



*"One Good Tern
Deserves Another"*

The Newsletter of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56 FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519
Founded in 1977. Website - www.iboc.org.au

I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

ISSUE NUMBER 300 - February 2007

IBOC NEWS Contents

Walks, Talks, Meetings p 2
Bits & Pieces p2 & p9
Club Beginnings p 3
Trees and Birds p 5
Editorial Potpourri p 6
300th IBOC News p 7
Autumn Camp p9
Unusual Sightings p9,10

CLUB CONTACTS

PRESIDENT: Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742
SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307
email: elizabethhudson@bigpond.com
TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
EDITORS: John Cashman, tel: 02 4284 0538
email: cashmansjr@bigpond.com
RECORDS OFFICER: Chris Chafer
email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au



Black Cockatoo

Photo: Chris Chafer

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$30, SINGLE \$25. JUNIOR \$5. Please pay Bronwyn Wilson, our Treasurer, by cash, cheque or mail order Don't delay, don't procrastinate! Pay Bronwyn now, at the club meeting or send it to her at 8 Wellington Drive, Balgownie 2519

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS February 2007

Wednesday Walk - Lake Illawarra Wednesday 7th February 2007.

NOTE CHANGED VENUE. Meet at the Picnic area at the cnr Northcliffe Drive, & Holborn St, Berkeley, west of the Boat Harbour at 5.15pm. Parking is on the side of Northcliffe Drive. We will then visit the wetlands by the harbour and also walk east along the track round Wollamai Point. Bring a picnic tea to enjoy after our walk

CLUB MEETING – Monday 12th February - 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall. Julie Clark will be our speaker and will speak about her work with the **Seabird Rescue Society.** And bring some goodies and your mug for supper.

Monthly Outing Saturday 17th February 2007. Bomaderry Creek

Meet at the start of the walk in the car park at the end of Narang St Bomaderry. From Wollongong, turn right at the 2nd roundabout (to the Skateway), (the 1st after Moss Vale Rd). Meet at 8.00am. The early start is to miss the heat of the day. Bring a carry morning tea and lunch. We will aim to finish by 1pm.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 20th February 2007, 7.30pm, at Anne and Allan Cousins', 4 Adelaide Place, Tarrawanna. (4283 3917) All members are welcome

March 2007 NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 23rd February 2007.** Please send articles, news, and items of interest to the editor at 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519, or email to cashmansjr@bigpond.com

BITS and....

Vale - Douglas (Doug) Rickers

Our long standing member, Doug Rickers died in Wollongong Hospital on Christmas Eve 2006 after a short illness. Doug will be remembered for his gentle nature, interest in photography, wonderful sense of humour and his deep love of bird watching.

He was a regular midweek walker and with his mate Jimmy Grun added much to the enjoyment of these outings for fellow members. Doug was an original member of the team that bird-surveyed the Grevillea Gardens in the nineties along with the Botanic Gardens and Bellambi Point. These were some of his favourite and regularly visited places.

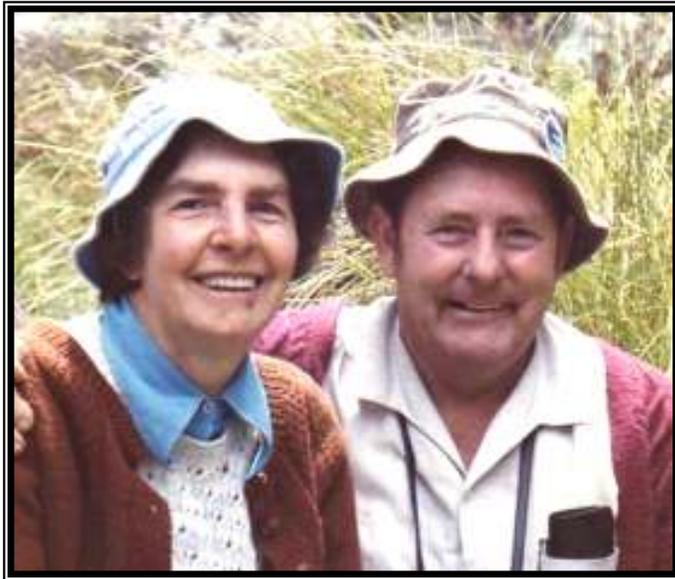
His love of bird watching was such that on being admitted to Hospital on 1st December he took his binoculars with him ...just in case! Doug was a thorough gentleman and will be sadly missed by the IBOC members who knew him. Our thoughts of sympathy and caring are with his wife Vera, daughter Janice and her family. *Kevin McGregor, Past President*

Apologies to Chris Chafer. At the IBOC AGM he was appointed as the Public as well as the Records Officer for the Club, not the Publicity Officer as misreported in the December News

Thanks to the **Committee** for agreeing, at some cost, to have two pages of colour in this 300th IBOC News. Thanks to Chris Chafer, Laurie Williams & Dave Thomson for the photos.

Club Beginnings Laurie and Nola Williams reminisce.

JC



Nola and Laurie at the Murga Bird Camp October 1986

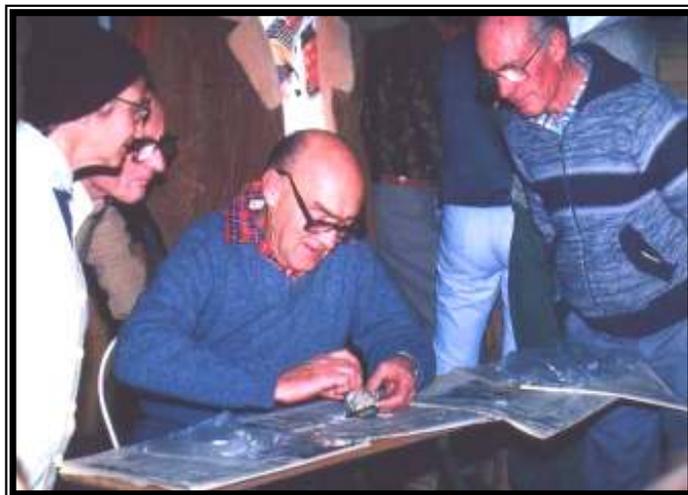
‘We moved down here in 1966, and Laurie ran a hot water repairs, sales and installation service for 8 years, before he sold it to Dux. (We didn’t know that Dux was planning to take over our business, for, due to our hard work, it was very successful). So as well as bringing up our two daughters, I, Nola, was the Office Manager. Well, the office was our bedroom, & I was the total office staff! But after selling up, I was out of a job. One day I called in at the WEA office to see what courses they had on offer, and found there was a ‘Basic Ornithology’ course coming up.

I told Laurie I would like to go and he said, “OK, and could I also come too.’ We had had some contact with the Bird Observers Club in Sydney, but this course was right in our home town. As it was, I had a bad back and missed the first two meetings, but went to the rest of them.

‘Doug Gibson was the lecturer, and he was excellent. He was so enthusiastic, he knew so much, and loved imparting his knowledge of birds.

I don’t remember him using slides or pictures, but he was wonderful at giving you the sense and the feel of the birds. He took the class on two walks too, and they were real eye openers and ear openers.

‘The class was limited to 26 people. We knew some of them



Doug Gibson showing some features on a Sacred Kingfisher Photo Dave Thomson

a bit: Dave Thomson, the Almonds, Dave Walsh, but what really surprised the WEA was that no-one dropped out of the class. That must be something of a record. It was so good that we thought, “This has got to continue.” So Laurie asked Doug if he would help in the formation of a Bird Watching club. But Laurie’s request was met with a blunt “No.” Doug wasn’t into organizing. Laurie was taken aback, but then suggested, “If we were to form a club, would you act as advisor or mentor?” And Doug happily said, “Yes.” So Laurie formed a steering committee and they met frequently, and nussed out a program and guidelines, and we had our first meeting on 26 February, 1977 at the WEA rooms.

The pattern of club activities hasn't changed that much. We had our Monthly Outing, and Doug usually guided us, and later on, as we had more retirees, the Wednesday walks were introduced. We also had local camps in the first two years, to Coolandel, on the Shoalhaven River and to Bungonia. And there was the Newssheet virtually from the outset. Initially it was just a page or so, detailing what meetings and walks and camps were coming up. It was mimeographed at first, and Laurie and a volunteer would drive around hand delivering them. One of the volunteers said, "I think I can pick the next house. It will be a house with a lot of trees." He was usually right. The hand delivery system went on for a couple of years, but then with more club members and bigger newssheets the postman became our friend.

Laurie was President for the first 6 ½ years during which time the club grew from 26 to some 150 members. Dave Thomson followed Laurie as President, but when Dave's wife, Betty, became seriously ill, he resigned after some 18 months to look after her. Dave was followed by Jim and Gwen Robinson.

Laurie and Nola agreed, "The club was our life. We were completely involved." Not only were there the meetings and the walks, and the newssheet to organise, but we also had to look for new places to walk and other places to camp. Members often helped, and Richard Miller, our first Records Officer was very helpful. If we weren't at a club meeting or walk, Richard and Laurie seemed to be frequently out looking for and surveying future places. And under the tutelage of Doug Gibson, we were becoming better at recognizing birds, and at recognizing good birding habitats.

Laurie said, 'Doug was a bit of a perfectionist. He used to say, "Get it right!" He wanted us to properly identify the bird and it's habitat. "Good enough" wasn't good enough for Doug. I came to appreciate what he was doing and teaching, and tried to follow it. Sometimes this caused trouble, and there were some arguments. Others were more "flexible" in their attitudes and the way they described and recorded bird sightings. That worried me, and the arguments really hurt. But people are people, and it's like business, you learn to negotiate, while always striving to get the best you can for the club! We've lived through two major floods, in both of which we lost thousands. In the '75 flood, we got nothing from the insurance, and just \$200 from the State Government. In the '98 flood we were covered by insurance, but I still had to negotiate over different matters. Most of the time I got what I thought we were entitled too, but sometimes the Insurance Supervisor would say, "That's really pushing the friendship too much," and I backed off a bit. I think it's a bit like that in any group of people.'

Since retiring from the club executive, and with their daughters married, Laurie and Nola have made time for other things too. Laurie has often had some business interests going on, and Nola has had time to devote to embroidery and to her interest helping young people to learn to embroider by Distance Education courses. This has involved both of them doing a lot of traveling, which they have enjoyed. Laurie said, "Nola completely supported me through the years at the club. She is one of the unsung heroes. So now I'm supporting her in her embroidery teaching." And always the interests of the club, of which they could be called the parents or grandparents, are very much in their hearts.

TREES and BIRDS

J D GIBSON

Doug Gibson's WEA lectures on 'Basic Ornithology,' at the end of 1976 were the inspiration for the founding of our club. Doug also contributed a chapter to Leon Fuller's *Wollongong's Native Trees* 1980. The following except is from that chapter. The article was written before the current form of capitalization of bird species was adopted. Printed with permission

Birds have evolved numerous adaptations to utilise the many ecological niches in the various habitat types. Trees being the dominant component of so many environments, their importance in the economy of so many bird species is not surprising. Each is important to the other in a balanced ecosystem: trees provide essential requirements for birds and derive benefits from the relationship in return.

Birds and Blossoms

The nectar supplied by the blossoms of eucalypts, banksias, grevillias, etc. is an important food source for many of the district's birds, notably the honeyeaters. Blackbutt, swamp mahogany, bloodwood, scribbly gum and Sydney blue gum are good nectar producing eucalypts. The intensity of flowering is variable from year to year, and different species flower in different months, thus spreading the nectar supply over much of the year. As a consequence, the principal nectar feeders are usually found to be nomadic or make regular seasonal movements. Usually heavy flowering can cause spectacular invasions of certain species.

Honeyeaters do not rely entirely on nectar for their sustenance, insects and pollen are also taken, supplemented in some species by fruits and berries – young in the nest are invariably fed on insects. The distinguishing characteristics of the group, however, is the brush tipped tongue, a striking adaptation for nectar feeding involving tube-like folds and a frayed tip. With this unique apparatus honey-eating birds are able to imbibe nectar from the open and diffuse eucalypt blossoms by a combined licking/sucking action. A similar modification appears in the hummingbirds (*Trochilidae*) of America, and the sunbirds (*Nectariniidae*) of Africa enabling them also to exploit the nectar of flowering plants.

Of the 18 or so honeyeaters that are known from the area, the following six are most commonly observed. Eastern spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostis*) is common in gardens and forest country where a suitable shrub layer exists, often probing blossoms while briefly hovering in front of them. Yellow-faced honeyeater (*Lichenostomus chrysops*) inhabits eucalypt forests. The resident population of this species is augmented by migrating flocks traveling northward in April/May and southward in August/September. Lewin's Honeyeater (*Meliphaga lewinii*) the only rainforest honeyeater may also be found in wet sclerophyll forests and nearby gardens. Its diet also includes fruit and berries. New Holland honeyeater (*Philidonyris novaehollandiae*) favours banksias and melaleucas while little wattlebird (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*) and red wattlebird (*A. carunculata*) which are both large nomadic honeyeaters follow blossoming eucalypts and banksias, especially *Banksia ericifolia*.

Several species of honey-eating parrots share in the Australian nectar harvest, these are the lorikeets which first crush the blossoms in their bills, and then lick up the nectar and pollen with their brush tipped tongues. Noisy and gregarious, they are not however, very numerous or well-known in the area. The commonest is the little lorikeet (*Glossopsitta pusilla*). In earlier days nomadic movements of lorikeets on a large scale were a feature of the district, probably when food trees in the coastal dune forests provided an abundant seasonal attraction.

Blossom feeders provide an efficient means of pollination by transferring the pollen grains accidentally adhering to their head parts from tree to tree. Whereas insects and wind are the principal pollinating agencies considered on a world basis, many Australian eucalypts, banksias etc. depend on honeyeaters and lorikeets to perform this function.

Seed Dispersal

Trees depend on various means for the dispersal of their seeds, such as wind, water and birds. Grain-eating (graminivorous) birds get protein from seeds themselves while fruit-eating

(frugivorous) birds seek the pulpy flesh in which the seeds are encased. Seeds consumed by fruit-eaters are later regurgitated with other indigestible matter and pass through the alimentary canal and voided intact, often with their hard covering softened sufficiently to increase the chances of germination. One wonders how seeds which are too heavy to be spread by the wind can germinate at a higher level than the parent tree. It is quite possible that the distribution of such trees would slowly contract to ever lower elevations if it were not for the assistance of fruit and seed-eating birds.

Trees in tropical climates are capable of providing a diet of various fruits throughout the year which is why specialist fruit-eating birds are mainly to be found in those areas. Fruit-eaters of temperate regions, as in this district, must either have the ability to forage over considerable distances or accept alternative foods when fruit is scarce. Topknot pigeons (*Lepholaimus antarcticus*) especially seek the fruit of our large native figs (*Ficus sp.*) and later the still viable seeds are voided, often in places remote from the parent tree. Other arboreal fruit-eaters which play their part in the dispersal of the seeds are the white-headed pigeon (*Columba leucomela*), pied currawong (*Strepera graculina*), satin bowerbird (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*), green figbird (*Sphecotheres viridus*), olive-backed oriole (*Oioilus sagittatus*) king parrot (*Alisterus scapularis*), silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*) and red-whiskered bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*). Typical of the many trees whose seeds are mainly spread by birds are pittosporum, white cedar, bungalow and cabbage-tree palms, lillypilly and, regretfully, camphor laurel and privet, these two introduced 'weed' species whose proliferation is degrading our native forests in some areas.

To be continued

A POTPOURIE OF EDITORS

John Cashman

Nola Williams typed the first Club circulars, which were roneoed and initially delivered by hand. Later, they were posted. These initial circulars were notices of walks and meetings, but reports, bird sightings and articles were soon added.

Some early editors were the spouses of Presidents, or were other Committee members, then at the 1980 AGM Tom and Joyce Barnes were co-opted as 'Editors of the Club circular.' Mary Shaw was the first editor to be named in the Newsheet, in 1988. She has been followed by Barbara Hales, Robyn Wilson, Kerri Lewis, Mike Morphet, Penny Potter & the current editor.

After the early mimeograph News, a couple of News were produced by the Gestetner process, and then we moved up to photo copying. Initially this was done in the offices of generous and sympathetic organizations and firms, before we moved to commercial printers.

Editing is frequently a solo process, but there has always been a team to get the News out. Barbara mentioned Daryl Goldrick and others who picked up her 'original' for the next stage. Kerri got Alan her husband to proof-read. 'That was essential.' Penny found Val Dolan was a great help in proof-reading and organizing the printing. I'm no computer buff, and make plenty of errors, but these would be far worse were it not for generous amounts of help from Penny and Chris Cartledge. And for many years we have great help from Norma Almond and Peg McKinlay in folding the News, putting in envelopes, and posting it out.

But problems are not unknown. There have been plenty of last minute rushes. Barbara recalled that you found yourself on a timetable, and Penny said that there was a relentlessness about it. You finish one News, and before you knew it, it was on to the next. You often had to organize trips and holidays around getting the News out. Barbara recalled one time when her original went astray in the post. Panic, panic, and she had to retype it. Kerri said it was enjoyable, but hard work fitting it in with a full-time job. Robyn said in her time as Editor, many articles were hand written. Some weren't easy to read. She rang one member about

9pm to check on the spelling of a name. She was told the right spelling but was also told by a somewhat peevish voice, "You know, we go to bed about 7.30!"

Having enough copy could be a problem. Barbara said, 'When it looked a bit thin, I would sometimes retype an earlier article, for our new members who hadn't read it.' Robyn recalls, 'As a pharmacist I was a "two fingers" typist, but it was such a pain if I made a mistake while typing the News and had to retype that whole page again.' Then sometimes there were complaints: spelling, errors, capitals, technicalities. Mary said, 'I was told off because I put in a nice bird poem, but didn't get permission to use it.' Barbara said, 'The complaints hurt. I really tried hard, proof read it, checked the spelling, did my best, but occasionally errors slipped in, and there would be a complaint. That hurt.'

Computers have given editors more flexibility. But neither they, nor their operators are foolproof. Computers seem to have a mind of their own! My computer completely froze last July, with 75% of the News done. Help! Chris Cartledge somehow managed to get a copy of the 75% and we finished that News on his computer, while mine was away at the doctors.

Generally editors have found the position quite interesting. Mike said, 'It was a chance to be creative, and I learnt much more about birds.' Some of Mike's creativity has also been seen in his occasional cartoons. Mary enjoyed the position, and Robyn found it interesting. Penny said that being Editor helped her get to know more people in the club and she appreciated that. It can be a consuming task, but it's rewarding when the News comes out well!

I appreciate having a small stable of regular and reliable writers who don't get into a tiz if you hold over their articles for a month or two. With newer writers, who are always welcome, it can be striking a balance between encouraging their enthusiasm, liveliness and verve, and at times correcting and editing (but not too much) their writing to enhance style and readability. Part of the job! Good writers, and we are fortunate to have quite a few, both report facts and stimulate the imagination to create an atmosphere enabling you to be there with the writer and emotionally respond to them.

The 300th IBOC News

Dave Thomson

Our 300th IBOC News – what about that? I'd reckon about our millionth word. We've come some distance since those early hand-delivered circulars of about 20 lines on a quarto sheet.

And a thumb through some of those early papers reminds us of the great times we've had and the work that's been put in for us. And there are plenty of memories in the photos of early outings, camps and Christmas meetings.

For starters, we're now 30 years old. Our first meeting was on Tuesday 1st February, 1977 in the WEA rooms. That meeting elected as our first office-bearers: Laurie Williams as President, Joy Appleby as Secretary/Treasurer and Richard Miller as Field Recording Officer. And our fees were set at \$5, \$8 and \$2 for adults, families and juniors.

Our first outing came the following Sunday on the properties of the Thomas and Voorwinden families at Calderwood. That outing produced our first report to the Australian Atlas – 56 species including a Black-faced Monarch – many of us hadn't even heard of one?

At our March '77 meeting, our first guest speaker, old-hand bird photographer Ellis McNamara from Mt Kembla showed his slides. We've seen a few slides since that first night.

And more "firsts".

Our first membership list, prepared in June '77, had 45 family names. While not as long as it would be today, not bad for a brand new club, and most were regulars at meetings.

Our first camp was at Coolendel, upstream from Nowra on the Shoalhaven in October '77. Some pretty raw campers at Coolendel, but we've since had enough camps to show some improvement.

Our first trip out of the district was to Pulletop NR, staying at the luxurious Rankins Springs Hotel in late Oct '77. Some of our party, standing after dinner at the rail of the darkened upstairs veranda waiting for IBOC stragglers, were entertained by locals tumbling out of the pub headed for home – sounded like “you’re too drunk to sing, you’d better drive”. That was after the locals had challenged us at the snooker table – slow matches with much drinking and walking between shots. And yes, we did see the Malleefowl, and close-up too.

In Dec '77 we had our first experience with bird banding when we watched Alan Leishman banding bush-birds at Appin. Birds in the hand look so much different to those in a tree and it’s great to touch them and understand how delicate and endearing some are, especially the wrens and robins. Currawongs and some others don’t meet the “delicate and endearing” rule.

In Feb '80 a small party went to Lord Howe Island on what was our first major trip away from “home” – what a great place. Cape York followed in July/Aug '81. The notion of a big trip every so often went down well and has become a regular part of our program.

Our regular Unusual Sightings list started in '83, prepared initially by Wal Emery, And how could we end the year without the “IBOC Logies” night, with members receiving awards for misdemeanors through the year. Christmas '78 saw Esme Gay take home a gold-painted cow pat, something to do with an exchange with a fresh cowpat on a Club outing. And in '81, Doug Gibson received tongs with metre-long handles for retrieving things out of reach – he’d dropped his precious notebook down our toilet on Cape York. And a few more, without explanation lest we embarrass those involved (we wouldn’t want to do that) and all from the '80’s ; a long singlet for Nola Williams; rubber gloves for BobMcKinlay; mouse trap for Gwen Robinson; kettle for Wal Emery; antifreeze for Haidee Hawken; motel guide for Hazel Emery; pink keytag for Dave Walsh. And as part of the festive frivolity, the elocution, dance, singing etc., like the pair of “wannabe baritones” in '82 with a rendition (that’s a kind way to put it) of the Gendarmes Duet, with IBOC modifications.

We’ve had a succession of birdos visiting from overseas too, and all seemed to enjoy our warm welcome and ready help. In our first year we had Malcolm Ford from the snakeless land of the kiwi, and he was lucky enough to witness a pair of snakes mating and to see the Malleefowl at Pulletop, both experiences denied most Aussies. And who could forget the visits from that ball of enthusiasm Tony Salvadori from Canada, his first in '80. And, among others, the quiet Canadian couple John and Dornacilla Peck who spent 2 years with us and so enjoyed our friendship that, at their last meeting in '85, John read some verse that he’d penned, saying in part

“And then you showed us how to camp,
In weather which was bright or damp,
With showers hot or sometimes cold,
And privies wondrous to behold.”

From those early days we’ve always carried a toilet on trips and camps, so making life more comfortable for ourselves and setting an example for the better regarded and more upmarket clubs, like Sydney, who didn’t. Ask any of our busload who in '85 camped beside a busload from the Sydney club on the plains at Coorabulka Bore in western Queensland (for the Yellow Chat). Friendly trees were a long way off so IBOC’s toilet had a continuous and long queue.

We’ve had some wonderful experiences, and still working well is the pattern of meetings, outings, newsletter, camps, trips, record-keeping, atlasing, library, badges, tee-shirts, toilet, shower and so on established in the early years by those who set our club going, President Laurie and his team.

...and Pieces ***Jim and Gwen Robinson** (Jim was the 3rd President of the Club) were both active in the building of Towradgi pool some 50 or so years ago. Just before Christmas the pool was reopened after Wollongong Council put in a new concrete base. The pool was originally built by voluntary labour, with the volunteers often having to work late at night or very early in the morning to fit in with low tides.

Gwen also taught swimming at the pool, first to children and later to adults under the “Learn to Swim” campaign. She taught a lot of migrant women, from the Fairy Meadow Hostel. Some of the husbands weren’t keen to have their wives appear in swimsuits in public: not part of their culture. But the first couple of women who dared to learn to swim had so much fun, they soon persuaded other migrant wives to come and learn from Gwen. Wives forever !

Autumn Camp 2007 Wellington NSW 14th to 21st April 2007.

The Autumn camp is to be at the Wellington Caves Holiday Complex, Caves Rd Wellington. Ph (02) 6845 2970. The Caravan Park is about 9km south of Wellington just off the Mitchell Hwy. The way from Wollongong is via the Blue Mts, Bathhurst, and Orange. About 400k.

You are advised to book with the Caravan Park as soon as possible, especially if you want a cabin. At present they have plenty of all types of accommodation, but they are fully booked for the week before, and the week afterwards.

All cabins have ensuites and are air conditioned, Park & Deluxe units only have TV.

Charges are as follows:

Standard unit	\$57 per double	Sleeps 8
Deluxe Golf View Units	\$68 per double	sleep 4/5
Park Cabins	\$52 per double	sleep 5
Powered sites	\$21 for 2 people	
Unpowered sites	\$16 for 2 people	

Once you have booked please let Betty know either by email or phone 4236 0307

Further details and the map in next month’s newsletter

Unusual Records for November - December 2006 Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	5	19-Nov	Sassafras	forest	KM
Brown Quail	1	12-Nov	Calderwood	roadside	NB
Brown Quail	1	18-Nov	Tallawarra	wetland	GB
Brown Quail	1	21-Dec	Myimbarr wetland (Shellharbour)	wetland	KM
Australian Shelduck	3	18-Nov	Tallawarra	wetland	GB,CB
Australian Shelduck	2	26-Dec	Comerong Is	saltmarsh	MC
Black Petrel	1	16-Dec	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Nankeen Night Heron	1	26-Nov	Windang	shore	TB
Nankeen Night Heron	1	9-Dec	Macquarie Rivulet, lower	riverine	LP
Glossy Ibis	28	11-Nov	Tallawarra	wetland	DG, GB
Glossy Ibis	26	28-Dec	Tallawarra	wetland	CB
Osprey	1	24-Nov	Tallawarra	overhead	CB, DG
Osprey	2	Nov	Lake Conjola	overhead	MJ
Square-tailed Kite	1	7-Nov	HMAS Albatross, sth Nowra	overhead	NJ, NW
Whistling Kite	2	11-Nov	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Whistling Kite	1	19-Nov	Mt Kembla	overhead	DF
Swamp Harrier	1	9-Nov	Maddens Plains	overhead	JM
Swamp Harrier	1	11-Nov	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Grey Goshawk	1	14-Nov	Bellambi Lagoon	woodland	AC
Grey Goshawk	1	6-Dec	Springhill, Cringilla	forest	DF
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	9-Nov	Corrimal	overhead	AC

Little Eagle	1	11-Nov	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Little Eagle	1	25-Nov	Nowra Hill	overhead	GB
Little Eagle	1	10-Dec	Seven Mile Beach NP	overhead	BO,KO
Little Eagle	1	11-Dec	Kanahooka	overhead	MC
Peregrine Falcon	1	7-Nov	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	overhead	MC
Peregrine Falcon	1a, 1j	30-Dec	Thirroul	garden	MM
Lewin's Rail	1	22-Dec	Bulli escarpment track	forest	GB
Baillon's Crake	1	18-Nov	Tallawarra	wetland	GB
Australian Spotted Crake	2	18-Dec	Myimbarr wetland (Shellharbour)	wetland	KM
Latham's Snipe	4	13-Nov	Tallawarra	wetland	CB
Latham's Snipe	18	21-Dec	Myimbarr wetland (Shellharbour)	wetland	KM
Marsh Sandpiper	1	28-Dec	Tallawarra	wetland	CB
Common Sandpiper	1	11-Nov	Tallawarra	wetland	DG
Great Knot	1	21-Dec	Lake Wollumboola	mudflats	NW
Sanderling	1	18-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	sandflats	MPP
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	50+	9-Dec	Haywoods Bay	shore	LP
Sooty Oystercatcher	1	9-Dec	Haywoods Bay	shore	LP
Red-kneed Dotterel	1	18-Nov	Tallawarra	wetland	GB
Sooty Tern	4	16-Dec	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
White-headed Pigeon	1	12-Dec	Bulli Pass	graden	RM
White-headed Pigeon	3	24-Dec	Curramore	garden	KM
Turquoise Parrot	2	14-Dec	Porter Creek Dam Road	woodland	MJ
Tawny Frogmouth	3	9-Dec	Mt Keira	garden	VD
Tawny Frogmouth	1	10-Dec	Keiraville	garden	ME
White-throated Needletail	25	29-Dec	Wilton	overhead	RI
Azure Kingfisher	1	30-Nov	Forest Grove, Kanahooka	wetland	MC
Azure Kingfisher	2	9-Dec	Macquarie Rivulet, lower	riverine	LP
Eastern Bristlebird	1	29-Dec	Carrington Falls	woodland	TB
Pilotbird	1	17-Nov	Mt. Kembla	forest	DF
Pilotbird	1	29-Dec	Carrington Falls	forest	TB
Logrunner	2	17-Dec	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Crested Shrike-tit	1	15-Dec	Excelsior mine, Thirroul	forest	MM
Leaden Flycatcher	2	24-Nov	Tallawarra	woodland	CB
White-winged Triller	1	2-Nov	Dapto	garden	TW
White-winged Triller	1	5-Nov	Killalea State Park	grassland	CJC
White-winged Triller	1	19-Dec	Kiama blow hole	pine trees	MC
Pied Butcherbird	1	28-Nov	Unanderra	garden	JN
Grey Currawong	1	19-Nov	Sassafras	forest	KM
Tawny Grassbird	1	11-Nov	Tallawarra	reedland	DG
Rufous Songlark	1	12-Nov	Swamp Rd. Dunmore	rural	GB
Brown Songlark	1	7-Nov	Nowra	rural	NJ, NW

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; NB - Norma Burke; TB - Teresa du Bois; AC - Alan Cousins; CJC - Chris Chafer; MC Martin Cocker; BC - Bruce Coyte; VD - Val Dolan; ME - Mary Eskdale; DF - Damien Farine; DG - Darryl Goldrick; RI - Ron Imisisdes; NJ - Nigel Jacket; MJ - Michael Jarman; PM - Peter Milburn; KM – Kevin Mills; JM - Jill Molan; MM - Mike Morphett; JN - Jack Nowaczyk; BO - Bruce O'Brien; KO - Kelsey O'Brien; LP - Lorraine Pincus; MPP - Martin & Penny Potter; NW – Nathan Waugh; DW - David Winterbottom; TW - Terra Wheway.

Comment: Again numbers of White-winged Trillers on the coastal plain in unusual places. Lots of great raptor records, especially Little Eagle. Will the Osprey nest first at Tallawarra or Lake Conjola, it's only a matter of time I think. Sooty Oystercatcher has not previously been reported from western Lake Illawarra. The **Pied Butcherbird** record is very interesting, only the 9th regional record since 1839. One was observed near this location at Farmborough Heights in February 2004. The Glossy Ibis are the largest numbers ever recorded from the region. **Thanks for all your records through 2006. Please keep them coming for 2007.**



*"One Good Tern
Deserves Another"*

The Newsletter of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56 FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519
Founded in 1977. website www.iboc.org.au

I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

Issue No. 301 March 2007

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$30 SINGLE \$25. JUNIOR \$5.
Please pay Bronwyn Wilson, our Treasurer, by cash, cheque or mail order

IBOC NEWS Contents

Trees and Birds p 2
Birds around Berry p 3
Young Buck Bowerbird p 4
Bomaderry Creek Outing p 5
Seabird Rescue Talk p 6
Berkley Harbour Walk p 6
Protocol / Birding in Nth India p 7
Autumn Camp News p 8
Unusual Sightings p9,10

CLUB CONTACTS

PRESIDENT: Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742
SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307
email: elizabethhudson@bigpond.com.
TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
EDITORS: John Cashman, tel: 02 4284 0538
email: cashmansjr@bigpond.com
Val Dolan, tel: 02 4229 6737
RECORDS OFFICER .Chris Chafer
email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS March 2007

CLUB MEETING – Monday 12th March - 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall.
Peter Nolan "Birds and travels in America and England." If you bring a plate of goodies for supper, and your cup/mug, it will be much appreciated

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 14th March – Blackbutt reserve – Leader – Chris Brandis. Meet at the centre carpark at 8:00 am and we will walk around some of the trails, have morning tea by the dam and return to the cars. To get there: turn west off Shellharbour Rd between Barrack Heights and Shellharbour at the traffic lights into Woodlands Drive, then left into Blackbutt Drive and follow the road up the hill into the reserve. If you need assistance, my mobile is 0427 962 837.

