalk arrived at a waterhole but pussy-footed round the edge. They were soon joined by a herd in brown livery who plunged straight in. The young, which were quite delightful, all mingled but the adults were more stand-offish. A third herd then arrived but all was amicable. More than amicable were a pair of lions at the next stop. She flounced her hindquarters at him and he obliged by mounting her – within 10 metres of our vehicle.

An apparent dust storm was caused by two Honey-badgers pounding through the veldt digging furiously as they went. The dust made them honey coloured rather than their normal black-and-white striped attire. Behind them came a platoon of Black-backed Jackals catching any rodents that the Badgers stirred up but missed.

A Secretarybird stalking through the open country is ever a striking sight. Desert Cisticolas, and the constant flushing of Red-capped, Pink-billed (or were they Rufous-naped, Eastern-clapper or Sabota?) Larks from the roadside added confused interest.

Forthcoming Events

11/12 September 2004 - Bird Interest Group Network of NSW, BIGnet

The various birding clubs of NSW will be meeting in Sydney at the The Armoury, Homebush Bay, on the 11/12 th of September, to further the interest of birding groups in NSW in association with Birds Australia. Any member interested in becoming active in this group is welcome to attend with morning and afternoon teas and an evening dinner to socialise. *Chris Brandis*

18/19 September 2004 - Cowra Woodland Bird Survey

The quarterly survey of the birds in remnant bushland and rehabilitated areas around Cowra is on again for the weekend of 18/19 th September under the leadership of members Jack Baker, Jean Clarke and Sue Proust. This is ongoing from a twitchathon funded university thesis to determine how our woodland birds are faring in the agricultural heart of NSW. Birders and locals get together to make a difference in protecting our endangered species as well as having a social get together and some serious birding. Many hands make light surveying, if you are interested let me know. *Chris Brandis*

21 September 2004 – Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture - Venue: UniCentre Function Room 1, University of Wollongong – Associate Professor David Paton will speak on ‘Conserving the Coorong’. The poster Display on Environmental Activities at the University of Wollongong opens at 6.30pm and the program starts at 7.15pm. The Coorong is a long, narrow and shallow body of water that stretches from the Mouth of the River Murray, 110 km to the south-east along the South Australian coastline. Up to 5km wide and barely 3m deep, the Coorong and Lower Lakes of the River Murray were listed as a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance in the 1980s because of the large number of waterbirds and migratory waders that used the area particularly during summer. The area includes a range of wetlands from the freshwater systems of the lakes, to the estuarine and marine systems of the northern Coorong to the unique hypermarine wetlands of the southern Coorong. The diverse wetlands of the Coorong provide a diversity of food resources for waterbirds and waders. The lecture will review the scientific research and community efforts aimed at understanding and conserving the Coorong and its water birds. A range of issues will be described including the outcomes of modeling changes in environmental flows and their impacts.

16/17 October 2004 - Beach survey for Shorebird presence and nesting

Every second year since 1994, birders have surveyed the entire, well almost, NSW coast line for the presence of shorebirds and any sign of breeding activity. These birds are generally in decline all round the world and unless some monitoring is undertaken we will not know the effect of the human population is having on these birds. This year the count is on the weekend of 16/17 October and IBOC members have surveyed the beaches and headlands from Coledale to Kiama. Apart from the Lake Illawarra estuary at Windang and some of the rocky headlands shorebirds are very scarce and breeding even scarcer but humans and free running dogs are all too common. The data will be included in the regular monthly surveys of some of our major shorebird spots such as Comerong Island and Lake Illawarra which is providing valuable data on shorebird trends such as we heard from Chris Chafer's talk in July and provides guidance for future developments in the area. If you are interested in becoming part of this important part of the birding itinerary please call me on 4296 2837. *Chris Brandis*

UNUSUAL RECORDS for June 2004

Chris J. Chafer

Unusual Records for July 2004 Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	36	29-Jul	sthn Lake Burragorang	lake shore	CJC
Stubble Quail	5	29-Jul	sthn Lake Burragorang	grassland	CJC
Southern Giant-Petrel	12	19-Jul	Windang Is.	inshore marine	NJ
Fluttering Shearwater	600+	19-Jul	Windang Is.	inshore marine	NJ
Little Egret	2	21-Jul	Fred Finch Park, Berkeley	creek	DW
Striated Heron	1	31-Jul	Fred Finch Park, Berkeley	creek	DW
Nankeen Night Heron	2	2-Jul	Little Lake	casuarinas	MR
Pacific Baza	2	1-Jul	Balgownie	overhead	RT
Pacific Baza	2	28-Jul	Balgownie	garden	WE
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	2	Jul	Bellambi lagoon	wetland	AC
Swamp Harrier	1	29-Jul	sthn Lake Burragorang	lake shore	CJC
Brown Goshawk	1	31-Jul	Kanahooka	overhead	MC
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	11-Jul	Windang	dune woodland	DW
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	16-Jul	Albion Park	overhead	PF
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	17-Jul	Bass Point	forest	MC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	9-Jul	Albion Park	woodland	JC
Peregrine Falcon	1	1-Jul	East Corrimal	dune woodland	DW
Peregrine Falcon	1	2-Jul	Figtree	overhead	LP
Peregrine Falcon	1	8-Jul	Avondale	woodland	AL
Peregrine Falcon	1	10-Jul	Bellambi lagoon	overhead	AC
Caspian Tern	55	21-Jul	Windang	sand flats	MC
Bar-shouldered Dove	4	11-Jul	Windang	dune woodland	DW
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	4	14-Jul	Wollondilly catchment	woodland	CL
Gang-gang Cockatoo	12	21-Jul	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	NJ
Musk Lorikeet	30+	26-Jul	Wollongong Botanic Gardens	parkland	MC
Ground Parrot	1	21-Jul	Budderoo fire trail	heath	NJ
Azure Kingfisher	1	4-Jul	Fred Finch Park, Berkeley	riparian	DW
Azure Kingfisher	1	9-Jul	Hooka Creek	riparian	CJC
Noisy Miner	1	11-Jul	Austinmer	garden	GM
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	6	29-Jul	Little River/Blue Gum Ck	woodland	CJC
White-plumed Honeyeater	4	1-Jul	East Corrimal	dune woodland	DW
Crescent Honeyeater	1	21-Jul	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	NJ
Crescent Honeyeater	2	31-Jul	Carrington Falls	forest	CJC
Jacky Winter	6	29-Jul	stn Lake Burragorang	woodland	CJC
Scarlet Robin	1	2-Jul	Illawarra golf course (Darkes Forest)	parkland	BR
Rose Robin	2	23-Jul	Dharawal NR	forest	MR
Eastern Whipbird	2	13-Jul	Bass Point (first record)	forest	CB
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	15-Jul	Thirlemere Lakes NP	woodland	CJC
Varied Sittella	5	27-Jul	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Grey Currawong	2	28-Jul	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Double-barred Finch	25	29-Jul	sthn Lake Burragorang	woodland	CJC
Bassian Thrush	1	4-Jul	Scarborough	garden	DO
Bassian Thrush	4	7-Jul	Bangalee Reserve	forest	SE
Green Catbird	1	28-May	Scarborough	garden	DO

Contributors: CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; AC – Alan Cousins; JC – Josh Coyte; SE – Sheila Emery; WE – Wal Emery; ME – Mary Eskdale; BH – Betty Hudson; AL – Alan Lewis; GM – Graham Meany; BN – Bette Neal; DO – Danie Ondinea; LP – Lorraine Pincus; MR – Michelle Rower; BR – Bruce Roubin; RT – Roger Truscott; DW – David Winterbottom.

Comment: Whilst it not unusual to observe Giant Petrels from prominent headlands during windy winter conditions, 12 is an exceptional number. The first Eastern Whipbirds have now been recorded from Bass Point, continuing their influx into coastal habitats from Corrimal to Windang. The Stubble Quail are the first reported from the region for 18 months and, along with the Emu, were found on the dry lake bottom 9 km north from where normal supply level is. This area of grassland is usually under 5m of water. Pacific Baza appears to have become resident in Balgownie.

For those of you who have expressed disappointment at missing my talk last month, a number of the bird images can be viewed on-line by going to my website and clicking on the new gallery link. www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

"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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From Your Committee p 2	PRESIDENT: Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742
Koonawarra Bay & Mt Brown Reserve p 2	SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307 Work email: bettyhudson@menziesgroup.com.au
Bangalee Reserve p 4	TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
Birding Abroad: Cordilleros p 4	EDITORS: Penny Potter, Tel: 02 4284 6196 Email: penny_potter@iprimus.com.au
Capertee Valley Revisited p 5	Val Dolan, Tel: 02 4229 6737
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FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS

CLUB MEETING – Monday 8th November- 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall. – AGM and Chris Brandis will show some slides taken while working (and birding) in Mombassa, Kenya.

