

HORSFIELD'S BUSHLARK

Scientific Name: *Mirafra javanica*
 Atlas Number: 648

DESCRIPTION:

The Horsfield's Bushlark is a small, short, thickset bird with a short sparrow-like bill. The upper parts are brown, reddish or sandy in colour with darker central streaks to the feathers. The breast is mottled or streaked and it has a buff eyebrow. The underparts are pale, with a brown tail. It is mainly found on the ground and runs without bobbing. If disturbed, it may fly low to



photo by Charles Dove

the ground in short jerky swoops, with the neck stretched so that the head is held up and the tail is pointed down. The wings in flight appear short and broad. The Horsfield's Bushlark is also known as the Singing, Australasian or Brown Bushlark.

SIMILAR SPECIES:

The Horsfield's Bushlark is much smaller than two similar birds, the Skylark, *Alauda arvensis*, and Richard's Pipit, *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. Its song is not as rich and varied as the song of the Skylark and it lacks the Skylark's short crest. The Horsfield's Bushlark runs without bobbing, unlike the pipit.

DISTRIBUTION:

The Horsfield's Bushlark occurs from the Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, through Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia to Shark Bay. This species is vagrant to Tasmania. It also occurs from Nigeria to Arabia, India and the Malay Archipelago.

HABITAT:

The Horsfield's Bushlark occurs in tropical and temperate grasslands, open woodlands, cereal crops and sparse sugar cane fields.

SEASONAL MOVEMENTS:

The Horsfield's Bushlark is a summer migrant to south-east Australia.

FEEDING:

The Horsfield's Bushlark feeds on grasses, seeds and insects. It often forages alone, but sometimes is found in small parties, foraging on the ground.

BREEDING:

The Horsfield's Bushlark will breed following significant rainfall in arid areas. It builds a deep, cup-shaped nest in a natural depression or a hollow scrape in the ground. The nest is usually lined with dry grasses and a hood of dry grasses is often built over the nest. The nests are usually found in grasslands.

LIVING WITH US

The Horsfield's Bushlark may have benefited from the clearing of forests for pasture and cropping. Their young may be vulnerable to predation in the nest by introduced predators.

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Founded in 1977

Club's Aim:

To join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the bird life around them.

ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.

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OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

GENERAL MEETING ON ZOOM

Monday 12th October 7pm for 7.30pm start

IBOC will be conducting another virtual meeting using Zoom, officially starting at 7:30 pm. Please note that the meeting will once again start at 7:00 pm to allow folks to catch up a bit and join before the business starts.

A presentation by Anna and Andrew Knowlson of the birds seen during their Around Australia Trip in 2019.

Note: to use Zoom, you need a tablet, mobile or laptop/computer and should download the Zoom app and make sure Ken Brown has your email at membership@iboc.org.au ; if you require any additional assistance in getting set up, feel free to contact Jann Gowans at info@iboc.org.au or 4285 9070.

Please RSVP Jann if you would like to join the meeting ASAP.

MIDWEEK WALK

WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER

leader Rupert Jarvis

Byarong Creek Figtree

Meet at 9am in the carpark at the end of Wallawa Street. Wallawa Street is reached by turning off the Princes Highway in Figtree on to Bellevue Road. Wallawa Street is the 2nd street on the right. We cross the creek at one point on rough stepping stones where a stick might be helpful for some people. Bring morning tea.

If weather doubtful contact Rupert on 0403 932 635

MONTHLY WALK

SATURDAY 17th OCTOBER

leader Alan Cousins

Mt Annan Botanic Garden

Meet at 9.00am at the main car park. Bring morning tea and lunch. Hopefully the Spring flowers will be in full bloom.

In the event of inclement weather contact Alan or Anne Cousins on 0413 869534 by 8.00am

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING ON ZOOM

MONDAY 19 OCTOBER

The next Committee Meeting will be Monday 19 October at 11am with Ken and Sue Brown hosting.

NEWSLETTER

DEADLINE 25th October 2020

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

To Charles Dove newsletter@iboc.org.au

or post to 1/13 Horrocks Crescent, Kearney's Spring, Toowoomba QLD 4350.