MONTHLY OUTING – Sunday 18th March –Bellawangerah & Red Rock– Leader: Betty Hudson. Meet at 8.30am at the Old Cemetery on Kangaroo Valley Rd, Bellawongarah. (There should be an IBOC sign at the entrance.)

Travel to Berry on the Princes Hwy and take the Kangaroo Valey road at the Southern end of the town. After climbing to the top of the escarpment veer right at a "Y" intersection and continue for approx 1km, the entrance to the cemetery is on the lefthand side. Enter and park in the small reserve. We will do a walk here and later drive part way along the Red Rocks track before doing another walk. Bring lunch and morning tea, which I anticipate we will eat at the cars. The walk will finish around 1.30pm.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 20th March 2006, 7.30pm, at Tom and Joan Wylie's, 4 Daphne Street, Bellambi (4284 2051) All members are welcome.

April 2007 NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Friday 23rd March**. Please send items to the editor at cashmansjr@bigpond.com or mail them to 5 Madden Street, Fernhill NSW 2519

Welcome to new club members, Ross and Jan Gowans, and Bill Carwardine.
It's nice to have you with us.

BITS and....

Just ducking out! Where have all the Freckled Ducks gone? Our family, who live in Victoria and who are keen twitchers were driving through the town of Sale last Easter en route to Mollymook. As they once lived in Sale they decided to have a look around. On stopping at the smaller lake they were amazed to see many Freckled Ducks there - about two hundred! Later in the year they were passing through, and again lots, though not as many! In early January my husband drove back to Moss Vale via the coast road from Victoria just to have a first sighting of a Freckled Duck or two, and it was with much excitement and anticipation that we drove to said lake! Not a one - several Latham Snipes in close range but not a 'freckle' to behold, not even through the telescope - such a disappointment!! Val Cooper

TREES and BIRDS

J D GIBSON

Doug Gibson's WEA lectures on 'Basic Ornithology,' at the end of 1976 were the inspiration for the founding of our club. Doug also contributed a chapter to Leon Fuller's *Wollongong's Native Trees* 1980. The following except continues from that in The February IBOC News. Printed with permission

Insect Suppression

The importance of in the control of insects injurious to trees is difficult to assess, though observation of the almost ceaseless activity of many species in this area leads one to conclude that their role must be significant. Birds often tend to congregate where insect outbreaks provide abundant food, thus they apply pressure on insect life in proportion to insect abundance.

Because of their active life, high temperature and small size, birds in general require proportionally more food than other animals. Small insectivorous birds like the warblers and thornbills because of their high metabolic rate are constantly engaged in gleaning the vegetation for insect prey. Spotted Pardalotes (*Pardalotus punctatus*) are typical of the leaf gleaners. Weighing only a few grams, they are easily supported by the leaves among which they forage for small insects, especially lerp-insects (*Psyllidae*) which can be very damaging to some eucalypt species if infestations are heavy in successive years.

In their tireless foraging, the various thornbills and warblers are assisted by other mainly or exclusively insectivorous groups such as whistlers, flycatchers, thrushes, cuckoos, cuckoo-shrikes, frogmouths, dollarbirds, bee-eaters and woodswallows, the last three catching their prey on the wing. Treecreepers and sittellas specialize in searching the trunks and branches for insects concealed in the crevices while currawongs and cockatoos occasionally adopt the same procedure. Shrike-tits have a powerful short beak with which they prise off pieces of bark to reveal the insects underneath. The combined effort of all the above must add up to a measure of control over thrips, leaf-miners, scale insects, spiders, caterpillars, beetles etc. and thus reduce the debilitating effect that these animals can have on trees in general.

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*) are particularly fond of the wood boring larvae of longicorn beetles. When they locate an infested tree, by hearing the grubs at

work, the birds methodically strip away the bark and outer layers until the prey is exposed. Because of their wary nature the cockatoos are seldom seen at this task, but trees damaged in this typical way are testimony to the fact, and it is generally conceded that destruction of infested trees contributes to the overall health of the forest.

Outside the breeding season, different species of insectivorous birds often band together and move through forested areas in mixed feeding flocks. It has been proposed and seems logical, that the foraging potential of individuals or small parties of one species is enhanced by this interspecific association, each bird exploiting its own particular part of the food spectrum and benefiting from the general disturbance of quiescent insects by other group members.

Other essential avian requirements provided by trees include nesting sites, nesting materials, song perches, vantage points for hunting and shelter for roosting and resting.

From consideration of the above comments it is fairly obvious that the course of evolutionary development has made trees and birds to a certain extent mutually dependent. Loss of tree species from an area inevitably means a loss of bird species and a consequent impoverishment of the natural environment.

Birds around Berry –

Bob Ashford

I received a request some time ago from Jeanne Highland, a resident of Bong Bong Road. ‘Would I take her visiting American friends, John and Alice, out birding?’ I received another from Les, a dairy farmer whose property lies adjacent to the Coolangatta Estate winery. ‘What the hell can I do about these damned Starlings and Indian Mynas?’

I considered meeting Les at the winery but relented and took John and Alice to Shoalhaven Heads to check out the shorebirds. Next to the resting flocks of Bar-tailed Godwits and Crested Terns was a pair of Pied Oystercatchers, striking black and white waders with long, thick, red bills, and a restless contingent of Little Terns. In amongst the Godwits we found a lone Gull-billed Tern, a nomadic inland breeding bird rarely seen around here. Like other species, it may have been influenced by the continuing drought to visit the coast, though it is unlikely to stay.

Les’s ‘damned’ Starlings and Indian Mynas were introduced to Australia in the late 1880’s by homesick settlers. Initially confined to the Sydney region they very slowly expanded their range. It’s only recently, as they hit critical mass, that they discovered the South Coast and the insect-laden pastures that Les’s property provides. I’ve no doubt many Berry residents can recall the days when there were no Starlings or Mynas around.

So altered has the landscape around Berry become that many of the birds we see around here are originally from ‘somewhere else’. Global warming is having an effect but it’s human impact that is creating the greatest change. We have made it very easy for some birds to thrive in this altered environment – often at the expense of other species.

The same paddock landscape has encouraged an explosion of Galahs, Long-billed and Little Corellas, all drier country open woodland species. Les’s gripe is that the Starlings and Mynas have evicted the smaller native species from his property. Culling and planting low indigenous bush will help. Rather more alarmingly in some parts of Australia Long-billed Corellas have been seen raiding remaining nesting holes and pulling out the eggs and chicks of the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo. By felling trees, building dams and planting crops we have encouraged new settlers who in turn have made it tough, if not terminal, for the original inhabitants.

Other new settlers include the Crested Pigeon, another dry country bird that arrived on the South Coast in the late 1980's. You'd be pushed to find a telephone line around Berry now without a Crested Pigeon. Another is the White-headed Pigeon, a forest bird from northern Australia. It has flourished as an introduced tree, the Camphor Laurel, has spread southward either through deliberate plantings or via bird droppings. The winter berries of the tree, along with dog and cat food leftovers, feed the Pied Currawong too. Come spring increasing populations of fattened Currawongs wreak havoc on the nestlings of smaller bush birds to feed their own young.

Silver Gull populations have exploded too, nurtured by rubbish tips and picnic chips. They regularly attack the nests and young of the endangered Little Tern. No wonder the ones we saw at Shoalhaven Heads were so restless. The Gull-billed Tern may have made its way here through natural occurrences. Far more species have made it here through our altering of the landscape.

So Les, you may win a battle but I doubt you'll win the war. There is some good news though. The Powerful Owl, a huge owl that traditionally needed vast tracts of forest to survive, is adapting very well to the urban sprawl by taking a new prey species – the cat!



'Young Buck' Bowerbird and Grape-shot Tera Wheway

Late January our backyard has been visited by a group of bower birds. The grape vine was visited and one by one grapes disappeared, like green marbles in their beaks. The vine was picked clean by the hungry bower birds. I was alerted by a rather strange aggressive and persistent noise so quickly went to investigate. All this activity had encouraged an immature bower bird to try his luck. I found the young male strutting, flapping, hissing, chattering,

dancing, prancing around and through his partially constructed bower. Imagine my delight! Neil was out playing canasta with friends and I waited impatiently for him to

arrive home and show him my find. We did a lot of skulking around the yard every time the appropriate calls were heard during the next 3 days

The internet was checked for further information. Green vegetable matter was needed to paint the walls!!!! Right --- my bird helped himself to all my tender young green bean leaves. Bother! I fixed that and covered them with bird wire frames. Our wily bird just used the wire as a perch and plucked a few more leaves.

He played with a blue bottle top and a yellow feather, but unfortunately for my immature male the grapes had finished and no females were to be seen. He was ever hopeful checking out every passing wattle bird. Then the rain dampened his spirits and he is now only an occasional visitor. What fun I have had to witness it all.

Monthly Outing: Bomaderry Creek - 17th February

Nerida Hudspith

It was an early 8am start for 11 keen members on our first monthly outing for 2007. This earlier start proved to be a wise move to beat the summer heat. As we greeted one another in the car park some Noisy Friarbirds were spotted in the gums.

We started our walk on the Eastern side of the canyon above the weir. As we moved to the lookout over the weir we had some great sightings of Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters and Spotted Pardalotes carrying nesting material, and you could hear Eastern Whipbirds in the distance. Following the rocky track through open Eucalypt forest some members were lucky enough to get a good look at a Rockwarbler hopping over the rocky outcrops. Others saw a flock of Glossy Black-Cockatoos on the wing land in trees in the distance. As we moved along four or five Mistletoe Birds flew into view, with the brilliant red on their breasts facing into the sun. I was very excited with four new birds to add to my list.

It's was so nice to see water lying in pools on the rocks and hear the frogs, after the recent rain we've experienced. I think it was Bill who said, "It's wet enough for the bugs to come out and the birds to follow them". As we descended down the sandstone cliffs into the canyon, it almost had a rainforest feel to it: with water dripping from the sandstone overhangs and trickling down the walls: it also provided us with relief from the heat. The track is being up-graded to make it more accessible: in places you need to be quite agile to navigate it, and it also included some small ladders. Some areas were blocked off for repairs to bridges and track. On two occasions we came upon gorgeous nests, decorated with lichen on the edge of the track, which Peter confirmed to be Eastern Yellow Robins.

We had a lunchtime treat, with a Grey Fantail mimicking a White-throated Treecreeper and following it up trees picking off the leftovers. An Eastern Yellow Robin also dropped by for a visit. As we pressed on after lunch we came across, a juvenile Oriole??? high in the canopy.

As the weir came into view and the track ended, it became evident that we would have to rock hop across the creek. Tom and Brian assisted everyone across without a problem. Perhaps this could have been an impossible task a week ago with rain.

Standing and waiting my turn to cross, I took time to examine the local urban rock artwork. Remembering Sean Dooley's visit here in *The Big Twitch* (page 136) brought a smile to my face. *Tell us more, some time ! Ed.*

All up we saw 42 species of birds, some interesting sightings and a great day out. Many thanks to Betty for organizing this walk, a place I've driven past many times and didn't know existed. Bird List for Bomaderry Creek Walk

Australian Wood Duck	Little Wattlebird	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
Pacific Black Duck	Noisy Friarbird	White-plumed Honeyeater
Australian Pelican	Lewin's Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Australian White Ibis	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Whipbird
Spotted Turtle-Dove	Brown Gerygone	Grey Fantail
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	Laughing Kookaburra	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Dollarbird	Olive-backed Oriole
Galah	White-throated Treecreeper	Grey Butcherbird
Rainbow Lorikeet	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Australian King-Parrot	Striated Pardalote	Pied Currawong
Crimson Rosella	Rockwarbler	Australian Raven
White-throated Needle-tail	Brown Thornbill	Satin Bowerbird
Azure Kingfisher	Yellow Thornbill	Mistletoebird
Red Wattlebird	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Silvereye

February Talk: The Work of Australian Seabird Rescue Society Penny Potter

The gruesome photo of a Pelican with an arrow through its body at Bermagui, published a few days earlier in the Illawarra Mercury, was a startling reminder of the need for an organisation like Australian Seabird Rescue (ASR). Julie Clarke, leader of the Illawarra branch, gave club members a very unsettling but absorbing talk about her work at the February meeting. Established at Ballina, NSW, in 1992 ASR volunteers are involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of seabirds, shorebirds and marine turtles. Injured Pelicans are a large part of their work.

Of the seven Pelican species in the world the Australian Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) is the only species found in Australia, with northern Tasmania being the southernmost extent of their range. As Australia's largest flying bird, they are widespread, inhabiting large bodies of fresh or salt water and with an ability to 'ride the thermals' that can take them up as far as 3,000 metres.

Although they look heavy, Pelicans weigh only about 4-8 kilograms because they have air pockets under the skin to provide buoyancy. Their body length measures 1.5-1.8 metres and their wing span varies from 2.3 to 2.8 metres. Size is the only difference between males and females – females are smaller with a shorter bill:

	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Beak Length (Maxilla)</u>
Males:	6-8.2 kgs (13-18 lbs)	42-50 cms (16-19 inches)
Females:	4-6 kgs (9-13 lbs)	35-42 cms (13-16 inches)

The maxilla is the upper half of the beak. The measurement is taken from where the beak meets the feathers, to the curve of the hook at the end (which is no sharper than a fingernail).

Since they forage in the shallows of ocean beaches, along rivers, wetlands and inland lakes, Pelicans are at great risk of becoming accidentally hooked or entangled in fishing tackle and un-attended set lines. This accounts for 92% of potentially fatal injuries (see table below). Discarded line represents a mere 6% of all injuries.

<u>92%</u>	<u>Entanglement with fishing tackle.</u>
<u>4%</u>	<u>Collision with powerlines and boats</u>
<u>2%</u>	<u>Disease</u>
<u>1%</u>	<u>Shooting, vandalism</u>
<u>1%</u>	<u>Swallowing foreign objects/pollution</u>

Julie showed us many disturbing pictures of injured Pelicans, Terns, Cormorants, etc and talked at length about the work of the Illawarra Branch, including at Lake Illawarra where considerable effort has gone into rescuing birds and educating the public. Thankfully the number of injuries there is decreasing but the belief that fishing hooks will eventually rust away on their own in the beak or gut persists. In fact, a common steel hook takes up to 12 months to rust away and during that time the bird will likely suffer major and possibly fatal infection. Julie encouraged members who find injured birds to report them to ASR or a local rescue group. If you find a bird entangled in a hook you should try to gently reel the bird in, but on no account cut the fishing line. A towel or shirt can be placed over the bird's head if it is possible to remove the hook without incurring further injury to the bird, but it is probably best to call ASR for assistance.

Val Dolan gave the vote of thanks for what proved to be an interesting and thought provoking talk. (Thanks to ASR, the Pelican pierced by an arrow made a full recovery!)

(Information also taken from <http://www.seabirdrescue.org/>)

Report on the Berkeley Boat Harbour Walk - 7th February 2007 Betty Hudson

On an afternoon when thunderstorms threatened and heavy showers had occurred, 13 members met at the carpark in Holborn Ave, Berkeley. After a debate as to which way to go first, the Boat Harbour or the mud flats, we headed off along the grassy foreshore towards the Boat Harbour Wetlands. Here we were rewarded with a wide variety of water & marsh birds

and the unusual sight of 5 Latham's Snipe walking and feeding along the edge of the water on the central island. Everyone got a good look despite the brooding weather. We continued round the wetlands adding to our list, but commenting on the lack of small birds. As we reached the last few yards of the wetland the rain which started as large spots rapidly got very heavy. Everyone hurried to the nearest picnic shelter. Though very heavy the shower was short lived and we were able to have our picnic tea in the dry before heading home after a convivial evening if little disappointing bird wise.

Bird Sightings. A total of 31 species was recorded

Muscovy (Domestic)Duck	Purple Swamphen	New Holland Honeyeater
Mallard	Dusky Moorhen	Magpie-lark
Black Swan	Eurasian Coot	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Latham's Snipe	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Grey Teal	Masked Lapwing	Australian Magpie
Chestnut Teal	Silver Gull	Clamorous Reed –Warbler
Little Pied Cormorant	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Silvereye
Australian Pelican	Crested Pigeon	Common Starling
Great Egret	Rainbow Lorikeet	Common Myna
Australian White Ibis	Red Wattlebird	
Royal Spoonbill	Little Wattlebird	

Tallawarra protocols

Chris Brandis

With construction underway on the site by Alstom on the TRUenergy power generating plant there have been some changes in the conditions of entering. To meet the TRUenergy, Tallawarra, aim that “Nobody gets hurt,” it would be preferable that people are safety inducted. This is not always practical unless you are leading a group, so we are confined to the Ash Pond 3 area while construction trucks use the area around the asbestos disposal areas. If you wish to be inducted, ring Michael Knez on 4231 8408 or 0418 373 170 to make an appointment to watch a video, pass a small test, and then sign the form.

If you wish to visit the area for bird observing, then let Michael or Lloyd Townsend, 0423 840 410, know that you will be on site and park in the small cleared area opposite the entry track. Only Darryl Goldrick and I have keys to the lock but it is easy to climb over the gate, hinge side, and the other gate only has chain over wire. If you can not contact Michael or Lloyd then go to the security office near the construction site and let them know you will be on site.

Please keep to the tracks and watch for snakes in the warmer months and report any suspicious activities to Alstom Site Security on 0437 897 462 or Environmental Security on 1800 004 998. It is advisable if you go alone to take a mobile phone in case of a mishap.

BIRDING ABROAD

David Winterbottom

A vignette from a voyage to Northern India that David and Elizabeth made in January 2006.

The Sultanpur Lake is a wetland close to Delhi which literally teems with birds. The huge colony of Painted Storks was alive with nearly fledged young chicks, if you can call such large ugly birds “chicks”. Duck were mostly migrant Teal and Shoveller but we also saw four or five other species including the Indian Spot-billed Duck. Many Cormorants, Herons, Egrets and other waterfowl were in evidence. The raptors were good too, including Shikras, Eurasian Sparrowhawks, a vagrant Northern Goshawk, a Great Spotted Eagle and Oriental Honey-buzzards.

Unlike the birds, most of the tigers have now been poached out of India. Those that remain can only be seen as part of a viewing frenzy by tourists (like us), from which they keep their

distance. We also saw a leopard, a jackal and a hyaena, but that was pure luck. With predators gone the deer and antelope populations have exploded.

On the way to the Undiana Lake, scanning the fences and telephone lines was rewarded with Indian Rollers, Bay-backed, Long-tailed and Southern Grey Shrikes, Brahminy and Asian Pied Starlings, Common and Bank Mynas, House and Jungle Crows, all of which were outdone by the many Black Drongos. At the lake an Osprey ruled the roost, but does not offend the Red-wattled Lapwings nor the Marsh, Green, Wood, Curlew or Common Sandpipers, Ruff, Stilts, Stints or even the Common Snipe.

In the dry scrub a White-naped Woodpecker was at its oval nest-hole. A pair of misnamed Jungle Prinias were quite at home. Two pairs of Painted Grouse fed on seeds and, later, many more flew in to drink at a small pool. Savanna Nightjars hawked over the water.

At Bharatpur there are wetlands created by a Maharaja to attract wild birds as a private shoot. And attract and shoot them he did. The party of his Excellency the Governor General bagged over 4,000 birds in one day! Fortunately those days have gone and, apart from the duck and herons, we saw White and Dalmatian Pelicans, Woolly-necked and Black-necked Storks, Eurasian Spoonbills, Black-headed and Glossy Ibis, as well as a pair of Sarus Cranes bugling evocatively.

Not far away is the Taj Mahal (a stunningly beautiful building) with Egyptian Vultures flying about looking a rather dirty white against the white marble. A final bonus was a pair of Dusky Eagle Owls nesting in a tall Silk Cotton tree in the grounds.

...and Pieces

* **Cockatoos:** When the cockies spread their wings and float from one branch to another they hang for a moment, like they're caught in an eddy of air. Then they choose their landing pad and settle, with a squawk and a shrug of their shoulders. They go for a strut along the branch, their yellow crests flaring. If they had hands they'd beat their chests. They're pretty smug. You can chase them off a fruit tree or a barley crop or the back of a wheat truck but you never defeat them: they're the birds of defiance.

Against an overcast sky it's shocking to see how white they are. They're the whitest things in the world, not that there's ever been a World Cup for whiteness. Not as far as I know.

From the opening chapter of John Marsden's book 'Incurable' – 'The Ellie Chronicles'.

* **BIGnet meeting at Merimbula** The next meeting of the Bird Interest Group of NSW and the ACT will be hosted by the Far South Coast Birdwatchers on the 17 and 18th of March and is open to any one wanting to represent IBOC. See Chris Brandis for more information

Autumn 2007 Camp Wellington Caves 14-21st April 2007

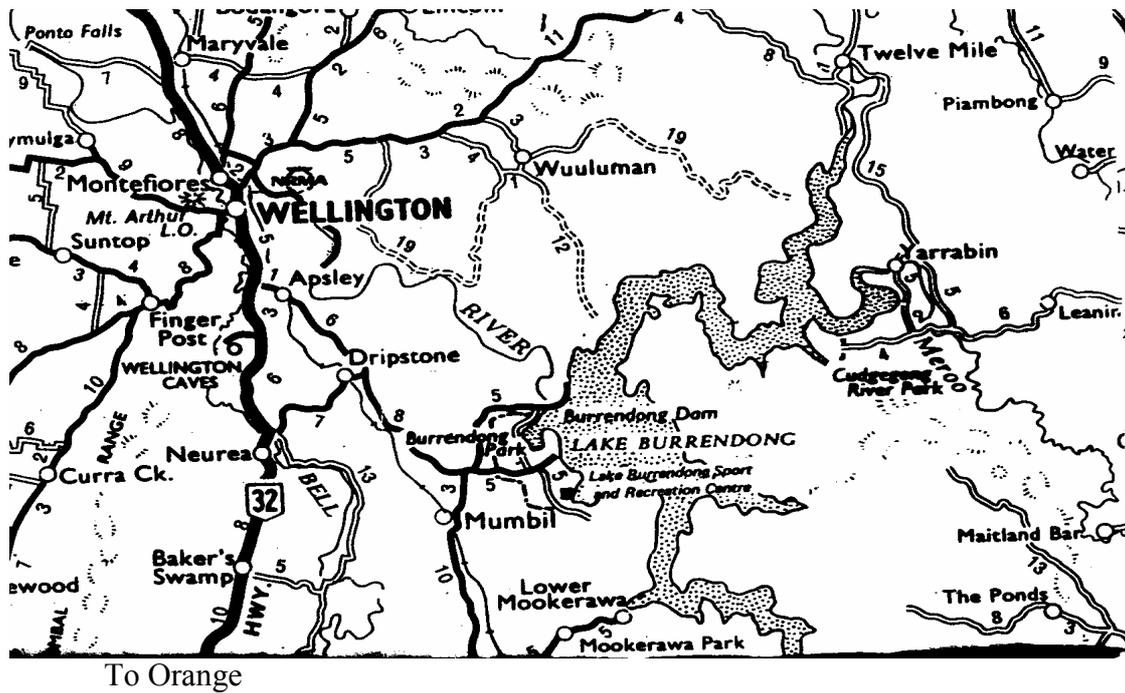
For information on booking and accommodation available please see last month's newsletter.

So far 17 members and friends have booked accommodation for the camp.

Directions: From Bathurst take the Mitchell Hwy to Orange, through Molong, towards Dubbo. Approx 53 km from Molong you will pass through the small settlement of Neurea, then pass a turning on the right to Dripstone & Lake Burrendong. After a further 6 km the turning to Wellington Caves is on your left. The Wellington Caves Holiday Park is 1 km along this road. The UBD Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange Map (from Newsagents) is a good general one of the region

Wellington Caves is about 9km south of Wellington where supplies and fuel is available. We will be going through Wellington every other day, on our outings.

One day during our stay we will visit Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo. From reports in the papers Dubbo does not have water restrictions, promising good bird watching.



Good Grief! Has it come down to this ?

A man went swimming on Galveston Island, he left his watch with his clothes on the beach. A bird ate his watch and scampered away. He saw the culprit and chased it into a large flock of birds. Grabbing a rock, he started towards the flock. When a cop stopped him, he stated "One of those birds ate my watch, I'm leaving no tern unstoned until I find it".

Unusual Records for January 2007

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Brown Quail	1	7-Jan	Killalea State Park	grassland	GB
Musk duck	7	5-Jan	Bamerang Dam	lake	BA
Black Swan	4,000+	4-Jan	Lake Wollumboola	wetland	BA
Hardhead	400+	4-Jan	Archgate nursery dam, Culburra	wetland	BA
Great Crested Grebe	1	5-Jan	Bamerang Dam	lake	BA
White-headed Petrel	1	8-Jan	off Wollongong	pelagic	CB
Westland Petrel	1	8-Jan	off Wollongong (released by Taronga zoo staff)		CB
Black Petrel	4	8-Jan	off Wollongong	pelagic	CB
Glossy Ibis	24	6-Jan	Tallawarra	wetland	DG
Osprey	1	6-Jan	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Osprey	1	18-Jan	Koona Bay (Lake Illawarra)	overhead	BBH
Pacific Baza	1	4-Jan	Kangaroo Valley	overhead	NJ
Square-tailed Kite	1	4-Jan	Bomaderry Creek Reserve	overhead	BA
Square-tailed Kite	1	5-Jan	Huskisson	overhead	MZ
Square-tailed Kite	2	27-Jan	Nowra	overhead	BA
Whistling Kite	2	6-Jan	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Swamp Harrier	1	7-Jan	Killalea State Park	overhead	GB

Grey Goshawk	1	1-Jan	Berrara	overhead	KM
Grey Goshawk	1	4-Jan	Berry	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	6-Jan	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Little Eagle	1	3-Jan	Balgownie	overhead	RT
Little Eagle	1	6-Jan	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Brown Falcon	1	6-Jan	Tallawarra	overhead	DG
Australian Hobby	1	4-Jan	Bomaderry Creek Reserve	overhead	BA
Peregrine Falcon	1	4-Jan	Pyree	overhead	BA
Peregrine Falcon	1	9-Jan	Bomaderry Creek Reserve	woodland	DF
Buff-banded Rail	1a4j	2-Jan	Bellawongarah	creek	BA
Buff-banded Rail	1	4-Jan	Flat Rock Dam, Nowra	wetland	BA
Buff-banded Rail	2a,2j	18-Jan	Albion Park Rail	garden	BBH
Latham's Snipe	3	27-Jan	Bolong	wetland	BA
Marsh Sandpiper	5	4-Jan	Shoalhaven Heads	mudflats	BA
Marsh Sandpiper	3	6-Jan	Tallawarra	wetland	DG
Grey-tailed Tattler	1	3-Jan	Bellambi Lagoon	wetland	NH
Sooty Oystercatcher	8	1-Jan	Berarra	beach	KM
Black-winged Stilt	62	1-Jan	Lake Wollumboola	lake edge	KM
Long-tailed Jaeger	1	26-Jan	off Black Head, Gerroa	inshore	BA
Kelp Gull	1	17-Jan	Myamba wetland, Shelharbour	wetland	KM
Little Tern	1	1-Jan	Berrara	beach	KM
Sooty Tern	3	8-Jan	off Wollongong	pelagic	CB
Common Noddy	1	8-Jan	off Wollongong	pelagic	CB
Crested Pigeon	13	30-Jan	Jamberoo	golf course	KM
Bar-shouldered Dove	2	10-Jan	Kangaroo Valley	garden	NJ
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	5	5-Jan	Booderee NP	overhead	MZ
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	13-Jan	Vincentia	woodland	NJ
Ground Parrot	1	4-Jan	near Hyams Beach, Jervis Bay	heath	MZ
Powerful Owl	1	19-Jan	Mt Kembla hotel	roadside tree	JM, TN
Powerful Owl	1	21-Jan	West Cambewarra	forest	GD
Sooty Owl	1	9-Jan	Clover Hill Rd., Macquarie Pass	rainforest	DF
Sooty Owl	1	21-Jan	West Cambewarra	rainforest	GD
Tawny Frogmouth	1	7-Jan	Figtree	garden	DF
Australian Owlet-Nightjar	1	9-Jan	Bomaderry Creek Reserve	woodland	DF
Fork-tailed Swift	10	15-Jan	Kangaroo Valley	overhead	NJ
Southern Emu-wren	2	7-Jan	Killalea State Park	grassland	GB
Eastern Bristlebird	4	4-Jan	near Hyams Beach, Jervis Bay	heath	MZ
Eastern Bristlebird	8+	14-Jan	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	JM
Pilotbird	2	14-Jan	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	JM
Striped Honeyeater	1	23-Jan	Kangaroo Valley	garden	CJ
Crested Shrike-tit	4	11-Jan	Excelsior Reserve, Thirroul	forest	MM
Satin Flycatcher	2	29-Jan	Kangaroo Valley	forest	BA
Skylark	1	4-Jan	Archgate nursery dam, Culburra	grassland	BA

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; GD – Gary Daly; DF - Damien Farine; DG - Darryl Goldrick; BBH – Brian & Barbara Hales; NH – Nerida Hudspith; CJ – Carla Jacket; NJ - Nigel Jacket; KM – Kevin Mills; JM - Jill Molan; MM - Mike Morphett; MZ - Marnix Zwankhuizen

Comment: The Striped Honeyeater which came to the Jacket's bird bath for two days and was photographed is a new bird for the region, the 425th species recorded from the region since the 1840s. The Westland Petrel had been rehabilitated at Taronga Zoo was released at sea off Wollongong by zoo staff. The Common Noddy sighting is the 10th regional record for this species.

PETER NOLAN and RAPTORS

Val Dolan

Raptor aficionado, Peter Nolan's, annual sojourn in the northern hemisphere began with his attendance at the International Falconry Conference in Kearney, Nebraska, U.S.A. Representatives of 38 countries, including Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Spain, Japan, Colombia and the Czech Republic gave presentations and many appeared in spectacular national costume at the conference dinner.

Later, meeting up with friends in Devon County, U.K., Peter continued the falconry theme of his holiday by hunting rabbits using American Harris's Hawks, assisted by ferrets. This bird is a captive breed in England. About a quarter of its flights resulted in a successful kill, which is appreciated by the vegetable gardeners who allow their properties to be used by hunters but not shooters. A slide showed one bird feasting on its final prey of the day.

While a friend was hunting with a precious four year old Peregrine Falcon the bird hit a wire amputating its leg. The caring owner drove for 3 1/2 hours to a veterinarian who had to euthanase the damaged bird.

The English weather in early December, 2006, was not conducive to comfortable bird watching with temperatures down to -1degree F, gale force winds, huge seas and overcast skies. Peter sometimes set off walking in the morning darkness, and with sunset at 3.37pm ... time was short, too. However, during his hunting walks, Peter sighted 27 small birds including a Red Legged Partridge, Green Kingfisher, Golden Plover and nine species of ducks. Driving to Dartmoor, in southern Devon, with the expectation of sighting some of the famous wild ponies only the more common deer were seen. Obviously lucky to see anything at all on the day, Peter's slide of Dartmoor's fog was reminiscent of a Turner painting!

Peter's enthusiasm was obvious and much appreciated by the club audience. Questions were answered about the differences between Peregrine Falcons around the world and Peter spoke of the plight of eagles in countries where farming and their habitat overlap. He also commented that many countries, much poorer than Australia, are involved in conservation and bird studies. Martin Cocker thanked Peter for his 'inimitable way' of making a club meeting interesting. Club members then monopolized Peter during supper looking at his still photographs and falconry magazines.

