

AUGUST ACTIVITIES

CLUB MEETING:

Monday 13th at 7.30pm

Fairy Meadow Community Hall, Cnr. of Cambridge Avenue & Princes H'way Fairy Meadow.

Dr Beth Mott Powerful Owl Project Officer *BirdLife Australia Discovery Centre*

Citizen scientists within Birdlife Australia's Powerful Owl Project (POP) have been working hard to help us all better understand how owls in our urban spaces are faring, and what we can do to help them thrive. The efforts of over 500 POP volunteers in the last 7 years have helped us learn a great deal about our urban spaces and what they represent for birds. The outgoing Project Officer for the POP Dr Beth Mott will present a summary of all the latest findings of the project, how Powerful Owls are going in the city and where we still need to go, to help all of our wonderful day and night-time bird fauna flourish.

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MIDWEEK WALK

Wednesday 15th at 9.00am

Leader Rupert Jarvis

Bass Point

Meet at 9.00 am. Access Shellharbour village from Shellharbour Road by Mary Street (Addison St. is blocked off for roadworks).

Follow Mary street until you see a blue sign to Bass Point Reserve. This takes you down Darley St. and the 2nd street on the right is signed to Bass Point. Follow this for about 3.5 kms. At the end of the road on the left is the meeting point in the car park.

Bring morning tea.

In the event of inclement weather phone Rupert 0403 932 6357.30am or after

MONTHLY OUTING

Saturday 18th at 9am

Leaders Tom and Joan Wylie

Barren Grounds - Meet at 9am at the main car park.

Follow Jamberoo Mountain Road to the left hand turn into Barren Grounds and follow to the end where the main car park and facilities are situated.

Bring morning tea and lunch.

Contact Tom or Joan before 7.30am on 42842051 or 0407268279 if the weather is doubtful

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING:

Next Committee Meeting on the 20th August 2018

The August Committee Meeting will be held on Monday 20th August at 2pm at the home of Joan & Tom Wylie. 4 Daphne Street Bellambi 2518

Any members with anything they wish to raise with the committee are welcome to attend

NEWSLETTER

DEADLINE 24th August 2018

For all articles & photos in the next IBOC newsletter PLEASE E-mail contributions: early

To Charles Dove newsletter@iboc.org.au or post to 3/15 Shepherd Street, Mollymook 2539.

Wishing all those members who are not well a speedy recovery

REPORTS

I BOC July Monthly Meeting Report

by Ross Gowans

Landcare Illawarra

Megan Rowlatt was our presenter, although she is no longer with Landcare, she told us how she came to be in her job. It had been a lifetime dream to work in the environmental area, to this end, she studied at university. Later leaving the Illawarra but returning to find her way into a liaison position working with the local Landcare, Bushcare groups and also land owners all wishing to restore degraded bush land areas.

Landcare provides guidance but most importantly tubestock plants that are all endemic to the area. These plants are sourced from local nurseries who have raised the plants from seed. The seed is all collected under a strict licence in the local area and stored in Landcare's local seed bank.

As well as all this great work Megan also puts effort into encouraging youth to take an interest in and contribute to environmental programs.

Thank you, Megan.

MIDWEEK WALK REPORT

Macquarie Rivulet Walk 11th JULY 2018

by Rupert Jarvis

Whilst cold we were blessed with a bright sunny morning. Within metres of the car park, the trees were alive with small birds.

We spotted Silvereyes, Thornbills, many Grey Fantails, Spotted Pardalote and White-plumed Honeyeater. An unusual sight was a flock of Red-browed Finches feeding not on the ground but high in the Casuarina trees. On the rivulet there were the usual suspects Egrets, Cormorants and Ducks and on the adjacent ponds Chestnut Teal and Wood Ducks and if you looked very carefully a pair of Black-fronted Dotterel which were skilled at looking like small rocks so they weren't always noticed. Further on we came to Wattle tree laden with yellow flowers and flitting around within the tree a male Rose Robin. Most if not all of us got excellent views and photos of this delightful bird.

We got to Darcy Dunstan Reserve for morning tea.

It was good to see recent new members Paul and Wayne along and near the end of the walk we met up with Rick and Susan who having recently moved to Kiama had just joined IBOC. It was also nice that Brian Hales was able to join us this morning and he had the opportunity to check on his previous home in Shearwater Boulevard even though dismayed that someone had repainted the front door.!!!