**THE MEMBERS OF ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB
WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME
ALL NEW MEMBERS TO OUR CLUB**

Illawarra Bird Observers Club Reports

IBOC SPRING CAMP AT SAWTELL SEPTEMBER 2020

by Anna Knowlson

Well 2020 has been a very compromising year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The original plan had been to hold our Autumn camp in Sawtell in late March however after the PM asked us all to stay at home the camp was aborted. However, six months later we thought we would could try again and in mid-September we were finally able to hold the IBOC camp at the Big 4 Caravan Park in Sawtell. 16 members attended and this was a good number because it fitted into the Covid restrictions of 20 people gathering outdoors.

The weather was kind for the whole week and the location was nice next to Bonville Creek with many Brush Turkeys wandering around the camp sites. While some people were still arriving on the Saturday those that were already in camp met at Boambee Headland lower carpark in the morning and enjoyed a walk around the headland and up to the top lookout. We had sightings of some good birds including Varied Triller, White-cheeked Honeyeater and a pair of Glossy Black Cockatoos as well as some dolphins and distant whales and coastal view north and south. In the afternoon we strolled from camp along the boardwalk beside Bonville Creek seeing amongst others Whip-bird and Yellow Robin and a pair of Tawny Frogmouths. Due to the possibility of extra people out and about on Sundays a change to the program saw us swapping locations from Urunga Boardwalk to the Bruxner Flora Reserve west of Coffs Harbour. We met at 9am at the carpark for The Gap on Bruxner Park Road to do a short walk in the rainforest. Unfortunately, there was not many birds as hoped for in the rainforest and we had to keep our eyes on the track which was a bit slippery as well as an eye out for leaches! We did manage to see a well-hidden Wompoo Fruit-dove found by Ross following the call. We then travelled up to Sealy Lookout for morning tea and to enjoy the view down to Coffs Harbour. A short walk out to Korora Lookout was also short on birds but we enjoyed some sculptures and recorded history by the local indigenous community. Lunch was back at Sealy Lookout picnic area and more chatting than bird watching was undertaken. It was agreed that we would gather near the camp kitchen at 4.30 in the afternoons before dinner to check the daily lists and the program for the next day while maintaining our social distancing of course.

Monday was a lovely day and we all met at the Urunga Boardwalk about 30 minutes south of Sawtell. We enjoyed a stroll along the well-used Boardwalk in the sunshine. Some managed to glimpse the elusive Mangrove Gerygone after listening for its call. A few waders were spied in the mudflats at the end of the side path including a Whimbrel, Striated Heron and an Osprey overhead. Back on the main Boardwalk heading out to the beach a brief view of a Red-backed Fairywren was had by a few, as well as several Superb Fairy-wrens, the males in bright breeding plumage. An odd sighting of a bright green tree frog was found in a casuarina tree near the end of the Boardwalk. Morning tea was enjoyed overlooking the estuary at Urunga prior to heading around to the Urunga Wetlands which was a rehabilitated industrial site. The plantings and wetlands attracted the birds including a beautiful Variegated Fairy-wren, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Black Swans and Dusky Moorhens to name a few. We travelled north to Mylestrom picnic area for lunch next to the Bellinger River. On the way back we noticed that the Rainbow Bee-eaters seemed to be gathering to look for

nesting sites in the sandy soil just near the Caravan Park opposite houses on the edge of the road.

Bongil Bongil Picnic Area within the National Park was the destination for Tuesday. Birds were sighted as soon as we were out of the cars. Spangled Drongos were frolicking about and a walk around the picnic grounds turned up a pretty Rufous Fantail. After morning tea, we took the trail along Bonville Creek and under the railway line where most of us had a good siting of an Azure Kingfisher. Lunch was partaken at the picnic grounds and then some visited the Butterfly House on the way back to camp. In the evening we gathered at the Coffs Harbour Marina to enjoy fish and chips with the Silvergulls before making our way up the pathway over Muttonbird Island at dusk. What followed was described by Lyndal Dawson as one of the most magical experiences of her life. We observed large rafts of Wedged-tailed Shearwaters off shore waiting to fly into their nesting sites on the island. Standing quietly on the pathway just on dark hundreds of Shearwaters flew in around our heads clumsily landing and scurrying into the heathy growth to their nesting holes. As numbers grew a mournful sound emanated all around us. It was magical and very special. Some of the campers who had not attended on Tuesday night were encouraged later in the week to enjoy this wonderful experience taking place so close to Coffs Harbour.