BLACKBUTT RESERVE WALK - Wednesday, 14/3/07

Chris Brandis

12 members met in the central carpark on a beautiful day and while waiting for the later arrivals Joan's sharp eyes spotted a White-throated Treecreeper, the first for years indicating, like the Eastern Whipbirds, there is some re-colonisation after the large fire some 15 years ago. By the time we were ready to move off we had some dozen species, including numbers of immature Spotted Pardalotes and a pair of Brown Goshawks, then as we moved down the central track a party of Fairywrens was found to have both Superb and Variegated present. This track led to the western carpark but there are a number of well used tracks going off on both sides but they all end up at the edge where there is a ring track. We arrived at the dam which was a picture with the bright smooth water with a dark forest background and plenty of dragonflies skimming around, a good spot for morning tea overlooking an Eurasian Coot on a nest.

As we were preparing to go eagle eye Jim spotted a Large-billed Scrubwren, the first ever for this area, and then a Rufous Fantail showed us how it got its name. We returned up a narrow mountain bike track back to the centre track and then wended our way back to the cars. The area is often quite busy at weekends with the picnic area well patronised by groups enjoying

the green space. With 2 new birds for the area it just goes to show that many eyes make for good spotting and an interesting walk around a nice local area.

Bird List

Black Swan	Pacific Black Duck	Little Pied Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant	Australian White Ibis	Brown Goshawk
Purple Swamphen	Dusky Moorhen	Eurasian Coot
Spotted Turtle Dove	Galah	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Rainbow Lorikeet	Crimson Rosella	Laughing Kookaburra
White-throated Treecreeper	Superb Fairywren	Variiegated Fairywren
Spotted Pardalote	White-browed Scrubwren	Large-billed Scrubwren
Brown Gerygone	Brown Thornbill	Yellow Thornbill
Red Wattlebird	Lewin's Honeyeater	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
New Holland Honeyeater	Eastern Spinebill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Eastern Whipbird	Golden Whistler	Magpie Lark
Rufous Fantail	Grey Fantail	Willie Wagtail
Black-face Cuckoo-shrike	Grey Butcherbird	Australian Magpie
Pied Currawong	Australian Magpie	Red-browed Finch
Mistletoebird	Red-whiskered Bulbul	Silvereye

* **Help !** Catherine Thomas, an Honours student at UTS is seeking help for her thesis on the Australian White Ibis. Specifically she is seeking sightings, numbers and locations of the ibis from March 20 to April 20 and then later in June/July. She would love it if you can help with bird sightings etc, and filling out a brief questionnaire. Catherine can be contacted at Catherine.A.Thomas@student.uts.edu.au

BEHIND the MENACE OF HITCHCOCK'S BIRDS

Mike MORPHETT

I guess we IBOCers joined the club as ornithophiles and not in order to overcome any hint or evidence of ornithophobia; still, I suspect that between these two extremes most of us on at least one occasion have felt some apprehension when confronted by a certain bird species, when there has been a too-close-for-comfort situation for both parties. Images of the open beak and raised wings of a honking sentinel goose or an irritable caged parrot or a large raptor with powerful talons may come to mind.

I was in my early twenties when I saw Alfred Hitchcock's horror movie *The Birds*, released by Universal Pictures in 1963, which Mark Obmascik quips "made the world think twice about backyard feeders". It was this American journalist's book, *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession* (Bantam Books 2004), I'm currently reading, that reawakened my interest in the film. Somewhat similar to Sean Dooley's personal experiences in *The Big Twitch* (Allen & Unwin 2005) in our own country, Obmascik traces the individual journeys in all sorts of conditions across North America during the year of 1998 by three birders in their obsession to record the highest number of avian species. Two of his protagonists, Al Levantin and Sandy Komito (Greg Miller makes up the trio) by chance joined the same tour boat to search Bodega Bay, north of San Francisco. This harbour was where Hitchcock did most of his filming. Inspiration came to him from two prime sources: Daphne du Maurier's short story of the same name, set in Britain, and a report in a Californian newspaper in August 1961 of strange and at times violent behaviour exhibited by certain seabirds. According to the Wikipedia, it was thought they suffered amnesic shellfish poisoning from ingesting fish containing domoic acid produced by the algae *Pseudo-nitzschia australis*.

After the initial innocuous pet shop scene, I recall the impact of the turn of events in the film: the sinister large gathering of crows on the children's playground gym equipment amid the succession of seemingly arbitrary and unexplained attacks on individuals and groups of people in the coastal village by these and other ordinary birds that we generally take for granted; namely, (western) seagulls, ravens and sparrows. Humans sought refuge from avian air-raids at a diner, an outdoor birthday party, and a gas station, and windows were splintered by diving birds.



To create heightened tension, the director enlisted the help of Ub Iwerks, who afterwards was nominated for an Academy Award for special visual effects, and bird trainer, Ray Berwick. Needless to say there were many technical problems to overcome over forty years ago to produce over 1400 shots. Live action with trained birds, mechanical birds, animation, and optically altered film overlay of flying birds were methods used. For many months Berwick trained birds to perform in simulated menacing ways: seagulls to circle over actors and return to his hand, and, in scenes where children featured, their beaks were wired shut for the protection of the children. Many gull scenes were shot in San Francisco, where the population was noted to be naturally nasty. Ravens and crows learned to peck hamburger off of actors' faces or seed sprinkled in their hair. Crows were made to lurk on the gutters of the old schoolhouse with magnets attached to their feet. One raven, named Corvus, took a particular dislike to Rod Taylor and attacked him at every opportunity, whereas another raven, Buddy, lived up to his name and refused to attack anyone for he welcomed human contact. At the outset Tippi Hedren was told that mechanical birds would be used in the brutal bedroom attack scene; however, live birds were thrown at her by the prop men for a week. Upon almost having her eye gouged, she became hysterical and collapsed and for a week suffered "flapping birds" nightmares. Elsewhere in the film she had birds attached to her by long nylon threads. Obmascik states that children fleeing swarms of black birds were actually running on a studio treadmill with the birds tied to their necks. He also refers to raspberry-dipped house finches pouring into a living-room through the fireplace. Another version describes attempts to lower 2000 bullfinches down the chimney, but instead they just hung out on any available perches.

So why did birds start and keep attacking humans? In an interview with French film director and critic, Francois Truffaut, who was influenced by Hitchcock's works, the latter said he didn't believe there was a reason. A number of theories have been advanced: in general to symbolise the frailty of human relationships, particularly in the form of feelings of, and responses to, attraction and rejection. More specifically, one critic's suggestion is the manifestation of a mother's anger, to the point of rage, towards other women's attempts to gain her son's affection, whereas in another's view the birds serve as a reminder that control is an illusion and those who persist to manipulate or dominate are the most vulnerable to unpredictable circumstances.

Should ever a *Birds III* movie be made - there was a 1994 Cable TV sequel, which I've not seen and apparently haven't missed much as it was generally considered a failure despite the appearance of Tippi Hedren in a different role - I should imagine, and perhaps hope, that the motive behind similarly relentless, aggressive behaviour would be as a payback for our universal destruction of their feeding and breeding habitats.

Travels in New Zealand, or 'I Feel Like A Tooheys or TUI!' Val Dolan

I didn't go to New Zealand for birdwatching but rather to attend a conference in Auckland and to catch up on some family history on the way. Driving from Wellington we saw millions of sheep, thousands of black and white cows but few birds. When we booked into the local pub at Taihape and asked the publican to recommend a NZ beer, \$6 bought us two half pints of Tui (pronounced Toohey, which sounded familiar!) The next day we bought a six pack of

Tui at the supermarket and noticed the lids had a picture of a tiny black bird with a tuft of white feathers under its beak. On our very first bushwalk at Huka Falls, above Lake Taupo, we sighted our first distinctive Tui . A shiny black bird with a 'bow tie' of white feathers let us have a fleeting glimpse as it flew into the trees by the river and caused us great excitement. We didn't yet know that the Tui is a very common bird on the north island. It was to become the symbol of our trip.



All the rooms at the Tauranga YHA are named for native trees. Ours was KOHEKOHE (the native cedar). An attractive print decorated one wall and a framed account of the uses of these trees the other. Maori cooked seabirds, often Shearwaters, in these leaves to disguise the strong taste and give a mixture of garlic, onion and spinach flavour to the dish. We also learned that once a year the Tui feasts on the ripe scarlet seeds of this tree and grows very fat. Maori have a saying 'he koko kai kohe,' which

means something like: 'you're as fat as a Tui !.' At a waterfront pub in Tauranga I ordered a couple of Tuis and the young Irish couple serving me said they kept seeing this distinctive bird but couldn't identify it until they watched a David Attenborough documentary.

Booking into a park on the Coromandel Peninsular we were treated for the first time to the call of the Tui as it returned to roost in a pine tree for the night. Great imitators it also gave us a rendition of a Bellbird's call, a bird it shared the tree with. My friend had an up close and personal encounter with the Coromandel Tui as it joined her for an early morning cuppa. She reported that as well as the distinctive neck tufts it also had a ring of longer decorative feathers around its neck. First settlers named it the parson bird for its distinctive collar.

Reaching Auckland I spent \$50 on a substantial bird book and another \$10 on a pocket guide to carry on walks. These told us that the Tui was an endemic honeyeater, 30 cm long, and confirmed many of our observations. The Auckland Museum records that Maoris tamed Tui and taught them to talk, even to offer a greeting to strangers. My final encounter was at the wondrous stainless steel railway station (Britomart) in Auckland where a huge billboard caught my eye - a single black Tui on a yellow background advertising the local brew. Enough to make one feel like a Tui or two!

Bellawongarah, Cambewarra Lookout, Red Rock - 18.3.07 Sylvia Garlick

It was a cool and overcast Sunday, but great for walking.

We (14 of us all told) met Betty at the turnoff to the cemetery, and parked the cars at the fire station. A walk around the parking area then down to the Historical Cemetery rewarded us with sightings of Lewin's Honeyeater, Superb Lyrebird, Crimson Rosella, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Grey Butcher Bird AND a few leeches. SO morning tea was taken on the fire station verandah that had a cement floor.



At the Top - David, Betty, Nerida, Sylvia, Joan Z, Bill, Terry Photo: Martin Cocker

Next we walked up the gentle slope to the rain forest, the rocks and leaves were dripping wet from yesterday's rain. Excellent cover was provided for birds, animals and insects by the understory of giant Bird's Nest and Rasp Ferns growing on the rocks as well as the ground. Here we saw Rufous Fantail, Brown Thornbill, Yellow Robin, Eastern Whipbird, Grey Shrike Thrush. On the path was a Bassiau Thrush. Only the second time I have seen this bird. On the right hand side of the track Red Browed Finches were sitting on the fence. The gate was locked so we returned to the cars and headed for Cambewarra Lookout. Here we saw three Brown Goshawks.

We parked the 2wheel drive vehicles and left in the 4wheel drive vehicles and headed for Red Rock. Lunch along the track and then a slow walk. to the Aboriginal Site overlooking Nowra, Bombaderry and the Shoalhaven River. Lots of birds in this area Red and Little Wattle Birds, Whitenaped Honeyeater, Yellow Faced Honeyeater, Grey Fantail, Dusky Woodswallow, Spotted Pardalote, Silvereeye and an immature Scarlet Honeyeater.

Time to return to the Lookout, and thank Betty for another interesting excursion, and head for home. 38 bird species sighted all told.

Brown Goshawk	Brown Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush
White Headed Pigeon	Brown Gerygone	Rufous Fantail
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Red Wattle Bird	Grey Fantail
Wonga Pigeon	Little Wattle Bird	Dusky Woodswallow
Topnot Pigeon	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Butcher Bird
Australian King Parrot	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Crimson Rosella	White-napped Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Laughing Kookaburra	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Spinebill	Satin Bowerbird
Superb Fairy Wren	Scarlet Honeyeater	Redbrowed Finch
Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Yellow Robin	Silvereeye
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Eastern Whipbird	Bassian Thrush
White-browed Scrubwren	Golden Whistler	

...and Pieces

* **Congratulations** to longtime IBOC member Lindsay Smith, who has reaped another prestigious award. The following appeared in the Mercury recently.

"Unanderra resident Lindsay Smith was yesterday presented with the Serventy Conservation Medal for his commitment to wildlife protection. At the Parliament House ceremony, Mr. Smith was recognised for his work protecting seabirds.

"Mr. Smith has been actively studying the seabirds visiting the coast near Wollongong for over 50 years and has become an expert on Australian seabirds, especially the albatross.

"Mr. Smith describes himself as an amateur, but in 1987 the Australian Museum employed him as an ornithologist for his research and he received an OAM for his work in 2004."

* **Projector** After much debate, the Committee has decided to purchase a projector for the club. (Up to now we have borrowed or hired projectors) Chris Brandis has investigated a number of machines, and compared prices. The Committee gave approval the purchase of a machine up to \$1000 approx (Prices range from \$800 to \$2,500) \$500 will be withdrawn from the club's Term Deposit and the rest will be paid from general funds.

* **BIGnet** Chris Brandis attends various BIGnet meetings on behalf of the club, and reports and writes about them. But he wonders, 'Does anyone read these reports? Is it worth the time and effort he puts into it?' What say you? Feedback is wanted? Talk with Chris!

* **Colour Supplement** Colin and Melissa Markham traveled to Kenya in August last year. They stayed at Larsens Tented Camp in Samburu Game Reserve, at Kicheche Tented Camp on the Masai Mara and in the Great Rift Valley staying at Lake Elementatia, Lake Nakuru, Lake Baringo, Lake Bororia and Lake Naivasha. Two weeks all told.

These three areas of Kenya have a vast array of bird species.

The **Markhams** have provided the two back pages of their bird photos of this IBOC News, *gratis*, to the club. And there will be another Colour Supplement to come from them!

Biggest and Smallest – the Same Bird – How's That? Dave Thomson

I've been thumbing through some bird statistics. Remarkable what you can find. Bet you didn't know that the greatest number of broods raised in one year by a bird pair was 21, and by a pair of our Zebra Finches. Or that one of the birds most susceptible to nasal leech infestation is the swan. You didn't? Luckily, some of the stuff is much more interesting.

The world's smallest bird is the Bee Hummingbird of central America, weighing in at just 1.6 grams (our smallest, the Weebill, weighs about 6 gms). The smallest mammal is probably the mouse-like Savi's Pygmy Shrew of the Mediterranean, which comes in about 3 grams, double the weight of the smallest bird. The largest bird is the Ostrich of Africa, weighing in at about 150 kg while the largest mammal is the Blue Whale, tipping the scales at about 150 tonnes – 1,000 times the weight of the largest bird. But the Ostrich is far too heavy to fly, leaving the title of heaviest flying bird to the 21 kg Great Bustard of Africa. The mammals have a similar problem in that the whale is so heavy that it can't be supported like the other large mammals by a prop on each corner, it has to have its weight uniformly supported over its body by living in water. The largest walking mammal is the 7 tonne Asian Elephant.

And we all know that the Peregrine Falcon when diving (stooping) on its prey is the fastest bird - in such a dive it can reach 188 km/h. In level flight, the title seems to go to the racing pigeon (Rock Dove) at a speed of 177 km/h, with the White-throated Needletail and the Red-breasted Merganser (duck) close behind. The title for the slowest flying bird goes to the American Woodcock (snipe-like game bird), getting along at the remarkable pace of 8 km/h. And while we're on flying, wing beats per second range from 2.3 for a lapwing through 5.0 for a Mallard and 9.0 for a pheasant, but none can match the hummingbirds. The South American Amethyst Woodstar (hummingbird) beats its wings 90 times a second, the resulting

hum being pitched about one and a half octaves below middle C, just a couple of notes lower than the familiar hum from our electrical gear.

Some of the more interesting figures involve eggs. As we'd expect, the biggest egg, 1,600 grams, is that of the Ostrich, while the smallest is, again not surprisingly, that of a hummingbird, the Vervain Hummingbird of the West Indies, weighing in at a mere 0.37 grams. And the biggest egg relative to the size of the adult is that of the Little Spotted Kiwi – though it weighs only 310 grams, it's 26% of the mother's 1.2 kg. At the other end of the scale, the Ostrich nearly makes it as the smallest egg relative to size of the adult at 1.8%, but the record goes to the Emperor Penguin whose 450 grams egg is 1.5% of the mother's 30 kg weight.

And so the figures go on – longest bill (Australian Pelican, 470 mm), country with the most introduced species (US (Hawaii), 68), deepest dive (Emperor Penguin, 540 m), most intelligent (Grey Parrot of Africa), highest price paid for an egg (1,000 pounds for that of the extinct *Aepyornis maximus*) and so on.

If you'd like to find more exciting information, try *The Bird Almanac*, by David M. Bird.

Unusual Records for February 2007

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Great Crested Grebe	1	17-Feb	Yallah	pond	IM
Streaked Shearwater	1	24-Feb	off Wollongong	marine	LS
Nankeen night Heron	1	11-Feb	Windang Bowling Club	lake shore	MR
Pacific Baza	1	31-Jan	bottom Macquarie Pass NP	forest	IM
Brown Goshawk	1	15-Feb	Excelsior Reserve, Thirroul	overhead	MM
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	2-Feb	Berry Mountain	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	24-Feb	Jerrara Dam	overhead	IM
Painted Button-quail	1	2-Feb	Berry Mountain	roadside	BA
Black-fronted Dotterel	5	17-Feb	Spring Creek wetland, Kiama	wetland	MR
South Polar Skua	1	24-Feb	off Wollongong	pelagic	LS
Arctic Jaeger	1	12-Feb	Bellambi Point	inshore	JW
Long-tailed Jaeger	2	3-Feb	Black Head, Geroa	inshore	BA
Common Tern	1	12-Feb	Bellambi Point	rocky shore	JW
Sooty Tern	1	24-Feb	off Wollongong	pelagic	LS
White-headed Pigeon	1	22-Feb	Minnamurra Rainforest	rainforest	JM
Topknot Pigeon	50+	23-Feb	Balgownie	overhead	RT
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	3-Feb	Bendella	garden	RR
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	5	17-Feb	Bomaderry Creek Reserve	woodland	BH
Red-rumped Parrot	3	11-Feb	Barrack Point	parkland	MR
Noisy Pitta	1	1-Feb	near Upper Cordeaux Dam	rainforest	JR
Rose Robin	1	4-Feb	bottom Macquarie Pass NP	forest	BO
Rose Robin	1	20-Feb	Bellawongarah	garden	BA
Logrunner	2	15-Feb	Excelsior Reserve, Thirroul	forest	MM
Crested Shrike-tit	5	5-Jan	Gibson track, Thirroul	forest	IM
Leaden Flycatcher	1	24-Feb	Jerrara Dam	woodland	IM
Spangled Drongo	1	20-Feb	Bellawongarah	garden	BA
Dusky Woodswallow	6	26-Feb	Barrack Point	roadside tree	MR
Bassian Thrush	1	8-Feb	Keiraville	garden	ME

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; ME – Mary Eskdale; BH – Betty Hudson; IM – Ian McKinlay; JM - Jill Molan; MM - Mike Morphet; BO – Bruce O'Brien; MR – Michelle Rower; RR – Robert Rind; JR – Neil and Judi Russell; LS – Lindsay Smith; RT – Roger Truscott; JW – Joan Wylie

Comment: The South Polar Skua is the third recorded from the region, and the Noisy Pitta is the 12th recorded in the Illawarra since 1839.

JUNE NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 24th May**. **NB. PENNY POTTER** will be the Editor of the June IBOC News so please send items to her at penny_potter@bigpond.com or mail them to her at 1/23 Hopetoun St, Woonona 2517

CELEBRATION.....2007 IBOC is 30 years old .

To acknowledge this birthday a Dessert & Coffee event will be held on the usual meeting night 9 July 2007 at 7.30pm in the Fairy Meadow Community Centre.

It will be an informal night beginning with Dessert & Coffee, with an opportunity to have fellowship and reflect on the Club's journey over 30 years before hearing from our Guest Speakers - Chris Brandis and Doug Prosser. Chris and Doug will share with us one of IBOC's projects over the years " Bird Surveys on Lake Illawarra". Cost to be advised (under \$ 10), and no need to bring supper that night. To assist with catering numbers RSVP to Fae & Kevin McGregor 42 71 3762 by 25 June 2007 please.

BITS and....

- **Fees.** Don't miss out on reading of Walks, Talks and other Club news. If you haven't already paid your fees, see our Treasurer, Bronwyn Wilson, pronto. Cheque her out personally, or send your cheque to her address at 8 Wellington Drive, Balgownie 2519.

The 2007 BASNA SEMINAR

Mike MORPHETT

On 24 March last, after casting my State member vote, I elected to attend another BASNA seminar, again held at Newington Armory, Sydney Olympic Park; this time the theme was 'A Celebration of Birds'. Speakers and audience did a mighty job focussing on the individual topics in very hot, humid conditions under fans tucked high in the tin roof. The oppressive atmosphere may have brought about the gremlins that intruded in three of the power-point presentations.

☐ **Secret Nightlife at Sydney Olympic Park:** Judy Harrington, who led our last September walk through Bicentennial Park, spoke of the varied wildlife in the Park despite the loud noise and bright lights accompanying human activities. Besides the nesting Tawny Frogmouth and Collared Sparrowhawk, she highlighted the Peregrine Falcon, Rufous Night-Heron, and also Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Godwit among the waders that settle on the mudflats within the Waterbird Refuge.

☐ **Bird Vocalisations:** With recordings and sonographs (prime example of which was the Eastern Whipbird) Fred van Gessel demonstrated a wide range of bird calls and songs and also some 'mechanical' sounds produced by certain species, using their bills, feathers or feet. He looked at sub-song, mimicry (the Chestnut-rumped Heathwren can reproduce calls of 12-15 other species), emotions producing weak or strong vocalisations, advertising, and times of day. Also variations, selecting the song of the Brown Thornbill and call of the Southern Boobook across different States and then similarities of calls of the Black-faced and Black-winged Monarchs in different regions.

☐ **What do Museum specimens tell us about the impact of urbanisation?:** Comparing the collection of pre-1900 bird specimens within a 10 km radius of Sydney GPO and observational data from the 2000 Atlasing program, Richard Major came up with a dichotomy of urban lovers and haters. Several Parrots, such as the Rainbow Lorikeet, large Honeyeaters (Noisy Miner for example), large carnivores/omnivores, and various introduced species (Rock Dove) have thrived with the expansion of human development, whereas small Honeyeaters and many insectivores and birds of fertile soils have declined; some to the extent of total absence, such as the Australian Bustard, White-fronted Chat (once at Homebush Bay and

Towra Point), and the Ground and Turquoise Parrots. About 20,800 bird skins are housed at the Australian Museum.

□ ***Cooperative breeding in Australo-Papuan Babblers:*** University researcher, Dean Portelli took us through the breeding habits of each of the five babbler species. Cooperative breeding (when more than two birds combine to raise a brood with ‘helpers at the nest’) was first discovered in the Grey-crowned. Similar behaviour exhibited by the Chestnut-crowned wasn’t confirmed until 15 years ago.

□ ***Going, going...gone? What chance Regent Honeyeaters in a disappearing woodland?:*** Despite 13 years of research, David Geering is still seeking information about this enigmatic, mobile and striking species, using sight records, colour-banding, radio telemetry and some speculation to ascertain its movement about, and use, of the landscape. He emphasised the significance of resource-rich (namely nectar) “hot spots” and the links between them as well as the combined cooperation of land-holders and volunteers (notably in the Capertee Valley) for the long-term survival of the species. Whilst there are only three remaining important breeding areas and despite the impact of drought, David has an optimistic outlook.

□ ***Why are Barking Owls so uncommon in Southern Australia?:*** Even after 20 years of surveys, Rod Kavanagh advocates further studies, especially within private properties, to better understand this bird’s conservation status, such as one conducted in the NW NSW Pilliga. Among the potentially limiting factors, he listed habitat and food availability, breeding success, predation (chiefly by goanna) of nestlings, and disease as impacting on this species that has a home range of about 2,000 hectares.

□ ***Important Bird Areas:*** Phil Straw referred us to the *IBA March 2007 Newsletter* and Birds Australia website www.birdsaustralia.com.au/project/ibas, requesting further suggestions to the 116 identified potential important areas, which, in our region, includes Budderoo and Barren Grounds, Burratorang Valley, Lake Wollumboola and Jervis Bay. Mid-2008 is the target for designating all sites in NSW which are to be recognised as globally significant for bird conservation.

□ ***Birds in Backyards:*** Holly Parsons said one of the project’s aims is to restore the balance between small birds, currently in decline, and large aggressive species that are on the increase. Strategies include the management of disturbances and threats and the creation of bird-friendly spaces (for our benefit as well as birds’) and of corridors. Also, Guidelines for Enhancing Urban Bird Habitats, targeting home-owners, environmental officers, bush regenerators, planners and landscapers. The guidelines should be accessible in May as a pdf on www.birdsinbackyards.net website.

□ ***North Head Surveys and Cowra Woodland Birds Program:*** drawing our attention to their posters, representative speakers again emphasised the need for ongoing assistance from volunteers.

□ ***BASNA Twitchathon:*** In the wake of a very successful fundraiser last year, Alan Morris urged the participation of more bird groups, suggesting some from the Illawarra, in October; something for our IBOC Committee to consider perhaps. Alan also sought more Atlasers, advising that GPS data can be Googled.

□ ***Australian Bird Education Centre:*** BASNA chairman, Ian Hume expressed the hope that this would open mid-year, initially on a weekend basis, to the public, but also with a view to targeting school groups in particular, after the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, which would charge only a nominal rent. The BASNA Office will move from Crows Nest into one of the allocated four buildings that border the western side of the 48-hectare Newington Nature Reserve. During the lunch break we were given opportunity to inspect the rooms, a short walk from the seminar venue. The centre will very much require the assistance of volunteers.

There are over 100 heritage buildings on the Newington Armory site, which at present is restricted to Sundays for public access. With undulating open and woodland areas bordering the Parramatta River, it was formerly occupied for over a century by the Royal Australian

Navy as an armament depot, after the Blaxland family had been colonial occupants. Together with the Newington Nature Reserve it makes up Homebush Bay, touted as the “new heart of Sydney”. I’d rather think of it as a revitalised lung as a counterpart to the eastern one in the form of the Botanic Garden and Centennial Park and as a specially bird-friendly place.

Mid-Week Walk – Wednesday 11th April – Wollongong Botanic Gardens - Chris. Cartledge

It was a lovely autumn morning, and when I arrived at the Murphys Ave car park it was almost full. My first thought was wow! The whole club membership has turned out. But alas, it was school holidays and at the entrance to the gardens were about 20 children from St Bridget’s Primary School doing their stretches before training for a cross-country running competition.

The IBOC contingent ended up to be eleven, including our esteemed treasurer Bronwyn, who was also taking advantage of the school holidays to make use of this great public facility.

As usual, Tom had his notebook out and before leaving the car park had 13 entries to start the sightings list for the day. It totalled 44. We did an anti-clockwise circuit of the gardens working our way through the various temperate zone plantings. An early highlight was the first of three bowers to be seen on the walk. Amongst the grevilleas, on the eastern perimeter, was the most recently constructed bower with a male satin bowerbird attending to two females.

We moved on, up to the top of the hill to see five Australian King Parrots on top of the ‘Mercury’ five islands sculpture. On closer inspection, we saw the parrots were waiting their turn for a bath in a small residual pond at the base of this now dry sculpture. When first opened in Wollongong Rest Park this gift to the city was spectacular sight with water gushing over each ‘island’.

Almost an hour later we reached the ‘Illawarra rainforest’ and saw small birds for the first time. We then moved into the ‘Sub-tropical rainforest’ area where, on their previous recce, Tom and Joan spied a Boobook Owl devouring a smaller bird. The carrion was still on top of the stump.

After morning tea on the amphitheatre stage we moved over to the old caretaker’s cottage at the back of Glennifer Brae. Here, in the massive fig tree overshadowing the cottage we watched numerous orioles feeding on the plentiful fruit. We wandered back to the car park via the rose garden and duck pond. Thanks once again to Joan and Tom for a most enjoyable mid-week walk!

Australian Wood Duck	Musk Lorikeet	Black-faced Monarch
Mallard	Australian King Parrot	Maggie lark
Pacific Black Duck	Crimson Rosella	Grey Fantail
Chestnut Teal	Eastern Rosella	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian Pelican	Laughing Kookaburra	Olive-backed Oriole
Royal Spoonbill	Superb Fairy wren	Grey Butcherbird
Purple Swamphen	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Dusky Moorhen	Brown Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Masked Lapwing	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Raven
Silver Gull	Red Wattlebird	Satin Bowerbird
Rock Dove	Little Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
Spotted Turtle-Dove	Noisy Miner	Silvereye
Galah	Lewin’s Honeyeater	Common Myna
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Rainbow Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	Goose (domestic)

Wellington Camp April 2007

Gwen Robinson

On the way to camp we passed through the towns of Bathurst and Orange. The streets were ablaze with autumn trees; yellow, orange and every shade of red. This spectacular show gave way to drought stricken paddocks of withered grasses and red-brown soil.

Wellington Caves Tourist Park was a good choice with units, cabins and a large area for vans and tents. We were greeted by resident birds grazing in the dry grasses: Australian King-Parrots, Red-rumped Parrots, Eastern Rosellas and Noisy Miners. Among the trees were Blue-faced Honeyeaters and Grey Butcherbirds. At night a Barking Owl caught moths fluttering before a light, or just posed for us. At the end of the first day the list was of 36 species, thanks mostly to the early arrivals.



On Sunday, the now 22 Birdos walked through the adjoining golf course into the surrounding dry area. Birds were few. Red-browed Finch, Superb Fairy Wren, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Crested Pigeons and a Grey Fantail were some seen. The bird list had climbed to a modest 52 when read out around the camp fire. Yes, we had a camp fire, thanks mostly to Neil and Tom and other wood gatherers.

Monday was a big day with a long hot walk on the Yarroman track around Mt Arthur reserve. Some of us saw only the Grey Fantail but others had better luck sighting the Tawny Frogmouth, Golden Whistler and Inland Thornbill. Fortunately sightings were more productive both before and after the walk, and Sivereye, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, White-fronted Treecreeper, Crimson Rosella, Long-billed Corella, Zebra Finch were some added to the list. Unfortunately Joan slipped and cracked the bone in her left forearm. With her arm in plaster, did this stop Joan? Not at all.

At 4pm we met for a most interesting tour of Wellington Caves led by Dr Michael Augee who formerly lectured at UNSW, and club member, Dr

Betty: set for the Zoo *Photo Brian Hale* Lyn Dawson who worked on fossils in the caves in the 1980s for her thesis on Vertebrate Palaeontology at UNSW, and later while associated with the Australian Museum. Michael, now a Wellington resident and the Deputy Mayor, organised a BarBQ for us provided by the Shire Council. Mike BarBQed tasty sausages and his partner Christine provided salads and a delicious slice for our tea and coffee. Drinks were provided too. We felt very special. Great BarBQ, and good company, including the Mayor, the Ranger, and others. Thank you Mike for a great night!

Tuesday: to Burrendong Dam and Arboretum. Here were sighted the Crested Shrike-tit, Mistletoebird, Speckled Warbler, Hooded Robin, Diamond Firetail, Peaceful Dove, Yellow Robin and Fantailed Cuckoo. Waterbirds sighted included Great Crested Grebe, Black Swan, Great, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, Pacific Black Duck and Great Egret. By the end of the day the list had climbed to 92, a large number for such dry conditions. Burrendong

Dam was only 2.5% of capacity but despite this, Wellington township is not on water restrictions.

Next day saw an early start to Dubbo Zoo resulting in a most interesting day studying the animals. Some animals were fed while we watched. Some members walked, keen ones rode bikes, while others drove in cars. We finished the day in a huge aviary where we saw many endangered species including Regent Honeyeaters with their sweet calls, the Malleefowl and a surprising number of Diamond Firetails feeding young and building nests. Birds flying free were a Black Kite, Red-capped Robin, White-browed Babblers and Grey-crowned Babblers.

That night, back at Wellington, we dined out at the 'Lion of Waterloo,' a hotel built of vertical timber boards in 1843. It was a Cobb and Co. coachhouse with lots of atmosphere, and the food was fine too.