Macquarie Rivulet Walk 11 th July 2018		60 Species Recorded	15 Members attended
Black Swan	White-faced Heron	Brown Gerygone	Grey Fantail
Australian Wood Duck	White Ibis	Yellow Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Grey Teal	Straw-necked Ibis	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven
Chestnut Teal	Black-shouldered Kite	Spotted Pardalote	Magpie-lark
Pacific Black Duck	Whistling Kite	Eastern Spinebill	Rose Robin
Rock Dove	Dusky Moorhen	Lewin's Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Spotted Dove	Black-fronted Dotterel	White-plumed Honeyeater	Silvereye
Crested Pigeon	Masked Lapwing	Little Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
Australasian Darter	Galah	Red Wattlebird	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Little Pied Cormorant	Little Corella	New Holland Honeyeater	Common Blackbird
Little Black Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	Common Starling
Pied Cormorant	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Myna
White-necked Heron	Satin Bowerbird	Grey Butcherbird	Mistletoebird
Eastern Great Egret	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie	Red Browed Finch
Cattle Egret	White-browed Scrubwren	Pied Currawong	Indian Ringneck (escapee)

WEEKEND WALK REPORT

Carrington Falls, Saturday 15th July 2018

by Alan Cousins

12 stalwart members met on a clear frosty morning (3C) at the Nellies Glen car park. Access To the actual Carrington Falls is still not available following the bad bush fires there in 2016 so we went on the Missingham Steps /lookout track detouring to Wharis Chair lookout to look out

over the valley which was a spectacular sight on such a clear day. Returning to the main track the bird life was a bit scarce (they probably stayed in bed on such a cold morning). We bypassed the track to Missingham lookout and Steps and proceeded along a lovely track bounded on the left-hand side by bushland and on the right by open paddocks with beef cattle grazing. Along the track many Eastern Yellow Robins and Grey Fantails were spotted. Halfway along the track we stopped for morning tea in a sunny spot that was a bit short on natural seating which entailed some of the Septuagenarians amongst us (me included) taking a time to reach the ground and as much time getting up!! We followed the track to its accessible end where it fell away into the valley and then returned on the same track back to the car park slowly adding species to Tom's list. We arrived back at the car park for lunch and were amazed at the number of additional visitors' cars in the car park, it being a good few hours since we started out. Lunch was taken in a nice enclosed area adjacent to the car park where we were able to relax on our own comfy seating. Following lunch we went down to Nellie's Glen where the waterfall was running nicely. On returning to the cars it was decided that as we had walked over 6.5K's and the afternoon was pressing on that we would call it a day having spotted 26 species. Many thanks to all who attended to make this a very pleasant day.

Carrington Falls Walk 15 th July 2018		26 species recorded	12 members
Peregrine Falcon	Brown Gerygone	White-naped Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Crimson Rosella	Striated Thornbill	Golden Whistler	Australian Raven
Laughing Kookaburra	Brown Thornbill	Rufous Whistler	Eastern Yellow Robin
White-throated Treecreeper	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Shrike-thrush	Silvereye
Satin Bowerbird	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Magpie	Common Blackbird
Superb Fairy-wren	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	Red-browed Finch
White-browed Scrubwren	Yellow-faced Honeyeater		

NOTICES & ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Saving Australia's angriest bird from itself

Liam Mannix – SMH – July 23, 2018

In the freezing cold before sunrise, the small group pushed their way up the dunes, through the thick mallee scrub, boots sliding in the red sand. There were no paths to follow. Every so often, someone would stop, pull out a smartphone and play birdsong.

Eventually, the searchers reached an ancient dried lake bed surrounded by dunes. Trees rose above them to form a thick canopy, and viciously spiked grass became so thick they could barely walk.

Simon Verdon hit play on his smartphone and was almost immediately deafened.

A tiny, angry head was sticking up from a tussock and screaming at him.

“These birds are so small, but they don’t know that,” he laughs, recounting the story. “When they hear the birdsong, they’ll come right up beside you and start yelling.”

After a two-year search, Verdon had discovered a hotspot for one of Australia’s most mysterious and threatened birds – the Mallee Emu-wren, one of our smallest birds.

His find, made last year, has helped pull the species back from the brink of extinction.