The North Coast Regional Botanic Gardens was the destination for Wednesday. We wandered along the edge of the mangrove area beside Coffs Harbour Creek and met up in the oriental gardens for morning tea to admire the beautiful spring flowering trees. Then slowly strolled back to the picnic area for lunch enjoying the birds and gardens along the way. A good bird count was recorded here including several birds nesting and with young.

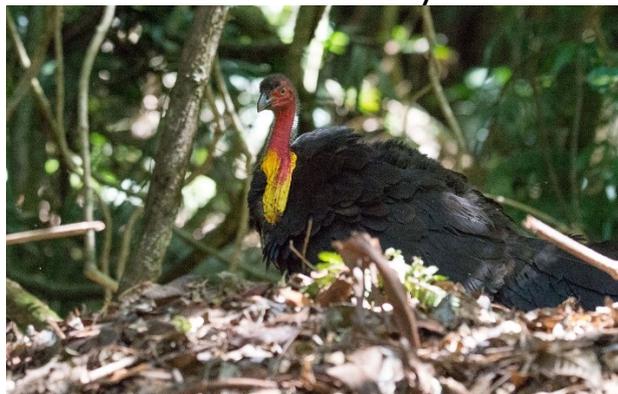
We travelled up into the mountains on Thursday to the Dorrigo National Park. The viewing platform at the Visitors Centre was a good spot to observe several birds from above including Topknot Pigeons and a spectacular male Regent Bowerbird. Those who wanted took the Wonga Walk to the Glade picnic area while the drivers brought the cars around. Along the path a Lyrebird was scratching close by and several Large-billed Scrubwrens were observed. A pair of Green Catbirds was seen along the Walk with the Birds boardwalk and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens were also observed popping around on the ground. After morning tea some of us trekked downhill to the Chrystal Waterfall with the hope of sighting Logrunners however they stayed hidden in the dense rainforest. Anna had a glimpse of a Pale-yellow Robin on the climb out to lunch at the Glade picnic area. Pam managed to find two female Paradise Riflebirds along the road back to the Visitors Centre which was a great finale to the day.

On the last day Ross lead us through some of the tracks through varying habitat leading from the Sawtell caravan park on the edge of Bonville Creek. The pair of Tawny Frogmouths were still in the same casuarina tree they had been found in earlier in the week. We walked through some littoral rainforest getting a brief view of a Regent Honeyeater along with Rufous Fantail and Leaden Flycatcher. The track then went along the edge of the creek where we could observe the sand flats and saw Bar-tailed Godwits, Pacific Golden Plovers and cute little Red-capped Plovers. Also, an up-close siting of an Osprey fishing in the creek was spectacular. The Eastern Yellow Robins were bouncing around the picnic site where we gathered for our final morning tea and a large goanna was warming

itself up on a dead branch in the sun. On Friday evening we gathered for drinks and nibbles and had to chase the pesky Brush Turkeys away from the food. Ken read out the final bird call list and gave out chocolate treats for some fun quiz statistic questions. Sawtell and surrounds was a great location for camp delivering some good bird sightings with a total of 131 species seen.