Thursday was a free day and more birds were added to the list particularly by those who visited Burrendong Dam again. The list was now 107. Next day, Tony, the Ranger for Mt Arthur took the group on an interesting but very arduous walk down by the Macquarrie River. No new birds were seen but a Brown Songlark was seen by a member elsewhere.

In all 26 club members and family attended the camp. Betty Hudson is to be congratulated for her work in organizing such an interesting camp. It was a great time together. And we hope Wellington received some of the rain which fell out west.

Bird List for Wellington Camp

There was a total of 115 species recorded during the camp on the camp site and the various other locations in the area we visited

Species only sighted at Dubbo Zoo, are marked with an asterisk.

Species only sighted at either Molong or Yeoval are marked with a hash

*Black Swan	Red-kneed Dotterel	Weebill	Magpie Lark
Australian Wood Duck	Masked Lapwing	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Mallard	Silver Gull	Inland Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Rock Dove	Chestnut-rumped	Black-faced Cuckoo-
Grey Teal	Crested Pigeon	Thornbill	shrike
* Chestnut Teal	Peaceful Dove	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Black-faced
* Hardhead	Galah	Yellow-rumped	Woodswallow
Australasian Grebe	Long-billed Corella	Thornbill	Dusky Woodswallow
Great Crested Grebe	Little Corella	Yellow Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
Darter	Sulphur-crested	Spiny-cheeked	Pied Butcherbird
Little Pied Cormorant	Cockatoo	Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Little Black Cormorant	Cockatiel	Noisy Friarbird	Pied Currawong
Great Cormorant	Australian King-Parrot	Little Friarbird	Australian Raven
Australian Pelican	Superb Parrot	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Little Raven
White-faced Heron	Crimson Rosella	Noisy Miner	White-winged Chough
Great Egret	Eastern Rosella	White-eared	Apostlebird
#Nankeen Night Heron	Red-rumped Parrot	Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Australian White Ibis	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	White-plumed	Double-barred Finch
Straw-necked Ibis	Barking Owl	Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Black-shouldered Kite	Southern Boobook	Eastern Spinebill	Diamond Firetail
Black Kite	Tawny Frogmouth	Jacky Winter	Mistletoebird
Whistling Kite	Azure Kingfisher	Red-capped Robin	Welcome Swallow
White-bellied Sea-	Laughing Kookaburra	Hooded Robin	Tree Martin
Eagle	White-throated	Eastern Yellow Robin	Fairy Martin
Brown Goshawk	Treecreeper	Grey-crowned Babbler	*Clamorous Reed-
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Brown Treecreeper	White-browed Babbler	Warbler
Little Eagle	Superb Fairy-wren	Varied Sittella	#Brown Songlark
Brown Flacon	Spotted Pardalote	Crested Shrike-tit	Golden-headed
Nankeen Kestrel	Striated Pardalote	Golden Whistler	Cisticola
Purple Swamphen	White-browed	Rufous Whistler	Silvereye
Dusky Moorhen	Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Blackbird
Eurasian Coot	Speckled Warbler	* Restless Flycatcher	Common Starling

...and Pieces * The Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater surveys are on once again. Surveys are run twice a year in NSW, ACT, Vic and parts of SA and QLD. The aim of the surveys is to record both of these species as they migrate away from their typical breeding areas. The Swift Parrot leaves Tasmania and is found on the mainland from April- September. The Regent Honeyeater breeds in three main areas: the Capertee Valley, central NSW; Bundarra- Barraba, northern NSW; and Chiltern in north-east Vic before dispersing.

We have over 800 people contributing to these surveys but considering the large area these species cover and the fact that their non-breeding distribution seems to vary between years, we would love more involvement.

Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater surveys. *Dates:* 19-20th May, 4-5th Aug 2007

Location: Surveys cover NSW, ACT, Vic as well as parts of SA and QLD. Please contact a project coordinator (listed below) to discuss which area you are able to survey and to receive relevant newsletters and the survey form. You may survey different sites in your local area over the weekend. *Time:* You can undertake surveys at any time over the weekend. Surveys can take as little time as 10-20 minutes each. *Contacts:*

Swift Parrots:

Belinda Cooke, Swift Parrot Project Officer, NSW, ACT, SA, QLD
Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW
swiftparrots@yahoo.com.au, Freecall 1800 66 57 66

Regent Honeyeaters:

David Geering, Regent Honeyeater Recovery Coordinator,
Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW,
David.Geering@environment.nsw.gov.au, Freecall 1800 621 056

BIGnet Report 17-18/3/07

Chris Brandis

The Bird Interest Group Network was held at Manna Park, just north of Merimbula, hosted by the Far South Coast Birdwatchers and attended by representatives of 14 clubs or government departments. Subjects discussed included the spread of the Indian Mynah down the south coast, control of Common Starlings, and an interesting scientific trial to remove Bell Miners from Manna Park and the Mandini complex. It was suspected that Bell Miners contribute to eucalypt die back and a reduction in the range of small birds. Members have been mist netting Bell Miners, euthanasing them in some areas and banding them in others and then observing any changes to the forest and bird numbers, and if the Bell Miners move back into areas they have been removed from. Initial results indicate that the trees recover, the number of small birds increased, and the Bell Miners have not moved back into de-stocked areas.

Strategies for increasing active club membership were discussed, as they are at nearly every meeting, and the development of an Australian Bird Education Centre at the Sydney Olympic Park by Birds Australia, and the request for volunteers to man the centre when finished. The Important Bird Areas project progress was summarised, the Little Tern project monitoring by the host Club along the Sapphire Coast, the upcoming Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater count and finally the site of the next meeting in September. Any member that would like to represent IBOC is welcome to, and can contact me for details at any time.

***Colour Supplement** Colin and Melissa Markham traveled to Kenya in August last year. They stayed at three tented camps which have a vast array of bird species; in the Samburu Game Reserve, at Masai Mara, and in the Great Rift Valley .
The **Markhams** have provided the two back pages of their bird photos of this IBOC News, *gratis*, to the club.

Unusual Records for March 2007

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Great Crested Grebe	47	3-Mar	Wingecarribee Reservoir	lake	BA
Kermadec Petrel	few	30-Mar	east of Kiama	pelagic	LS
Gould's Petrel	few	30-Mar	east of Kiama	pelagic	LS
Royal Albatross	1	31-Mar	east of Jervis Bay	pelagic	LS
Red-tailed Tropicbird	1	30-Mar	east of Kiama	pelagic	LS
Masked Booby	1	31-Mar	east of Jervis Bay	pelagic	LS
Osprey	1	10-Mar	Albion Park Rail	overhead	BBH
Pacific Baza	1	3-Jan	lower Macquarie Pass	forest	IM
Pacific Baza	2	4-Mar	Kangaroo Valley	overhead	CJ
Black Kite	2	12-Mar	Dunmore	overhead	RB
Grey Goshawk	1	2-Mar	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	3-Mar	Nepean Dam	overhead	BA
Brown Falcon	1	8-Mar	Moss Vale	overhead	DG
Peregrine Falcon	1	20-Mar	Tianjara plateau, Morton NP	overhead	MZ
Buff-banded Rail	2	10-Mar	Albion Park Rail	lake edge	BBH
Latham's Snipe	2	10-Mar	Albion Park Rail	lake edge	BBH
Ruddy Turnstone	19	3-Mar	Bellambi Lagoon	shore	NH
Grey Ternlet	1	31-Mar	east of Jervis Bay	pelagic	LS
White-headed Pigeon	2	12-Mar	Macquarie Pass NP	forest	RT
Peaceful Dove	1	3-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	BA
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	30-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR
Powerful Owl	1	1-Mar	Kanahooka	forest	MC
Barn Owl	1	23-Mar	Corrimal	garden	RT
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	several	20-Mar	Tianjara plateau, Morton NP	heath	MZ
Rose Robin	1	2-Mar	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Rose Robin	1	12-Mar	Macquarie Pass NP	forest	RT
Rose Robin	1	30-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR
Crested Shrike-tit	2	26-Mar	Bellawongarah	forest	BA
Crested Shrike-tit	2	30-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR
Leaden Flycatcher	1	29-Mar	Balgownie	garden	TE
Satin Flycatcher	1	2-Mar	Mt. Keira	forest	CB
Spangled Drongo	1	1-Mar	Bellambi	overhead	TW
Diamond Firetail	1	30-Mar	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; RB - Roger Bogeart; CB - Chris Brandis; TE - Terri Edwell; ME - Mary Eskdale; DG - Darryl Goldrick; BBH - Brian & Barbara Hales; NH - Nerida Hudspith; CJ - Carla Jacket; IM - Ian McKinlay; JM - Jill Molan; MM - Mike Morphet; MR - Michelle Rower; RR - Robert Rind; LS - Lindsay Smith; RT - Roger Truscott; TW - Tom Wylie; MZ - Marnix Zwankhuizen

Comment: A special SOSSA pelagic boat trip that set sail from Ulladulla at the end of March produced some quite interesting observations off the continental shelf. Of note was only the 2nd regional record of Masked Booby, the previous one being in March 2003.

Finches

A tiny spill of bird things in a swirl
and crest and tide that splashed the garden's edge,
a chatterful of finches filled the hedge
and came upon us with a rush and curl
and scattering of wings. They were so small
I laughed to see them ludicrously gay
among the thorny stalks, and all that day
they teased me with their tiny throated calls.

Thomas Shapcott *Little Book of Birds*



"One Good Tern Deserves Another"

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

I.B.O.C. NEWS

<http://www.iboc.org.au/>

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 \$30 SINGLE \$25 JUNIOR \$5**

Please pay Bronwyn Wilson, our Treasurer, by cash, cheque or mail order

IBOC NEWS Contents

Report on May Meeting	p 2
Mid-week walk: Kelly's Falls	p 2
Drenched in Darwin	p 4
Heathcote National Park Walk	p 5
Birds Around Berry	p 7
Of Birds and Poems	p 9
Unusual Sightings	p10

Club Contacts

PRESIDENT:	Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742
SECRETARY:	Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307 email: elizabethhudson@bigpond.com
TREASURER:	Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744
EDITORS:	John Cashman, Tel: 02 4284 0538 email: cashmansjr@bigpond.com Val Dolan, Tel: 02 4229 6737
RECORDS OFFICER:	Chris Chafer email:cchafer@speedlink.com.au

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS JUNE 2007

CLUB MEETING – Monday 11th June 2007 - 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall - Col Markham will be presenting some of the photos of birds and animals he took on his trip to Kenya. **Please remember to bring a mug and a small plate for supper afterwards.**

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 13th June 2007 – Hooka Point – Chris Brandis Meet at the car park at the end of Sussex, approaching from the west, and Holborn, from the east, Streets at 9 am for a walk out along Hooka Point and Hooka Creek. My mobile no. is 0427 962837. Bring morning tea, hats, sunscreen etc.

JUNE MONTHLY OUTING - Saturday 16th June 2007. Booderee National Park, Jervis Bay - Leader Betty Hudson. Meet at the car park at the Visitors Centre at the entrance to the National Park on the Jervis Bay Road. at 9.00am. We will drive into the park to Murray's Beach and then walk through the coastal forest and heath to the cliffs overlooking the ocean. The actual walk will depend on the weather. We will return to the cars and drive to the Botanic Garden and Lake Windermere for lunch and a short afternoon walk. To reach Jervis Bay take the left turn off the Princes Hwy south of Nowra, just after passing Falls Creek. Continue along this road until you reach the park entrance. It is suggested that we car pool as there is an admission fee to enter the park

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING - Tuesday 19th June, at 7.30pm at the home of Joan and Tom Wylie, 4 Daphne St, Corrimal (Tel: 4284 2051). As usual, members are invited to attend.

JULY 2007 NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is **Thursday 21st June**. Please don't leave submitting your contributions to the last minute and where possible please submit by email to John Cashman: cashmansjr@bigpond.com.

REPORT ON MAY MEETING

It Builds A Nest...Lays Eggs...Has A Bill...But It Isn't A Bird!

Val Dolan

Speaker:Dr Tom Grant

When a specimen of this animal was taken to England in the late 1700s people thought they were being tricked by a composite of bird and animal. Indeed although Aborigines told settlers that these creatures lay eggs this was not believed. In an attempt to 'study' the animals in the early days of Queensland one man wrote that he had killed 1300 males and the same number of females! The same person removed a platypus from its pond and experimented to see how far it could walk to return, until it died trying.

Our guest speaker, Dr Tom Grant, has been studying the platypus for over 35 years. He told us these stories and was obviously appalled. When he asked for a show of hands from the audience of 50 most indicated that they had seen a platypus in the wild. Although it has a bill, lays eggs which develop like a bird's and has a leg spur in the male, it is undoubtedly a mammal. Scientists believe it is related to or descended from an ancient Patagonian animal now found only in fossil form. While there is a considerable difference in fur colouration and size from Queensland to Tasmania and from the eastern part of NSW to the Murray Basin they appear to be the same species. All close their eyes and ears when swimming and have grinding pads to crush their food, which can only be eaten under water. They must eat one third of their body weight daily to survive. In the wild much of this food is tiny in the form of insect larvae but in captivity they thrive on yabbies.

In 1986 scientists thought that the mucous covered nerve endings in the bill of the platypus worked in a similar way to the electric field that sharks and rays make use of in their nerve endings and that this assisted in the collection of tiny food items. The definitive use of the spur on the males' hind leg remains debateable too. Dr Grant showed us diagrams of the formation of the spur and photographic evidence of the swelling induced by picking up a male in the breeding season. He also showed diagrams of burrows and nests, explaining that a nest may be abandoned if infested with ticks .

A lively question time followed the presentation. Evidence has been found of a 21 year old female still breeding but generally 12 to 14 year olds are more common. A couple of reports have been received of Wedge-tailed Eagles carrying off platypus but their most common predator is the fox, which preys on them when they move overland. People who inadvertently catch a platypus while fishing and simply cut the line can cause slow and painful death. Loss of habitat, bank erosion, and shrinking water supply are all obvious problems.

Our members knew of platypus habitation of local creeks in the past. Kevin McGregor said there were two in American Creek at Figtree until 1988, when one was shot. On a happier note Dr Grant showed us photos of places on the Shoalhaven where several platypus are still thriving in spite of the 5 year drought.

Bruce O'Brien thanked our speaker on behalf of members and visitors for a most informative presentation.

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 11th May – Kelly's Falls
John Cashman

17 club members, 4 ladies - Val, Mary, Robyn and Jane, 5 couples - Joan and Tom, Tera and Neil, Brian and Barbara, Sylvia and David, Ross and Jann, and 3 men - Ted, tall Chris and John met for the walk. The club hadn't done this walk for a few years, though it was a favourite of a former long time member, Jack Heslop. Jack lived near-by and was delighted to take other bird watchers around his 'backyard.

Joan had seen some birds on the road in, and we started back that way with sightings of Eastern Spinebill, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Crimson Rosellas, Rainbow Lorikeets and a flock of Little Corellas flew overhead. Then down to the falls which had a healthy stream of water pouring over them, and on towards Helensburg. Bird sightings were few, but there were magnificent views back to the falls, and down the valley to Bald Hill with the sea beyond. And the wildflowers were wonderful. Talk about an early spring: we saw creamy white Wattles, Egg and Bacon, Bottlebrush, Native Fuchsia, Flannel flowers starting to

bloom, and various other flowers that Sylvia and others could identify. All were wonderfully lush, as though the flowers had decided, 'It's been so dry, we are going to make the most of that recent rain!'

Ross recalled walking this way when he was in the Thirroul Cubs, and Scouts. They caught the train to Stanwell Park, and walked up to the Falls, quite a hike itself, then crossed the upper end of the valley, over the ridge, and down the far side through some properties to catch the train home from Otford. Ross said some of the property owners were a bit like hill-billies: ran a few horses and cows, but were pretty grumpy if they caught you. At these properties, he recalled, the Cubs and Scouts crept low behind lantana and shrubs, and scuttled quickly across open areas. Quite an adventure!

After morning tea, we set off on the loop track. Again bird sightings were few, but there were various honeyeaters, wattlebirds, a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, a White-throated Tree-creeper and others. There were a lot of trees and foliage and sometimes we could hear more birds than we could see. But it was magnificent country: huge sandstone crags, cliffs and boulders spray-painted delicately with lichens and mosses, stacks of Gynea lilies preparing for a towering display in spring, Flannel flowers that couldn't wait for spring, and the tans, oranges, grays and red-browns of angophoras - their limbs twisting and turning, as though as young trees they had seen extraordinary energetic dancing of aboriginal katachi men and wanted to preserve that memory for ever.

The last part of the loop walk was back along a fire trail, and a Spotted Pardalote, the ubiquitous magpie and Magpie-lark were seen, at least bringing our modest total up to a celebratory 21. Many thanks to Joan and Tom. Not a lot of birds, but a luscious walk!

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Spinebill
Little Corella	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Whipbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Red Wattlebird	Golden Whistler
Rainbow Lorikeet	Little Wattlebird	Magpie-lark
Crimson Rosella	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
White-throated Treecreeper	New Holland Honeyeater	Australian Magpie



LORD HOWE ISLAND TRIP, FEBRUARY 2008

At the May monthly meeting a proposed Lord Howe Island trip was announced and a clipboard passed around for those interested in taking part to register. The response was excellent and immediate with 26 seats being taken up. As numbers for flights and accommodation are limited we had to act quickly to try and secure our preferred dates and we were lucky to be given our second choice. We will be spending 7 nights on the island in self catering accommodation from 9th-16th February 2008. We realise that not everyone can make it to meetings so if you missed out and would like to be included please call Barbara Hales on 4257 4431 immediately and we will do our best to a) take you with us, b) put you on a reserve list in case of cancellations or c) if there are more people than we can cope with, try and arrange a second group.

Cost is \$1,680 per person twin share which includes standard accommodation and airfare plus we have been quoted \$39 per person for travel insurance. Food, excursions etc. are extra.

Drenched in Darwin

Neil & Tera Wheway

We flew to Darwin for the last week in February for five nights; hopefully see the build up of the wet season thunderstorms and to do the odd bit of bird watching. Luckily we got to observe both. We landed late at night after a thunderstorm had passed; driving into town in the hire car debris on the roads was evidence of the storm's passing.

After enjoying a calorie loaded breakfast at the hotel in the company of the Penrith Panthers football team we headed off with binoculars into the Darwin sauna. The temperate was in low thirties with the humidity in the high nineties. Our first location was the sewerage works but unfortunately we were unable to gain access to them or the ponds to see any birds. Undaunted we drove to Lee Point to find any shore birds. By now it was getting very hot walking along the beach in the shade of trees. Red tailed Cockatoos flew among the beach casuarinas, but irritating shore birds remained unidentified. Leaving the hot beach for the shade of park nearby we were being entertained by Figbirds, Yellow Orioles and a Northern Fantail. Late in the afternoon driving past a bowling club car park Tera spotted Magpie Geese in the short grass. The remainder of this car park was over grown with very long grass full of seed heads. We returned to this car park many times to watch the Golden-headed Cisticola, Zebra Finch, Double-barred Finch, Crimson Finches and Chestnut-breasted Manikins.

Subsequent days followed in a similar vein. At Fogg Dam where the water was higher than on our dry season visits we spotted Large-billed Gerygone and Shining Flycatchers with the females chasing the males (what a life). Also there were the Jacanas, kites and egrets. A lone Jabiru flew in and landed in the water near a Great Egret. Tera's sister spotted a crocodile swimming between them but the bird's keen eyesight spotted it and the crocodile went hungry, but not the mosquitoes even with us well slathered in repellent they were well fed. A visit to Litchfield National Park had us seeing Red-backed Fairy-wrens and a Northern Rosella. Pheasant Coucals guarding their territory along the roadsides were smarter than cane toads which didn't get off the road in time for vehicles. At Howard Springs we went looking for Rainbow Pittas but spotted several Orange-footed Scrubfowl and a nest mound. Four metres diameter and over a metre high, "Slater" describes their mound 12 metres across and 3-5 metres high - an enormous undertaking by anyone's standard. We had just about given up because of heat and mozzie bites then found in the undergrowth Rainbow Pittas, well worth the afternoon exertions. One bird seen on several occasions was the Black Butcherbird which after much thumbing through the book was able to be identified. It was difficult because of its size compared with other butcherbirds we looked at crows, ravens etc. We jokingly thought that we had discovered a new species for Australia.

A must for any visitors to Darwin is an evening meal on the wharf with its underwater lights watching the large fish attracted by the lights to feed on fish and chips thrown over into the water. Arrive early to get a table. It is truly a wonderful ambiance; it was from here we watched a storm build up the lightening was a wonderful show. Leaving the eating area we watched a Reef Egret on a boat mooring rope about 300mm above the water. Using the rope as a trapeze the egret swung down and was plucking small fish off the surface of the water. It never missed. So engrossed we failed to see the storm approaching. Within seconds the heavens opened with horizontal rain soaked to the skin we battled to car and the sanctuary of the hotel. Windscreen wipers are totally useless in such conditions.

We left Darwin on the Ghan on a two night journey to Adelaide. Luckily we did because a few days later the wet started in earnest with flooding and the railway cut off at Adelaide River. A low depression from cyclone George caused rainfalls not seen for several years according to Tera's sister who has lived in Darwin for many years. Train travel either on the Indian Pacific or the Ghan is to be recommended. It is a reminder of days gone by when life was lived at slower pace. It is a civilized way to travel in luxury with delicious meals and attentive staff. Traveling along the track we never forgot to be on the lookout for birds: Budgies, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo and many raptors were left unidentified because of fleeting glimpses and lack of knowledge.

Whilst northern Australia during the wet season is hot sticky and uncomfortable it does have its compensations. Sitting on the wharf eating fish and chips watching storm clouds rolling in. Watching the sunset over Fanny Bay while enjoying dinner in the gardens of the Darwin Sailing Club and of course a refreshing cool drink of amber fluid. What bird watching trip would be complete without a glass of port or two. Last but not least is the wonderful variety of colourful birds that we are lucky to be able to observe. One bird not seen but always looked for is the Gouldian Finch, but having purchased a stubby holder with its picture on I can drink a beer and dream.....

Top end bird list

Orange-footed Scrubfowl	Pied Imperial-Pigeon	Grey Whistler
Magpie Goose	Red-tailed Black-cockatoo	Grey Shrike-thrush
Australian Shelduck	Galah	Broad-billed Flycatcher
Australian Darter	Little Corella	Leaden Flycatcher
Little Pied Cormorant	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Shining Flycatcher
Little Black Cormorant	Red-collared Lorikeet	Restless Flycatcher
Little Egret	Red-winged Parrot	Magpie-lark
Eastern Reef Egret	Northern Rosella	Northern Fantail
Pied Heron	Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	Willie Wagtail
Great Egret	Pheasant Coucal	Spangled Drongo
Nankeen Night Heron	Azure Kingfisher	White-Bellied Cuckoo-shrike
Straw-necked Ibis	Blue-winged Kookaburra	Varied Triller
Royal Spoonbill	Forest Kingfisher	Yellow Oriole
Black-necked Stork	Sacred Kingfisher	Olive-backed Oriole
Whistling Kite	Rainbow Bee-eater	Figbird
Brahminy Kite	Dollarbird	White-breasted Woodswallow
White-bellied Sea-eagle	Rainbow Pitta	Black Butcherbird
Brown Falcon	Red-backed Fairy-wren	Pied Butcherbird
Ruddy Turnstone	Large-billed Gerygone	Torresian Crow
Comb-crested Jacana	Silver-crowned Friarbird	Zebra Finch
Bush Stone-curler	Little Friarbird	Double-barred Finch
Pacific Golden Plover	White-gaped Honeyeater	Crimson Finch
Masked Lapwing	Bar-breasted Honeyeater	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
Silver Gull	Rufous-banded Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
Emerald Dove	Rufous Throated Honeyeater	Golden-headed Cisticola
Peaceful Dove	Dusky Honeyeater	
Bar-shouldered Dove	Grey-crowned Babbler	

Heathcote National Park, Monthly Walk, 20th May 2007

Neil Wheway

It was on a pristine autumn morning that 15 of us gathered for our trek into the park. It was an easy stroll for the first few hundred metres, then after leaping over boulders, we clambered down to a fire trail. The rain on the previous Friday had left the bush clean and washed. Wandering along past Lake Toolooma the trees seemed to be alive with Eastern Spinebills and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters. At the northern end of the lake a dam was sighted, as well as, the ruins of an old pumping station, the old boiler and foundations with an old pipe line going up the cliff face. It was thought that this facility was constructed to supply water for the trains at Waterfall railway station in the bygone era of steam trains. On this section there was no shortage of Red Wattlebirds.

Shortly after passing the pipeline a Pilotbird was spotted high upon a rock face; on the lake Swamp Hens and a couple of Black Ducks. We wandered through Camp Coutts scout camp, and took morning tea at Coutts Creek, the warm sun was very pleasant after walking in the shade past Lake Toolooma. It was here that we were joined by a pair of White-eared Honeyeaters

After leaving Coutts Creek we continued to the power transmission line and began the slow walk up the steep winding track between Lake Toolooma and the Westmacott Ridge. A 4WD vehicle had left tracks and rubber on some of the rocks, evidence of the steep difficult terrain. On one very steep section there were still some fragments of bitumen to be seen. It could well have been that bitumen was used to assist and help drivers when the power lines were inspected from the ground. In this modern age they fly helicopters along the lines completing the job much faster and easier. Reaching the top, and enjoying the view, we had to walk down the other side, with no maintenance the track had become deeply scoured by heavy rain.

On reaching Heathcote Creek we left the fire trail, and headed off along a narrow walking track to Kingfisher Pool. Sadly there were no kingfishers that morning. However the toilet and picnic table were a welcome relief for some walkers. Lunch was eaten in this idyllic spot some using the table, others sitting on the rocks at the edge of the creek.

After crossing Heathcote Creek, pestered with biting little bush flies, we turned off the fire trail walking through shoulder high undergrowth back to the first fire trail track. It was then we realized that what had been climbed down, we must climb back up. The slow slow climb up with many stops to get our breath back, enabled us to admire the Eucalypts, Angophoras and rocks we had to climb and scramble amongst on the way back to finish the walk.

14 finished the walk. Brian Kelly a long time club member had to return home at morning tea time for a luncheon engagement. For the members who knew Brian it a pleasant surprise for them to see him again.

It was a very pleasant day with 35 birds seen. Also seen were many noisy silver birds flying over head heading for Mascot.

Pacific Black Duck	Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Yellow Robin
Little Pied Cormorant	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Whipbird
Australian Pelican	Pilotbird	Golden Whistler
White-faced Heron	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Brown Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Purple Swamphen	Yellow Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Dusky Moorhen	Red Wattlebird	Pied Butcherbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Rainbow Lorikeet	White-eared Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Australia King-Parrot	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Crimson Rosella	New Holland Honeyeater	Silvereye
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Spinebill	

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 find 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!

A voice from the back seat called as we pulled away from the beach ‘Can we get a drink?’

Bob Ashford, 02 4464 1574, bobashford@bigpond.com

MISCELLANEOUS

CELEBRATION 2007...

IBOC is 30 years old!



At the July meeting we will celebrate with Coffee and Dessert - Please bring own mug. Come prepared to share verbally your memories of IBOC camps, meetings and entertainment etc. New members would particularly be interested in “what we’ve done in IBOC over 30 years”. Please also bring any photos you’d like to display on the night. To assist with catering numbers RSVP to Fae & Kevin McGregor 42 71 3762 by 25 June 2007. Cost \$5.

Lake Illawarra Entrance Update

With the entrance now open, the rock training walls complete and the dredging of sand from the entrance half completed a meeting between the LIA, Neuman Contractors, Department of Commerce, National Parks and IBOC to discuss the bird sand mound was held on Monday 14th May.

It was low tide and there was quite an expanse of tidal sand flats which was being used by the over wintering waders and roosting shorebirds. It was decided that a sound mound about 1 meter high and some 50 by 70 meters near the northern access track with a narrow moat to deter people, dogs and foxes. Some plant stabilisation could be tried but there will still be much of the previous Little Tern nesting area remaining, but easily accessible by people. It was expected that the mound could be eroded away during flood periods but the hydrology is very unpredictable and IBOC will continue keeping an eye on the bird populations in the entrance and reporting any concerns back to the LIA.

With the poor success of the Little Tern breeding over the last few years it may be better for them to move to Lake Wollumboola where people pressure is less, fox control easier and the locals have taken them under their wing, so to speak.

Chris Brandis

Australasian Shorebird Conference - Newcastle University 6-8 July 2007

For further information contact PhilStraw@avifaunaresearch.com or via the internet http://www.shorebirdnetwork.org/conferences_threatenedflyway.html



This would never happen on an IBOC outing?

One day I was walking down the beach with some friends when someone shouted, "Look at that dead sea bird!" Someone looked up in the sky and said, "Where?" *Richard Miller*

Of Birds and Poems

John Douglas Pringle

The Scot, John Pringle, came to Australia, shortly after World War II. Pringle was editor of the Sydney Morning Herald, and later editor of the Canberra Times. This essay was published 35 years ago, in his book, On Second Thoughts, and records his astonishment at seeing the birds of Australia, which we so easily take for granted. Continued from the August News

The citizens of Canberra are even more fortunate. A member of Parliament, leaving the House to walk to the Canberra Hotel, can see on any evening numerous crimson and eastern rosellas with countless red-backed parrots on the stately avenues of the capital. If he drives even a few miles into the country he is bound to see the white cockatoos and galahs, and in winter, when he goes to a diplomatic reception in Mugga Way he will see flocks of the noisy but beautiful gang-gang parrots craning down their rosy heads to peer at him while they scream their harsh sardonic cry from the gum-trees on each side of the road. And if he cares about birds he can drive up into the prickly ranges of the Brindabella and glimpse, as I once did, a flock of giant yellow-tailed black cockatoos, looking almost as large as eagles as they flap heavily through the big timber, calling harshly to each other. In the dark, somber gullies they seemed like evil spirits or huge bats aroused from a tomb;

the wild black cockatoos, tossed on the crest
of their high trees, crying the world's unrest.

Nothing is more difficult than to describe a bird to someone who has never seen or heard it. But here I am lucky. All the poets of Australia seem to love birds and have described them with a vividness and precision I could not hope to rival. I propose to borrow from them shamelessly. Judith Wright, from one of these poems these lines are taken, is the richest source: in 1962 she published a whole volume of poems on birds. But there is hardly a contemporary Australian poet who has not written at least two or three. I think of Judith Wright as the poet of parrots and birds of the forests; of Douglas Stewart as the poet of little finches, scarlet robins and honeyeaters; of David Campbell as the poet of hawks which hang motionless over the bare Monaro hills and 'windy crows' whose harsh melancholy cry is perhaps the most unforgettable of all the Australian bird-sounds. But birds, like flowers and birds and words are the poets currency: I could fill an anthology with poems on the magpie alone.

Far the commonest of Australia's cockatoos are the sulphur-crested white cockatoos and the galahs. The galahs especially can be seen in enormous numbers almost anywhere in the inland; they are as common as wood pigeons in England – an almost as unpopular with farmers. Indeed because they are so common they are not appreciated. Galahs are something of a joke to people in the country, and, for some reason which I have never been able to understand, the word is used to describe any stupid or idiotic individual – 'You silly galah!' But poets and writers have always been quick to recognize their beauty. Let me quote from Francis Radcliffe's *Flying Fox and Drifting Sand*, one of the best books ever written about the Australian outback

Galahs are lovely things. Their breasts and underparts are of varying shades of rich rose. Their backs and wings are bluish grey. Sometimes, when the light falls on them, this colour looks almost as pale as clean smoke – rather like the colour which the sky assumes when there is a haze on the horizon. At all times of the day galahs can be seen in twos and threes sailing about with their easy but unsteady flight, but it is in the evening that they provide their great spectacle. At the close of the day they gather together in flocks, and fly about in mass formation and fly about like so many of the parrot tribe. And with every swift change of direction the birds take on a different hue. One moment they will be flying down the light, a cloud of grey ghosts barely visible against the eastern sky. Then in a flash they will wheel around towards the sun: and it

seems to all the world as if a new flock had suddenly come into being, as though solid bird bodies had been created out of nothing but the thin air and the sunset colours.

And I cannot resist adding these lines from Judith Wright's poem, 'For New England.'