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 10th November – Purry Burry Point, Primbee to Windang Peninsula Heritage Park – Leader: Mike Morphett (0429858305). Meet at 8.20 am at the Purry Burry Point car park via Bundah Place, which runs off Lakeview Parade by the small park and large fig tree. We'll walk north to the point and jetty and then head south through the public reserve bordering the lake along boardwalks and mostly under tree cover to the Heritage Park, a distance of about 3 km. To avoid the return walk, some members might want to organise to have a vehicle waiting for them at Windang, especially in the event of another heatwave, or else cover only part of the walk. Hence the earlier start to allow for decisions to be made. Morning tea will be somewhere by the lake.

MONTHLY OUTING - Sunday 14th November 2004 - Mount Kembla - Leader: Betty Hudson
 Meet at the Mt Kembla ring track car park under the transmission lines at 9am sharp. We will walk around the Mt. Kembla ring track which should be quite productive at this time of year. To get to the meeting place take the Cordeaux Rd off the Princess Hwy at Figtree, next to the rail overpass. Continue along Cordeaux Rd through the village of Mt. Kembla, past the Dendrobium mine entrance until you come to a Y intersection. Continue along Cordeaux Rd which veers to the left here for just over a kilometre until you reach the major powerline easement with a car park and lookout. Bring a carry lunch. If time permits after this walk we may the nearby Stafford Farm track. Habitat is tall eucalypt forest and rainforest.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 16th November 2004, at 7.30 pm at the home of Norma Almond, 2 Shoobert Crescent, Keiraville (4229 6812). As usual, members are invited to attend.

December 2004 NEWSLETTER The deadline for contributions for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 21st November**. Where possible please submit by email (but handwritten material is just as welcome!).

From Your Committee

Finance

Balance of IBOC account @ 30.09.04 was \$1,329.34
Approved expenditure for October was \$110 for books.

AGM

November is the AGM of the club. Nomination forms for the new Committee were included with October's newsletter. Please take the time to think about who you would like to run the club for the next 12 months. So far the Committee has received nominations for President, Secretary, and Treasurer and one Committee member. We still need a Vice President, and three more Committee members.

Club T Shirts

There are still T Shirts and fleecies available for sale, contact Kerrie Lewis (4262 0204 after hours).

Lake Illawarra

Chris Brandis is monitoring the effect of the stockpiling of rock at Windang on the nesting birds at the entrance to the lake on behalf of IBOC.

2005 Program

The Committee would appreciate suggestions from members for next year's program, speakers, walks and camps. If you have any ideas or suggestions please feel free to come to a committee meeting and share it with us or contact a Committee member.

Peach Face Lovebirds

Free to a good home!

A friend of Anne and Alan Cousins is trying to find homes for twenty Peach Faces. If you are interested please contact:

John & Sandra Meldrum
Te. 4272 6833

Editor's Note

My thanks to everyone who has sent in material to IBOC News over the year. Please keep your contributions coming in for the enjoyment of all members. Tell us about birds you've seen, special birding moments, or share your trips with us – any item large or small helps to make the newsletter varied and interesting. *Penny*



KOONAWARRA BAY & MOUNT BROWN RESERVE Mike MORPHETT

A report on the mid-week walk held on Wednesday 13th October 2004

The predicted heatwave and the prospect of a climb meant that only seven people turned up for what could be described as an endurance test. Members of the bird community were wiser by appearing to keep movement to a minimum. One notable exception was a Willie Wagtail that vigorously patrolled its casuarina territory at our meeting-place at Kanahooka Point car park, buzzing viewers who advanced too close to its nest, that was well concealed amid overhanging branches less than five metres up. Reparking at Illaroo Parade, we watched the two forms of teal and a Bar-tailed Godwit move in and out of a line of 14 Black Swans with hooped necks as they preened their chests. Passerines were vocal in the casuarinas bordering Barrons Gully creek, but very hard to spot, except for goldfinches that advertised themselves when alighting

on a patch of thistles, their gold shining like the sun. The two locations beside the lake yielded 20 bird species:

Black Swan	Australian Pelican	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Grey Teal	Bar-tailed Godwit	Maggie-lark	European Goldfinch
Chestnut Teal	Silver Gull	Willie Wagtail	Welcome Swallow
Little Pied Cormorant	Crested Tern	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Great Cormorant	Spotted Turtle dove	Australian Magpie	Silvereeye

The group then tackled Mount Brown from the north-west in Emerson Road. This locality is named after George Brown, a Scot, who arrived in New South Wales in 1822 and, after operating an inn in Liverpool, opened a second one, the Ship Inn, in Wollongong nine years later. In 1833 he received a grant of 300 acres south of Mullet Creek and a further 100 acres the following year, when he moved into a house that formed the nucleus of the early township of Dapto. He had constructed the Illawarra Lake Hotel after the Ship burned down, and then a windmill beside it. In addition to a steam flour mill, he ran a coach service between Dapto and Wollongong three times a week, the journey lasting one hour with fare of four shillings, and played a prominent part in the first Illawarra Agricultural Society, raising sheep and cattle and holding the first of the ploughing matches on his farm. He died in 1850 at the age of 56 and was buried in St Luke's churchyard. I give you this little bit of local history as, perhaps becoming delirious from the heat, some of the walkers relived memories of these parts, particularly before housing took away bush and farm land.

From the reservoir fenceline at the top of Mount Brown, we five survivors looked down on a dam tucked away in a timbered gully bordering Compton Street, but could not pick out any bird life. According to the *Illawarra Mercury* that same day, Wollongong City Council plans to replace this 80 year-old farm dam with a series of pools because of flooding risks, but some local residents are in opposition out of concern for the anticipated adverse impact on wildlife; some 55 species have been recorded there. On the southern side of Mount Brown we relaxed in the shade and the nor'wester for morning tea (Oh that the water tanks had been kegs from the Ship Inn!) and to take in the magnificent view of Lake Illawarra, the ash ponds and pastures, the Shellharbour suburbs, including the development of Haywards Bay, and the Illawarra Escarpment. If George could see all the environmental changes that have occurred in this district over the past century and a half, might he not shake his head and sigh, "Och! It's nae such a bonnie wee place, ye ken.?"

Over on the western side of Mount Brown a conspicuous Australian Raven was on sentry duty atop dead timber, some distance from its mate squatting on a mass of twigs. A pair of raptors briefly circled over this area, immediately eliciting a response from the lookout, and headed south-west without our being able to identify them. We were similarly frustrated by a lone bird of prey on our return journey. Otherwise, avian activity was generally quiet in the intensifying heat; temperatures reaching about 39°C mid-afternoon set a new October record for Wollongong. Of note among the 22 species identified were the arrival of the Dollarbird and the presence of a pair of Eastern Rosellas, cited in the *Handbook* as being under threat in many coastal locations by urban development and Common Mynas. Bruce was fortunate to spot about ten White-throated Needle-tail shortly before the rest of the group reached the reserve. The bird list below includes an additional 23 species recorded during my three previous surveys of Mount Brown Reserve and are marked thus: 1 for 28 May, 2 for 1 September, and 3 for 20 September this year. I believe this area warrants further field studies, with some emphasis on raptors, either at a club or individual level.

Australian Pelican	Laughing Kookaburra 3	Eastern Spinebill 123	Australian Raven
White-bellied Sea-Eagle 3	Dollarbird	Jacky Winter 1	House Sparrow
Little Eagle 3	White-throated Treecreeper 1	Eastern Yellow Robin 23	Red-browed Finch 1
Brown Falcon 2	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Whipbird 23	European Goldfinch 3
Nankeen Kestrel 1	Spotted Pardalote	Golden Whistler 23	Welcome Swallow 3
Galah	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush 13	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo 2	Brown Gerygone 23	Maggie-lark 3	Silvereeye
Rainbow Lorikeet	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail 123	Common Starling
Crimson Rosella	Yellow Thornbill 23	Willie Wagtail 3	Common Myna
Eastern Rosella	Little Wattlebird 23	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Lewin's Honeyeater 23	Grey Butcherbird	
White-tailed Needle-tail	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	

BANGALEE RESERVE, 16th OCTOBER

Chris Chafer

After meeting in the car park at 9.30, 14 members set off on a circular walk through this small diverse 127ha reserve on the banks of the Shoalhaven River. The walk took us through a picnic area, regenerating woodlands, then up a short climb to open woodland and some great lookouts. We checked out some old ruins from the 1850s and eventually walked through some emergent rainforest and tall moist eucalypt forest, where we had great views of Crested Shrike-tit, Satin Flycatcher and a fleeting glimpse of a Square-tailed Kite. We arrived back at the picnic area for a rather late lunch on the fine sunny spring day.