The Wren weighs just five grams, which is about one teaspoon of sugar, and stands only 15 centimetres tall. Its wings can barely get it off the ground. It eats insects, lives inside razor-sharp and impenetrable bushes of Triodia grass, and only resides in places that have been burnt between 20 and 40 years ago.

It is so rare that few people have ever seen one alive.

“It has this narrow window of 20 or so years in which it can use the vegetation – it sounds like a stupid strategy, and it’s endangered, so I guess it is pretty stupid,” says Verdon.

The Wren was known to live in just four reserves in Australia. In 2014, two of those reserves in South Australia were hit by bushfires.

“When a wildfire goes through that country, it wipes out everything. There are no survivors. It just turns into a moonscape,” says Verdon.

Scientists were faced with a grim prospect. Only one spot, in Victoria, was left. If more couldn't be found, the Wren was staring at extinction.

So they turned to Verdon. Before starting his PhD at La Trobe University, he had worked in the Mallee as a firefighter, making him ideal to search for flame-loving creatures. He was also an obsessive birdwatcher. To begin the search, the 29-year-old turned to maths. Using a database of all Victoria's landscapes, he looked for environments where the bird might live. Then he added in data for how recently the area had burnt. He ended up with a mathematical model to predict likely wren hotspots.

Unfortunately, there were 230 of them, many in places not accessible by car.

So, he and a small team of volunteers spent the next 18 months visiting each and every one.

Mallee Emu-wrens are tiny and live in dense grass, so they are almost impossible to find. But they are very territorial and will react angrily if they hear the song of another Wren.

So, Verdon and his volunteers combed hectares of bushland, playing wren song on mobile phones and listening for returning calls. For 18 months, they heard only silence.

"I felt like I was hearing the future – there were no birds calling. This is what people in 20 years are going to hear, not the busy soundscape I was used to," says Verdon. "That was depressing, very depressing."

But as he pushed his way onto the plateau in the Murray-Sunset National Park, on the northern portion of the border with South Australia, he knew he'd found the spot.

"You could hear all the birds, every bird, at once," he says, his voice still filled with wonder all these months later.

Vitaly, the lake bed seems to support the Wrens despite not being regularly burnt.

The new region Verdon discovered contains about 3000 Wrens, bringing the total known population to about 8000. Researchers had suspected there were some in the area he was looking, but to find 3000 was a major triumph.

With help from Parks Victoria and the South Australian government, 40 Wrens taken from the plateau have been reintroduced into South Australia. If they thrive there and elsewhere, more will be released at other sites.

Hundreds of galahs mysteriously found dead in Burra

By Eugene Boisvert and Patrick Martin Updated Mon 23 Jul 2018, 11:56pm



PHOTO: Some of the Galahs found dead in Burra. (Facebook: Ruth Norris)

About 200 Galahs have been found dead in the South Australian town of Burra, prompting investigations by the state's Department for Environment and Water and the local council.

Dead birds started turning up in the historic Mid North town last Wednesday, with numbers increasing to about 200 by Monday, according to Animal Rescue and Care co-ordinator Ruth Norris.

"We're wondering whether someone has put some poison down inadvertently — a fertiliser, poison, or whether it was an actual purposeful poisoning, I don't know," Ms Norris told the ABC. "We're hoping to send some off to PIRSA [Primary Industries and Regions SA] or a lab to get tested. "Apart from that, they all appear adult and healthy."

They were all found in a small area around the old courthouse and police house lockup, on Sancreed Street, in North Burra — an area where Galahs tend to congregate.

State Government and council investigating

Ms Norris said this meant it was unlikely they had died from gorging on germinating seeds from local farms. In that case, dead birds would have been found in a much larger area. A necropsy she did revealed very little grain in their stomachs. "They've got good body condition so it's not a weather event, it's not a disease, it appears to be a very unusual event or even suspicious," she said. Cats and dogs which had touched the Galahs had not become sick, she said.

State Government and council investigating deaths.

A Department for Environment and Water spokeswoman said staff were "looking into the circumstances" of the deaths following the Facebook post and media enquiries, however no official report had been made. Galahs are not a protected species in South Australia, however they can only be killed by shooting.