But look, oh look, the Gothic tree's on fire
With blown galahs, and fuming with wild wings.

Unusual Records for March - April 2007

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Emu	5	11-Mar	Sassafras	paddock	KM
Fuscous Honeyeater	2	21-Apr	Barrack Heights	garden	MR
Osprey	1	16-Apr	Tallawarra	overhead	CB
Grey Goshawk	1	14-Apr	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	29-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	14-Apr	Cambewarra lookout	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	15-Apr	Saddleback Mountain	overhead	MR
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	16-Apr	Thirlmere Lakes NP	overhead	MR,TE
Peregrine Falcon	1	3-Apr	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Latham's Snipe	7	21-Mar	Myamba wetland, Shelharbour	wetland	KM
Black-fronted Dotterel	1	8-Apr	Myamba wetland, Shelharbour	wetland	MR
White-headed Pigeon	15	19-Apr	Berry	?	BA
Peaceful Dove	1	16-Apr	Bargo Gorge	woodland	MR,TE
Bar-shouldered Dove	10+	3-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	CB
Topknot Pigeon	50	6-Apr	Berry	overhead	GBr
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	10-Apr	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR,TE
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	19-Apr	7 Mile Beach NP	forest	BA
Little Lorikeet	3	16-Apr	Barrack Heights	garden	MR
Little Lorikeet	5+	16-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR,TE
Red-rumped Parrot	1	18-Apr	Primbee dunes	parkland	CB
Barn Owl	1	30-Apr	University of Wollongong	parkland	RT
Brown Treecreeper	1	10-Apr	Bargo Gorge	woodland	MR,TE
Fuscous Honeyeater	1	22-Apr	Blackbutt	garden	CB
Fuscous Honeyeater	4+	29-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR
Scarlet Honeyeater	3	14-Apr	Barrack Heights	garden	MR
Scarlet Honeyeater	10+	16-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR,TE
Crested Shrike-tit	2	10-Apr	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR,TE
Crested Shrike-tit	1	21-Apr	Rhododendron Park, Balgownie	forest	TE
Spangled Drongo	1	6-Apr	Austinmer	garden	GM
Spangled Drongo	1	16-Apr	Primbee dunes	woodland	MR,TE
Spangled Drongo	1	18-Apr	Blackbutt	garden	CB
Double-barred Finch	3	10-Apr	Bargo Gorge	woodland	MR,TE
Beautiful Firetail	1	10-Apr	Bargo River walk	woodland	MR,TE
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	5	21-Mar	Myamba wetland, Shelharbour	wetland	KM

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GBr – Grant Broise; CB – Chris Brandis; TE – Terri Edwell; GM – Graham Meany; MR – Michelle Rower; Km – Kevin Mills; RT – Roger Truscott;

COMMITTEE MEETING The next Committee meeting will be held at Kevin and Fae McGregor's, 10 White Place, Figtree, 4271 3762. on Tuesday 17th July at 7.30 pm. Club members are always welcome.

AUGUST NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is Thursday 19th July. Please send items to the editor, cashmansjr@bigpond.com or mail them to him at 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519

June Monthly Meeting – Martin Potter

Our June meeting saw the welcome return of intrepid explorer Col Markham to give a talk on his and Melissa's recent African expedition. The subject of his presentation was the Kenyan leg of their journey, and as always was accompanied by an impressive selection of stunning slides depicting the vast array of local wildlife and landscapes.

Their first port of call was the Samburu National Park which stretches along the banks of the tree-lined Ewaso Nyiro river and attracts a lot of game including elephant, buffalo, cheetah, leopard, lion, the oddly-named greedy zebra, and the oddly-patterned reticulated giraffe, only found in this region. Birds seen in the park included flocks of the spectacular Vulturine Guinea-fowl, Superb Starlings, Yellow-billed Hornbills, Blue-breasted Woodpeckers and the African Mourning Dove, whose mournful call is said to sound like it's saying "woe is me"!

Next on the itinerary was the Masai Mara, one of the most famous game reserves in Africa which has frequently been captured on film, with "Out of Africa" being the most well-known. The trip was not without risk, and many might find daunting the idea of staying in a tent with lions and leopards as neighbours, but the slides showed the tents to be quite luxurious and armed Masai rangers were on hand in case the neighbours became too friendly. The rule was not to go out at night without a ranger, and it was also not a good idea to take flash photos if elephants appeared, if one wished to avoid being trampled. Pictures of the wide variety of birdlife included an Ostrich protecting 17 eggs, Oxpeckers removing

ticks from Buffalo, Violet-breasted Rollers rolling, the Secretary Bird, so called because of the quills tucked behind its 'ear', Cranes, Hornbills, Snake-Eagles and many others. One of the highlights of the whole trip was to witness thousands of wildebeest crossing the Mara River as part of their annual migration.

The final part of the Markhams' Kenyan adventure took them to the Great Rift Valley, the place where the Earth is, tectonically, tearing itself apart. Major geological upheavals caused a series of lakes, five of which were visited. Some of the lakes such as Baringo and Naivasha are freshwater, and are renowned for their birds. Baringo attracts enthusiasts from all over the world, and the demand is such that it has a resident ornithologist who conducts bird walks and slide shows. Other lakes such as Lake Nakuru have a high saline content and are rich in algae and tiny crustaceans. As a result they are the setting for one of the world's most spectacular birding sights, that of brilliant pink flamingos as far as the eye can see. When conditions are right, between one and two million lesser and greater flamingos feed around the shores of Nakuru, together with tens of thousands of other birds. Fortunately Col was able to capture this spectacle for us with his camera.

The Markhams then left Kenya for their next destination, Kruger National Park in South Africa; hopefully this and other destinations may form the subject of future presentations from Col. His excellent photography and narration were very much appreciated by all members present, and a suitable vote of thanks was given.

BITS and....

First Wildlife Reserve. The early christian saint, Cuthbert, in the Seventh Century was the first to create a wildlife reserve and bird sanctuary. Cuthbert went to and settled on the island of Inner Farne off the Northumberland coast. There, while being noted for his peacefulness piety, and wisdom, he created the first wildlife reserve. Having a great affection for the birds with whom he shared the island, he introduced laws in 676AD which protected the birds. Cuthbert died in 687 and is buried at Durham, but he left an enduring legacy.

Today, especially in the breeding season, there are thousands of birds on the island. 40.000 people come to see the birds, the seals and to visit Cuthbert's chapel. Terns, Puffins and Guillemots abound. During spring and summer wardens monitor all aspects of the birds' lives and their numbers are increasing.

Beautiful Britain Autumn 2006

TRIP REPORT HOOKA CREEK BERKELEY 13-6-07 Michelle Rower

Sixteen members set off on a brisk morning for a walk around Hooka Point. After spotting some Yellow Thornbills, which were beautiful in the morning sunshine we made our way to the observation tower. We were blessed as just as we arrived the wind dropped which made the top section of the tower pleasant to take in some magnificent views of the lake.

Sylvia had brought her spotting scope and along with Joan found some Australasian Shovelers for members to look at. We found many small bush birds at the bottom section of the loop in the track including a female Mistletoebird, Golden Whistler, Silvereye, White-plumed Honeyeater, Grey Fantail and European Goldfinch. Three White-bellied Sea-eagles flew overhead and were closely followed by a Black-shouldered Kite.

As soon as we crossed the bridge into Fred Finch Park Joan heard a Flycatcher calling. We all had good views of a Restless Flycatcher as it hopped busily around catching insects. It is easy to see where this bird got it's name, as it was never still and twitched it's tail even when sitting quietly on a branch. We watched it for quite a while and were entertained by it's cheerful call whenever it caught an insect.

After the walk when we went for a comfort stop we met Tom and Joan and found a large flock of Figbirds in a small fig tree right next to the public toilet.

Many thanks to Tom and Joan for doing a great job of leading the walk as Chris Brandis was unwell. We hope you are feeling fully fit again Chris.

Bird List

Black Swan	Black-winged Stilt	Eastern Spinebill
Grey Teal	Silver Gull	Rose Robin
Chestnut Teal	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Golden Whistler
Pacific Black Duck	Crested Pigeon	Restless Flycatcher
Australasian Shoveler	Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo	Magpie-lark
Australasian Grebe	Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey Fantail
Darter	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Willie Wagtail
Little Pied Cormorant	Laughing Kookaburra	Black-Faced Cuckoo-shrike
Great Cormorant	Superb Fairy-wren	Figbird
Australian Pelican	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
White-faced Heron	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven
Little Egret	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	European Goldfinch
Great Egret	Yellow Thornbill	Mistletoebird
Australian White Ibis	Red Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
Royal Spoonbill	Little Wattlebird	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Black-shouldered Kite	Noisy Friarbird	Silvereye
White-bellied Sea-eagle	White-plumed Honeyeater	Common Starling

BIRDING ABROAD at Samburu, Kenya

David Winterbottom

Intrepid travelers, David and Elizabeth Winterbottom, have been on numerous overseas trips to look at birds and other things. Here is a vignette from a voyage in August, 2006

Whilst looking for Vulturine Guinea fowl in the scrub along the river bank we soon found ourselves on the fringe of a viewing frenzy around a superb leopard at full length along the branch of a large tree. Returning to the fruitless search for the Guinea fowl a splendid Gabar Falcon posed on a dead tree long enough to be photographed before flying down to drink from a puddle in the sands of the river. A little later a Rosy Patched Bush Shrike flaunted its macabre “blood streaked” throat for us all to see. A Golden Breasted Starling then put to shame the Superb Starlings which, hitherto, had seemed to be of unmatched beauty.

A late, but hearty, breakfast in the open dining area overlooking the river was enlivened by van den Denken’s and Yellow-billed Hornbills and a White-bellied Go-away Bird vying with the vervet monkeys for bread crumbs. Two Blacksmith’s Plovers patrolled the river sands.

After breakfast, a walk around the grounds yielded Firefinches making the most of the watering of the paths, some Marica Sunbirds and a Northern Black Flycatcher. Later, after seeing some birds that we had seen before, some of the people sweeping

the grounds noticed us peering up into the trees and showed us two magnificent Verreaux’s Eagle-owls with their pink eyelids – another big tick! Later, the photo opportunities offered by a Tawny Eagle, a Fish Eagle and several Fan-tailed Ravens caused some disruption to the luncheon banquet.

The bush was very dry with many acacia trees mutilated by elephants. We watched in amazement as they nonchalantly pulled down branches which were covered with long vicious thorns and munched them unconcernedly. White-headed Buffalo Weavers with their scarlet backs, White-browed Sparrow Weavers, with heavy eyebrows, and non-descript Donaldson-Smith Sparrow Weavers seemed to inhabit every little tree. . Flocks of Black-capped Sparrow Weavers and the occasional Red-billed Buffalo Weaver added to the confusion of birds and their nomenclature. Flocks of Vulturine Guinea fowl, with their fantastic violet plumes, were now all over the place.

The day ended with a real bang! First, we spotted a Banded Parisoma and it transpired that our guide had never seen one before. Then we found two cheetahs. Ten minutes later a lioness was seen taking a great interest in something. Twenty minutes after that we arrived back at the lodge to see the “tourist’s” leopard, up the tree on the other side of the river, eating its goat. Three big cats in half an hour – beat that if you can!

Spring Camp - 20-27th October 2007 - Nymboida.

The Spring camp will be held at the Nymboida Canoe Centre in the Clarence Valley. The centre is 34km south west of Grafton on the Armidale Grafton Rd. Grafton is approx 700km from Wollongong and you should allow for an overnight stay on the journey

This is an area with a great diversity of birds & several bird watching groups have stayed at the centre. The centre itself has recorded 66 species on its 100 acres.

The canoe centre has plenty of modern budget cabin style accommodation and unpowered campsites. The cabins are 4 to a building, each room has 2 single beds with mattresses and its

own outside door. There are amenities blocks with showers and toilets and 2 outside camp kitchens. The kitchens have gas BBQ's, gas burners, microwave, fridge freezers and electric jugs. No cooking equipment is supplied or plates cutlery etc. There are picnic style tables and chairs in this area.

Cabins are \$21 per person per night and campsites \$8 per person per night.

The owner has requested that all bookings are channeled through Betty Hudson . I have booked 8 cabins at this time. This number can be increased or decreased as required. No campsites have been booked so far. No deposit was required by the Centre.

If you wish to book a cabin or campsite please phone me on 4236 0307 or write your name on the list at the next two meetings. If required motel style accommodation may be available in the area, again contact me for information.

There will be more information and a map in next month's newsletter.

Back to Blighty And back to birding beginners! - Penny Potter

Not only was our trip to the UK in July 2006 our first trip back since arriving here nearly ten years ago, it was also the first time we would be seeing the place as birdwatchers. Mindful that we had many family obligations to fulfil, we were careful to add some guaranteed bird sightings into our itinerary. So it was that we acted on a hot tip from fellow IBOC members Brian and Barbara Hale and set off for Bempton Cliffs, near Bridlington in East Yorkshire, on a mission to find Puffins. This was our first UK birding trip ever and our excitement and expectations were high.

Travelling to East Yorkshire from Leicester in the Midlands you cross the magnificent Humber Bridge, and here we decided to stop to take a photo of the bridge at the Humber Bridge Country Park. As we walked the pathways searching for the riverbank and a suitable spot to take the photo we experienced a serious reality check. The surrounding birdsong was beautiful and constant, but the birds were well hidden by the dense foliage – we searched for them in vain and realised glumly that we were back to being birding beginners. As the birds continued to fly through the bushes unseen all around us, Martin was heard to coin the phrase “Show up, or shut up!” in total frustration. Finally, an hour later and aware that time was passing, we gave up on views of both the birds and the bridge and continued on

to the RSPB reserve at Bempton Cliffs in very much lower spirits.

There, in contrast, we experienced an absolute birding high. Literally thousands of sea birds could be watched at leisure clinging to their nests on the chalky cliffs: Guillemots, Gannets, Razor Bills, Kittiwakes, Herring Gulls, even Jackdaws and of course the stars of the show, those lovable Puffins. Excitement coursed through our veins – so many lifers at once! Despite the wind getting up and the constant trickle of other birders walking around us we spent a wonderful couple of hours walking along the cliff tops studying the birds, their chicks and their behaviour. At one lookout I was delighted to spot a Fulmar among the Kittiwakes. By late afternoon when we had had our fill, we moved on to the feeding station. Here we spotted Greenfinch, Dunnock, Tree Sparrow, Pheasant and Yellowhammer before retreating into the shop for a pie, and giving in to temptation to buy new binoculars.

After an overnight stay in Bridlington we took a more leisurely route home, stopping at Hornsea Mere to eat our lunch. Here we were surrounded by about a hundred curious Canada and Greylag Geese while trying to identify what turned out to be a Whooper Swan. At one point I found myself being chased by an angry parent, having stooped to photograph three cute

and curious goslings that were intent on investigating the camera at close quarters!
We ate our sandwiches in the car overlooking the lake and were treated to the amazing spectacle of a mix of approximately 1,000 Swallows, Swifts and House Martins swooping for flies over the water. When we started our lunch we were hard pressed to tell the difference between them, but seeing all three together made identification much easier, and by the end of our sandwiches we had become experts!

Feeling very satisfied with our 48 hour birding escape we headed back to the motorway and family commitments. Already we were planning a trip to Gigrin Farm in Wales to see Red Kites



Quiz

1. What bird is that ? *Photo Chris Chafer*
2. The old classic, *What bird is that ?* was written by a. Ailsa Ailey, b. Benjamin Basil Bailey, c. Dermot McDougal Dailey, d. Neville Caley, or e. Quenton deQuincey Qualey ?
3. In the Monty Python sketch about the bookshop, the customer, Marty Feldman, didn't want to buy *The British Book of Birds* from bookseller, John Cleese, because he didn't particularly like -a.

the Jackdaw, b. the Gannet, c. the Nightingale, or d. the Barn Owl ? included in the book!

North American Birds Moving North as a Result of Climate Change

as forwarded by **Roger Truscott**

Lafayette, La. – June 07, 2007 - A new study in Conservation Biology analyzed the breeding ranges of North American birds over a 26-year period. The results show that the ranges have shifted northward; coinciding with a period of increasing global temperatures. These results were similar to those found in studies conducted in Great Britain, showing the worldwide extent of these distributional changes.

“Our results add to an increasing body of scientific research documenting the effects of global climate change,” says study author Alan Hitch, a wildlife ecologist at Auburn University. “It also raises questions about whether moving north could be detrimental to some species.”

According to Hitch, identifying the forces behind the shifts is the first step to understanding whether they may lead to the extinctions of local populations. “It was important to determine whether climate change was the likely cause of the range shift,” says Hitch. “Because the shift was only in the Northern part of the range, and because the shift was similar to that seen in Great Britain, we have some support for that conclusion.” The analysis was designed to help account for other factors that might explain the range shift, including population expansions and land-use changes.

“It is difficult to predict when or if the forces behind the distributional shifts of birds we report here may lead to extinctions of local populations,” says Hitch. “Birds are extremely mobile which allows them to move in response to climate change; however, prey that birds rely on for survival may not be able to adapt so easily.”

The Wonga Pigeon

I’ve been spending some time watching the cows around Berry recently, as one does! At this time of year these same cows are invariably accompanied by flocks of a small white heron known as a Cattle Egret. As the cattle feed they disturb insects which the Egrets quickly snap up. Every so often I see an Egret jump up on the back of a cow, presumably to direct operations!

Cattle Egrets are found around the world in tropical and temperate climates but only colonised Australia in the 20th century, the first record being in 1907. Some were introduced to help control insects but it was during the 1940’s and 1950’s when the Asian colonies experienced a huge population explosion that they established a foothold in northern Australia. Since then they have spread steadily southward.

Soon now the Egrets will develop their breeding plumage replacing plain white with rather striking orange-buff feathers on their head, neck and back. Then they’ll say goodbye to Berry’s cows and converge on their nearest breeding grounds at the Shortland Wetlands just north of Newcastle. There many hundreds of them mix with other species of Egret to create a typical heron nursery – smelly, chaotic and noisy!

Noise is also heralding activity on Berry Mountain. For hours each day lately I am subjected to an incessant – “woo, woo, woo, woo, woo, woo...” It is the advertising call of the Wonga Pigeon and I’m sure the only time it stops is to pop in another Strepsil!

...and PIECES

* Last month’s Monthly Outing was cancelled because of the wild weather. Considering the variety of weather, very few of our walks have been cancelled.

* **Quiz Answers** 1 Eastern Bristlebird 2.d. Neville Caley 3. b the Gannet

Bob Ashford

It’s the male who is calling, enticing receptive females to walk through the forest, often quite long distances, to check him out. If, on arrival, the female considers he passes muster then what follows is a feathery flurry on the forest floor!

Wongas descended from an ancient lineage of Australian pigeons and were first described in December 1791 in a collection of drawings now known as the ‘Sydney Bird Paintings’, probably drawn by a convicted forger. They were given the name ‘Wunga-Wungee Pidgeon’.

These large, generally solitary ground pigeons search the leaf litter of wetter forests in search of food. Their alert and considered stance and their black, grey and white plumage always remind me of a rather haughty butler. When they do fly, usually only a short distance, it is with such a clatter that they can unnerve even the most experienced twitcher! The early explorers and settlers considered the Wonga a special delicacy! Skilled trappers called them in imitating the male’s advertising call and catching the birds in clever twig and vine traps. Over the following century and a half they virtually emptied the forests of Wongas.

In 1955 the artist Hugh Boyd declared his property, at the foot of Black Ash Reserve, a sanctuary, doing his bit to save the remaining Wongas from greedy trappers. This now forms part of the area know as Bellawongarah – “beautiful Wonga”. I can’t help believing that ‘my’ Wonga is actually cheering – “Hugh, Hugh, Hugh, Hugh, Hugh..”

* Janis Hosking reports that the June 2007 Newsletter for the **Dubbo Field Nats** is now available at their website. www.dubbofieldnats.org.au

* **Tree Planting** for the **Regent Honeyeater** and other birds is on again in the Capertee Valley over the weekend 18,19 August. At the planting in May 2500 young trees were planted and it's hoped to plant a further 2,000 trees on two properties in August. It's a great weekend to join in and experience.

Further information and booking for accommodation and/or the dinner on Saturday night, which in itself is really special, from Tiffany Mason, PO Box 95, Lithgow NSW 2790, or phone 6350 3115, and at tiffany.mason@cma.nsw.gov.au

Unusual Records for May 2007

Chris J. Chafer

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Brush-turkey	3	7-May	Mt. Keira	rainforest	VD
Great Egret	12	12-May	Windang	estuary	LP
Swamp Harrier	2	6-May	Tallawarra	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	15-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR,TE
Grey Goshawk (white phase)	1	15-May	Albion Park	forest	JC
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	9-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR,TE
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	3-May	Jaspers Brush	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	3-May	Bellawongarah	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	3-May	Barren Grounds NR	overhead	MR,TE
Little Eagle	1	24-May	Dunmore	overhead	BA
Brown Falcon	1	8-May	Bellambi	overhead	AC
Australian Hobby	1	2-May	Geringong	overhead	BA
Peregrine Falcon	2	6-May	Yallah	overhead	BA
Australian Spotted Crake	1	13-May	Myamba wetland, Shelharbour	wetland	CB
Bar-shouldered Dove	4	17-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	RI
Gang-gang Cockatoo	6	25-May	Mt. Pleasant	woodland	RT
Musk Lorikeet	few	30-Apr	University of Wollongong	parkland	PP
Little Lorikeet	10+	15-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR,TE
Brush Cuckoo	1	24-May	Dunmore	late record	BA
Barn Owl	1	24-May	Ooaree Creek, Gerringong	overhead	BA
Barn Owl	1	30-May	Port Kembla harbour	urban	RB
Fuscous Honeyeater	2	15-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR,TE
Scarlet Honeyeater	3+	15-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR,TE
Spangled Drongo	1	29-May	Primbee	golf course	IM
Spangled Drongo	1	13-May	Nowra	urban	SE
Spangled Drongo	1	15-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR,TE
Spangled Drongo	2	17-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	RI

Contributors: RB – Roger Bogaert; AC – Alan Cousins; BA - Bob Ashford; CB – Chris Brandis; JC – Josh Coyte; VD – Val Dolan; TE – Terri Edwell; SE – Sheila Emery; RI – Ron Imisides; MR – Michelle Rower; KM – Kevin Mills; LP – Lorraine Pincus; PP – Penny Potter; RT – Roger Truscott.

Thornbills

Their tiny torrent of flight
sounds in the trees like rain
flickering the leaves to light -
a scattered handful of grain,
the thornbills little as bees.

Judith Wright



*"One Good Tern
Deserves Another"*

The Newsletter of the ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56 FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519
Founded in 1977. website www.iboc.org.au

I.B.O.C. NEWS

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

Issue No. 306 August 2007

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$30 SINGLE \$25. JUNIOR \$5.
Please pay Bronwyn Wilson, our Treasurer, by cash, cheque or mail order**

IBOC NEWS Contents Film Night p 2 Killalea walk p 2 Songs p 3 IBOC's 30 years p 4 RNP Bird list p 5 Lake Illawarra Authority p 5 Sibelius p6 Potted History p8-10	CLUB CONTACTS PRESIDENT: Roger Bogaert, tel: 02 4237 8742 SECRETARY: Betty Hudson, tel: 02 4236 0307 email: elizabethhudson@bigpond.com TREASURER: Bronwyn Wilson, tel: 02 4283 4744 EDITOR: John Cashman, tel: 02 4284 0538 email: cashmansjr@bigpond.com Val Dolan, tel: 02 4229 6737 RECORDS OFFICER .Chris Chafer email: cchafer@speedlink.com.au
--	--

FORTHCOMING IBOC EVENTS August 2007

FILM NIGHT- Saturday 8th September. 7pm at 'Puffin Place.' Details on page 2

CLUB MEETING – Monday 13th August 7.30pm Fairy Meadow Community Hall.

Dr Roger Truscott -'Cecil B De Mille does Brazil' Anacondas, River wolves (otters), Giant anteaters and even the occasional bird #!. All this and possibly more!! Join our intrepid adventurer as he tests out his new video camera on unsuspecting wildlife in the depths of the South American Pantanal. If you enjoyed the camera shake in movies such as the "Blair witch project" you ain't seen nothing yet.' (To help you come back to earth, please bring some supper to share together afterwards.)

MID-WEEK WALK – Wednesday 15th August – Mt Kembla – Leader – Tom Wylie
Meet at the Kembla lookout carpark, almost under a pylon, and near the top of Cordeaux Road, **at 9am.** Bring some morning tea with you. Joan's mobile is 0407 268 279.

MONTHLY OUTING - Saturday 18th August - Tallawarra Ash Ponds - Leader: Darryl Goldrick Members travelling from the north should take the Princes H'way through Dapto, past Mt.Brown Public School (on the southern outskirts), and then turn at the Power Station turnoff (2nd on left as you pass under Freeway) - a lot more obvious signage now compared to previous years. Those coming from the south, take the Dapto offloading ramp on the Freeway north of Yallah, then turn right at T -section onto the Princes H'way and as above, take 2nd turnoff on left as you pass under the Freeway. We will meet at a point approx. 500 meters down the entrance road at **8.30am** Morning tea will be taken during the walk around ash pond 3. Lunch will be at the cars prior to the afternoon circuit.

COMMITTEE MEETING The next Committee meeting will be held at Alan and Anne Cousins, 4 Adelaide Place, Tarrawanna 4283 3917. on Tuesday 21st August at 7.30 pm. Club members are always welcome.

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is Thursday 23rd August. Please send items to the editor, cashmansjr@bigpond.com or mail them to him at 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519



Film Night Revival



When? Saturday, 8th September, starting at 7 p.m.

Where? 32, Shearwater Boulevarde, Albion Park Rail.

Film nights have been very popular in the past and, as a number of people have expressed an interest in reviving them again, Barbara and Brian Hales are hosting the first one as above and they are hoping for a good response from members. Please bring along a small plate to share for supper and if you have a camping chair pop that into your car too in case we need extra seats. Film nights have always proved to be a very enjoyable experience so please come along and join in. It would be helpful if you could phone Barbara and Brian on 42574431 so that we can get some measure of the number expected to attend.

Killalea State Park 11.07.07 'Boots and Binoculars' Neil Wheway

Tera and I arrived at Killalea with Tera moaning about her new boots because each boot was ½ lb heavier than her old ones. Jumping out of the car to check two raptors, the worse thing that can happen to a bird watcher, she had forgotten her binoculars!! Too late to return home for them. 'If I didn't have these ##### new boots I wouldn't have forgotten them.' Tera was hoping no one would turn up on a cold windy day, because she wouldn't be able to see the birds. But Birdos are made of sterner stuff. Ten of us were not put off by a bit of inclement weather. Just as well, as the day turned out sunny and the wind dropped a bit. I should sheepishly mention that I forgot my ears too! *(The editor offers a small prize for the best interpretation of Tera's "these ##### new boots!" and Neil's sheepish thoughts)*

When the others arrived and heard of her problem. Barbara and John, Judy's husband, offered a loan which Tera was very happy to accept and was much appreciated. We drove to the camping area, parked the cars and walked from there. We had recced the walk the weekend before and started off according to plan. However, a different track was found which led down to the golf course fence and a wetland area, and the plan went out the window. This section proved to be pretty good with water birds and butcherbirds flying from post to post as we walked along, as well as being protected from the wind.

This track led us back to cars and picnic shelter in time for 'elevenses' which were shared with a group from the Shellharbour Community Bus. I even scored a piece of cake with icing. It pays to look hungry!

After morning tea we continued up through the camping ground to another section overlooking the sea but no whales were to be seen. We did see yellow robins and a Bar-shouldered Dove, and a pair of White-bellied Sea-Eagles soaring in the wind. We didn't get to the Minnamurra Spit but

still saw 39 species and spotting a Magpie-lark while driving out made it 40. Sorely missed were the expert regular walkers to identify some of the smaller birds flitting amongst the bushes, and a raptor. These still remain UFOs.

Birds recorded for the walk

Black Swan	Bar-shouldered Dove	Golden Whistler
Pacific Black Duck	Crimson Rosella	Magpie-lark
Australian Grebe	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Grey Fantail
Little Pied Cormorant	Superb Fairy-wren	Willie Wagtail
Little Black Cormorant	Brown Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
Great Cormorant	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Australian Pelican	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Raven
White-faced Heron	Red Wattlebird	Satin Bowerbird
Intermediate Egret	Little Wattlebird	Red-browed Finch
Australian White Ibis	Lewin's Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	New Holland Honeyeater	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Little Eagle	Eastern Spinebill	Silvereye
Purple Swamphen	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Silver Gull	Eastern Whipbird	

VALE - Peggy Merritt

Peggy Merritt died on the 30th June, 2007. Peggy and her husband Russ have been members for a number of years and in particular enjoyed the walks. Peggy wrote many articles for the I.B.O.C. News and her knowledge of trees and plants were covered in those articles and enjoyed by all. Peggy was a polite and lovely lady and will be missed by Russ, her children and grandchildren. Four past Presidents of I.B.O.C and other club members attended her funeral. Rest in Peace, Peggy.

BITS and...

The map for the October Spring Camp at the Nymboida River Canoe Camp and more details about the camp itself will be included in next month's IBOC News. Betty Hudson reports that 23 people have so far indicated that they will be attending the Camp. If you are interested in a basic cabin at \$21 per night, please indicate your interest to Betty.

With a song in my heart

The IBOC 30th Birthday Bash saw two members launch into songs of some time ago. Brian Hales' two contributions from Christmas 1988 were-

I hate Aeroplane Jelly, Aeroplane Jelly's the pits
 I hate it for dinner, I hate it for tea
 Aeroplane Jelly does nothing for me
 I hate Aeroplane Jelly, Aeroplane Jelly's the pits.

I'm a little Vegemite as sick as sick can be,
 I get this awful Aussie stuff for breakfast dinner and tea,
 My mother says I have to have it every single day,
 But it tastes YUK on my mashed spud
 And even worse on Yorkshire Pud,
 It makes me sick as sick can be.

And Gwen Robinson sang **Camping in the rain**, which she wrote for the 1999 Camp, and sang to the tune *Singing in the Rain*

We're camping in the rain
Yes...it's happened again
What a miserable feeling
We're wet thru' again.
We hope rain won't last
But it has in the past
So we're camping, and birding in the rain.

Let stormy clouds chase
Everyone from the place
But not I.B.O.C. campers
We're a much tougher race
With new birds to find
It's on with the grind
Of tramping and squelching in the rain (mud).

Where did the birds go?
They're not stupid you know
They shelter in trees
And they're under the leaves.
They're so hard to see
And we all agree
They're twittering at the twits in the rain.

If your place is in drought
We will rent Kevin out
With his special charm
It will rain on your farm.
With I.B.O.C. in tow
You'll soon get to know
You'll be singing and dancing in the rain.

So we're camping in the rain
Next year won't be the same
We'll try for some dry camps
And get lucky again
It was wet ninety nine
But two thousand will be fine
And we'll be camping and birding without rain.

IBOC 30 years on & heading for 40-

Despite rain and cold wild winds all week and on the night 33 members celebrated this milestone in the warmth of IBOC fellowship. A welcome from President Roger to all heralded the beginning of the celebrations, followed by the enjoyment of a variety of delicious desserts, fruit, nut and cheese platters and chocolates washed down with tea and coffee.

Fae McGregor

A buzz of excited talking took over as members relaxed and had opportunity to share with those at their table.

Fae then hosted the "Memories of the past 30 years segment" with members telling their stories. The firm foundations that set IBOC on its way 30 years ago was acknowledged and affirmed.

Four Past Presidents, Laurie Williams, Jim Robinson, Brian Hales, Kevin McGregor and their wives Nola, Gwen, Barbara and Fae were in attendance and their contributions to the Club's history was acknowledged and appreciated.

Brian Hales and Gwen Robinson were reminded of words they penned in 1999. Brian recited /sang his odes to the Aussie icons Vegemite and Aeroplane Jelly and Gwen sang her version of "Singing in the rain" as "IBOC camping in the rain" to much applause. After hearing of the fun of past camps, walks, memorable club meeting nights and scanning through the Club's history in photographs many of the newer members' appetites were whetted for such experiences, so the Club's future seems assured. Members who are no longer with us were remembered as the photo albums attested to their valuable contributions over the years.