SAWTELL SPRING CAMP BIRDLIST		16 members	131 species
Emu	Pacific Baza	Laughing Kookaburra	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian Brush-turkey	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Sacred Kingfisher	Varied Triller
Black Swan	Whistling Kite	Rainbow Bee-eater	Crested Shrike-tit
Australian Wood Duck	Brahminy Kite	Dollarbird	Golden Whistler
Pacific Black Duck	Brown Goshawk	Noisy Pitta	Little Shrike-thrush
Australasian Grebe	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Superb Lyrebird	Grey Shrike-thrush
Rock Dove	Purple Swamphen	White-throated Treecreeper	Australasian Figbird
White-headed Pigeon	Dusky Moorhen	Green Catbird	Olive-backed Oriole
Spotted Dove	Eurasian Coot	Regent Bowerbird	White-breasted Woodswallow
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Australian Pied Oystercatcher	Satin Bowerbird	Grey Butcherbird
Crested Pigeon	Sooty Oystercatcher	Superb Fairy-wren	Pied Butcherbird
Bar-shouldered Dove	Pacific Golden Plover	Red-backed Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie
Wonga Pigeon	Red-capped Plover	Variegated Fairy-wren	Pied Currawong
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	Masked Lapwing	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Spangled Drongo
Topknot Pigeon	Bar-tailed Godwit	White-browed Scrubwren	Rufous Fantail
Tawny Frogmouth	Whimbrel	Large-billed Scrubwren	Grey Fantail
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	Eastern Curlew	Brown Gerygone	Willie Wagtail
Australasian Gannet	Gull-billed Tern	Mangrove Gerygone	Australian Raven
Australasian Darter	Crested Tern	White-throated Gerygone	Torresian Crow
Little Pied Cormorant	Silver Gull	Yellow Thornbill	Leaden Flycatcher
Great Cormorant	Glossy Black-Cockatoo	Brown Thornbill	Black-faced Monarch
Little Black Cormorant	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Spotted Pardalote	Spectacled Monarch
Pied Cormorant	Galah	Striated Pardalote	Magpie-lark
Australian Pelican	Little Corella	Eastern Spinebill	Paradise Riflebird
White-necked Heron	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pale-yellow Robin
Eastern Great Egret	Rainbow Lorikeet	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Cattle Egret	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Red Wattlebird	Australian Reed-Warbler
Striated Heron	Australian King-Parrot	Scarlet Honeyeater	Silveryeye
White-faced Heron	Eastern Rosella	Brown Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Australian White Ibis	Eastern Koel	White-cheeked Honeyeater	Fairy Martin
Straw-necked Ibis	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Common Myna
Eastern Osprey	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Noisy Friarbird	Red-browed Finch
Black-shouldered Kite	Azure Kingfisher	Eastern Whipbird	

Brush Turkey



Blue-faced Honeyeater



Eastern Rosella



Variegated Fairy-wren



Lace Monitor



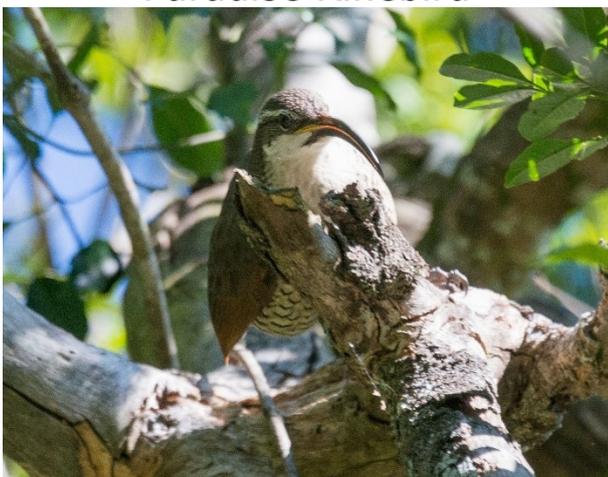
Rainbow Lorikeets



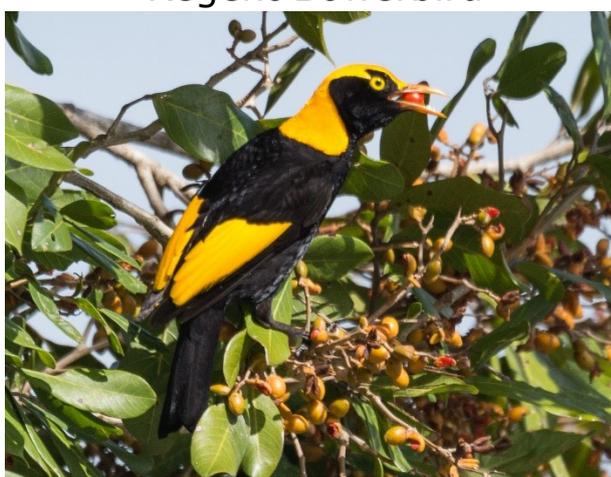
Rainbow Bee-eater



Paradise Riflebird



Regent Bowerbird



Which flock of birds usually collect in a covey? Answer page 10.