Regional Council of Goyder chief executive David Stevenson said the council had sent off some of the dead birds to the Natural Resources office in Clare for investigation. While Galahs were common in the grain-farming area, he said it was concerning to find so many dead in suspicious circumstances. "We're very concerned, particularly that we don't know what has caused this," Mr Stevenson said. "It seems that it's only affected galahs. "I guess the jury's out until we hear from the experts." Ms Norris said she was surprised by how far her Facebook post had travelled. "I'm very grateful that so many people care and that it has gone viral," she said.

"It's a good lesson learnt that whatever we do in the environment, it has a flow-on effect.

"So we have to be really careful and think things out really carefully before we say 'I'm going to do this'. "Because whatever we do has a consequence and if we're aware of that and think of the end result then we can work towards far better management of whatever we're dealing with."

Rare white leucistic Magpie found in Adelaide Parklands

By Simon Royal Updated Sun 22 Jul 2018, 1:15pm

PHOTO: The Magpie's brown eyes and faint matches mean it is not an albino. (ABC News: Simon Royal)



The warbling of Magpies is one of the most distinctive sounds of Australia's cities and bushland. But in Adelaide's northern parklands, that familiar tune is coming from a slightly unfamiliar source — a white Magpie, with black wings. According to University of South Australia Biology professor Chris Daniels, the male bird does not have albinism — it is leucistic. "Leucism is genetic variation in the cells responsible for producing black pigment," Professor Daniels said. "They still have the black of the beak and the normally coloured eyes, but the body of the bird can be completely white or can be a mixture of grey and white or can have odd white patches across it." Normal-coloured eyes are one of the things that distinguish an animal with leucism from one with albinism, with their characteristic pink eyes and skin. Professor Daniels said there would be no impact on the bird's life expectancy. The bird certainly seemed to be living a Magpie's best life — hanging out. With its family in the Park Lands, trotting up to people who offer it a delicious morsel, and then squabbling with other birds for the best bit. But colour, and colour variation, is still important to birds, particularly when it comes to choosing a mate. How this aspect of the bird's life might be affected by leucism is not well understood. "It is quite rare, so we don't know if they are able to form a pair and become the dominant territorial bird or just hang around and live life as a bachelor or spinster," Professor Daniels said. "I guess we'll find out more in spring, whether he teams up with a mate or not. "There is so much to be learnt about the importance of colour in behavioural groupings."

NEXT CAMP FOR 2018 AT ULLADULLA IN OCTOBER

KingPoint Ulladulla (08) 4454 4261

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

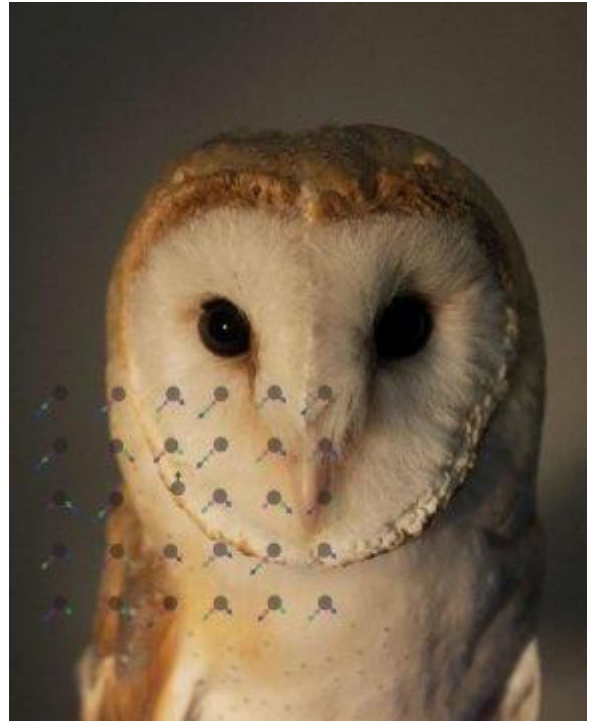
Owls see as humans do

Humans and birds may be more similar than previously thought

Date: July 2, 2018 Source: Society for Neuroscience

Summary: A study of Barn Owls suggests the visual systems of humans and birds may be more similar than previously thought.