The sharing of memories could have gone on but time was ticking away and Kevin

had a most interesting presentation prepared by Chris Brandis (who was overseas) on IBOC surveys of the birdlife on Lake Illawarra: a project run in conjunction with the Lake Authority over many years. Kevin then introduced Doug Prosser who talked further about the Lake and answered the many questions put to him. President Roger thanked Doug for his attendance and interesting input and presented to Doug and Marie a gift on behalf of the IBOC members.

Existing for 30 years, IBOC is a testament to Doug Gibson and those foundation members who set the Club on firm foundations, and the leaders and members who are faithfully carrying on the traditions today are responsible for creating an atmosphere of happy bird observing in the Illawarra and for continuing to build on the IBOC "memories".

Birds sighted on the Monthly Outing to the Royal National Park, 15th July

Australasian Gannet	Superb Lyrebird	New Holland Honeyeater
Whistling Kite	White-throated Tree Creeper	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater
White-bellied Sea-Eagle (Juvenile)	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Spinebill
Brown Goshawk	Variagated Fairy-wren	Grey Fantail
Sooty Oystercatcher	Rockwarbler	Australian Magpie
Silver Gull	Brown Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Crested Tern	Striated Thornbill	Australian Raven
Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird	Red-browed Finch
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Little Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	

Lake Illawarra Authority

Doug Prosser, Chairman of the Lake Illawarra Authority was guest speaker at our July meeting. Doug said he fell in love with the lake as a boy and spent many joyous times exploring it by bike and in home made kayaks, and camping on Gooseberry Island.

Uncontrolled subdivision around the lake foreshores after World War 11 caused much erosion and added pollution to the lake. The lake was dying and Doug became it's advocate, speaking about it to anyone and everyone. Finally Wollongong

and Shellharbour Councils in 1975 formed a Management Committee with Doug as Secretary for its first three years. However though a number of useful studies were done, the Committee was hamstrung as it had no budget, and all the while. the lake continued to deteriorate.

Eventually in 1987, the State Government created the Lake Illawarra Authority. The Government provides \$500,000 pa which is matched in kind by the two Councils. This however is hardly enough to pay to

have the lawns mowed, to clear away rubbish and look after the various parks dotted around the 37 km of lake foreshore, as well as pay for the one full time officer. So in fact the LIA has actively contributed to the lake by obtaining various grants from the State Government coastal improvement programs, as well as physical assistance from 'Work for the Dole' and Green Corps programs.

A milestone was recently reached with the completion of Stage 2 works which were

to create an entrance that will remain open for longer periods, though Doug said that for millennia the lake had its own mind about opening and closing. Currently the entrance is working well with over 200,000 cubic m of sand being removed from the entrance and put on Warilla beach. The entrance's southern breakwater stops the sand from returning.

Doug's very informative talk was followed by a vigorous question time, and thanks from all.

The SIGNIFICANCE of BIRDS to SIBELIUS

Mike MORPHETT

Come September I expect there will be much attention given by the Finns to commemorate the death fifty years ago of their famous composer, Jean Sibelius at the age of 91. I became a 'Sibelian', a devotee of his music, when a 21 year-old student, after attending a concert in the Kent city of Canterbury. The last item was his Symphony No. 5 in E flat major, and the impact of the closing six widely-spaced fortissimo chords, likened to Thor's hammer blows, is still as strong for me now as it was then; however, it was not until just recently that I became aware of the avian link to the third movement. Self-critical Sibelius twice revised the work after its first presentation on his fiftieth birthday. During its four years of gestation, he was affected by certain events, including the First World War. He and his family had to seek refuge in Helsinki with the threat of Russian domination when civil war broke out between the Red and White Guards. He felt further fear for his welfare and life when diagnosed with throat cancer, requiring a number of operations; the tumour was later found to be benign. Prone to bouts of depression (I suspect bordering on bipolar disorder), he grieved over the death of his friend and wealthy patron, Axel Carpelan, but which spurred him into finalising the work. For him, a symphony was 'more an inner confession at a given stage of one's life than just a composition'.

Besides having nationalistic pride, Sibelius was an avid reader of the classics and Scandinavian mythology, notably the Kalevala. But it was his love of, and spiritual connection with, nature, particularly reflected in his later works, that appeals to me. Among those prominent in the music world the conductor Leopold Stokowski attested to his closeness to nature. Sibelius's home, from 1904 and named Ainola in honour of his wife (she died in June 1969), was built on a high hill at Järvenpää, nearly 40 km north of the capital, and, to Carpelan's senses, smelled of the forest. It was extended to provide him with an upstairs study that looked over the treetops to Lake Tuusula, which gave him much inspiration. The villa also housed his six daughters, one of whom died in early childhood, and the youngest two he called his snow buntings.

The annual migration of birds and the changing seasons were significant in the composer's life. To son-in-law and conductor, Jussi Jalas he made these observations about himself: "About 100,000 years ago I must certainly have been related to swans and wild geese, because I feel drawn towards them" (August 1940), and "I am related to the wading birds; they too live without a clock as I have done during long periods of my life" (June 1943). The call of the crane Sibelius considered was the leitmotif of his

life. According to his secretary, Santeri Levas, he determined that “a bullfinch sang C# -D, but a larger bullfinch twittered

between D and D#”. Elsewhere he is said to have identified nightingales singing in E minor



Like Scriabin, Messiaen, Liszt and Rimsky-Korsakov, Sibelius is thought to have created much of his music through synaesthesia, whereby sense perceptions are mixed rather than experienced separately. Latest research suggests that women are more likely to have these sensations and that letters and colours are a common combination. It appears Sibelius saw notes as colours, and birdsong and smells of the forests became sounds in his ear. I'd venture to say he may well have shown signs of being a synaesthete in early childhood, for as an example of his vivid imagination, a story relates that while his mother played the piano, he crawled under and tried to associate notes he heard with colours of the stripes in the rug.

One of his biographers, Erik Tawaststjerna states: ‘Sibelius responded with exceptional intensity to the moods of nature and the changes in the seasons: he scanned the skies with his binoculars for the geese flying over the lake ice, listened to the screech of the cranes, and heard the cries of the curlew echo over the marshy grounds just below Ainola. He savoured the spring blossoms every bit as much as he did autumnal scents and colours’. Levas records the composer's reaction to a flock of swans one spring day: “They have flown over the lake. I can't see them but I breathe the same air as they do, and that is something. Nobody has any idea what the flight of migrant birds in the spring and

autumn means to me. Once they were very late. On Christmas Eve a flock of about fifty swans flew very low over our house. I could hardly have thought of a better Christmas present for myself.” Sibelius himself kept written records of his thoughts and experiences, referring to his diary as the mirror of a sensitive soul and also as a spittoon, into which he could deposit comments he would be too ashamed to raise in conversation. Translated, an entry for 21 April 1915 reads: ‘Today at ten to eleven I saw 16 swans. One of the great experiences of my life! Lord God, how beautiful! They circled over me for a long time. Disappeared into the sun's haze like a gleaming, silver ribbon...Nature's mysticism and life's Angst!’ The sound of those swans' calling became the source of the swaying, triple-time theme for the trumpets and horns in the finale of his fifth symphony, which has since become known as the ‘Swan Hymn’.

On 20 September 1957 Sibelius died of a cerebral haemorrhage. Coincidentally, that same evening Malcolm Sargent conducted the fifth symphony in a concert broadcast from Helsinki. According to Tawaststjerna, two days earlier he had returned ‘from his customary morning walk. Exhilarated, he told his wife Aino that he had seen a flock of cranes approaching. “There they come, the birds of my youth,” he exclaimed. Suddenly one of the birds broke away from

the formation and circled once above Ainola. It then rejoined the flock to continue its journey'. Both he and Aino lie buried on the southern slope of Ainola,

which since 1974 has served as a museum in tribute, and where birds are said to still congregate.



What is it about Tera Wheway that Boobook Owls come and perch on her verandah rail and pose for her so photographically ?

Potted History of Illawarra Bird Observers' Club (as yet unfinished), prepared from newsletters, notes, etc.(refer also to the separate tabulation of IBOC Camps and Trips, newsletters (inc. annual meeting/outing programs) and the book of outing records).

Compiled by **Dave Thomson**

Date.	Information.
1976	"Introduction to Ornithology" course conducted in term 3 at WEA by Doug Gibson. Doug ran a similar course at WEA at least once more in later year(s).
30/11/76	At instigation of, mainly, Laurie Williams and Dave Walsh, informal meeting held to decide whether interest shown by attendances at Doug's recent WEA course evidenced a need for a Bird Club in Wollongong and whether one could be supported. Meeting chaired by Laurie with wife Nola as minute secretary. Decided in affirmative and resolved to call club Illawarra Bird Observers' Club. Resolved also to have first meeting early 1977, to meet monthly on 1 st Tuesday and to have outing on weekend after each meeting. Selected a group of 5 (Laurie W, Dave W, Richard Miller, Peter Ison and Joy Appleby) to draft constitution, decide officebearers needed and fees, all for presentation to first formal Club meeting. The group met at the Williams home.
1/2/1977	Inaugural meeting of IBOC , held at the premises of the WEA. Meeting called by personal contact with those from Ornithology course and by newspaper notice. Resolved to have Annual General Meeting at the first meeting of the year (changed some time later to Nov. meeting) and at the AGM to elect the President, Secretary/Treasurer and Field Records Officer and to set fees for the year. Resolved to have monthly meetings on 2 nd Monday (not 1 st Tuesday as originally proposed) at 7.45pm (later changed to 7.30pm) with outing on following weekend, alternating Saturday and Sunday. Resolved to have a "cup of tea" after meetings. Resolved to have 2 of 3 signatures on bank account cheques. Fees for 1977 set at \$5 for Ordinary Member, \$8 for Family and \$2 for Junior

	(school age). The Club's First elected Office-bearers , elected for year 1977, were Laurie Williams - (Foundation dt) President Joy Appleby - Secretary/Treasurer Richard Miller - Field Recording Officer. Decided that the Feb outing, the Club's first outing ", would be on the next Sunday, 6 th Feb, 77 at Calderwood on the properties of the Thomas and Voorwinden families.
14/3/77	First guest speaker , Ellis McNamara showing his bird slides.
6/77	First membership list had 45 family names.
77 to 9/80	Our newsletter hand delivered by Laurie/Nola Williams, with an occasional conscript . In the Sept. '80 newsletter we announced that it would in future be distributed by mail, approval having been so given by postal authorities (we'd shown on our Aug and Sept newsletters that they were "Registered for Posting etc") and that there would be an issue each calendar month except October and January.
3/77 – 4/78	Monthly meetings held in the Hall of St Michael's Anglican Cathedral, Market St., Wollongong.
77-12/81	Newsletter was mimeographed (?-purple text) and started as a half page notice of the upcoming meeting/outing on a quarto sheet, developing over time to become more newsy and occupying several single-sided, mimeographed, foolscap sheets.
77-12/03	Newsletter referred to as "The Circular of the ---"
1/10-3/10/77	Club's First Camp , at Coolendel, W of Nowra.
21/10-23/10/77	Club's First Trip Away from "Home" - to hotel at Rankins Springs to visit Pulletop NR (for Malleefowl).
3/12-4/12/77	Club's First experience of Bird Banding . Watched Alan Leishman netting/banding at "Beulah" property at Appin. Some camped o/night.
15/4/78	Club's First experience of Bird Atlassing , when Dick Cooper , NSW Regional Organiser for the RAOU's 5 year '77-'81 Atlas of Australian Birds, accompanied us on our field outing to Woronora Dam and showed us how it was to be done. We have been involved ever since in that Atlas, the continuing NSW Atlas that grew from it and the RAOU's 4 year '98-'02 Atlas.
6/78-5/81	Meetings held in Hall of St. Alban's Anglican Church, Princes Hwy/Cox's Lane, Corrimal.
22/4/78	Club's First Film Night , at Williams' home.
11/78	Meeting time permanently advanced from 7.45 pm to " 7.30 pm sharp ".
4/11/78	Our first involvement in FOC's annual Spring Bird Count .
13/11/78	AGM. Office-bearers elected for 1979 were: Laurie Williams / President Terry Dunlea / Secretary Ron Almond / Treasurer Mike Morphett / Field Officer Dave Thomson / Atlassing Doug Gibson / Technical Hazel Emery / Librarian Wal Emery / Display Boards Ruby Johnson / Supper.
12/11/79	AGM. Office-bearers elected for 1980 were as for 1979 except Mike became Recorder, Wal became Room Supervisor and we couldn't find a Supper Supervisor.
24/2/80-5/3/80	Club's First Extended Trip outside the state , a party of 8 members to Lord Howe Island.
6/80	Call for an Editor of our newsletter.
10/11/80	AGM. Office-bearers elected for 1981 were as for 1980 except that Rowena Errington became Secretary, Doug became Recorder and Technical Historian, Dulcie Rose (and a helper yet to be found) became Supper Supervisor and we acquired our first editor(s)

	with the co-opting of Tom and wife Joyce Barnes as joint editors of “The Circular”.
18/2/81	The first of our annual pre-February-meeting get-togethers at Windang estuary , to start the year with a late afternoon “wader-watch” and a picnic together in the twilight.
6/81	First time we showed on the front page of the newsletter our principal office bearers
6/81-2/95	Meetings held in Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens’ Centre, Princes Hwy/Collaery Ave, FM.
9/81	Cloth badges and metal badges carrying the Club emblem became available, and later car stickers and tee-shirts.
9/11/81	AGM. Our principal office-bearers (Williams, Errington and Almond) were re-elected.
12/12/81	Arnold McGill and Roy Wheeler, well regarded old-hand birdo’s who assisted us in our formative years, inducted as our first Life Members .
11/81-4/82	Hazel Emery replaced Rowena as Secretary, Bob Green became Librarian, Ron Hanks - Editor, Karen Hansen – Culinary Supervisor, Horace Ward – Recording Officer and Barbara Hales – Sales Officer.
2/82 and 3/82	Newsletter printed by Roneo process, and still foolscap (note 1 or 2 issues only).
4/82-12/06 +	Newsletter printed by commercial printing process (offset? - by a printer member) for some time and then by photocopying process. Name IBOC News and Club emblem placed on front page (but still shown to be “The <u>Circular</u> of the I B O C “ until 2/04 when changed to “The <u>Newsletter</u> of the I B O C”).
6/82-12/06 +	Newsletter printed on A4 paper (had been quarto then foolscap).
8/11/82	AGM. Principal office-bearers (Williams, Emery and Almond) and others, re-elected, except Dave Thomson added as Vice President, Bob and Dina Green – Librarian(s), Wendy Hanks/Val Shurley – Culinary Officers.
11/4/83	President Laurie Williams stood down and was replaced by Dave Thomson.
5/83	First of what became a monthly listing of recent Unusual Sightings (by Wal Emery).
9/5/83	Doug Gibson and Laurie Williams inducted as Life Members. Wal Emery filled vacant VP position.
14/11/83	AGM. Elected Dave Thomson/Pres, Wal Emery/VP, Hazel Emery/Sec, Ron Almond/Treas, Doug Gibson/TechOff, Laurie Williams/Excursions Off, Ron Hanks/Ed, Horace Ward/Records Off, Bob Green/Librarian, Barbara Hales/Sales off, Bob McKinlay/Hall Supr, Esme Gay/ Notice Board Supr, Wendy Hanks/ Culinary Off, Kevin Wood/Off-in-chge Bird Counts.
11/8/84	Club’s first boat trip to the continental shelf. 18 people at \$20 ea.
11/87	Fees raised to \$7 for single, \$10 family and \$2 student (had been \$5, \$8 and \$2).
12/91	Fees raised to \$10 for single, \$15 family and \$5 student (had been 7,10,2).
8/94	Club incorporated as legal entity IBOC Inc. (precise date ???). Incorporation acknowledged at top of front page of newsletter from 12/94 on.
12/94	Fees raised to \$15 single, \$20 family and \$5 junior (had been 10,15,5).
12/00	Fees raised to \$20 single, \$25 family and \$5 junior (had been 15,20,5).
3/95-12/06 +	Meetings held in the Fairy Meadow Community Centre (formerly library/baby health centre), Princes Hwy/Cambridge Ave., FM.
2/04-12/06 +	Newsletter referred to as “The Newsletter of ---“—no longer “Circular”.
13/11/2000	Brian Hales, Barbara Hales and Horace Ward inducted as Honorary Life Members. That makes 7 total Life Members, the others being Arnold McGill and Roy Wheeler (12/12/81), Doug Gibson and Laurie Williams (9/5/83).

Coming from the South, at Kiama there is a sign pointing to Jamberoo. Travel through Jamberoo, at the traffic circle at the western end of town turn right into Jamberoo Road. At the Curramore sign turn left into Curramore Road. Then as above. The walk is easy on level terrain, first in our property and then along Curramore Road. Bring your morning tea.

MONTHLY OUTING - Sunday 16th September - Mt Annan Botanic Garden Mt Annan nr Narellan Leader Betty Hudson. Meet at the picnic area beside the main car park of Mt Annan Botanic Garden at 10.05am (the gates open at 10.00am).

The gardens can be reached from Wollongong by travelling along the Picton Road to the Southern freeway, where you take the access ramp to Campbelltown & Sydney. Exit via the Campbelltown ramp and turn left towards Narellan. At the next roundabout turn left into Mt Annan Road. Follow the signs to the gardens.

Once in the gardens proceed to the entry booth where there is an entry fee (\$7.50 at last visit). Follow the signs to the carpark which is adjacent to the cafeteria and Shop. We will have morning tea in the grassy area beside the carpark before walking around the immediate area. Lunch will be by the cars at some other point in the gardens. This is a diverse area for birds: it has birds which prefer the drier more open habitats available there rather than on the coast.

COMMITTEE MEETING The next Committee meeting will be held at Tom and Joan Wylie's 4 Daphne Street, Bellambi, 4284 2051 on Tuesday 18th September at 7.30 pm. Club members are always welcome.

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is Thursday 20th September. Please send items to the editor, cashmansjr@bigpond.com or mail them to 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519

Welcome to Jaycee Armstrong, who has joined the Club as a Junior Member. Nice to have you join us. Jaycee is a friend of Kelsey O'Brien

Mid week walk - Mt. Kembla 15/08/07.

At the lookout carpark eleven people discussed the proposed walk and decided it was because of steep parts of the track and the wet weather too dangerous. A decision was made to drive down the hill to the lower carpark and walk the Ring Road track. Once there (thanks to the mobile phone) we were joined by five more members.

We walked in fine rain and sunshine. Bassian Thrush and Superb Lyre Birds were the first birds seen. Little birds Silvereyes, Brown Thornbills and Superb Fairy-wrens were foraging in the undergrowth which was very weedy but provided good cover. Further along the track high in the trees were Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Crimson Rosellas, Galahs and a Spotted Pardalote. The light

Sylvia Garlick

was not the best for bird watching but we saw Lewin's Honeyeaters, Golden Whistlers, (M/F) Pied Currawongs, Grey Fantails, Eastern Yellow Robins (calling) and Laughing Kookaburras.

Late morning tea was taken on a grassy clearing then on the return walk we were happy to see a Grey Butcherbird, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, White-browed Scrubwren, Eastern Whipbird, Grey Shrike-thrush and Brown Gerygone. Then two very reliable birds the Australian Magpie and Australian Raven were added to the list. At the end of the walk Satin Bowerbird, Rainbow Lorikeet and Little Wattlebirds completed the list.

Thanks to whistle-blowing leader Tom Wylie for a pleasant walk. I'm sure everybody enjoyed it.

Bird sightings

Brown Cuckoo-Dove	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Fantail
Galah	Brown Gerygone	Grey Butcherbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Brown Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Rainbow Lorikeet	Little Wattlebird	Pied Currawong
Crimson Rosella	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Yellow Robin	Satin Bowerbird
Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Whipbird	Silvereye
Superb Fairy-wren	Golden Whistler	Bassian Thrush
Spotted Pardalote	Grey Shrike-thrush	

Around the Next Bend in Tasmania

Very late in June and early July was the time we had decided to have a week and a half in the Apple Isle, put the car on the ferry, check out the bird population and photograph lighthouses. Driving down the Hume Hwy. we encountered sleet in the Goulburn area the car dash started dinging and a light flashed on and off. Not more trouble! The day before a flat tyre had to be fixed. Pulling over and checking the car manual the light flashed and dinged for a short period when the temperature is below 4°C to alert the driver there could be ice or snow on the road. It stayed on most of the time we were away.

Arriving in Devonport we were quickly out of town. All the countryside was white with a heavy frost: coldest temperatures in Tassie for over a decade. Tera wanted to photograph the frost, and hopping out of the car we discovered Flame and Scarlet Robins on a fence and a fallen tree. What a lovely sight! A few kilometres further along we found a whole flock of White-fronted Chats. We remember the excitement of seeing one or two while on outings to Shoalhaven Heads, but here was a paddock full of them!

We had a look around Beaconsfield where one year ago they had the mining accident with two lucky survivors. While in town we visited the museum, and I heartily recommend it. Our first lighthouse and first night was at Low Head, with another 'must visit' museum. Accommodation for the night was the old pilot house: an aged stone building administered by the Tasmanian National Parks, in a wonderful complex of old buildings. Watching the

Neil & Tera Wheway

large boats steaming by on the river with wind blowing a gale and freezing cold makes one realize what a dangerous job the olden day pilots had rowing out to board these vessels. Today they motor out in cabin cruisers.

Another lighthouse visited was the Eddystone light in the Mt. William National Park. It was a foul day, raining, blowing, and a muddy dirt road. Not much of the car was visible that evening driving into St. Helens. Luckily there was a car wash in town. In the precincts of the lighthouse were dead Shearwaters, but the place was deserted with no one to ask the reason for their death.

A visit to the Freycinet National Park is always worthwhile to see Wine Glass Bay and the lighthouse, and it was here walking in the park we stopped to observe the Yellow-throated Honeyeater.

Driving between Sorell and Hobart up over the mountains which were covered in snow from previous snow falls, we had to drive through a snow storm. The VW Golf weathered the storm magnificently. Bruny Island has a lighthouse so we had to photograph that and of course any birds. Having checked about accommodation before leaving home we chose to stay at the only hotel on the island, the pictures on the internet looked fantastic. But seeing the hotel units left us a little stunned. They were two concrete block units on the waterfront: great view, it would be brilliant in summer. It was blowing a gale outside as well as inside the unit around the window and door frames. Stringing spare

blankets across the gaps made a big difference, but the blankets still billowed out into the room. The small electric heater helped a bit, but the big one on the wall refused to work. We did see lots of birds and the lighthouse. Brrrr.

At Hastings the caves and thermal springs were interesting and well laid out, but the Black Currawongs made a nuisance of themselves in the shelters and barbeque areas. The Tahune Forest Air Walk and the Huon River walk had us watching a Bassian Thrush. Morning tea was taken at a picnic spot where a bloke asked what we were looking for, Pink Robins was our answer. "They've been flying about here all morning" was the reply. We didn't see one. Driving back from the Air Walk we stopped again for another look for the

Endemic List

Tasmanian Native-hen	Green Rosella	Dusky Robin
Tasmanian Thornbill	Tasmanian Brown Scrubwren	Yellow Wattle Bird
Yellow-throated Honeyeater	Black-headed Honeyeater	Strong-billed Honeyeater
Black Currawong	Scrubtit (not seen)	Forty-spotted Pardalote (not seen)

robin. After lunch we gave up and in the car ready to leave the same bloke raced over shouting "its back" sure enough there it was. You little beauty!

Pulling up at the Hellyer Gorge the Olive Whistler was hopping about and Bassian Thrushes were everywhere. Tasmania in winter is wonderful, with no trouble getting accommodation, and very few people and tourists about. When seeking a room for the night we asked three questions. Is there a heater? an electric blanket? and lastly what are your winter rates?. Tera found a list of 12 endemic birds to tick; we found 10 of them plus seventy four others. We were well satisfied. We had some trouble identifying birds, and I think it was because of their fur coats and not their feathers.

BITS and...

- * Here is a beautiful site to see thornbills. Check it out. It's lovely! Jill Molan <http://www.peterfuller.com.au/galleries/thornbills/thornbills.html>
- * Special thanks to Richard Miller for the gift of a number of avian books. Some went to the library, some to club members and some to the Scout's Bird Observation hide on Mt Keira
- * Special thanks also to Martin Cocker for a further gift of books to the library.
- * Last month, Dave Thomson's 'Potted History of IBOC' was published by the editor somewhat prematurely. Dave would be pleased if any club members who has noticed any corrections or omissions to the 'Potted History' would contact him on 4284 2876

Chris Chafer - Records Officer

Chris Chafer will retire as our Records Officer at the end of the year. Chris has held this position, in two stints, for 15 years, but now lives in Sydney. The Records Officer lists and keeps track of rare and unusual bird sightings in our area, and sends them on to Birds Australia. Chris has done this meticulously, and made thoughtful comments on the sightings. Chris is also a great photographer, and his bird photos grace our website and occasionally appear in the

newsletter. Our grateful thanks to, and best wishes to Chris. We appreciate his long and extensive contribution to the club. Chris will not be an easy act to follow, but the Committee is looking for a volunteer to carry on this important task.

Chris Brandis comments, 'It's a good job for someone who wants to get to know the status of our local birds. And if they want to do more in this area, they could become a member of the NSW Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee.

Birds around Berry – July 2007

30 years! It's a long, long time. And in spite of many frustrated efforts, near misses and long lonely nights wondering "will it EVER happen?" it was worth it. All totally unexpected five seconds of it.

In early June I was returning from Wollongong to Berry on the Princes Highway. At about 7.45pm I was crossing Ooaree Creek just past the Gerringong turn off when my headlights caught a large ghostly bird flying across the road. I recognised it instantly and whooped with joy - "it's a Barn Owl!" - or, as they say, words to that effect! Like some ethereal spirit the owl slowly flapped through the beam of my headlights, its body and underwings luminescent white made even more startling by the shimmer of golden bronze on its back and upper wings. With a stream of cars behind me and nowhere to pull over all I could do was watch this wondrous bird drift into the darkness of Rose Valley. Five seconds, only five, of a bird I had spent thirty years scouring Australia to see - and I was a very happy boy!

A Barn Owl sitting on a branch reminds me of an upturned pear, its legs being the stalk. When it flies it looks as though the rounded end has hit a tree creating a large round flat face. It is such a beautiful bird and it deserves a better description, yet somehow, when you actually see one, this unusual shape seems to work perfectly.

The flattened face is in fact a heart-shaped 'facial disk'. Set in the disk are a pair of large dark eyes which you might imagine are the owl's main asset for hunting its prey. In fact the disk acts much like a forward-facing radar dish collecting and focussing sound to the ears. The ears are hidden in the feathers and, interestingly, are not symmetrically placed (like ours). This misalignment operates like a sophisticated Global Positioning System pinpointing exactly the sound of a mouse's rustle in the grass and allowing the owl to hunt in total darkness. The Barn Owl is a

Bob Ashford

very effective hunter and pound for pound consumes more rodent pests (usually *Antechinus* or the introduced House Mouse in Australia) than any other wild creature. Farmers are generally very happy to have them roosting in their sheds and several have told me with great glee about the 'white owls' they have seen around Coolangatta Mountain!

I saw my first Barn Owls in a deserted old church in the little village of Great Ouseburn in West Yorkshire. My grandparents lived there, next to a farm, in an equally old cottage. They persuaded the old farmer to show me where the owls roosted and between the age of about nine to fourteen there weren't many spring holidays that passed without me visiting my grandparents and the nearby Barn Owls. My English teacher used to ask me before school broke up "I suppose your *'What I did in my holidays'* essay will be about the Barn Owls again?" They invariably were.

Since leaving school I've travelled extensively and seen Barn Owls in many places (except Australia until this sighting!). They can be found on every continent, except Antarctica, though they are not a common bird. In the early seventies I was based in Nepal and made friends with an American missionary family, the Flemings. Bob Fleming, the son, was in the process of producing the first Field Guide to the Birds of Nepal. I was a regular visitor to his Kathmandu studio where two Nepali artists were painting the plates to illustrate the book. Most of the birds I had never seen before and the dead specimens were as fascinating as the paintings.

Bob had a far-reaching network of village kids who would bring in specimens, dead or alive. On one early visit a miniscule young boy brought in a stunning Blue-throated Barbet, equal in fluorescent colouring to many of our lorikeets. Seeing my excitement Bob talked to the kid and

told me to come back the next day, which I did. The kid arrived and on his twig-like arm stood a Barn Owl in all its pear-shaped magnificence. Its big dark eyes shone out from its white feathered disk. I was entranced. The little street urchin had

found it as a fledgling and raised it on the hordes of mice and rats that inhabit Kathmandu. I had never had such a view of a Barn Owl, so close or so beautiful. Until, that is, those glorious five seconds that night on the road to Berry.

Travels on the North Island of New Zealand (Part 2)

Val Dolan

Part I of Val's travels can be found in the April 2007 issue of IBOC News.



Spotted Shags

Photo: Val Dolan

An early morning walk to the Wellington waterfront yielded families of ducks, gulls and terns but in the bushes behind Te Papa, the National Museum, a clear sighting of a Silvereye showed that appropriate planting can attract birds into busy cities.

Later, out on the road, I was annoyed with myself for not finding a bookshop to buy a N.Z. field guide. I saw a magnificent Australasian Harrier astride its prey or road kill and my friend spotted a female Pheasant as we drove along. We both saw two sparrow like brown birds with distinctive yellow heads fighting. Yellowheads seemed the obvious identification, but these endemic birds are no longer found on the north island. Most likely we saw the introduced Yellowhammer. Black Swans with cygnets were seen on Lake Taupo but we had no idea then if these were also native to N.Z. In fact these are introduced Australian species that have colonized most of the wetlands. Black Swans, like

Pheasants were introduced for the benefit of shooters and apparently there are still two months of the year when they can be legally shot.

In the Te Puia thermal region at Rotorua I was thrilled to see my first live Brown Kiwis in a nocturnal house. These were very active, following each other around and fossicking in the leaf litter. In the mountains the Conservation Department had sign posted a couple of sites but a combination of narrow windy roads, no parking, the responsibility for a hire car all deterred us from seeking them out. Could we have seen these nocturnal birds on a day time walk? Taxidermed Spotted Kiwis were on display in the Auckland Museum. Captive and stuffed birds are a poor second to a bushland sighting. Walking around the sulphurous Te Puia we photographed a Maori bird trap. This was a thing of beauty in itself made from timber and suspended from a tree. Apparently it could be filled with sweetened water to attract birds.

On the way to the Coromandel Peninsular we passed a mud flat at low tide. This was entirely covered with Pied Oyster Catchers: over a hundred mixed adult and immature birds... a great sight I thought I may have been exaggerating here but 29,000 were counted at The Firth of Thames in 1999 according to Stuart Chamber's, *Birds of New Zealand*. There were also several black winged gulls that I thought were Pacific Gulls which are apparently NOT found in N.Z. They were native Black-backed Gulls, a large impressive bird. Further along the same coastline at a lucky moment of the right tide we spotted several rocky outcrops, white with guano, and covered with birds. We had to drive past on a narrow windy road to find a precarious parking place and walk back to take photos of these birds later identified as Spotted Shags. These shags have orange feet and are closely related to the South American Red-legged Shag.

Like many tourists in the area we made a visit to the Hot Water Beach, where thermal activity produces hot water under the sand at low tide. It's great fun to dig in your heels or hire a spade and dig yourself a hole! I spotted a New Zealand Pipit on a garden path here, identified by its distinctive walk as it attempted to hide. Also found in many gardens are the introduced Blackbirds. Peacocks were brought from Sri Lanka and India to enhance large estates but escaped, and are now feral. Australian Magpies have also been introduced and while not quite as unpopular as our possums they are seen as a nuisance to native birds, and plunder their nests.