A total of 44 species was observed for the day:

Great Cormorant	White-throated Treecreeper	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Australian Pelican	Superb Fairy-wren	New Holland Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail
Square-tailed Kite	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Spinebill	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Wedge-tailed Eagle	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Grey Butcherbird
Wonga Pigeon	Large-billed Scrubwren	Eastern Whipbird	Pied Currawong
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Brown Gerygone	Crested Shrike-tit	Australian Raven
Rainbow Lorikeet	Brown Thornbill	Golden Whistler	Satin Bowerbird
Australian King-Parrot,	Striated Thornbill	Rufous Whistler	Red-browed Finch
Crimson Rosella	Little Wattlebird	Grey Shrike-thrush	Mistletoebird
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Noisy Friarbird	Black-faced Monarch	Welcome Swallow
Dollarbird	Lewin's Honeyeater	Satin Flycatcher	Silvereye

BIRDING ABROAD: CORDILLERAS

David Winterbottom

Over the past few years David and Elizabeth Winterbottom have been going overseas to look at birds and other things. Here is a vignette from a voyage in February 2004.

These Costa Rican mountains divide the Pacific Ocean from the Caribbean and link the Rockies to the north with the Andes to the south. Bridging continents, oceans and altitudes, and with 25% of the country in National Parks, Costa Rica has an overwhelming list of birds – most of them unfamiliar to us.

Once in the highlands, we had Rufous-collared Sparrows and Sooty Robins busily around us with Blue-and-white Swallows flying overhead. A walk into the rainforest, dripping with lichens and bromeliads, yielded a Yellow-thighed Finch (a most inconspicuous bird save for vivid yellow patches on its thighs) and Black-and-yellow Flycatchers before finding three Resplendent Quetzels. Despite their reputation, we were not prepared for the unbelievably bright green feathers contrasted against the vivid scarlet body – truly magnificent birds. On the way back we saw both Mountain and Clay-coloured Robins, the latter very common, Peg-billed Finch and Sooty-capped Bush-Tanagers. American Swallow-tailed Kites flew gracefully above the canopy.

The lodge had a garden crammed with flowering plants, supplemented with some feeders, all crowded with belligerent little hummingbirds buzzing like iridescent bees. It took time to identify them and almost impossible to remember which exotic bird went with which exotic name– Green Violet-ear, Green Hermit, Fiery-throated, Mountain Gem, Scintillant and Volcano. But what a performance! The Flowerpiercers, Grassquits, Flame-coloured Tanagers and a Baltimore Oriole, normally so showy, were dull in comparison.

A day or two later and we were in the Monteverde Cloud Forest. Here, just to confuse us further, there were more hummingbirds – Violet Sabrewing, Coppery-headed Emerald, Purple-throated Mountain Gem and the Magenta-throated Woodstar. Here, too, we came across the Orange-bellied Trogon, another amazing bird but obligingly tame, and the equally colourful Blue-Crowned Motmot.

More was to come. In the village square, a figtree in fruit proved attractive to birds of one species we had never seen but easily identified. A pair of Keel-billed Toucans were helping themselves to the figs. They are rather less ungainly than we expected, and ate with immaculate manners. There were also many Emerald Toucanets in the same tree – smaller versions of the Toucan with a narrower bill – truly delightful birds.

Sitting around with a glass of wine in hand, it is hard work, this birding business!

CAPERTEE VALLEY REVISITED**Mike MORPHETT**

On the weekend of August 21-22 I made my third visit to Capertee Valley to help out with the planting of 3500 young native trees on a selected farmland area, a vital part of the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program. Early Friday evening I arrived at 'Kurrajongs', a large rambling farmhouse just off the gravel section of the Tourist Road about 23 km out from Capertee. There I teamed up with three couples from the Cumberland Bird Observers Club.

After a frosty start the next morning, we drove to 'Brymair' property off Noola Road, which forms part of the Dunnville Loop Road, and worked from about 8 am to 4 pm. A few volunteers had already started, while others trickled in during the course of the morning, which developed into a fine day work - and weatherwise. Even though soil conditions were ideal, the seven of us felt stiff in the muscles the next day. In the paddock during the tree-planting, someone stumbled across a Masked Plover's nest with two eggs. It was amazing the eggs weren't already scrambled as someone's beagle had earlier been chasing a rabbit round and round in circles in that area, and when eventually the dog caught it, it didn't know what to do. Project organiser, Dave Gearing fulfilled the extra role of rabbit-rescuer.

Saturday evening Glen Alice Community hall came alive when all those involved in the tree-planting gathered for the usual hearty three-course dinner, prepared and served by the local ladies.

As the planting quota had been reached, Sunday was a free day, to the relief of our muscles. Dave and his wife, Carol led a large group that morning alongside a small section of the dried-up Capertee River south from the bridge in Glenowlan Road. After my previous unsuccessful trips to the valley, it was certainly third time lucky for me, for we were soon rewarded with excellent sightings of the Regent Honeyeater. Three pairs traversed through the tall timber, their gold plumage resplendent in the sunlight. The males were bobbing their heads in mating display to their partners and there was no sign of agonistic behaviour among the pairs, indicating, Dave said, that their territories had not yet been established. One bird bore rings on its leg, showing it to be a Capertee Valley banding, but the actual year couldn't be confirmed. On the other side of the bridge, high up in the middle of a mass of dead mistletoe, White-browed Babblers made visits to a nest they were lining inside with feathers and dried grasses.

We seven then returned to 'Kurrajongs' and drove across to the airstrip on the property to speak with the owners, who had kindly moved out of their farmhouse during our stay there. Near the strip they were occupying a cabin nearing completion, with the plan of accommodating visitors on a regular basis. Afterwards we explored a timbered area bordering Coco Creek, which had been without water for the past two years. Fallen trees across it and bank erosion were evidence of the impact of past flooding. There we spent much time observing a flock of five Turquoise Parrots, especially when they dropped to the ground to feed among the grasses, The males were striking in colour. Close-by a pair of Jacky Winters were constructing their tea-strainer nest, wedged high up in an exposed fork of a tree.

In April and August each year tree-plantings are held in this valley, which is a beautiful area to stay and study, particularly when the early morning or late afternoon sun catches the sandstone cliffs of the surrounding ranges. The tree-planting weekends are very convivial and conservation-focused affairs, which I thoroughly recommend club members participate in. Further information about the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program can be obtained from the website www.absa.asn.au/regent/regenthome.html. I also suggest that Capertee Valley would be an ideal location for an IBOC camp.

FRODOCAM

The Brisbane Courier Mail is once again running coverage of the Peregrine Falcons' nest high on the Admiralty Towers apartment building in Brisbane, including a web cam at the following address: <http://thecouriermail.com.au/extras/frodocam/default.htm>. The parents Frieda and Frodo have hatched four chicks, believed to be three female and one male (the smallest - named Frodo in a readers' poll) and have been nesting there since 1999.

Miscellaneous

**Excerpt from
Sydney Morning Herald
Column 8**

“Bringing ornithological reasoning to the epidemic of white stone and golf ball pilfering black birds, Sam Clough, of Cessnock, says: “The difference between a raven and a crow is that one has an additional pinion feather in each wing. Whether a black bird is a raven or a crow, therefore is a matter of a pinion.”

BIRD TRIVIA

1. It would require an average of 18 hummingbirds to weigh in at one ounce.
2. The nest of the bald eagle can weigh well over one ton.
3. The European eagle owl is the largest owl in the world. It can measure 28 inches (70 centimetres) tall with a wingspan of five feet (150 centimetres).
4. In 1973 a Rippell's griffon vulture collided with an airplane flying at 11,270metres (37,000ft) over west Africa - highest altitude at which any bird has been identified. They usually fly at 1500m (500ft).

E –Newsletter

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of IBOC News, please email me and I will put you on my mailing list – this would also benefit the club by helping to keep printing costs down.

Penny
(penny_potter@iprimus.com.au)

***WILD SOUTH – ENDLESS SUMMER - A Library Video
Val Dolan***

Because an aunt of mine was taking a long awaited trip to Broome I borrowed this video from our library. It is an excellent follow up to Chris Chafer's talk on waders because it quite often shows a mixed bunch of waders feeding together. Dottrels, Ruddy Turnstones, Sandpipers, Bar-tailed Godwits, Great White Egrets, Little Egrets, Mangrove Warblers, Kingfishers, Avocets, Turnstones, Tattlers, Terns, Oyster Catchers and Mangrove Herons and many others were filmed together on the shore. This gives the viewer the opportunity to compare sizes, shapes and movements in a way that individual still photos do not. The video also describes the 15,000 km migration routes from the Russian tundra to the tidal flats of Broome.

As well as seasonal visitors the video shows permanent residents in a great variety of settings, from the 44 degree heat of Roebuck Bay to Eighty Mile Beach or the salt works and even small permanent wetland provided by a bore for the benefit of cattle but made use of by many birds. Jabiru, Brolga and Bustards were some of the larger birds that we do not see in the Illawarra.

Another part of this video shows how netting and counting is carried out in conditions that are hazardous for both birds and humans. There are many reasons to borrow this video. Vicarious bird watching, preparing for a trip to Broome, admiration for dedicated bird banders or just a celebration of the variety of life we are privileged to enjoy.