This montage illustrates a Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) watching a monitor displaying a paradigm which tests behavioural and neural responses to figure-ground segregation. The paradigm consists of a target dot appearing inside the borders of the site's receptive field (figure, represented by the dashed red circle), and moving to the right (denoted by the gray arrow), surrounded by dots-array (ground). The colors of the arrows represent 3 types of movement tested: (1) magenta relates to condition where 100% of the circles moved 1350 upwards; (2) green relates to condition where 70% of the circles moved 1350 upwards; (3) blue relates to condition where 50% of the circles moved 1350 upwards. In behaving Barn Owls the coherency of the background motion modulates the perceived saliency of the target object, and in complementary multi-unit recordings in the Optic Tectum, the neural responses were more sensitive to the homogeneity of the background motion than to motion-direction contrasts between the receptive field and the surround.



Credit: Yoram Gutfreund

A study of Barn Owls published in *JNeurosci* suggests the visual systems of humans and birds may be more similar than previously thought.

The ability to perceive an object as distinct from a background is crucial for species that rely on vision to act on their environment. One-way humans achieve this is by grouping different elements of a scene into "perceptual wholes" based on the similarity of their motion. This phenomenon has been mostly studied in primates, leaving open the question of whether such perceptual grouping represents a fundamental property of visual systems in general.

Yoram Gutfreund and colleagues addressed this question by studying the brain and behaviour of Barn Owls as the animals tracked dark dots on a grey background presented on a computer screen. A wireless "Owl-Cam" tracked the owls' visual search behaviour in one set of experiments while neural activity in the optic tectum -- the main visual processor in non-mammalian vertebrates -- was recorded in another. The researchers indeed report evidence of perceptual grouping in the owl, suggesting that this ability evolved and was conserved across species prior to the development of the human neocortex.

Story Source: Materials provided by [Society for Neuroscience](#). *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

Journal Reference: Zahar Yael, Tidhar Lev-Ari, Hermann Wagner, Yoram Gutfreund. **Behavioral evidence and neural correlates of perceptual grouping by motion in the barn owl.** *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 2018; 0174-18 DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.0174-18.2018

Why the Grey Shrike-thrush whistles

Birdlife Australia e-news Aug 2018

The Grey Shrike-thrush is one of the best songsters of the Australian bush, and its far-reaching whistling call is a familiar part of the birdsong of many places. The Wotjobaluk people of the Wimmera and Mallee districts of western and north-western Victoria know why it whistles.

The Grey Shrike-thrush had two reliable hunting dogs. He would send them out to catch some food, then, at the end of the day, he'd climb a tree and whistle loudly to retrieve them. Being reliable, the dogs would always return quickly, usually with some possums or a wallaby or some other food for him to eat.

One day the shrike-thrush sent them out to hunt for some food, and later, when he felt a little hungry, he whistled for them to come back as usual. But they didn't. Growing anxious, he whistled for them again, but still they didn't return.

Distraught, and unsure of whether he would ever see his dogs again, he stayed up in the tree and continued to whistle for his dogs, hoping in vain that they might come back. He still does.



The Allan Sefton Memorial Lecture Invitation

10th August, building 43 Sciences Teaching Facility, UOW at 5pm.

Light refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the lecture.

RSVP before 1st August

by registering [here/sefton2018](http://www.uow.edu.au/sefton2018)

For further event details please visit www.uow.edu.au/sees/uow234632



RANKINS SPRINGS BIRDING WEEKEND

FRI 28 SEPT. TO SUN 30 SEPT.

- FRIDAY EVENING: MEET & GREET PUB DINNER
- SATURDAY: EARLY MORNING to AFTERNOON BUS TRIP TO LOCAL BIRDING HOT SPOTS. INCLUDES MORNING TEA, LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA/SNACKS
- SATURDAY EVENING: BBQ DINNER AT HALL
- SUNDAY MORNING: BIRDING BUS TRIP
- ACCOMMODATION CHOICES
 - * CAMPING/YOUR OWN VAN (POWERED & UNPOWERED SITES) AT THE RS CARAVAN PARK
 - * MOTEL
 - * LOCAL B&B & FARMSTAYS



TO BE PLACED ON AN EMAIL LIST FOR FURTHER DETAILS & UPDATES ABOUT THIS FANTASTIC CENTRAL NSW BIRDING WEEKEND, EMAIL HELEN AT THE 'LACHLAN FOLD WILDLIFE ACTION GROUP': lfwag@gmail.com