During our travels we saw a beautiful blue-green Kingfisher typically perched on a powerline. A single Pukeko (Swamp Hen) wandered up to the side of the road from a creek. These birds are made much of in tourist shops and their image produced as keyrings, decorative tiles and teatowels. Making our way inland along a gravel road in search of some rare native forest we took a well cared for boardwalk into the forest to see kauri trees and walked further to escape a busload of noisy tourists. Standing quietly in the magnificent old growth forest we saw a glorious New Zealand Pigeon. The only endemic pigeon it is 510mm long and has iridescent green and purple feathers which strangely allow it to blend into the shadowy forest. We investigated each other for a full 30 seconds and the Pigeon then fluttered out of sight. Locals told us they are good eating and known as 'Tegels' pigeons... not legal I feel sure.

As I said in Part One I wasn't on a birdwatching holiday but these are some of the pleasure of travelling in N.Z. Next time the magic story of the island of Tiritiri Matangi... and who was the thoughtful bird club member who advised me to find it?

Birdie Books

Jan Aitkin

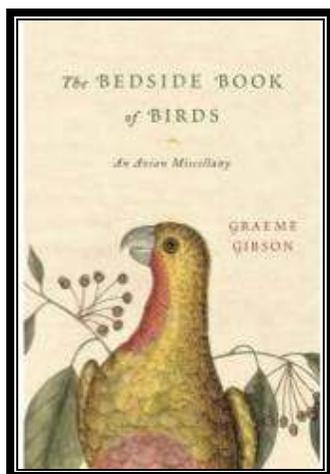
Jan Aitkin is a retired public servant and is a secondhand bookseller. Jan was the President of FOBL (Friends Of Balmain Library) for several years. This is an article she wrote for the FOBL newsletter Bookworm, in July 2007

Rather late in my life, with declining sight and agility, I fell in with a partner who is a birdwatcher. To my surprise I have become quite passionate about birds and we have had expeditions to remote places to see rare species. The very best one was to see the Black Grass Wren at the top of WA – it required a small plane, a tinier plane, a doorless helicopter and a trek over some very

inhospitable terrain in 40° heat, and you guessed it – the bird was nowhere to be seen!

The birdie books have been a bonus. We have as a matter of course bird guides from all over: Morcombe, Slater, Pizzey, Simpson & Day et al. But they are for business – there are lots of others which are for fun. One such was the kids' book by Arthur Ransome – *Great*

Northern? I have been a Ransome fan for years but hadn't read this book: its main thesis is that birds may appear very far from their normal habitats – blown by wind and storms perhaps and lucky birdwatchers may chance on them.



But to skip to a recent local book: *The Big Twitch* by Sean Dooley, which has the fast pace of a detective story. The author is an addicted bird watcher and chose to spend his inheritance on trying to see 700 assorted birds in one year within Australia. Twitchers are the hyperactives of the birdwatching community and are known to spend heaps of cash on and

flying from one end of the country to the other just to see one new rare bird to add to their list ticks.

On a totally different tack is *How to be a Bad Birdwatcher* by Simon Barnes, an Englishman and sportswriter for *The Times*. The text on the flyleaf shows why birdwatching is not the preserve of twitchers, but one of the simplest, cheapest and most rewarding pastimes around. What it doesn't say is that this is a very droll book.

From the other side of the Atlantic comes *Red Tails in Love: a wildlife drama in Central Park* by Marie Winn, the story of red tail hawks nesting on tall buildings near Central Park in New York. With the decline in local habitats the Park has become a stopover for all sorts of birds and the birds and their watchers are lovingly documented here. There is a TV documentary called *Pale Male* on the same subject. But the Book Beautiful on birds is *The Bedside Book of Birds – An Avian Miscellany* by Graeme Gibson – gorgeous production, wonderful photographs, an absolute feast for the eye.

...and Pieces

* Safety First. Always wear strong shoes and sensible clothing on walks. A Safety kit is to be carried on all walks. The notice about walks should indicate any difficulties beforehand. And for insurance purposes, please always sign the attendance book at meetings

*Big NET meeting Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning 8th,9th September at the Olympic Park Education Centre. You're welcome. \$10 afternoon and morning teas

*16th September, also at the Olympic Park Education Centre. an Orientation Course for Birdie Volunteers to man the Education Centre on weekends. Free

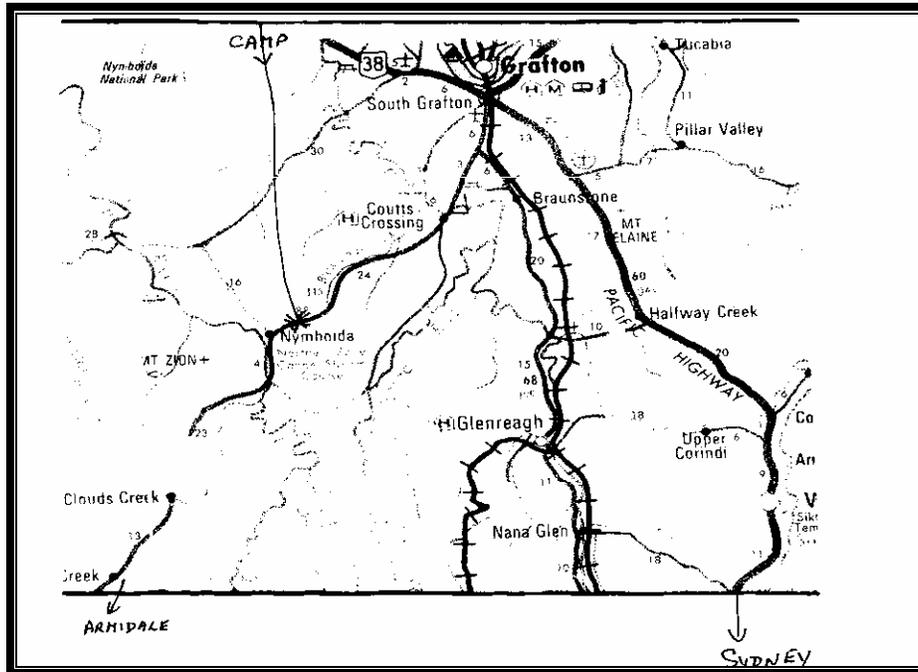
OCTOBER CAMP Nymboida Canoe Centre, Nymboida nr Grafton 20-27th October

The October Camp this year will be at the Nymboida Canoe Centre at Nymboida, which is 34km SW of Grafton, on the Armidale road. The centre is well signposted on the approach to the village. Neither food nor fuel is available in Nymboida, the nearest being in Grafton. Please make sure you leave Grafton with a full tank.

Travel to camp is via either the Pacific Hwy to South Grafton where you turn left onto the Gwydir Hwy for a short distance and then turn left at the roundabout onto the Armidale Road, or along the New England Hwy to Tamworth, then to Armidale where you take the Waterfall Way to Ebor and then turn along the Grafton Road. Either way it is close to 700km and an overnight stop is strongly recommended each way. The UBD map of either the Coffs Coast or Far North Coast NSW will give a good overall map of the area.

If you have not already added your name to the list of members attending the camp, please let Betty Hudson know on 02 4236 0307 or Mobile 0432 829 945 if you intend coming to the camp, so that accommodation can be booked for you.

Please note that there are no EFTPOS or Credit facilities at the Centre. Please bring the money for your camp fees with you, as payment will have to be made to the centre at the end of camp



Bird List for Tallawarra Walk 19.08.07 42 species by lunch - more to come
 Due to an editorial hic-up and a misunderstanding, the full bird list and description of the Tallawarra walk will have to wait until next month

Brown Quail	Whistling Kite	White-fronted Chat
Musk Duck	Brown Falcon	Restless Flycatcher
Black Swan	Purple Swamphen	Magpie-lark
Australian Wood Duck	Eurasian Coot	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Masked Lapwing	Grey Butcherbird
Chestnut Teal	Crested Pigeon	Australian Magpie
Hardhead	Galah	Australian Raven
Australasian Grebe	Long-billed Corella	House Sparrow
Little Black Cormorant	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Red-browed Finch
Australian Pelican	Rainbow Lorikeet	Welcome Swallow
White-faced Heron	Eastern Rosella	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Great Egret	Superb Fairy-wren	Little Grassbird
Cattle Egret	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Golden-headed Cisticola
Australian White Ibis	Noisy Miner	Common Myna

Unusual Records for June - July 2007

Send your records to: email cchafer@speedlink.com.au

Chris J. Chafer

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Brush-turkey	2	25-Jun	Keiraville	garden	ME
Australian Shelduck	1	21-Jun	Moss Vale	river	DG
Australian Shelduck	1	11-Jul	East Moss Vale	farm dam	KM
Southern Giant-Petrel	1	23-Jun	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM

Southern Giant-Petrel	3	6-Jul	MM beach	inshore	CJC
Southern Giant-Petrel	5	29-Jul	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Northern Giant-Petrel	1	23-Jun	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Northern Giant-Petrel	1	29-Jul	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Royal Albatross	1	29-Jul	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Grey-headed Albatross	1	29-Jul	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Buller's Albatross	2	23-Jun	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Buller's Albatross	1	29-Jul	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Straw-necked Ibis	400+	15-Jun	Terragong Swamp	field	DG
Royal Spoonbill	27	10-Jun	Koona Bay (Lake Illawarra)	lake	BBH
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	3	2-Jun	Abrahams Bosum, Currarong	overhead	BA
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	2	20-Jun	Primbee dunes	overhead	DG
Brown Goshawk	1	2-Jun	Abrahams Bosum, Currarong	overhead	BA
Grey Goshawk	1	27-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR, TE
Grey Goshawk	1	2-Jun	Bearra	overhead	KM
Grey Goshawk	1	3-Jun	Bellambi dunes	overhead	TW
Grey Goshawk	1	3-Jun	Bomaderry Creek Reserve	overhead	KM
Grey Goshawk	1	16-Jul	Balgownie	overhead	RT
Wedge-tailed Eagle	4	2-Jun	Jaspers Brush	overhead	BA
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	3-Jun	Sussex Inlet	overhead	KM
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	26-Jul	Mt. Kembla	overhead	MR, TE
Little Eagle	2	15-Jul	Killalea State Park	overhead	CJC
Brown Falcon	2	15-Jun	Terragong Swamp	overhead	DG
Australian Hobby	2	11-Jun	Barrack Point	pine tree	MR
Arctic Tern	1	23-Jun	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
White-headed Pigeon	36	24-Jun	Berry	parkland	CJC
White-headed Pigeon	1	25-Jun	Coolangatta	road side	KM
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	9	30-May	Sussex Inlet west	forest	KM
Red-rumped Parrot	3	11-Jul	East of Berrima	rural	KM
Powerful Owl	1	30-May	Sussex Inlet west	forest	KM
Barn Owl	1	3-Jun	Berkeley (Hooka Point)	woodland	MR
Azure Kingfisher	1	2-Jun	Abrahams Bosum, Currarong	creek	BA
Fuscous Honeyeater	2	27-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR, TE
Fuscous Honeyeater	12+	2-Jun	Abrahams Bosum, Currarong	woodland	BA
White-plumed Honeyeater	1	24-Jun	Barrack Point	parkland	MR
White-plumed Honeyeater	3	6-Jul	Darcy Dunster Res. Dapto	riparian	LP
Crescent Honeyeater	2	15-Jul	Boyd's Lookout	forest	SE
Scarlet Honeyeater	5+	27-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR, TE
Flame Robin	6	26-Jun	Marulan	rural	DG
Rose Robin	1	4-Jun	Sussex Inlet	forest	KM
Rose Robin	1	11-Jun	Wollongong Botanical Gardens	garden	JW
Rose Robin	1	9-Jul	North Nowra	garden	SE
Spotted Quail-thrush	5	3-Jun	Wingello State Forest	forest	CB, CC
Crested Shrike-tit	2	28-Jul	Killalea State Park	forest	MR
Spangled Drongo	2	27-May	Primbee dunes	dune woodland	MR, TE
Spangled Drongo	1	10-Jun	Bellambi dunes	woodland	TW
Bassian Thrush	10+	26-Jul	Mt. Kembla	forest	MR, TE

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; TE – Terri Edwell; SE – Sheila Emery; ME – Mary Eskdale; DG – Darryl Goldrick; BBH – Brian & Barbara Hales; MR – Michelle Rower; PM Peter Milburn; KM – Kevin Mills; JM – Jill Molan; LP – Lorraine Pincus; RT – Roger Truscott; JW – Joan Wylie; TW – Tom Wylie.

Birds which might be seen include Southern Emu-wren, Eastern Bristle Bird, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Crescent Honeyeater and Ground Parrot

COMMITTEE MEETING There will be no Committee Meeting in October as a number of the Committee will be involved in the Nymboida Camp

NYMBOIDA CAMP October 20th to 27th 2007 Leader Betty Hudson.

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is the weekend 20, 21 October. Please send items to the editor, cashmansjr@bigpond.com or mail them to 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Our meeting on 12th November will be the AGM of the Club. All executive positions will be declared vacant, reports will be given and elections held

Welcome to Gleniss Wellings, who has joined the Club. Nice to have you with us.

A Night at the Flics

About 25 people attended the revival of a social evening of DVDs at Barbara & Brian Hales' cinema. We watched 2 shows the first was Urban Predators which was about butcherbirds, owls, magpies and crows living with us in a suburban environment. The second was of the camp at Wellington Caves taken by Martin Potter. This brought back memories of our time there particularly the Barking Owl in the car park, and reminders of how dry it

Neil Wheway

was during the time of our stay.

There were no peanuts or popcorn at this venue but a scrumptious supper that the film goers had brought with them. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed evening and we didn't have to pay admission to get in. It is hoped in the future to hold other evenings. So if you missed out this time, keep reading the newsletter, for coming attractions.

Karen Hansen

Longtime Club member Karen Hansen passed away on 30th August 2007. Karen had grown up in Denmark where her family had a farm and small forest holding, an environment which developed Karen's love of nature and the land. She came to Australia in 1955, following a niece for whom she had cared and grown close to. When her niece and family returned to Denmark after a couple of years Karen decided to stay on in Australia, a decision which she never regretted.

I first met her at the Illawarra Natural History Society meetings in 1975. From her interest in all aspects of nature Karen particularly enjoyed the wonderful birdlife to be observed in Australia. When Doug Gibson commenced his series of 'Ornithology' classes through WEA Karen was keen to enrol and thrilled when out of

Richard Miller

them the Illawarra Bird Observers Club was formed. Karen attended the lectures, film nights, walks and camps whenever possible and for several years helped out as one of our Monday night 'T ladies'. In subsequent years Karen became restricted in her walking but continued to enjoy Club meetings.

Karen returned to visit family and friends in Denmark on a regular basis until her later years and also travelled widely around Australia. She was always keen to say that she was happy to have travelled so much while she could, travel which included a plane flight over the Antarctic, and had no regrets, though I have a hunch that a trip to Kangaroo Island was still on her list.

Karen took great pride in her home and garden enjoying the trees, flowers, native animals and especially the birds which visited her 'sanctuary' in West Wollongong but not the neighbourhood cats which she cursed for killing her resident blue-tongue lizards. She had a plum tree which fruited prolifically and shared the produce with many Club members as well as supplying some fruit to one of the local retirement homes. She was a very keen vegetable gardener and always trying to convince friends and relatives of the need to have red, green and yellow veges every day. Karen was able to continue living in her own home and growing her veges until just before her 98th birthday so perhaps we should all heed her advice!

Karen was a proud lady of strong character. Her house walls displayed examples of her embroidery skills and she also had some photos of the family farm in

Denmark where she grew up, showing the large waterwheel which provided the power for her grandfather's woollen mill. Emily and I had the pleasure of visiting the family farm in Denmark so these photos brought back many fond memories for both Karen and ourselves the many times we dropped round to visit for a cuppa, a slice of pecan pie and a walk around her garden. We were always given flowers, fruit, veges or plants as we left. The Bird Club was an important, enriching and supportive part of her life and Karen was especially grateful to Laurie & Nola Williams for the enthusiasm and friendship which they generated amongst members during the formative years of The Club. Karen will be missed by the many friends she made through IBOC and for her participation and support of The Club but she leaves with no regrets after an active, happy and fulfilling life. Thanks for the friendship.

BITS and...

* **Correction** from September Newsletter BITS and...p4 The collection of books and journals recently received by IBOC for the benefit of Club Members and other interested bird observers were donated by the Gibson Family from Doug Gibson's personal library.. Richard Miller's involvement was purely as a facilitator in distributing the material.

* **Finance.** The Treasurer reported that Club Finances stood at \$1406.24 at 31 August 2007. Main expenditure in the last month was for Insurance, some \$700. To ensure that our Insurance policy covers you, please sign the attendance book at all meetings.

SPITFIRE and RAPTORS Quiz

1. The British fighter, the Supermarine Spitfire of WWII fame was powered by a Rolls-Royce engine named after a medieval magician and a raptor. It was the M.....?
2. In late 1941, some marks of the Spitfire were fitted with another Rolls-Royce engine again named after a raptor starting with G. It was the G.....?
3. Rolls-Royce built five other engines fitted to different military aircraft, which were also named after raptors. They were the E....., another G....., K....., P....., & V.....?

The Editor recently read a great book, Jonathan Glancey's *Spitfire: the Biography*. 500 Spitfires were made in Australia in WWII at Fisherman's Bend. Temora Aero Club now has two restored Spitfires in flying condition.

LITTLE PENGUINS! DOG ON IT !

Recently, in Warrnambool, Australia the world's first trial utilised a Maremma Sheepdog to guard the dwindling [penguin](#) population of Middle Island. For years the penguins have been attacked and killed by foxes and dogs. All previous attempts to save the penguins had been unsuccessful. A local chicken farmer suggested and supplied one of his working Maremmas for a trial. The trial has been so successful that the local council and wildlife officers have secured two Maremma pups for permanent relocation to the island.

http://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/page/page.asp?page_Id=527

Chris Cartledge noticed this item, and passed it on. Thanks Chris.

MOUNT ANNAN BOTANICAL GARDEN- 16.9. 2007

Lorraine Pincus

Arrived at the gardens on time and joined the queue of cars waiting for the gates to open. From here we were able to see the large gardens of pink, white and yellow Paper Daises. We, all 18 members started the day with morning tea at the car park, joined by a friendly Grey Butcherbird. We were alerted by the excited raspy noise of a pair of Masked Lapwing vigorously flying back and forth obviously protecting eggs-- 4 in to be exact (Tom was persistent with his observations) nicely placed amongst the leaves and twigs on the ground near the foot path.

Most established trees were flowering in the Terraced Gardens but it was noticeable how dry the ground and small bushes and shrubs were. The Common Blackbirds were busy flicking the dry leaves aside to obtain the meal underneath. A small Grey Fantail was busily dancing in the air. The Yellow Thornbills and Silvereyes were elusively darting in and out of the Sheoaks and Casurinas. Silence was broken by the unusual call of 4 female Satin Bowerbirds and Joan observed one young male practicing with a blue object in his mouth. Our path eventually brought us to a small

dam where a Eurasian Coot was sitting on a nest, on an opposite bank we viewed an Australasian Grebe also nesting with her mate swimming nearby. The cars were driven to a shady isolated spot for lunch near the Historic Water Canal.

After lunch we wandered down a cycle path and to our delight we saw 2-3 pairs of Red-rumped Parrots visiting their nests, in the same tree two Dusky Woodswallows shared a limb.

From there we drove to Lake Nadungamba and Lake Gilingandum specifically to view Latham's Snipe, which we did as they flew by after being flushed out of the reeds by the "Secretary bird."

Our last area to be explored was the Banksia Theme Garden, there were small Banksias, not attracting any honeyeaters. Only a very dry riverbed and dam, but plenty of noise and noisy kids, no bird would dare fly by. At this point we 'called it a day' but not before seeing and hearing a Golden Whistler.

It was a lovely spring day to enjoy the company of others and to watch the birds. Thank you Betty for a great day.

52 Bird Species seen

Black Swan	Red-rumped Parrot	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian Wood Duck	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Dusky Woodswallow
Pacific Black Duck	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Grey Butcherbird
Hardhead	Laughing Kookaburra	Australian Magpie
Australasian Grebe	Superb Fairy-wren	Little Raven
Australian Pelican	Spotted Pardalote	Satin Bowerbird
Australian White Ibis	Striated Pardalote	Red-browed Finch
Purple Swamphen	White-browed Scrubwren	European Goldfinch
Dusky Moorhen	Yellow Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Eurasian Coot	Little Wattlebird	Fairy Martin
Latham's Snipe	Noisy Miner	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Masked Lapwing	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Spotted Turtle-dove	Eastern Whipbird	Silvereye
Galah	Golden Whistler	Common Blackbird
Little Corella	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Starling
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Magpie-lark	Common Myna
Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey Fantail	
Eastern Rosella	Willie Wagtail	



Masked Lapwing *Photos Tera Wheway*

BIRDING ABROAD The Lower Luangwa, Zambia

David Winterbottom

Here is a vignette from a trip we made in September, 2006.

There was only a trickle of water running through the sand under the embankment below our camp (we had the honeymoon suite!) although the river bed must have been several hundred metres wide. However, there were pools enough to cool the hippos, with their attendant Redbilled Oxpeckers. It also brought in lots of birds - Egyptian Geese, White Crowned and Blacksmith Plovers were on the sands with Threebanded Plovers, Common Sandpipers and the occasional Greenshank, all overlorded by a magnificent African Eagle.

Lilacbreasted Rollers, Whitefronted and Little Bee-eaters hawked above the bank whilst many Pied and one Giant Kingfisher waited for an opportunity. Hundreds of Helmeted Guineafowl chuntered across the sand whilst, at a respectable distance, a pride of lions came out to sun bathe. Even further away some Giraffe stalked past.

A game walk yielded more animals than birds. First we skirted gingerly past a

couple of big Buffalo, then we met the pride of Lions who slowly backed off, followed by the rumblings of Elephant in the bush, so we quickly backed off. A large herd of Eland and some Giraffe were curious, and a young Leopard was great sighting. We stopped short of getting between a Hippo and its water hole at which there two small herds of Elephant. Then we passed close to a King Cobra on the way back. It was all rather too exciting to notice many birds, except for the flocks of Lillian's Lovebirds – not to be missed – the African equivalent of Budgies!

Marabou, Yellowbill, Saddlebill and Openbill storks were to be seen on nearby dambos (billabongs) as were a number of White-faced Duck and Spurwing Geese, the odd African Jacana and Black-winged Stilt, and just one Painted Snipe – very rare there apparently. The Great Egrets, Little Egrets and Cattle Egrets are the same as ours, but Grey and Blackheaded Herons

take the place of our Whitefaced Heron. Virtually every day in camp we saw Fork-tailed Drongos, Longtailed Glossy Starlings, Red-billed Quelia, Blue Waxbills, Bateleur and Tawny Eagles, Arrowmarked Babblers, Red-billed Hornbills and lots of Doves.

An evening drive, after a picnic sundowner overlooking the river, revealed a Pearl Spotted and a Giant Eagle Owl.

We spent a bit of time watching a pair of Water Dikkops (Thick-knees) before they took off to make their mournful cries. A Leopard, a Civet, several Large Spotted Genets, Porcupines and Scrub Hares made the evening more interesting. Back in camp the day finished with a sumptuous al fresco dinner under the stars, to the grumbling sound of hippos coming out for their nightly grazing and the eerie whoop of a hyena.

Those Bad table manners at Breakfast too !

As often as I can, on a Sunday morning, I wander up the Mt Pleasant track and travel south along the Mt Keira ring track. On a clear morning it is delightful. Thankfully, very few people take advantage of this wonderful Wollongong resource and it is rare to see another bushwalker.

Lately, half way up the Mt Pleasant track, I have been serenaded by 'Larry' the lyrebird. Larry is unusual, at least in my experience, because he loves to sing not at ground level, but 5m up on a horizontal branch of a large red cedar. I suppose his voice travels further that way, and it gives the ladies more of a chance to catch his latest hits. It is truly wonderful to listen to his repertoire and to try to identify each call.

Along the ring track in July large rainforest trees are fruiting. There is a certain division of labour apparent here. First there are laurels with big black fruit that seem to be the favourite of Satin Bowerbirds. Green Catbirds are also present. Further

Roger Truscott

still and the lilly pillys are absolutely laden with pale pink fruit. Here there has been in the past 2 weeks, a flock of about 30-40 Topknot Pigeons.

Their routine is constant. Catch the sun first on the bare branches of a red cedar to warm up and facilitate digestion, then at a time decided by one or many, off they all go to settle on the top branches of a nearby lilly pilly. You can hear the wing beats as the flock passes by, then the racket as they alight and fruit starts to hit the forest floor. I watched them closely and for every one berry eaten some 2 or 3 are dropped apparently with deliberation. Why should this be? Are they just messy eaters, or do they feel each fruit first, as you would avacadoes in a supermarket and, if not ripe, discard it (I am referring to the pigeons here of course). There is no shortage of fare here (unlike a Bondi tram), so such apparent wastefulness does not incur a penalty. Uncivilised behaviour or not, it is wonderful to watch such a brekky scene.

Of Birds and Poems

John Douglas Pringle

The Scot, John Pringle, came to Australia, shortly after World War II. Pringle was editor of the Sydney Morning Herald, and later editor of the Canberra Times. This essay was published 35 years ago, in his book, On Second Thoughts, and records his astonishment at seeing the birds of Australia, which we so easily take for granted.

Magpies and currawongs are only slightly shy and less aggressive than kookaburras. The magpie sometimes attacks human beings in defence of its nesting site. In spite of this habit they are friendly and endearing birds, easily tamed and rightly popular. Their lovely melodious, yodeling call is one of the most beautiful of all Australian bird-calls, heard especially in the dawn.

As I have already said, I could fill an anthology of poems about the magpie, but two stand out in my mind as the most vivid and accurate. The first is by James McAuley:

The magpie's mood is never surly;
Every morning waking early,
He gargles music in his throat.
The liquid squabble of his note,

Its silver stridencies of sound,
The bright confusions and the round
Bell-cadencies, are pealed
Over the frosty half ploughed field.

Then swooping down self-confidently
From the fence-post or the tree,
He swaggers in pied feather coat
And slips the fat worms down his throat.

Now Judith Wright:

Along the road the magpies walk
With hands in pockets, left and right.
They tilt their heads and stroll and talk.
In their well-fitted black and white

They look like certain gentlemen
Who seem most nonchalant and wise
Until their meal is served – and then
What clashing beaks, what greedy eyes!

But not one man that I have heard
Throws back his head in such a song
Of grace and praise – no man nor bird.
Their greed is brief; their joy is long.
For each is born with such a throat
as thanks his God with every note.

It seems to me that an even an Eskimo who reads these two poems would know exactly what the magpie looks and sounds like.

.....
The currawongs are less popular and have a bad reputation for bird-nesting and egg-robbing, but personally I cannot help liking this bold elegant black and white bird with its long tail and bright golden eyes, and its ringing cries, 'currawong, currawong,' as it swoops and flits from tree to tree. I am glad that Judith Wright shares my feelings:

The currawong has shallow eyes-
Bold shallow buttons of yellow glass
That see all round his sleek black skull.
Small birds sit quiet when he flies;
Mothers of nestlings cry *Alas!*
He is a gangster, his wife's a moll.

But I remember long ago
(a child beside the seldom sea)
the currawongs as wild as night

quarreling, talking, crying so,
in the scarlet-tufted coral-tree;
and past them that blue stretch of light,

the ocean with its dangerous song.
Robber then and robber still,
he cries now with the same strange word
(*currawong-currawong*)
That from those coxcomb trees I heard.
Take my bread and eat your fill,
Bold, cruel and melodious bird.

TAWNY!

Professor Gisela Kaplan of the University of New England has recently released her book *Tawny Frogmouth* after years and years of study. 'This bird is heart-meltingly gorgeous as perhaps only a baby koala or a labrador puppy can be,' she says. 'And as individuals, Tawny frogmouths often have a charming disposition, very similar to that of parrots.'

Tawny Frogmouths, the only nocturnal birds living in backyards across most of the country have a darker side too. The irises of the male's eyes turn from yellow to red before they attack any male or female that enters their territory. They are the 'skunks of the air.' Sometimes they

ejaculate foul smelling faeces, 'with enormous force and also over a wide area,' perhaps to ward off snakes and monitor lizards that eat their eggs and chicks.

But these big-eyed fluffy birds also partner for life and are protective, devoted parents. 'Once the young have left the nest, the family tends to roost closely together.' By eating cockroaches, spiders, mice, centipedes, scorpions, snails and slugs, they help humans get rid of pests, but they are threatened by man-made inventions such as barbed wire and pesticides.

From an article by Deborah Smith in the SMH 24.9.07

Mid week walk- Jamberoo 12/9/07

Those able to get to this mid week walk were well rewarded. The weather was perfect for being outdoors and the birds obviously appreciated the arrival of spring...leading to a bird count of 53! The turning circle outside the van Oudtshoorn's home soon filled with cars and Tom Wylie had already started the list before a party of 24 set off to find more elusive bird life.

After a browse around Nic and Daphne's property we crossed a footbridge over a tiny creek and ventured onto a friendly neighbour's land. Tales were told of resident Tawny Frogmouths and a count of 90 bird species observed over a year. I was able to point out to the knowledgeable Sylvia what stinging nettle looks like. She touched it just to check! It doesn't grow in

Val Dolan

the part of Western Australia she knows so well. Walkers at the head of the group spotted a Kookaburra enter its nest in a hollow log. All of us had a perfect sighting of a raptor diving for prey on a grassy hill. Back at the starting point for morning tea Daphne offered a delicious freshly baked chocolate cake around. She was up early! A few visitors, well satisfied with their pleasant morning, left the group and the rest of us set off along the road .

Coral trees were a favourite spot with the birds and they seemed very territorial with sometimes three different species at different heights in the one tree. A creek follows the road, making it a perfect environment for bird life but it is private property and many KEEP OUT signs

reminded us of this fact. Fortunately arriving at the gate of Brigadoon we were told that the owners had agreed to let us explore their property. A walk along a grassy creek bank led to a precious stand of native trees. I reclined in the shade of an old gum tree and chatted to a local, who was trying to dispose of some crofton weed, about the privilege of living in harmony with wildlife. He has a long term resident carpet snake, nicknamed, Monty.

On the way back to the road our host at Brigadoon thoughtfully provided chilled tankwater for the group. Because of the prolific birdlife and the glorious day we finished later than usual and some members had to file off due to afternoon commitments, so we were less than 24 by this time. Apologies that the bird list is *Thanks to Val who had to write this report while under a distressing eye problem. Below is an interim bird list which we hope to enlarge on later.*

incomplete due to my mismanagement and in spite of Tom's three carefully recorded pages. Joan remarked that we hadn't seen any White-headed Pigeons or Brown Cuckoo Doves. As I rounded the back corner of my house a Brown Cuckoo fluttered away, one of 8 seen recently in my backyard by my neighbour. The same afternoon I enjoyed a cool drink on my front verandah and counted 10 White-headed Pigeons resting on the power lines. Driving home I had seen fields of Cattle Egrets in breeding plumage surrounding the local cattle at Jamberoo and horses at Kembla Grange. Thanks to Nic and Daphne and their friendly neighbours for allowing us to enjoy the native birds they obviously take pleasure in. A decision is to be made after 3rd October about tourist helicopter rides over this idyllic environment at Jamberoo Valley.

Australian Wood Duck	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Golden Whistler
Chestnut Teal	Laughing Kookaburra	Rufous Whistler
Pied Cormorant	Variegated Fairy-wren	Magpie-Lark
Great Cormorant	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Fantail
White-faced Heron	Large-billed Scrubwren	Willie Wagtail
Brown Goshawk	Brown Gerygone	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Brown Falcon	Yellow Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
Nankeen Kestrel	Striated Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Masked Lapwing	Noisy Miner	Australian Raven
Galah	New Holland Honeyeater	Green Catbird
Long-billed Corella	Eastern Spinebill	Satin Bowerbird
Australian King-Parrot	Eastern Whipbird	Welcome Swallow
Crimson Rosella	Eastern Yellow Robin	Common Myna

....and Pieces

* Neil Wheway suggested that a couple of speakers be purchased to enhance the sound quality when laptop and our projector is used with a DVD. The Committee asked Neil to investigate the prices of suitable speakers.