Eastern Osprey



Large-billed Scrubwren



Photos supplied courtesy
of Pam Hazelwood

NOTICES & WHATS AROUND

Forget worms and gophers, lyrebirds are the world's best soil shifter

SMH - Miki Perkins - September 1, 2020

The Superb Lyrebird is best known for its sophisticated and powerful calls, which echo through the forest and mimic the song of other birds as well as human sounds such as car alarms and chainsaws. New Australian research has discovered this songbird is extraordinary in another way: Superb Lyrebirds move more soil than any other land-based animal in the world, including earthworms. This has significant implications for the forest ecosystems where they live in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania. Scientists from the Centre for Future Landscapes at La Trobe University have discovered that, on average, superb lyrebirds displace 155 tonnes per hectare of forest litter in a year.

In the Sherbrooke Forest, in Melbourne's Dandenong Ranges, researchers found an individual Superb Lyrebird could move up to 11 standard dump trucks' worth of litter and soil a year.

In scientific terms this makes them an "ecosystem engineer" par excellence, says primary author and ecology PhD candidate Alex Maisey, whose study is published in *Ecological Applications*.

"We believe wildfire is the only comparable natural disturbance process that shapes ecosystem structure at this scale."

Superb Lyrebirds spend most of the day tilling the soil, facing uphill and scratching the litter behind them with their powerful feet so they are aided by gravity, Mr Maisey said.

"When you hold their feet, you don't really know who's holding who – they grip your hands so tightly," he said. "They are incredibly strong and their claws must grow at an amazing rate."

Mr Maisey tracked the activity of wild superb lyrebirds over two years in the Central Highlands of Victoria across three locations and found, like beavers in North America, the songbird changes the environment in ways that can benefit other organisms.

As they search for insects on the forest floor the lyrebirds change litter decomposition and "fluff up", or aerate, the structure of soil on the forest floor, making it easier for seeds to germinate.

When researchers fenced off areas of the forest, they found the leaf litter drastically increased in the areas where the Superb Lyrebirds were unable to forage, with implications for bushfire risk and increased fuel load.

Research published five years ago found Superb Lyrebirds reduced the risk of bushfire by spreading dry leaf litter and digging safe havens that help other species survive fires.

Many vertebrates are prolific in moving soil: Arctic ground squirrels displace up to 18 tonnes per hectare per year in the Arctic, while the northern pocket gopher can displace up to 14.5 tonnes per hectare per year in the prairie habitats of North America.

BirdLife Australia estimates that about 40 per cent of the Superb Lyrebird's habitat was destroyed in the 2019-20 megafires, throwing the conservation status of the species into question. In the face of climate change, and the growing risk of severe bushfires, understanding the role that lyrebirds play in ecosystems is more important than ever, Mr Maisey said. "Conservation of this species should be a key priority in the management of wet forests in south-eastern Australia."

A Little Eagle briefly circled our place in the sunshine yesterday.

By Peter Salvair



Australia's first feather map reveals Murray-Darling Basin crucial for nomadic waterbirds

ABC Central Victoria By [Beth Gibson](#) and [Jo Printz](#)

Dr Kate Brandis (right) says their scan measures elements including potassium, calcium and salt in the feathers. *(Supplied: UNSW and ANSTO)* Australia's first feather map has revealed that the Murray-Darling Basin is vital to ensuring the health of waterbirds around the country.

Key points:

The feather map has analysed feathers from around Australia to find out where the bird was when the feather was grown. More than 200 citizen scientists sent 835 submissions from 553 wetlands.

The research shows 60 per cent of the feathers analysed were found to have grown in the Murray-Darling Basin wetlands.

Dr Kate Brandis is the lead researcher for the University of New South Wales and Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's Feather Map project.

The project recently released the results of its survey on which wetlands waterbirds used, how they used them and wetland health.

When it was launched in 2016, more than 200 "citizen scientists" answered the call-out to help Dr Brandis track waterbirds across Australia.

"It was becoming a bit of a fieldwork logistical nightmare," she said.