BIRDS AROUND BERRY - November 2004

Bob Ashford

“What are we stopping for?” asked one of the kids in the back seat. I pointed to the ginger horse in the paddock. On its back stood an Australian Raven sporting what appeared to be a large bushy ginger moustache. Seemingly oblivious to the abuse its body was receiving the horse grazed happily on while the Raven systematically tugged hair from its mane and tail. By the time he had a beakful the Raven did indeed sport a very fetching moustache! Watching the bird’s antics kept us all amused for several minutes until one of the kids asked “Where are we going now?”

As we drove off and climbed the bends of Berry Mountain I was asked another question “Are we there yet?” To entertain the kids I told them why October was such a great month for birdwatching. “It’s spring and birds are easy to see and hear because they are busy and too distracted to worry about us birders as they go about their courting, collecting nesting material and looking after demanding kids!”

At Cambewarra Lookout the kids ran around exploring while I gratefully sipped a latte. Almost immediately a magnificent Wedge-tailed Eagle ‘whooshed’ into view. Another slowly circled in the sky not so far away. The first one gave us patrons a reckless impersonation of one of those stomach-churning fun-fair roller coasters. Intent on impressing its mate it climbed high in the sky where it tucked in its wings and hurtled earthwards until just before the tree canopy when it would pull back the flaps and shoot skyward again. As it reached the point where gravity finally conquered motion it would tip, briefly hang in the air and then hurtle earthward again. Utterly entranced I returned to my cold latte to be interrupted by one of the kids asking ‘Can we go to Maccas?’

As they munched their way through their ‘Maccas’ I told them about the Bush Stone Curlew that Alan Henigan had emailed me about earlier in the month. He had heard the birds calling just above his house in Sabal Close. Bush Stone Curlews used to be found in the Shoalhaven but are now virtually extinct. Feigning great interest one of the kids asked “Can we get an ice cream?”

Pushing on I explained that the birds live and breed in woodlands where foxes found them easily and had virtually wiped them out so that in the last 50 years only a handful of them had been reported in the Shoalhaven. Phil Craven, of National Parks and Wildlife in Nowra, had called me to find out the exact location Alan had heard them. He explained that Alan had probably heard the bird’s courting calls and he wanted to play back a tape of these calls to check if they were still there. He was very excited about the possibilities of Bush Stone Curlews being back near Berry. Between chips one of kids asked “Can we go to the beach?”

On the beach at Shoalhaven Heads each kid peered in turn through my telescope as I pointed out the different species of waders that could be seen. The little Red-capped Plovers chased hoppers and flies on the surface and the large long-billed Bar-tailed Godwits probed deep in the sand for worms. I told them that the Bar-tailed Godwits breed in the Russian Arctic and Alaska and come here to rest and fatten up ready for their next breeding season. To get here some undertake the longest single-flight over-water migration in the bird world. Some fly direct from Alaska to New Zealand, a distance of 11,000 kilometres non-stop. The ones on the beach fly non-stop from the Yellow Sea in China, over 7,000 kilometres. If the winds were kind they could cover the distance in 6-7 days and they would lose half their body weight by the time they arrived. No Stop, Revive, Survive. No MacDonald’s. Just 7,000 kilometres in one unbelievable effort!

As we pulled away from the car park heading to our next destination one of the kids had a question ‘Can we get a drink?’



UNUSUAL RECORDS for September 2004

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Brush-turkey	1	7-Sep	Mt Keira scout camp	rainforest	BA
Australian Brush-turkey	1	12-Sep	Calderwood	forest	PD
Brown Quail	1	20-Sep	Spring Creek, Bombo	wetland	SE
Blue-billed Duck	4	23-Sep	Bowral	farm dam	GD
Freckled Duck	2	22-Sep	Booderee Botanic Gardens	wetland	PFu
Australian Shelduck	2	23-Sep	Bowral	farm dam	GD
Hardhead	224	22-Sep	Booderee Botanic Gardens	wetland	PFu
Striated Heron	1	14-Sep	Macquarie Rivulet, lower	riparian	BH
Whistling Kite	1	8-Sep	Killalea SRA	overhead	MC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	1-Sep	Woonona	overhead	MPP
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	8-Sep	Avondale Rd., Dapto	garden	TW
Collared Sparrowhawk	2	16-Sep	Cordeaux Dam	woodland	CJC
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	25-Sep	Bargo R, Tahmoor	overhead	MPP
Australian Hobby	1	17-Sep	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	overhead	MC
Peregrine Falcon	1	23-Sep	Forest Track, Bulli Tops	overhead	MPP
Common Sandpiper	2	25-Sep	Berkeley boat harbour	lake shore	MC
Bush Stone-curlew	2	6-Sep	Berry Mountain (calling)	forest	AH
Beach Stone-curlew	1	20-Sep	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	SBo
Pied Oystercatcher	2	11-Sep	Koona Bay, Lake Illawarra	shore	BH
Gull-billed Tern	4	25-Sep	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	SBI
Little Tern	6	10-Sep	Berkeley	lake shore	AL
Common Bronzewing	1	8-Sep	Bellawongarah	?	BA
Long-billed Corella	50	26-Sep	Mt. Warrigal	parkland	DG
Tawny Frogmouth	1	2-Sep	Keiraville	garden	ME
Tawny Frogmouth	2	4-Sep	Croome Rd. Albion Park	woodland	MR
Azure Kingfisher	1	17-Sep	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	wetland	MC
Red-browed Treecreeper	2	19-Sep	Bargo River tack, Tahmoor	forest	IBOC
Eastern Bristlebird	1	25-Sep	Currarong	?	SBI
Weebill	2	19-Sep	Bargo River crossing Tahmoor	woodland	CJC
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	8+	19-Sep	Bargo River crossing Tahmoor	woodland	IBOC
White-plumed Honeyeater	2+	10-Sep	Berkeley High School	parkland	AL
Rose Robin	1	8-Sep	Bellawongarah	rainforest	BA
Hooded Robin	1	15-Sep	Brayton, nr Canyonleigh	woodland	DG
Logrunner	2	3-Sep	Thirroul	rainforest	IM
Logrunner	2	8-Sep	Black Ash NR	rainforest	BA
Logrunner	2	18-Sep	Bulli Pass	rainforest	MPP
Eastern Whipbird	1	2-Sep	Wollongong golf course	dune scrub	ME
Crested Shrike-tit	1	3-Sep	Thirroul	rainforest	IM
Crested Shrike-tit	2	25-Sep	Bargo R, Tahmoor	woodland	MPP
Satin Flycatcher	1	16-Sep	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	NJ
Spangled Drongo	1	1-Sep	Korrongulla Swamp	woodland	DO
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	5	19-Sep	Bargo River crossing Tahmoor	woodland	CJC
Figbird	3	8-Sep	Barrack Point	garden	MR
Figbird	4	22-Sep	Booderee Botanic Gardens	forest	PFu
Dusky Woodswallow	1	11-Sep	Avondale	powerline	AL
Grey Currawong	1	15-Sep	Marulan	roadside	DG
Little Raven	38	19-Sep	Wilton	rural	CJC

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; GB – Graham Barwell; SBI – Simon Blanchfellow; SBo – Stein Boddinton; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; GD – Garry Daly; PD – Pauline Duren; TE – Terri Edwell; SE – Sheila Emery; ME – Mary Eskdale; PF – Peter Fullagar; DG – Darryl Goldrick; BH – Brian Hales; AH – Alan Henigan; NJ – Nigel Jacket; AL – Alan Lewis; IM – Ian McKinlay; DO – Danie Ondinea; MPP – Martin & Penny Potter; MR – Michelle Rower; RT – Roger Truscott; TW – Tera Wheway.

Species accounts and status can be found at www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer



I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

"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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From Your Committee p 2	PRESIDENT: Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742
Report on the Barraba Camp p 3	SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307
Interlude at Ironbark Creek p 6	Work email: bettyhudson@menziesgroup.com.au
Mombasa p 7	TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
Mount Kembla p 8	EDITORS: Penny Potter, Tel: 02 4284 6196
Purry Burry Point p 8	Email: penny_potter@iprimus.com.au
Cost of Development p 9	Val Dolan, Tel: 02 4229 6737
Birding Abroad: Turkish Coast p10	Email: valdolan2000@yahoo.com.au
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FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS December 2004 – February 2005

CLUB MEETING – Monday 13th December- 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall. – Trivia Evening Christmas Party Come along for an evening of light-hearted trivia and wear your Christmas or Bird T Shirts. Please bring a pen or pencil with you and bring a small plate for supper afterwards.

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 15 December – Wiseman Park Woodland & Fairy Creek Corridor, Wollongong – Leader: Mike Morphett. Meet at 8.30 am at the car park to Beaton Park complex beside Foley Street. Across the road we'll explore Wiseman Park, which is a coastal plain grassy woodland remnant and merges with the Fairy Creek Flood Mitigation Scheme area, and continue westward along the creek corridor to where Gilmore Street meets Acacia Avenue, with morning cuppa somewhere along the way. Recent surveys have come up with some interesting birdlife in a location not far from the Wollongong CBD, where walkers afterwards may want to carry on with their Christmas shopping. The proposed Nan Tien Temple area visit is rescheduled for next March. If anyone has suggestions/special requests for Wednesday morning walks next year, would they please contact Mike by the end of this month (T: 4267.3558; E: mcmorphett@speedlink.com.au), as he's been asked to draft a program.