MONTHLY SIGHTINGS: -June/July 2018

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

SPECIES	Nº	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Brown Quail	2	28/06/2018	Terry Reserve, Albion Park	Grassland	Paul Charlier
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	3	11/07/2018	Thirroul	Backyard	Mike Morphet
Sooty Oystercatcher	3	1/07/2018	Towradgi Beach	Rockshelf	Jenny Starling
Red-necked Avocet	130	3/07/2018	Lake Wollumboola	lake	Charles Dove
Banded Stilt	1	3/07/2018	Lake Wollumboola	lake	Charles Dove
Tawny Frogmouth	2	23/06/2018	Burrill Lake	Casuarina	Charles Dove
Tawny Frogmouth	1	28/06/2018	Ulladulla	Casuarina	Charles Dove
Gull-billed Tern	12	3/07/2018	Lake Wollumboola	lake	Charles Dove
White-necked Heron	5	10/07/2018	Milton	Farmland	Charles Dove
White-necked Heron	3	9/07/2018	Jamberoo	Sports Field	Betty Hudson
Double-banded Plover	5	4/07/2018	Racecourse Beach Ull.	Tidal Rock	Charles Dove
Black-fronted Dotterel	1	7/07/2018	Bellambi	Lagoon Waterline	Tom/Joan Wylie
Red-kneed Dotterel	1	3/07/2018	Lake Wollumboola	lake	Charles Dove
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	1	22/06/2018	Mt. Bushwalker	Heathland	Charles Dove
Straw-necked Ibis	~30	28/06/2018	Adj Illawarra H'way, A/Park	Paddocks	Paul Charlier
Eastern Osprey	1	9/07/2018	Kembla Grange	Overhead Mullet Creek	Wayne Green
White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	7/07/2018	Thirroul Beach	Offshore	Ian McKinlay
Whistling Kite	1	3/07/2018	Lake Wollumboola	Overhead	Charles Dove
Grey Goshawk	1	29/06/2018	Albion Park	Frazers Creek environs	Paul Charlier
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	13/07/2018	Balgownie	O'head	Alan/Anne Cousins
Little Eagle	3	3/07/2018	Lake Wollumboola	Overhead	Charles Dove
Hudsonian Godwit	1	3/07/2018	Lake Wollumboola	lake	Charles Dove
Bar-tailed Godwit	15	3/07/2018	Lake Wollumboola	lake	Charles Dove
Little Corella	2	29/06/2018	Bellambi, Rothery St	?	Mike Morphet
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	~60	29/06/2018	Pembroke Mews, Bellambi	?	Mike Morphet
White-throated Treecreeper	1	3/07/2018	Thirroul Firetrail	Excelsior Forest	Ian McKinlay
Satin Bowerbird + bower	1male	24/07/2018	Thirroul	Backyard	Mike Morphet
Yellow Thornbill	20	24/07/2018	Mollymook	Casuarina	Charles Dove
Brown Thornbill	2	24/07/2018	Thirroul	Backyard	Mike Morphet
Spotted Pardalote	1	23/6+3/7	Glennifer Brae/Thirroul Firetrail	Oval/Excelsior Forest	Ian McKinlay
White-eared Honeyeater	1	10/07/2018	Dolphin Point	Bushland	Charles Dove
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	1	10/07/2018	Dolphin Point	Heathland *	Charles Dove
Varied Sittella	9	10/07/2018	Dolphin Point	Bushland	Charles Dove
Golden Whistler	1 m	29/06/2018	Macquarie Rivulet	Riparian Reserve	Paul Charlier
Grey Shrike-thrush	2	4/07/2018	Ulladulla	Bush	Charles Dove
Olive-backed Oriole	1	10/07/2018	Dolphin Point	Bushland	Charles Dove
Rose Robin	1m	24/06/2018	Mollymook	Gum Tree	Charles Dove
Rose Robin	1	8/07/2018	Ulladulla	Bush	Charles Dove
Bassian Thrush	1	3/07/2018	Thirroul	Escarpment	Ian McKinlay
Beautiful Firetail	3	4/06/2018	Mt. Bushwalker	Heathland	Charles Dove
Australasian Pipit	5	9/07/2018	Minnamurra Headland	Open Grassy Area	Carol Fowler

Sightings of our birdlife helps us collect and maintain knowledge base of the movement and populations of species we can note any specific changes that might occur. Please take note when your out and send your sightings

[Darryl Goldrick](#) records officer

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While all due care has been taken to ensure that the content of this newsletter is accurate and current, there may be errors or omissions in this newsletter and no legal responsibility is accepted for the information in this newsletter