"So we put the call out for citizen scientists across the country to visit their local wetlands and collect waterbird feathers, and send them in to us."

Dr Brandis said they decided to look at feathers because they were like a "time capsule" for what a bird ate when it was growing.

"Feathers are made of keratin, which is the same stuff that's in your hair and nails, and when they are growing it records the diet that you've been eating at the time it grew," she said.

"We take the feather and we scan it with something similar to an x-ray machine, it's non-destructive.

The feather map has looked at feathers from around Australia sent in by "citizen scientists". *(Supplied: UNSW and ANSTO)*



"It scans the feather and it measures a whole range of elements like potassium, calcium, salt and things like that. And the other tricky thing is, depending on where you ate it, those values change."

The survey analysed 210 feathers from 158 wetlands from across Australia, and of the nomadic species. It found that 60 per cent of the feathers were found to have grown in the Murray-Darling Basin wetlands. Feathers from the Murray-Darling Basin were also found in 11 of 13 Australian basins.

Water for waterbirds

"The Murray-Darling Basin is a key basin for all Australian waterbirds," Dr Brandis said.

"Many of the feathers that we sampled had grown in the Murray-Darling Basin, even though they had ... [been found] all over the country.

"So that is really critical for our water managers and wetland managers to know. Because it places a bit more impetus on us in getting the management right for those wetlands, because they are providing waterbirds to the rest of the country. he said another key finding from the feather map was that many birds travelled long distances across the country.

"We had pelican feathers that were found in South Australia but were grown in Perth, and similarly we found some on the North Queensland coast that were grown in South Australia," Dr Brandis said.

Some of the birds surveyed were the Australian white ibis, the nankeen night heron and the Australasian Bittern, all from the Barmah forest area in Victoria.

Dr Brandis said she hoped the feather maps improved the supply of environmental water to waterbirds around the country.

"Environmental water gets used for a whole range of different things, from birds to fish and vegetation, so hopefully we can add some more impetus to the argument around getting water for waterbird outcomes."

This morning I looked to see what ornaments our resident male Satin Bowerbird had added to his bower in our back garden and found this plastic item measuring about 9 by 6cms:



When I turned it over, I had a good laugh. What female could resist such an item of embellishment; though she could be disappointed to discover not one wipe was left out of the 80, containing aloe vera, with vitamin E, and alcohol-free and hypoallergenic, for her future chicks after making love in his bower?



By Mike Morphett

LINKS

Duck army set on snail trail in Thailand's rice paddies In a long-standing tradition, the release of 10,000 ducks rids rice paddies of pests — such as cherry snails, apple snails and weeds — as well as providing a rich source of nutrients for the water birds.

[Read the full story](#)

Shared from [ABC app](#)

Emu's escape in US prompts pronunciation debate

A US journalist's pronunciation of emu in a report about a runaway bird has outraged Australians — but it turns out the word may be derived from an old Arabic term and Americans can pronounce it how they please.

[Read the full story](#)

Shared from [ABC app](#)

Talk about getting cocky.

These bin-diving birds are 'outsmarting' us in search for top tucker. While Polly might want a cracker, the cockies just north of Wollongong are happy with a bin-day degustation.

[Read the full story](#)

Shared from [ABC app](#)

This article is from the September 26 issue of The Sydney Morning Herald Digital Edition. To subscribe, visit <http://smh.com.au/digitaledition>.

SPOTLIGHT

STORY BY Konrad Marshall PHOTOGRAPHY BY Andrew Silcocks

When stage-four lockdown descended on Melbourne, Sean Dooley set a challenge for his fellow birdwatchers – to see how many species they could spot from home, or on their daily exercise outing. Dooley found 56 in five weeks, including one particular highlight.

A critically endangered Swift Parrot – on the fast track to extinction due to logging of its Tasmanian nesting grounds – landed on a branch outside his window while he was on a Zoom call with colleagues at BirdLife Australia.

"They perfectly understood that I had to leave the call and race outside," says Dooley, 52, laughing. "People think you don't see amazing natural things in the city, but there was this bird – rarer than a tiger, rarer than a panda – outside my house. That's a pretty exciting yet poignant moment."