DECEMBER MONTHLY OUTING - Saturday 18th December 2004 - Grevillea Park - Leader: Kevin McGregor Meet at 4.30pm at Grevillea Park, which is behind Bulli Showground. The outing will be a short walk through the gardens followed by a BYO Picnic tea (a sausage sizzle will be available). The last time we celebrated the end of the year in this fashion over 70 members, their families and friends attended. It gives us a chance to meet many members we have not had the opportunity to see recently at meetings and outings, and to enjoy happy reunions with them. Make an effort to come along and enjoy the evening. We look forward to seeing some of our long standing members. To get there travel on the Princes Highway to Bulli and turn into the

road leading into the Bulli Showground (Trotting Track) adjacent to the Bulli Bowling Club. Continue right up to the garden parking lot.

JANUARY MEETING – Please note there is no January club meeting.

JANUARY MONTHLY OUTING - Sunday 16th January - Firetrail 10a, Dharrawal Nature Reserve, - Leader: Bruce O'Brien. Meet at 8.00am at Maddens Falls Parking Area, Darkes Forest Road. If travelling north from Wollongong take the Old Princes Highway towards Helensburgh (not the Freeway) and turn left into Darkes Forest Road (this turn is past the two golf courses and over the Freeway bridge). The car park is approximately 2.5 kilometres from the turn. Please note there are no facilities at this venue; the closest are at Sublime Point.

COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 16th January 2005, at 7.30 pm at the home of Betty Hudson, 1 Druall Road, Jamberoo (4236 0307). As usual, members are invited to attend.

FEBRUARY MID-WEEK OUTING – Wednesday 9 February, 5.30pm – Windang – Leader: Chris Brandis – Meet under the pine trees before the Windang Surf Club at 5 pm. More next newsletter.

FEBRUARY CLUB MEETING – Monday 14th February – ‘Papua New Guinea and New Zealand’, Trevor Quedsted – 7.30 pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall

The next newsletter will be for February 2005 with the deadline for contributions being Thursday 27th January 2005. Where possible please submit by email (but handwritten material is just as welcome!).



From Your Committee

Finance

Balance of IBOC account @ 31.10.04 is \$1,162.14. Approved expenditure for November was \$160 for books.

2005 Program

The 2005 program is coming together but we still need someone who would be willing to coordinate the program of monthly walks. You do not necessarily have to lead them or even work out the route, just arrange for someone to lead a walk in a particular area on a certain day.

December Meeting

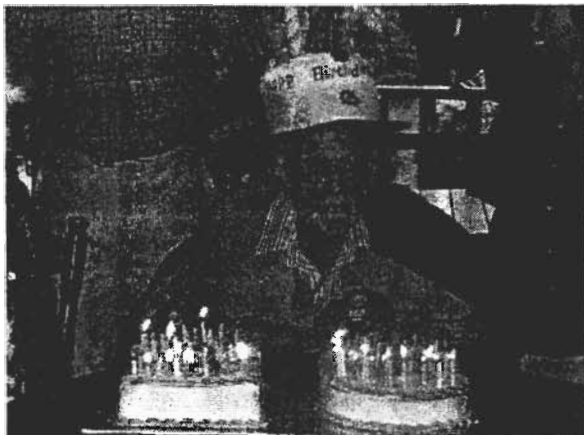
At the December meeting a table will be set up with Christmas Gift ideas. Remember to bring your money!!

2005 Committee

<i>President</i>	Roger Bogaert
<i>Vice President</i>	Vacant
<i>Secretary</i>	Betty Hudson
<i>Treasurer</i>	Bronwyn Wilson
<i>Committee Members</i>	Tom Wylie, Val Dolan Kerrie Lewis Kevin McGregor
<i>Editors:</i>	Penny Potter Val Dolan

Non- Elected Positions

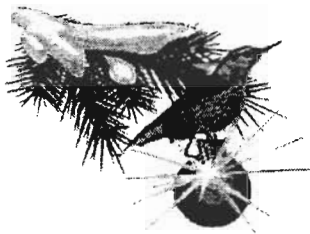
<i>Librarian</i>	Joan Wylie
<i>Name Tags</i>	Tera & Neil Wheway
<i>Midweek Walks</i>	Mike Morphett
<i>Camps</i>	
<i>Monthly Outings</i>	Vacant
<i>Noticeboard</i>	Martin Potter



A BELATED HAPPY BIRTHDAY JACK!

From all your friends
at IBOC

Some of our longer standing members helped Jack Hyslop to celebrate his 95th birthday recently. Jack used to be a key member in organising regular walks in the Royal and Heathcote National parks well into his eighties.



REPORT ON THE BARRABA CAMP: 23-30 OCTOBER 2004

Betty Hudson

Leaving Wollongong on an early morning of heavy rain and low cloud, I found the sunshine as soon as I climbed out of the Colo River Gorge. The sun shining through the mist between the trees seemed like fairyland. However in the upper Hunter, turning a corner I soon saw that the clouds were again gathering in the west and looking very ominous. For the rest of the journey I passed through sudden short heavy showers. Leaving Barraba and starting the climb up to the ridge where the camp was situated, all the signs showed that I was following a very heavy storm. The water was running across the paddocks and in one place across the road. Was I thankful to Richard and Peter Fackender who had placed the IBOC signs along this road!

At last I turned off the road to camp, and everyone waving through the trees. But what was this? The rain had raised the level on the causeway to a worrying height. Luckily Peter directed me to a alternate way using a bridge. Safely arrived I was very grateful for the welcoming cup of tea from Tera. With another storm threatening everyone helped me to get my tent up very quickly, beating the rain by a few seconds. Later when Val arrived we heard that Tamworth had been struck by a severe storm that afternoon and sandbagging was required.

Next day we had our early morning wakeup call from the Channel-billed Cuckoos who were enjoying a perfect dawn after the rain. An early start saw Peter show us a shortcut across the creek to the property. In a very short distance we had an impressive bird list including Red-winged Parrots at nest holes, Musk and Little Lorikeets, and a Leaden Flycatcher's nest with both adults feeding chicks. Noisy Friarbird nests were two a penny. All the birds seemed to be enjoying the aftermath of the rain. With new arrivals expected we returned to camp for an early lunch. After lunch we had visitors of another kind. A feral pig sow and six piglets. We later heard that the sow was on her way back to Tamworth and Dapto destined for freezers. She weighed in at 230 pounds dead weight.

Sunday promised to be a hot day, so we again left early and walked down the western boundary of the property, passing several large granite outcrops and finally reaching a large area of exposed granite where the creek plunged down to the valley. It would be awesome in flood times. We added a Speckled Warbler's nest to our list as well as several other new birds. At times the callitris pine trees were very thick and difficult for detecting birds but we could hear them, especially the Rufous Whistlers. On returning, we came across an area where there were many extremely old grass trees in the shelter of the granite outcrops where moisture seeped through. Back at camp I watched a flock of Fuscous Honeyeaters bathing in a small waterhole on the creek. Another new bird for me. A hot shower, tea and then camp fire made a perfect finish to the day.

Next morning, after the usual wakeup call from the birds, we set off with Richard along the road to another area bordering a paddock which had wetter areas with different birds. We were lucky enough to flush a pair of Turquoise Parrots from the grass and get a good sight of them. An unusual sighting was a pair of Cuckoo-shrikes, one Black-faced and one White-bellied, sharing nest building duties. After an early lunch some of us went to Bundarra to shop (nearer than Barraba but smaller). We took the long way round to look at waterholes and dams, and were rewarded with a Black-winged Stilt, Hardheads, and a Masked Lapwing with three eggs right on the edge of the road. We also saw several raptors as the country was farmland, among them Australian Hobby, and Nankeen Kestrel. On returning to camp there was another arrival.

The next day we went looking for the Regent Honeyeaters along the Woods Reef Road. A check of all the ironbark reserves failed to give a trace even though the trees were in flower. Morning tea was beside Ironbark Creek where it left the hills. The rock rubble was impressive with large blocks of jasper and granite, lunch was at another riverside reserve where we watched lorikeets searching trees for nest holes and found several large carp in the water. After lunch we drove through the outskirts of the Woods Reef Asbestos Mine on the way to Split Rock Dam and Barraba. At the Dam we saw Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and a Brown Falcon spreading alternate wings out on the ground. We couldn't decide if it was sunbaking or having an ant bath. The water was very low with no water birds evident. A quick visit was made to Black Springs Reserve where White-winged Trillers were in evidence and we said goodbye to Val who left to return home via Tamworth, then went on to Barraba for shopping. It was a very late return to camp.

The next day was very hot and windy, and we went along the eastern side of Ironbark Creek inside the property. Birds were few, but a large goanna was seen trying to reach a Noisy Friar-bird's nest in the outer branches of a tree. Stones thrown at it had no effect other than to drive it further up the tree. The best sighting was an Azure Kingfisher. We had a lazy afternoon seeking the shade before a cold southerly change hit. Campfire was a few embers and we soon all went to bed.

Next day was fine but cooler, for our long day to Upper Horton and Barraba. Our first stop was Glenford Creek bridge, which was closed for repairs. There were plenty of birds calling but we were not tempted to go into the long grass to find them after seeing a large black snake swimming in the creek. Hooded Robbins and Apostle Birds were good sightings. Morning tea at Upper Horton Sports Grounds gave us House Sparrows, Double-bar Finches, and Straw-necked Ibis. We then moved onto Horton Falls Road reserve for a late lunch, and saw plenty of Honeyeaters but no Regents. We then went sightseeing to Horton Falls - impressive but disappointing after a steep hot walk, that there was no view of the actual falls only the pools at the top.

We returned to Barraba for shopping and a visit to the caravan park where Tera and Neil had seen Zebra Finches. No Zebras this time, but Plum-headed finches in the brambles on the river bank. Another very late return to

camp but we were all well pleased with the additions to the list. Chris Chafer and Avril had arrived while we were out. Chris had found a pair of Barking Owls roosting not far from camp. Unfortunately an early morning walk failed to find the owls.

On Friday we went to the top paddock of the property where we were assured there were always Hooded Robins. This proved to be a poor morning bird wise, with no new sightings but was an interesting walk with great views. We had lunch in camp, as we were getting ready for a return home the next day. In the afternoon Chris C showed me the owls - I had looked in the wrong place! A last check of the list at camp fire revealed that we had 122 species for all the places we had visited and 101 for the camp site area We just couldn't exceed the Upper Horton list of 129.

Our thanks to Col the owner of the property for allowing us unrestricted access, and to Richard and Peter Fackender for their time in showing us the birds of the area and their support with signs, firewood etc. An especial thankyou to Neil Wheway for getting the gear to camp, getting the toilet and shower put up, and ensuring that there was hot water each night for showers and dishes. On a personal note I had a great camp with many new birds and I hope that everyone else enjoyed it. I would certainly like to visit the area again in the future, although I would take two days over the drive next time. My thanks to everyone, Tera and Neil, Val, Mary, Chris B, Roger, Chris C and Avril. for making it such an easy, happy week.

Australian Wood Duck	Little Lorikeet	Buff-rumped Thornbill	White-winged Triller
Pacific Black Duck	Australian King Parrot	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Olive-backed Oriole
Grey Teal	Red-winged parrot	Striated Thornbill	Dusky Woodswallow
Hardhead	Crimson Rosella	Red Wattlebird	Grey Butcherbird
Australasian Grebe	Eastern Rosella	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird
Great Cormorant	Red-rumped Parrot	Noisy Friarbird	Australian Magpie
White-faced Heron	Turquoise Parrot	Little Friarbird	Pied Currawong
White-necked Heron	Brush Cuckoo	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Great Egret	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Noisy Miner	Little Crow
Straw-necked Ibis	Shining Bronze-cuckoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	White-winged Chough
Black-shouldered Kite	Channel-billed Cuckoo	White-eared Honeyeater	Apostlebird
Brown Goshawk	Barking Owl	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Richard's Pipit
Grey Goshawk	Southern Boobook	Fuscous Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Collared Sparrowhawk	Tawny Frogmouth	White-plumed Honeyeater	Zebra Finch
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Australian Owlet-nightjar	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Plum-headed Finch
Little Eagle	White-throated Needle-tail	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Brown Flacon	Azure Kingfisher	White-naped Honeyeater	Diamond Firetail
Australian Hobby	Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Spinebill	Mistletoebird
Peregrine Flacon	Sacred Kingfisher	Jacky Winter	Welcome Swallow
Nankeen Kestrel	Rainbow Bee-eater	Hooded Robin	Tree Martin
Black-winged Stilt	Dollarbird	Eastern Yellow Robin	Fairy Martin
Black-fronted Dotterel	White-throated Treecreeper	Crested Shrike-tit	Clamorous Reed-warbler
Masked Lapwing	Brown Treecreeper	Rufous Whistler	Rufous Songlark
Common Bronzewing	Superb Fairy Wren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Silvereye
Crested Pigeon	Variegated Fairy Wren	Leaden Flycatcher	Common Starling
Peaceful Dove	Spotted Pardalote	Restless Flycatcher	Common Myna
Galah	Striated Pardalote	Magpie Lark	
Little Corella	White-browed Scrub Wren	Grey Fantail	
Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo	Speckled Warbler	Willie Wagtail	
Cockatiel	Weebill	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	
Rainbow Lorikeet	White-throated Gerygone	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	
Musk Lorikeet	Inland Thornbill	Cicadabird	

AN INTERLUDE AT IRONBARK CREEK

Neil Wheway

After leaving a wet Illawarra we arrived at a wet Barraba, having left our instructions to find the campsite in Dapto. So we decided a cabin at the caravan park was in order and we would look for the campsite later. Late that afternoon we drove out trying to find our site. Peter had put up the signs so well, that we had no trouble finding the creek campsite, which turned out to be 40 klms from Barraba. We met up with Peter and Richard at Col's shed and had afternoon tea, and left saying we would return fairly early the next day.



Club honeys looking for birds

Before leaving the caravan park the next morning we wandered down to the back fence to the Manilla River and spent a long time watching the Dollar birds flying over the river catching insects on the wing, also Zebra Finches and Reed Warblers held our interest. With us were two ladies from Melbourne who were members of Bird Observers Australia. We returned to this spot later during the camp and were again not disappointed as Plum-Headed finches were spotted by all.



Happy campers planning the day's walk

Arriving at the camp early in the afternoon we erected our camper just in time to find shelter from a fierce thunderstorm. Richard had come over with a chainsaw and cut a stack of firewood. Betty arrived later. Luckily her tent was erected before the storm returned - this time less severe. Arriving and leaving at different times during the week eleven people enjoyed the camp.

Our campsite was in an idyllic position with a profusion of birds to observe. One didn't have to walk very far - in fact our first morning after the storms, twenty minutes from camp was the most rewarding of the whole week with regard to numbers.

Other days were equally rewarding, with types of birds spotted including Turquoise Parrot, Barking Owl and Plum-Headed Finch to just name a few. Driving into Bundarra one afternoon a Masked Lapwing sitting on three eggs on the edge of the road was observed. Peter and Richard took us for walks all within cooe of the camp and their knowledge of the area and the birds was inspirational. I saw birds and nests that had they not been pointed out to me, I would never have spotted them. Feral pigs and goats roamed the area and were spotted on the walks, also the damage caused by them to the environment.

Col who owned the property next to the stock route came over when he was up from Tamworth at weekends. He joined us around the nightly campfire where many tales tall and true were recounted. Unfortunately all good times come to an end, and after a wonderful week at Ironbark Creek it was time to break camp and drive home. The memory will stay with me for a long time (Alzheimer's permitting).

REPORT ON NOVEMBER MEETING: Mombasa**Nancy Urban**

The guest speaker for the November meeting was Chris Brandis who talked about his trips to Mombasa and Costa Rica. Both places sound like beautiful places to visit. Mombasa is on the Indian Ocean and when the tide goes out, it stretches for about 1 kilometre out, and you are able to see a lot of shore birds that are native to that area. Chris saw quite a few waders. There were a lot of birds that were observed in and around his hotel (the feathered variety, not the ones sipping cocktails). Chris was able to identify the Mouse Bird that looks like it is a little bottom heavy, a variety of different finches, and a black and white bird called a Puff Back Bird. When the Puff Back Bird spreads its feathers out it puffs up, hence the name. The Golden Weaver Bird was seen making nests that looked a lot like fish ponds. Red Tinker Birds were common and their sound was just like a hammer hitting a bell. Around the hotel there live a lot of Little Spinks, Little Plovers and Little Ring Plovers that are slightly different to our Plovers. They also have Wagtails which are also slightly different to our Willy Wagtails. Mombasa has its fair share of introduced birds. One really common pest is the House Crow that was introduced to Mombasa by the Indians that colonised the country. The native Raven is rarely seen because of the House Crow. White-browed Robin Chats were easy to hear but difficult to see as they don't sit still. Canaries come from this region but are not the same pet variety we have.

There are a lot of monkeys that like to steal food, and any chance they get they will take advantage of it. If you forget to lock your hotel window, often the room will look like it has been ransacked when you get back.

Chris went on a few different safaris and saw a variety of different birds and animals. Storks were seen eating fish and frogs alongside hippos in the water area. Chris was fascinated by the lizards that would change colour depending on their mood. Other animals that were seen were lions, a Battle Owl, Eagles that were very acrobatic in flight, Buffalos, and raptors. The money produced by tours goes straight back into education.

Transport was very rough. You were able to cram 20 people into one van and the petrol was as expensive as in Australia. Markets are set up on the side of the street where they sell food and other items.