It's also a type of moment being enjoyed by more people than ever before. Birding is booming, and has been for some time, spurred by everything from the 2011 Jack Black movie *The Big Year* to people seeking a real-life version of *Pokémon GO*. But the coronavirus pandemic has seen that interest explode. The number of people contributing to the BirdLife Australia autumn survey rose almost tenfold this year, from 241 contributors to 2242. And there's a huge beginner event coming up, too: Aussie Backyard Bird Count, part of National Bird Week, starting October 19. "It gets people involved who aren't necessarily bird nerds – they're more 'bird curious'."

People can download the Aussie Bird Count app (which also has a bird identification function) to record what they see, which also helps expert ornithologists better understand how our feathered friends are faring – invaluable data after the summer bushfires killed or affected an estimated 180 million birds. "You can't protect something if you don't know it's endangered. We're relying on citizen science."

It's also fun. That's what's drawn so many people in during lockdown. We're looking up in wonder, as if seeing something anew. "But it's the same birds doing what they've always done – we've just never been quiet enough to notice," says Dooley. "People are finding a great deal of solace in sighting birds. I think it gives them a sense that the world is still okay."

ANSWER from pge 6 question - **Partridge or Quail**

Thornbill building

Mike Morphett

A wide variety of wildlife, mainly birds, has made use of the well-established prickly-leaved paperbark that grows in our front garden in Thirroul. One night some years ago I had the good fortune to observe a common ringtail possum clinging to the trunk. This timid species is far less common in our neighbourhood than the Brushtail, which often engages in intraspecific noisy skirmishes. What was fascinating about this particular sighting was that it was obviously collecting nesting material, as it had a number of tea-tree bark scraps curled up in its prehensile tail. This behaviour I have only lately discovered (13 September last), is copied by the female duckbilled platypus: this was from watching what is proving to be an excellent ABC TV wildlife series, 'Australia Remastered', hosted by Aaron Petersen; the instalment also featuring the other monotreme, the Short-tailed Echidna, and following on from that of 'Parrot Paradise'.

Last Tuesday morning, 15 September, I was picking up fallen twigs out the front, when I spotted a small bird moving about on the paperbark trunk: a Brown Thornbill, *Acanthiza pusilla*. At first it seemed to be feeding on insects, but instead it was picking off tiny bits of bark; then it darted across the hedge and low down towards the roadside. Within an instant another such Thornbill appeared, carrying out the same procedure; and thus the rotation continued. It was evident they were engaged in building a nest. In the manner of TV presenter Michael Portillo delving into his Bradshaw's and Appleton's railway travel guides through Britain and North America, I looked up the breeding section of Michael Morcombe's field guide: "Aug-Dec. Builds untidy round, domed nest with side entrance from dry grass, fine bark strips and pieces of fern frond, lightly bound with webs. It is set among ferns or tussocks, low in the undergrowth; is often higher in tall shrubs, in rainforest and SE Qld. Clutch 2-3 (16x12 mm). Incubated by female, 17-20 days; young fly aged 15-16 days."



Brown Thornbill foraging on eucalypt trunk on fence line



Brown Thornbill nest nearing completion

I walked out to the roadside, surveying the fern-covered bank in the area I thought the birds' line of flight led to. Within minutes I was able to find the nest barely a metre above ground level, woven amongst the ferns and a thin flowering vine. I moved away upon seeing one of them arrive with nesting material in its bill. Later on, it was easy to spot the nest, now that I knew its location; a bit like solving a Where's Wally puzzle. I do so hope this pair are successful breeders, particularly as they have appeared to be the only small species not to succumb to the pressures brought about by the steadily increasing numbers of larger birds, notably the Grey Butcherbird, that invariably awakens me with its dawn call. Sadly, missing or scarce nowadays in my neighbourhood are the likes of the Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler, Brown Gerygone, White-browed Scrubwren and Red-browed Finch. And, sadder still, this trend is becoming the norm and more widespread

A couple of shots from this morning, only a stone's throw from our back yard.
The Variegated Fairy-wren stirred up a few native bees. *By Peter Salvair*



I just caught this on "Mad as Hell" of all places, but an internet check (the Guardian) suggests that it is genuine.

The Morrison government is proposing to relax the ban on importing exotic parrots commercially.