The lodge Chris stayed in is built on stilts to keep the animals out. Eagles and squirrels were spotted around this area. A Somalian Ostrich was spotted - they have grey heads. The Pygmy Falcon is quite small and very cute looking; their diet mainly consists of grasshoppers. Other animals seen around the region include Zebras, a Woolly Neck Stork, Gazelles, Sand Grouse that were seen running around sleeping lions. Starlings had beautiful colourings and were very common, as were Sunbirds that looked very plain until they moved into the sun so that their colours were reflected in the light. Paradise Fly Catchers have very long tails and are also nice to look at.

Chris then spent a week in Costa Rica which has 800 different varieties of birds because it is between the two Americas and is famous for Humming Birds. Costa Rica doesn't have armed forces, just the police force. They spend their money on health and education which is free (we can only live in hope). Wood Wrens were observed around the hotel and were hard to tell apart. Chris saw lots of Hummingbirds and a Toucan feeding on figs on a boat trip he took along a river.

It sounded like Chris had a great visit even if he had to work.

MOUNT KEMBLA WALK, 14th November**Bill and Joan Zealey**

Sunday 14th November, 14 members gathered at the Mt Kembla carpark, to walk round the Mt Kembla Ring Track. It was a calm and brilliant morning, and none too early for the Zealeys. The first part of the track descends precipitously, and we were glad that it was dry underfoot. None-the-less we nearly lost our leader, Betty Hudson, to the treacherous decaying steps. After this the track levelled off, and began to be populated by leeches, including one gigantic one. We could hear plenty of birds, but they were difficult to spot among the many levels of rainforest vegetation. However we had some excellent views of Topknot Pigeons, Brown Cuckoo Doves, and of Bassian Thrushes rustling among the undergrowth. Where the rainforest track opened up into a firetrail we stopped for an early lunch and everyone was rewarded by excellent views of a Crested Shrike-tit. The Catbird that had been audible for much of the morning, hurtled across the track. On the tarmac road back we glimpsed a Grey Goshawk quartering the escarpment. On return to the car park we decided we'd had the best of the day, and went off home.

Grey Goshawk	Sacred Kingfisher	Striated Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Little Eagle	Laughing Kookaburra	Lewin's Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike
White-headed Pigeon	Superb Lyrebird	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Butcher Bird
Brown Cuckoo-dove	White-throated Treecreeper	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Raven
Topknot Pigeon	Superb Fairy Wren	Eastern Yellow Robin	Green Cat Bird
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Variegated Fairy Wren	Eastern Whipbird	Satin Bowerbird
Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo	Spotted Pardalote	Crested Shrike-tit	Red-browed Finch
Australian King Parrot	White Browed Scrub Wren	Golden Whistler	Silver Eye
Crimson Rosella	Large Billed Scrub Wren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Bassian Thrush
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Brown Gerygone	Black-faced Monarch	
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Brown Thornbill	Rufous Fantail	

PURRY BURRY POINT & WINDANG PENINSULA HERITAGE PARK**Mike MORPHETT****A report on the mid-week morning walk held on Wednesday 10 November 2004**

In overcast conditions after early morning showers, nine club members met at the Purry Burry Point car park and made Primbee Bay the first site for birdwatching. The water in this corner of Lake Illawarra was very still, producing clear reflections of the shoreline trees and houses, marred only by the corpse of an Australian Pelican lying in the central shallows, whilst the survivors of the species continued with the maintenance business of hanging out their wings and preening themselves. A pair of Black-winged Stilts was a joy to watch in flight from one side of the small bay to the other. Obliging, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers came across to confirm identification.

Retracing our steps, we then detoured to cross the small park to the two fig-trees standing by Lakeview Parade, having been attracted by a pair of Figbirds on a telegraph pole. There were more of them there with a variety of plumage colours and calls. Adding to their activity were a number of Red Wattlebirds (a possible nest of theirs in a nearby paperbark) and Welcome Swallows darting across the path of passing vehicles. Up high in the larger fig was a Magpie's nest, made of a combination of natural materials and wires and electrical cables. We had earlier seen the owner send packing a Nankeen Kestrel and a Silver Gull. Because of the time we spent there, I wondered if the local residents might now take a keener interest in the birdlife within coo-ee (yes, that bird let everyone know it was there, even if it kept itself hidden), if they hadn't done so already.

We then proceeded south along the lake foreshore, preceded by a Great Egret that croaked its annoyance at our presence and reluctantly shifted along the grassed area towards the boardwalk, whilst a White-faced Heron remained undisturbed at the water's edge. Wailing calls betrayed the presence of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, and shortly after a dozen settled in a tree amid the houses. Out on the lake, imperceptibly moving westwards, were some 280 Black Swan (about 70 and 250 were recorded on my recce walks). Several trees lay fallen, the

aftermath of the gales that caused widespread damage in the region a fortnight earlier; and debris, stranded along the back fences of Windang Road properties, indicated the extent the lake had risen after the much needed rainfall that began on 17 October. In this public reserve strip Masked Lapwings registered their alarm calls and flapped above our heads, and on our return journey we glimpsed two chicks in a back garden, dutifully lying low in the grasses. By contrast, a parent Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike openly fed insects to one of two immature birds in a nearby tree.

After morning tea beside the calming lake, we returned to the car park and five of us then drove to Windang Peninsula Heritage Park. There Tom and Joan spotted a Brown Falcon fly overhead. Superb Fairy-wrens and Thornbills, both Yellow and Yellow-rumped, were in abundance. A Red-browed Finch carried a stem of dried grass, much longer than itself, to a nest in a casuarina, only to drop it almost at the point of destination, while close by Common Starlings were bringing nesting material to one of the nestboxes that have been installed in the park. On the ground a sizeable skink escaped the jousting, shaking bill of a Magpie at the expense of its tail, which the bird accepted. By the end of the two walks the weather had considerably brightened up and we had tallied 48 species. The list below includes additional species seen on the earlier surveys: 27 May * and 7 October □. Michelle and Terri then went on to Korrongulla Swamp, but, snake-shy, made do with some Darters and “heaps of” Clamorous Reed-Warblers.

Black Swan	Black-winged Stilt	Spotted Pardalote	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Pacific Black Duck	Masked Lapwing	White-browed Scrubwren □	Figbird
Chestnut Teal	Silver Gull	Brown Gerygone □	Australian Magpie
Little Pied Cormorant	Crested Tern □	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Australian Raven
Pied Cormorant	Spotted Turtle dove	Yellow Thornbill	House Sparrow
Little Black Cormorant	Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird	Red-browed Finch
Great Cormorant	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Little Wattlebird	European Goldfinch
Australian Pelican	Galah	New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
White-faced Heron	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *	Eastern Spinebill *	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Great Egret	Rainbow Lorikeet *	Eastern Yellow Robin	Clamorous Reed-Warbler □
Australian White Ibis	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Golden Whistler	Silvereye
Brown Falcon	Common Koel	Magpie-lark	Common Blackbird
Nankeen Kestrel	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Fantail	Common Starling
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Superb Fairy-wren	Willie Wagtail	Common Myna

THE COST OF DEVELOPMENT

Ron Simcock

Imagine my surprise to see a Buff-Banded Rail wandering around the back garden of a house in Albion Park built only 18 months ago. There is only a swimming pool and lawn in the garden and it is surrounded by a Colorbond metal fence.

The house is adjacent to the flood plains Council demands be included in all new subdivisions. There is a flow of water at present through the “creek”. The house is located at the end of one subdivision and development of an adjacent subdivision has just started. The first work is to clear out all the reeds and tall grasses from the original creek to make a “nice” looking flood plain. I wonder where the Rail came from???

I doubt anyone was aware of the existence of the Rail. I don't give it much chance of survival with the cats and foxes roaming around at night.

But then that's the price of progress!!

AWARD RECOGNISES EXCELLENCE IN STUDYING AND UNDERSTANDING THE NATURAL WORLD

The Australian Natural History Medallion is the pre-eminent award in Australia for those who study, educate and communicate the wonders of Australia's natural environment. This prestigious award is presented by an association of peak conservation and natural history groups, and can be considered "the ARIAs of Australia's natural history community".

Former medallion winner, Peter Menkhorst, stated "Natural history is important for conservation planning because we still are very ignorant about most species, indeed most higher level taxa. There has been a worrying decline in natural history knowledge in Government agencies with continuing budget cuts and the fashion for 'cutting edge science', computer modelling and high tech solutions etc. Very often all that is required is some simple natural history and basic ecological understanding. Hence amateur natural historians still have an important role to play."

The Australian Natural History Medallion for 2004 was presented to Professor David Lindenmayer on Monday 8 November 2004 at the FNCV Hall in Blackburn. The award recognises Professor Lindenmayer's substantial contribution to the study of ecology and conservation biology particularly that of forests and their fauna. After the presentation the recipient will give an address entitled "21 years of Wildlife Research in Victoria's Wet Forests".

David Lindenmayer was appointed to the position of Professor at the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the Australian National University in 2004. His research has relied heavily on the development of vertebrate sampling methodologies and ecological computer modelling. It has stressed the importance of habitat fragmentation as a threatening process and the need for wildlife corridors and retained elements in wood production forests. Over the last twenty years he has planned and implemented a number of multi-disciplinary research studies in landscape ecology in Victoria's Mountain Ash forests, in pine plantations and eucalypt forest near Tumut, on rehabilitated farmlands, and in prescribed fire regimes at Jervis Bay.

The Medallion has been awarded every year since 1940 to the person judged to have made the most meritorious contribution to the understanding of natural history within Australia. Previous winners have covered all fields of natural history: plants, birds, insects, geology, reptiles, marine life, anthropology and many aspects of conservation. It was presented to David Lindenmayer by Associate Professor Bruce Livett, President of the Royal Society of Victoria.

BIRDING ABROAD Turkish Coast

David Winterbottom

Over the past few years David and Elizabeth Winterbottom have been going overseas to look at birds and other things. Here is a vignette from a voyage in September 2004.

The trip started well enough with breakfast on the roof of our Istanbul hotel under the shadow of Santa Sophia on one side, the Blue Mosque on the other with the Bosphorus behind us. Sparrows and Turtle Doves at the table, Mediterranean Gulls and Hooded Crows around, a party of Great Tits in the garden below, and an unexpected Grey Heron flapping past.

Once on board our small cruise boat (9 passengers, guide, skipper, chef and deck hand) we were struck by the absence of sea birds. A few Yellow-legged and Mediterranean Gulls, a Swallow or two and the odd Sparrow and Dove on the dockside and that was it.

We set off and moored for the night in a small cove. I was rowed ashore and went for a walk up the hillside. Nothing but a Blackbird and a Jay to be heard until I nearly trod on a Quail. So the lack of birds was not entirely due to shooting it seemed. Still nothing. Then a few Bee-eaters overhead. Then nothing. I have never met a place so devoid of birds. Absolutely no sign of the much vaunted autumn migration of Buzzards, Storks and other birds flying south for the winter.

The main purpose of the trip was to view the ancient ruins from the time of Darius and Alexander the Great and earlier, through to Roman times. They were certainly very impressive even if the only birds to be seen were Rock Nuthatches and the occasional Crested Lark.

And so it continued until a cove planted with olives and vines was visited where Wheatears, Orphea and Olivaceous Warblers were seen, together with Spotted Flycatchers, Starlings and a Red-backed Shrike. The next day the ancient ruins had been swamped by a small wetland. That yielded Mallard, Little Grebes, Moorhens, Coots and a glorious Kingfisher.

Apart from an Alpine Swift, a Kestrel, two Terns and a couple of lonely Buzzards, that was it. A less rewarding two weeks from a birding point of view we thought it hard to beat. But that was until the next leg of our trip. There are even fewer birds in southern Italy!

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editors,

I have just come back from the October camp. I would like to thank those who attended for their company but especially Neil Wheway for all his hard work, Tera for looking after him, Roger for his birding skills and most importantly Peter and Richard for knowing where each bird was nesting and showing us the photographs they were taking from their hide and the stories told around the fire. By no means last, Betty Hudson's organising of the day's activity. It was a most successful camp as IBOC camps usually are.

Mary Shaw.

Twitchathon

Thank you to everyone who supported the club's Twitchathon team. Bruce and Kelsea O'Brien, Penny and Martin Potter entered the Champagne Race and went out spotting from about 7.30am-4pm, visiting West Dapto, Mount Keira, Mount Kembla, the Botanic Gardens and University, Lake Illawarra and Windang Beach. A total of 78 species were seen and they managed to raise \$354.70.

Twitchathon Results 2005

A summary of the Twitchathon results is as follows (rarest bird spotted by the team is shown in brackets):

Main Race

Hunter Home Brewers, 220 (1st prize) – Painted Honeyeater

Whacked Out Woodswallows, 218 (2nd prize) – Barking Owl

Central Coast Champions, 200 (3rd prize) – Jacana at Leneghans Swamp, Minimi

Champagne Race

Lessticum Phoradae, 156 (Champagne to the team!) – Comb Crested Jacana

Warbled Specklers, 136 – Turquoise Parrot, Glen Davis

Champagne Shriketits, 119 (a great effort for just Sunday!) – not specified on form

Whitton Street Sapsuckers, 113 – Blue Billed Duck

Lyrebirders, The – 121- Eastern Bristlebird

Spineless Spinebills, 128 – Red kneed

Dotterel/Triller (Far South Coast)

Matheson Mopokes, 110 – Lewins Rail

Steamed Chats, 104 – Superb Parrot (ACT? area)

Red faced Parrots, 86 – Glossy Ibis (never seen before at Sydney Olympic Park)

Wooden Spoonbills, 84 – White bellied Cuckoo Shrike

Wollongong Wongas, 78 – Little Tern at Windang

Counting Crows, 66 - Crested Shriketit – Coffs Harbour area

UNUSUAL RECORDS for October 2004**Chris J. Chafer**Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au or Ph: 4276 1015 after 7pm

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
White-chinned Petrel	1	3-Oct	off Wollongong	pelagic	CB
Black Petrel	2	24-Oct	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross	1	23-Oct	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Osprey	1	9-Oct	Tallawarra ash ponds	overhead	MC
Pacific Baza	2	10-Oct	Macquarie Pass NP	forest	CJC
Square-tailed Kite	1	29-Oct	west of Shoalhaven Heads	overhead	MC
Swamp Harrier	1	5-Oct	Dunmore	overhead	MC, MPP
Brown Goshawk	1	23-Oct	Bundeena (Shoalhaven R.)	overhead	LP
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	20-Oct	Bulli Pass	overhead	RI
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	29-Oct	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Little Eagle	1	17-Oct	Wattamola (Kangaroo Valley)	-	NJ
Peregrine Falcon	2	8-Oct	Mt. Brown	overhead	MC
Peregrine Falcon	1	26-Oct	Barren Grounds NR	overhead	NJ
Buff-banded Rail	1	2-Oct	Berkeley harbour	wetland	MC
Bar-tailed Godwit	410	17-Oct	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	NJ
Common Sandpiper	3	5-Oct	Windang	sand flats	TN
Common Sandpiper	2	12-Oct	Berkeley harbour	wetland	MC
Ruddy Turnstone	14	12-Oct	Woonona	rock	NW
Red Knot	14	5-Oct	Windang	sand flats	TN
Red Knot	24	10-Oct	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	GB
Sanderling	3	4-Oct	Bellambi Point	rocky shore	GB
Sanderling	1	17-Oct	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	NJ
Sanderling	1	30-Oct	Windang	sand flats	GB
Curlew Sandpiper	4	5-Oct	Windang	sand flats	CB
Broad-billed Sandpiper	1	30-Oct	Shoalhaven Heads	mudflats	SBI
Pied Oystercatcher	10	24-Oct	Gerroa beach	beach	BA
Grey Plover	1	27-Oct	Windang	sand flats	TN
Hooded Plover	2	10-Oct	Cudmirrah	beach	KM
Pacific Gull	1a	11-Oct	Woonona	rocky shore	NW
Gull-billed Tern	5	17-Oct	Shoalhaven Heads	sand flats	NJ, GB
Common Tern	20	24-Oct	Black Head, Gerroa	rocky shore	BA
White-headed Pigeon	2	5-Oct	Coledale	garden	MPP
Topknot Pigeon	50+	17-Oct	Kellys Falls, Helensburgh	rainforest	CJC
Long-billed Corella	20	17-Oct	Helensburgh	paddock	CJC
Musk Lorikeet	24	24-Oct	Nowra CBD	urban	BA
Ground Parrot	1	16-Oct	Budderoo fire trail	heath	NJ
Ground Parrot	1	26-Oct	Budderoo fire trail	heath	NJ
Azure Kingfisher	1	4-Oct	Minnamurra River (lower)	riverine	LP
Pilotbird	few	26-Oct	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	NJ
Large-billed Scrubwren	2	26-Oct	Barren Grounds NR	heath	NJ
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	26-Oct	Barren Grounds NR	heath	NJ
White-cheeked Honeyeater	few	10-Oct	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
Spectacled Monarch	4	21-Oct	Balgownie (video evidence)	garden	TE

Contributors: BA – Bob Ashford; GB – Graham Barwell; SBI – Simon Blanchfellow; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC – Martin Cocker; TE – Terri Edwell; SE – Sheila Emery; ME – Mary Eskdale; PF – Peter Fullagar; DG – Darryl Goldrick; BH – Brian Hales; NJ – Nigel Jacket; KM – Kevin Mills; TN – Terril Nordstrom; LP – Loraine Pincus; MPP – Martin & Penny Potter; MR – Michelle Rower; RT – Roger Truscott; NW – Nathan Waugh.

Quite a few rare species this month, thanks to everyone who has contributed to this years records. Species accounts and status can be found at www.speedlink.com.au/users/cchafer