I feel that bird clubs should check this out and oppose it for two reasons -

1. exotic parrots could import exotic diseases which might threaten our own parrot species.
2. the most desirable exotic parrots are macaws, already under pressure in South America. Australia legalising the import of exotic parrots could help to put further pressure on these birds.

Regards Joan Zealey

MONTHLY SIGHTINGS: – August/September 2020

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

SPECIES	NUMBER	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
White-headed Pigeon	1	12/09/2020	Thirroul	on backyard aviary	Mike Morphet
Topknot Pigeon	2	4/08/2020	RVGC	Large Fig	Ian McKinlay
Tawny Frogmouth	2	19/09/2020	Wollongong	Residential Palm Tree	Brian/Barb Hales
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	2	9/09/2020	Thirroul residential	in flight	Mike Morphet
Gang-Gang Cockatoo	2	25/08/2020	Excelsior fire Trail, Thirroul	above Forest	Ian McKinlay
White-faced Heron	1	6/09/2020	Minnamurra	cliff ledge below Coastal Walk	Mike Morphet
Musk Lorikeet	several	29/07/2020	Russell Vale Golf Course	flowering Eucalypt	Ian McKinlay
Australian King-Parrot	4	16/09/2020	Robsons Rd Mt Keira	Suburban creek	Chris. Cartledge
Eastern Koel	1	24/09/2020	Lake Illawarra South	Residential	Darryl Goldrick
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	18/09/2020	Thirroul residential	calling in flight	Mike Morphet
Laughing Kookaburra	2	29/08/2020	On street light pole , Tarrawanna	Escarpment bushland	Alan & Anne Cousins
Green Catbird	2	2/09/2020	Thirroul	backyard	Mike Morphet
Superb Fairy-wren	2 m+fem	3/08/2020	Tarrawanna	Yard	Alan & Anne Cousins
Variegated Fairy-wren	5 m	25/08/2020	Macauleys Beach cycleway	grassland/low bushes	Ian McKinlay
Brown Thornbill	2	15/09/2020	Coast Street, Thirroul	nestbuilding in ferny roadside bank	Mike Morphet
Eastern Spinebill	1	30/08/2020	Tarrawanna	Garden plants	Alan & Anne Cousins
Eastern Spinebill	1	30/08/2020	Tarrawanna	Garden plants	Alan & Anne Cousins
Lewin's Honeyeater	1	3/08/2020	Tarrawanna	Garden	Alan & Anne Cousins
Red Wattlebird	2	6/09/2020	Minnamurra	James Oates Reserve	Mike Morphet
Eastern Whipbird	1	23/08/2020	Woonona Hts IESCA	forest	Mike Morphet
Black-faced cuckoo-shrike	1	9/09/2020	Tarrawanna	On tree in green alongside yard	Alan & Anne Cousins
Golden Whistler	1m	18/08/2020	Bellambi Dunes	forest	Ian McKinlay
Golden Whistler	1 fem	23/08/2020	Hewitts creek lagoon	trees at edge	Ian McKinlay
Willie Wagtail	1 on nest 6/9/20	06/09/20	Towradgi Ck-Pioneer Rd Bridge	Nesting on branch over water	Robyn/John Cashman
Australian Raven	2	7/09/2020	Thirroul	backyard bath & robinia	Mike Morphet
Magpie-lark	2	30/08/2020	Tarrawanna	Bird bath in yard	Alan & Anne Cousins
Eastern Yellow Robin	1	23/08/2020	Woonona Hts IESCA	forest	Mike Morphet
Eastern Yellow Robin	2 +3 in nest	25/08/2020	Hewitts Creek lagoon	Casuarina forest	Ian McKinlay
Silvereye	several (Tas)	23/08/2020	Suburban garden	Small Leafed Fig	Ian McKinlay
Red-whiskered Bulbul	1	30/08/2020	Tarrawanna	Garden	Alan & Anne Cousins
Red-whiskered Bulbul	1	3/08/2020	Tarrawanna	Tree over on green	Alan & Anne Cousins

**Thank you to those members who posted their sightings to me for records and newsletter.
So, please email me or phone.**

Don't forget to check out our website for contacts and email addresses
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