* The Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation group, with whom we exchange Newsletters, are also celebrating their 30th anniversary this year. Among other activities the group has recently planted 100+ wattles in a local reserve. They advertise the Australian Birdfair at Leeton on 15th to 18th November, and have an interesting article about the Birds Australia Gluepot Reserve in South Australia.

* **Spitfire and Raptor Quiz** Answers

1. Merlin 2. Griffin 3. Eagle, Goshawk, Kestel, Peregrine, Vulture.

OCTOBER CAMP Nymboida Canoe Centre, Nymboida nr Grafton 20-27th October

The October Camp this year will be at the Nymboida Canoe Centre at Nymboida, which is 34km SW of Grafton, on the Armidale road. The centre is well signposted on the approach to the village. Neither food nor fuel is available in Nymboida, the nearest being in Grafton. Please make sure you leave Grafton with a full tank.

Travel to camp is via either the Pacific Hwy to South Grafton where you turn left onto the Gwydir Hwy for a short distance and then turn left at the roundabout onto the Armidale Road, or along the New England Hwy to Tamworth, then to Armidale where you take the Waterfall Way to Ebor and then turn along the Grafton Road. Either way it is close to 700km and an overnight stop is strongly recommended each way. The UBD map of either the Coffs Coast or Far North Coast NSW will give a good overall map of the area.

If you have not already added your name to the list of members attending the camp, please let Betty Hudson know on 02 4236 0307 or Mobile 0432 829 945 if you intend coming to the camp, so that accommodation can be booked for you.

Please note that there are no EFTPOS or Credit facilities at the Centre. Please bring the money for your camp fees with you, as payment will have to be made to the centre at the end of camp



Black-winged Stilt

Photo Chris Chafer

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is Thursday 24th November. Please send items to the editor, cashman5@bigpond.com (Please note our NEW email address, from mid November) or mail them to 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519

Black Tailed Native Hen- A First for the Illawarra

Seen at Why Juck Bay on the southern shore of Lake Illawarra on Sunday 14 October. Normally a bird of the inland with its stronghold in the Murray-Darling Basin. A bird that is strongly influenced by the boom and bust of drought and rain and that can travel long distances, appear in vast numbers and then disperse not to be seen again in the area for years. In this respect it has similar habits to Grey Teal

Martin Cocker

and both species can be good indicators of the other's presence. On the day in question there were a flock of 200+ Grey Teal in the Bay as well as 3 Marsh Sandpipers.

Look out for this bird at the margins of lakes and associated cover. Send in all your sightings. Good Birding!

Martin is our new Records Officer
Email cocker@speedlink.com.au



Black-tailed Native Hen

Photo: Martin Cocker

CROOME ROAD WALK - 10.10.07

Twentyone members gathered for a leisurely mid-week walk around Croome Road Sporting Complex: a pleasant walk as it is almost all flat easy walking on fairly wide tracks. We were fortunate to have lovely weather, overcast, then sunny but not too hot. This was the first walk Terry Edwell and I have led for the club and we were pleased we did not get anyone lost.

Michelle Rower

Croome is a large area so it was only possible to cover a small section of the complex in a morning. We were also attracted by the numbers of nesting birds we discovered along the way. There seemed to be a large number of lorikeets in gum trees close to Croome Road itself. We all got good views of Musk Lorikeets and a male Spotted Pardalote sat obligingly for us before darting into his nest hole.

During the walk we startled two hares, and enjoyed looking at two things Terry had discovered here: a Crested Pigeon sitting on the nest and the beautiful bower created by a male Satin Bowerbird – someone is missing quite a few new blue pegs. He had collected a wide variety of blue and creamy yellow items – straws, blue milk bottle plastic lids and the tamper proof rings that go with them, flowers and other small water bottle caps.

After checking out the dam and admiring the Long-billed and Little Corellas feeding on the horse training paddock a Red Wattlebird was discovered sitting on the nest at eye level close to the track. This bird sat tight and just pretended we weren't there, or maybe hoped we'd go away and leave him alone.

There seemed to be a small area where there were several nesting birds in close proximity. Two Magpie-lark's mud nests, a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike who sat and

looked down on us as we looked up at him, a Willie Wagtail guarded his nest close by and an Olive-backed Oriole was busy nest building – a beautiful nest of fine slivers of bark woven together.

A Satin Bowerbird's nest was under construction in the fork of a tree. Several of us saw the female sitting close to the nest. We finally made it back to the oval where we had parked the cars for morning tea. After morning tea we had a wander by a creek and a Brown Goshawk flew over our heads. We also had a small flock of Topknot Pigeons circle above us.

When we returned for the reading of the morning's list, Joan at last got to see one of the Mistletoebirds she had been hearing all morning. He sat at the edge of a tree so that we all got a good view of him in the sunlight – just lovely. He and his mate entertained some of us with a game of chasings – zipping across the road and between trees with amazing speed. Overall we saw forty two species of birds.

Australian Pelican	Eastern Rosella	Willie Wagtail
White-faced Heron	Channel-billed Cuckoo	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Brown Goshawk	Laughing Kookaburra	Olive-backed Oriole
Spotted Turtle- Dove	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Butcherbird
Crested Pigeon	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Topknot Pigeon	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Raven
Galah	Red Wattlebird	Satin Bowerbird
Long-billed Corella	Noisy Miner	Red-browed Finch
Little Corella	Lewin's Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Rainbow Lorikeet	Eastern Spinebill	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Musk Lorikeet	Rufous Whistler	Silvereye
Little Lorikeet	Magpie-lark	Common Starling
Crimson Rosella	Grey Fantail	Common Myna

Nesting Birds seen at or on nests: Crested Pigeon, Magpie-lark, Red Wattlebird, Willie Wagtail, Black faced Cuckoo-shrike (2), Olive-backed Oriole, Satin Bowerbird nest and we saw it's bower.

BITS and....

*Apologies to Betty Hudson for getting her phone number wrong in the last IBOC News, and to those to whom this caused much inconvenience (*The wrong number given was something to do with a Methodist church in Perth! Was this a spiritual intervention?*)

* Please note that from early November (in time for the December IBOC News) the editor's email address will change to cashman5@bigpond.com

Kingfisher Park Julatten

Early in the year Tom and Joan Wylie, Tera and I discussed going to Kingfisher Park after reading Shaun Dooley's book *The Big Twitch*. We flew to Cairns in early August for an eight night stay hoping to see different birds. We picked the hire car up at the airport, loaded it up with groceries and set off up the mountain, in the warmth of tropical North Queensland.

Arriving at the lodge we were warmly greeted by Lindsey Fisher. After settling in we headed off for a walk to check out the local birdlife, nearly wandering into the nearby retirement home (we weren't looking for rooms) and after being redirected, wandered into a sugar cane paddock where we spotted a Bush Stone Curlew. On returning we decided happy hour should be on the huge veranda in front of the units and so it was. Watching the honeyeaters and robins having their happy hour of home-made nectar was a good way to finish the day. We organized our stay similar to a bird camp, our routine was after the evening meal we met up to plan the next day and have a bird count. Betty, you would have been proud of us! We were given valuable information by our hosts, the Fishers, where we should be able find birds in the area. Our first morning we set off full of confidence armed with the knowledge on which track among the cane fields we should see the Blue-faced Parrot-Finch. Of course we found the wrong track and no finches. Later we found the correct one and after four trips we saw the finches. That is all except Tom (Sad! Sad! Tom)

On the way to the Mareeba Wetlands we stopped off at Lake Mitchell: what a birding paradise! It was a short drive between two gates but water birds on either side of the track. Where to look first! Jabiru, Jacana, and Magpie Geese etc. At the wetlands we paid to walk around one of the lakes; however the afternoon was quite warm, so the walk fee was transferred into a boat ride. Luckily we did because our boat driver "Chook" was a fountain of knowledge on birds and said we should see

Neil & Tera Wheway

a White-browed Crake. It was found among the water lily pads. Chook's exclamation was "we got the sucker:" he was a colourful character and loved hamming it up. Another day we had a good viewing of the White-browed Robin exactly where we had been told to look. Some road workers gave us directions where to find pardalotes and again, there they were. Very obedient birds in North Queensland! A 5am get up got us on the road for the Daintree River and an early morning bird cruise. I found it wonderful that from a boat it's possible to get really close to the birds. We had close encounters with kingfishers and Shining Fly-catchers. We heard a terrible noise sounding like a cat or person being murdered, but Chris, our guide, said it was a frog being caught and eaten. Sure enough, we saw a Nankeen Night Heron enjoying breakfast. Next day was spent up in the Daintree National Park exploring all the board walks, seeing a juvenile Cassowary and to Joan's delight, a Black Butcherbird.

After long days out it was a comfort to arrive back home at Kingfisher Park for the peace and serenity and watch the honeyeaters and robins having happy hour. Noisy Pittas wandered around along with the Brush Turkeys and Orange-footed Scrubfowl. Keith told us about the Papuan. Frogmouth. We were unable find it until it was pointed out. We then saw them several times in the orchard and on the river trip. Victoria's Riflebird and the Spotted Catbird were frequent visitors to Kingfisher Park.

Our hosts took us spot lighting one night to see the Masked Owls and also spotted were three Kookaburras cuddled up on a branch. We remembered the seven that were seen at the Cowra camp a couple of years ago. Our eight days passed very quickly and were thoroughly enjoyed with 148 birds seen some with help from our friendly hosts and others. We thank Tom and Joan for their company Tera and I had many "lifers"- even Tom and Joan had "lifers" to add to their extensive bird count.

North Island of New Zealand, Travels - Tiritiri Matangi, Part 3 Val Dolan

The island of Tiritiri Matangi, 4k off the mainland in Auckland Harbour, was the site of a Maori pa before European settlement. The island was then farmed continuously until 1970. A regeneration program began in 1984 with the support of thousands of volunteers under the supervision of the Department of Conservation. In ten short years over a quarter of a million native trees were planted. Fast growing trees formed a canopy and the droppings of seed-eating birds helped to spread seed and contribute to the natural growth of the forest. Only the most resilient of native species of birds remained and the rarer ones had to be reintroduced onto Tiritiri Matangi.

Auckland is built on a series of volcanic hills... some exceptionally steep... so we were glad that the ferry operator will collect passengers from their accommodation. A scenic 50 minute cruise had us at Gulf Harbour where we collected Wendy, a local New Zealander. She had kindly agreed to provide lunch for two travellers as no food is available on the island. Wendy had participated in some of the original revegetation work and was looking forward to seeing the latest developments. Another short cruise and we were there. On disembarking we were divided into two groups, those who were confident enough to wander alone and others who had paid an extra \$6 to be taken on a guided walk. We all had shoe inspection as the good work could be quickly ruined by introduced seeds. After role call we were divided into groups of 8 and our volunteer guide told us we would be taking the Wattle Track to the lighthouse.

An excellent sighting of a dishevelled Red-Crowned Parakeet drinking at a waterhole took place less than one minute along the track. Shortly after this my travelling companion, Sally, spotted a pair of Brown Quail with several fluffy young foraging through the undergrowth, well hidden in

the deep shadows. On a more open part of the track we caught a glimpse of a N.Z. Fantail. A young boy, who had asked for this trip for his 10th birthday present, knew enough about the habits of birds to entice it back by stirring up insects from the undergrowth with a long stick then instructing the rest of us to stand still and be quiet. A bit of role reversal for many of us! We were rewarded with a perfect viewing of a North Island Fantail, typically grey and white. I'd love to say I also saw the North Island Kokako (others did!) but I was looking in the wrong direction the only time one flew across the track.

During lunch, on the tiny lawn at the lighthouse, we were able to observe a couple of very special Takahe. These birds have a bill designed for grazing and demonstrated their liking for tiny flowers that come up amongst the grass. We were warned not to feed or touch these rare and precious birds, but they were very intrusive. Our guide told us how these birds were thought to be extinct until they were rediscovered in 1948. Wendy told the story of how, as a child, she cut the photo of the discovery out of the newspaper because one of the people who found the Murchison Mountains birds was her Sunday School Teacher. In spite of the best efforts since 1948 to place Takahe on islands without predators they are proving to be slow breeders and poor parents with a high chick mortality. There are probably less than 200 individuals in existence. Superficially similar to the Pukeko (Swamp Hen) they are heavier and longer with shorter, thick legs and a massive bright red bill for grazing on herbs, ferns etc.

After lunch Sally, Wendy and I walked down Wharf Road with the assistance of a map of the island purchased at the well stocked volunteer run shop ... no food but a very welcome free tea or coffee. We easily found the Hobbs Beach Track and a short way along the track there were

nesting boxes with glass tops for viewing penguin chicks. These didn't look or smell too inviting so we moved on in time to see a glorious Saddleback alight on a flax flower in full sunlight. As this is a bird that prefers the forest our view was very special with its chestnut and black feathers glowing spectacularly. It belongs to the endemic family of NZ wattlebirds and is 25 cm long. There were many waterbirds around the beach but the only ferry was making its way to the wharf so no time for close inspection. As we returned past the nesting boxes two young volunteers were lifting one bundle of pale blue down out for weighing and inspection and it instantly

sprang into life like any infant disturbed from a nap. Due to great timing we were all able to add a Blue Penguin chick to our memorable bird list.

Back at the wharf yet another curious Takahe distracted us from the flock of Indian Myna birds who unfortunately seemed most familiar with the surroundings. However, a wonderful day in native NZ bush with native NZ birds had been made possible by the NZ Department of Conservation and a dedicated bunch of volunteers who support this open sanctuary.

TOP END TOUR

During the second half of I went on a camping trip from Darwin to Alice Springs. The tour was organised by Outback Track Tours and endorsed by Birds Australia, who provided a bird leader, Phil Brook. Seeing the Top End had long been an ambition of mine and I thought this would be an ideal way to see parts of Australia that I had not seen and a great opportunity to see new birds and learn from experts.

On the flight to Darwin I was amazed to see how much of the Top End was being burned. I knew that the traditional aboriginal people used fire management during the dry season but the scale of burning was immense. It seemed that half the land was covered by smoke.

I spent three days in Darwin having a look around. (quite an impressive city, but in summer it would be vastly different) before meeting the other passengers and crew for dinner the night before we left. There were 14 passengers (all but two were birdos) plus the bird leader, the driver and the cook.

We left Darwin on Saturday, July 14th in a 16 seat 4-wheel drive bus with trailer. The first stop was Fogg dam, a marvelous wetland area about an hour out of Darwin. We saw the first of many crocodiles on the

Graham Meany

bank of the South Alligator River as we drove into Kakadu to our first campsite at Cooina. The mosquitoes were not as bad as we had been told, but there were a few about. The main features of our stay at Cooina were Ubirr and Nourlangie with their aboriginal art and, probably the highlight of the entire trip, the Yellow Waters sunrise cruise. (absolutely brilliant!) From Cooina we traveled to Gunlom in the southern part of Kakadu, where we spent the third night.



Azure Kingfisher *Photo Graham Meany*

From there a long day's trip to Timber Creek where we embarked on a Victoria River sunset cruise and watched the boat captain feed a group of Whistling Kites and a sea eagle (a daily occurrence which was

somewhat disturbing to the birds but was applauded by other passengers who may not have realized the implications of wildlife becoming dependant on people for their food.)

From Timber Creek we crossed the WA border to Kununurra where we stayed for two days. Hoping to see Gouldian Finches we were disappointed to find that they were at Wyndham rather than Kununurra. However, we did see bustards, Sandstone Shrike-thrush and White-quilled Rock-pigeons as well as a variety of finches and a Yellow-rumped Mannikin. A cruise on the Ord River to the Argyle Dam wall was another highlight.

After Kununurra we moved on to the Bungle Bungles where we spent two nights and encountered the only really cold weather of the whole trip (night time temperatures were down to zero). Some of the travellers took a helicopter flight over the Bungles but I chickened out (I like to think that it was the \$230 that put me off, but I noticed the chopper had no doors). Those who went on the flights said it was a tremendous experience. The Bungles themselves can only be accessed by four-wheel drive vehicles or plane, which is their way of limiting tourist numbers.

Hall's Creek was our next stop and the last of 'civilisation' until Alice Springs. It was a very noisy night and what we thought was a football game turned out to be a normal Monday night at the local pub.

On our way to Lake Gregory, we diverted to have a look at Wolfe Creek meteorite

crater (apparently the second largest in the world). We then left the 'main' road and passed through a couple of Aboriginal communities before arriving at Lake Gregory where our support vehicle was waiting for us. We had been expecting it for about five days as the alternator on the bus had packed it in. Our two night stay was extended to three by popular demand because of the great birding (huge numbers of water birds, plus Yellow Chat, Brolgas, Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Diamond Dove, Budgerigars and many more).

After leaving Lake Gregory we traveled down the Tanami Track (minus air-conditioning) and camped at Rabbit Flat before moving on to our last two nights of bush camping at Newhaven Station (no Ground Parrot or Grey Falcon but we did manage to bog both bus and support vehicle about 30km from camp – I did not know that one person could know so many swear words and put them all into one sentence!) We got out eventually and spent the last day traveling to Alice Springs. We sighted two small herds of camels on the way out of Newhaven and Black-breasted Buzzards at our lunch stop at Tilmouth Wells Roadhouse.

Two days in Alice Springs – a much nicer place than I had been led to believe – included a visit to Desert Park (a must if you are in the area).

Despite a few hiccups with the vehicle it was a memorable experience with a total of about 170 species seen and about 40 new birds for me. I am saving up for the next trip.

....and Pieces

* With the back page of Unusual Sightings in this News, Chris Chafer is signing off as our Records Officer. Chris has held this position in two stints lasting more than 15 years: half of the Club's existence. Many thanks Chris. We really appreciate all your work for us and, as the records are passed on to Birds Australia, for all the birding community.

And welcome to Martin Cocker who is taking over the position ..cocker@speedlink.com.au

* Writings and Sightings from another great camp at Nymboida in the December News.

* A Plea. Some great photos are coming in. Pity we can't fit in more or have them in colour. But please 'compress' your photos before you send them ! Thanks !

The Bird Discovery Centre -

Later this year Birds Australia NSW and ACT, BASNA, are to open a centre in the Newington Armory, Sydney Olympic Park, which has recently been opened to the public on week ends. This is a fascinating heritage area and an initial orientation day was held on Sunday 16th September to familiarise prospective centre volunteers with the site and formulate some ideas in how the centre can be managed to get maximum exposure of the birding world to the many visitors and promoting our hobby. The area has some original woodlands, restored salt marsh and mangrove areas with quite an impressive bird list although many of the areas are off limits to visitors because of missing live ordinance.

Chris Brandis

Buildings 133, 132 and 131 are planned to hold the BASNA office, a library and discovery centre, (was to be “educational” but that sounded too formal) with posters specimens and prospective activities. Volunteers can opt for a 3 or 6 hour stint and further training opportunities will be made available for any one interested in promoting birding. We had a trip around the area by the small train that was used to carry the armaments to the various buildings for storage, repair, building and dismantling with a very interesting commentary on the most interesting history of the area and the small museum sites. If interested in promoting birding I can put you in touch with BASNA.

BARREN GROUNDS RESERVE 13 October 2007

Lorraine Pincus



Natural sandstone ‘bridge over untroubled water.’

Photo: Mike Morphet

Arrived at the car park, temperature read 14C, stepped out of the car and the wind was icy. Thankfully all 16 of us had plenty of layers of clothing to keep warm. The sights and sounds in the car park were

encouraging, the Eastern Whipbird was seen and heard, the friendly Grey Fantail was there to greet us, and Tom’s list was half way down the page.

We started the Griffith track past the vacant "Lodge," the ground was soft and puddles remained from the recent rain storm, and the wild flowers were giving a lovely array of colour. Just before the turn off to the "Stone Bridge" we could hear the familiar loud noise of Black Cockatoos. Three or four were seen feeding on the ground. When disturbed a flock of 20 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos gave us a wonderful demonstration of their slow buoyant flight into nearby banksias and casuarinas to continue feeding.

The track is well marked but very overgrown. In some areas the bush grows as high as 3 metres. Many calls were heard but the bush being so dense birds were not easily seen. And they were elusive and shy too. But Brown Thornbills were seen frequently: a pair showed us their nest deep in the leaf matter at the base of a tree. Morning tea was had at the "Stone Bridge" a warm sunny spot out of the wind which

was now less intense. The temperature had improved too. It was decided to walk the full track and lunch at the picnic tables where we started. The list of birds had not increased very much, but we were all enjoying the botanical side of the walk. Most abundant was Woolsia a carpet of small white flowers interspersed with large shrubs of pink Boronia and Banksia. I saw a beautiful Waratah amongst the dark green foliage of the bush. Small specimens of 'egg and bacon', Bauera - pink bell (dog rose) grew beside the track, and small blue flowers of Dampiera and Patisonia were everywhere. Black boys, Isopogon (drum sticks) and Christmas Bells also appearing along the track.

A Black-faced Monarch was clearly seen by all who ventured the 100m to the Illawarra Lookout. Mary and I had missed the sighting, so it visited us while we ate lunch. It was an enjoyable day as always, with a mixture of wild flowers and birds. Thank you Betty for a great day.

Sightings at Barren Grounds

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Spotted Pardalote	Eastern Whipbird
Gang-gang Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren	Golden Whistler
Crimson Rosella	Brown Gerygone	Rufous Whistler
Eastern Rosella	Brown Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Striated Thornbill	Black-faced Monarch
Laughing Kookaburra	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Superb Lyrebird	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
White-throated Treecreeper	New Holland Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Red-browed Treecreeper	Eastern Spinebill	Satin Bowerbird
Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Yellow Robin	

Unusual Records for August - October 2007

Chris J. Chafer

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Brown Quail	1	7-Oct	Croome Rd, Albion Park	grassland	MR,TE
Northern Giant-Petrel	1	21-Sep	Berrara	dead on beach	MM
Cape Petrel	20+	8-Sep	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
White-headed Petrel	2	8-Sep	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
White-chinned Petrel	1	8-Sep	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Buller's Albatross	1	26-Aug	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Buller's Albatross	1	15-Sep	Black Head, Geroa	inshore	BA
Osprey	1	23-Sep	Shoalhaven Heads	overhead	MPP
Pacific Baza	2	23-Sep	Balgownie	overhead	RT
Square-tailed Kite	2	21-Oct	Bargo	woodland	GB
Whistling Kite	1	2-Sep	Macquarie Rivulet, Albion Park Rail	overhead	GB
Grey Goshawk	1	30-Sep	Thirroul	garden	MM
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	7-Sep	Brownsville	urban	BOB
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	24-Sep	Regal Heights	urban	JC

Australian Hobby	1	8-Oct	Berkeley	urban	JC
Peregrine Falcon	1	4-Sep	Warrawong	urban	PN
Peregrine Falcon	1	6-Oct	Hooka Point	forest	TJW
Baillon's Crake	1	10-Oct	Blackbutt Reserve	farm dam	MR,TE
Black-tailed Native Hen	1	15-Oct	Why Juck Bay	lake edge	MC
Marsh Sandpiper	3	15-Oct	Why Juck Bay	lake edge	MC
Pied Oystercatcher	5	24-Sep	Karoo Pt. Ballarang	lake edge	LP
Red-kneed Dotterel	2	6-Oct	Hooka Point	lake edge	TJW
Red-kneed Dotterel	1	14-Oct	Comerong Island	mud flats	GB
Arctic Tern	2	22-Sep	off Wollongong	pelagic	PM
Whiskered Tern	1	29-Sep	Tallawarra	wetland	BA
Bar-shouldered Dove	5	2-Jan	Darks Forest	woodland	NM
Topknot Pigeon	26	19-Aug	Thirroul	garden	MM
Topknot Pigeon	20	1-Sep	Bulli	overhead	RM
Topknot Pigeon	50+	3-Sep	Balgownie	rainforest	RT
Topknot Pigeon	30	4-Sep	Woonona Heights	rainforest	MD
Topknot Pigeon	7	10-Oct	Croome Rd, Albion Park	overhead	MR,TE
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	21-Sep	Bomaderry Creek Reserve	woodland	CJC
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	26-Sep	North Nowra	woodland	SE
Long-billed Corella	300+	9-Jul	Albion Park, St. Joseph High	urban	BC
Musk Lorikeet	10+	7-Oct	Croome Rd, Albion Park	woodland	MR,TE
Superb Parrot	1	1-Jul	Albion Park	urban	BC
Powerful Owl	1	2-Oct	Mt Kembla	forest	RB
Sooty Owl	1	7-Oct	Macquarie Pass NP	forest	JC
Azure Kingfisher	2	2-Sep	Macquarie Rivulet, Albion Park Rail	riparian	GB
Azure Kingfisher	2	20-Oct	Lake Yarrunga Bendeela area	riparian	LP
Rainbow Bee-eater	4	24-Sep	Thirlmere Lakes NP	overhead	CJC
Large-billed Scrubwren	1	20-Sep	Bellawongarah	rainforest	BA
White-plumed Honeyeater	5	2-Sep	Macquarie Rivulet, Albion Park Rail	riparian	GB
Crescent Honeyeater	few	7-Aug	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	JM
Flame Robin	2	23-Sep	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	JM
Rose Robin	2	16-Sep	Mt. Keira	forest	RT
Logrunner	2	2-Sep	Bellawongarah	rainforest	BA
Crested Shrike-tit	2	23-Sep	Killalea State Park	forest	CJC
White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike	1	21-Oct	Bargo	woodland	GB
White-winged Triller	1	16-Sep	Cambewarra west	paddock	GD
Masked Woodswallow	few	21-Oct	Bargo	woodland	GB
White-browed Woodswallow	50+	21-Oct	Bargo	woodland	GB
Grey Currawong	3	6-Oct	Bellanglo State Forest	woodland	BA
Mistletoebird	6	6-Oct	Hooka Point	forest	TJW
Rufous Songlark	1	14-Oct	Numbaa	rural	GB

Contributors: BA - Bob Ashford; GB Graham Barwell; RB – Roger Bogaert; CB – Chris Brandis; CJC – Chris Chafer; MC - Martin Cocker; BC – Bruce Coyte; JC – Josh Coyte; GD – Gary Daly; MD – Mike Deacon; TE – Terri Edwell; SE – Sheila Emery; ME – Mary Eskdale; NM – Neil McKinlay; PM - Peter Milburn; RM – Richard Miller; KM – Kevin Mills; JM – Jill Molan; MM – Mike Morphet; PN – Peter Nolan; BOB – Bruce O'Brien; LP – Lorraine Pincus; MR – Michelle Rower; RT – Roger Truscott; TJW – Joan and Tom Wylie.

Comment: The big highlight is the first record of Black-tailed Native Hen from the region. Well done Martin Cocker for finding and reporting it. This is the 426th species recorded from the region since John Gould visited our shores in 1840. This is my last back page after 15 years of recording. It's been a labour of love. Thanks to everyone for contributing over the years. I hope you will all support Martin who is taking over the job.

The President's Annual Report

Summarising the year's activities and accomplishments for this report has highlighted again the passion and commitment of a great number of people involved in the activities of the club.

The regular second Monday of the month meetings, and mid-week walks and monthly outings continue to be popular and well attended. The regular camps, this year at Wellington and Nymboida, were very successful according to the feedback received from members. In 2008 the committee will be conducting a survey to see if members are satisfied with the club's current direction and activities.

The club has been fortunate in gaining the services of well qualified speakers to talk at our monthly meetings. As well as the local scene, they have taken us all over the world, including Africa, America and Antarctica. Their generosity in giving up their time and sharing their knowledge is much appreciated.

The IBOC Newsletter has printed over 300 editions, and a newsletter with coloured photos celebrated the 300th edition. The regular production of the newsletter could not be achieved without the input from John Cashman, the article writers, and assistance from Penny Potter, Val Dolan, Norma Almond and Peg McKinley. Thanks to all of you for keeping members informed on club activities and coming events.

Chris Chafer, Records Officer, has moved to Penrith and resigned his position, which he has held for 15 years. Our thanks to Chris, and we wish him the best for the future. Martin Cocker has taken up the position of Records officer, and we welcome him.

IBOC Annual General Meeting

Chris Brandis, with fine precision, chaired the elections at the Club's AGM last month. It is pleasing to report that President Roger Bogaert, Secretary Betty Hudson and Treasurer Bronwyn Wilson were re-elected unopposed: a mark of our confidence in them. Elected to the Committee were Anne Cousins, Penny Potter, Sylvia Garlick and Tom Wylie. The positions of Vice-President and Activities Officer were not filled.

Roger Bogaert

IBOC celebrated 30 years of the club's existence in the Illawarra. Four past Presidents, Laurie Williams, Jim Robinson, Brian Hale, and Kevin McGregor and their spouses attended the celebrations. All set the club on a firm foundation for club members to continue their passion and commitment over the future years. Fae and Kevin organised the night and took us down memory lane from its beginnings with Laurie and Nola Williams, and Doug Gibson right up to the present. Thank you Fae and Kevin for a successful night.

The club has its own Website, thanks to our webmaster Chris Cartledge. The site is getting a number of hits each month from keen birdwatchers wishing to visit the Illawarra.

The club continues to monitor and work with the Illawarra Lake Authority and Shellharbour Council, recording the bird species at various locations. Chris Brandis has been our liaison officer with various Illawarra organizations. We appreciate his time and commitment. The proposed Kilalea development is of some concern, but a representative from the development company has agreed to address the club next year, to outline the developer's proposals and answer questions.

The Committee has renewed the agreement for the Fairy Meadow Community Hall in 2008.

I have not enough space to thank all members but I must give special thanks to Betty Hudson, our Secretary, and organiser supreme of camps, outings and many other activities.

On behalf of the committee I wish all members a safe and happy festive season.

Other positions which were appointed, volunteered, lobbied, or continued over from previous years included - Public Officer: Chris Brandis, Records Officer: Martin Cocker, Librarian: Anne Cousins, Webmaster: Chris Cartledge, Notice Board Officer: Martin Potter, Name Tag Officer: Neil Wheway, Hall Arrangement Officer: Tom Wylie, and Editor: John Cashman. Thanks to Val Dolan, and Fae and Kevin McGregor who served us well on the Committee last year, and have all served in various positions in the Club in previous years. Grateful thanks also to Norma Almond, Peg McKinlay, Val Dolan and Penny Potter who all variously helped again with the editing, printing arrangements and distribution of Newsletters.

Bass Point Reserve 14.11.07

Driving to the entrance gates of the reserve the preliminary excavation work for the Shellharbour Marina was observed, but what impact this will have on the fauna of the area remains to be seen. Maybe not too much because the quarry has been in operation for many years, and the fauna seems to be able to adapt to environmental changes. Another observation made was the blue metal boat at the wharf leaving; Tera and I have been many times to the reserve this was only the second time that we have seen a boat there.



Powerful Owl *Photo:Michelle Rower*

The group drove down to the main car park and walked out to headland where a boat became stranded on the rocks during WW11

Neil Wheway

where we were then joined by Eleanor and Ron Thompson and their son Andrew: they are newish members on their second walk with us. Good to have them along with us. Their other walk was at Nic and Daphne's place in Jamberoo.

We then wandered along the road to Bushrangers Bay. Here the group split into two, one going on to have a look down onto the rocky foreshore while myself and a few others headed off to overlook Bushrangers Bay. The only birds spotted were two whipbirds chasing each other. I thought that was an appropriate time to head back for morning tea. Once we headed back along the main track Chris Cartledge had other ideas calling us all back to see the whales breaching just off the headland. What a show they put on leaping right out of the water. An added bonus was seeing the Wedgetailed Shearwaters skimming the top of the water in the vicinity of the whales.

At last, tongues hanging out for a cuppa, we got back to the picnic area and were enjoying our cuppa, when Terry Edwell came racing in disturbing our rest to look at a Powerful Owl. What a scramble and mass exodus to look at the owl which was being harassed by Currawongs - what a magnificent and stately looking bird. Once again we headed back to continue our now cold cuppa.

We then walked along the foreshore track but by this the wind had got up making it difficult to see birds in the continually moving bushes and trees. Whales were again spotted in the bay near the quarry wharf; the walk was completed by walking back along the road. Tera and Sylvia

dragging the chain found a Willie Wagtails' nest with three eggs. Not to be out-done another Willie Wagtails' nest was spotted near the car park with a pair of birds having a tag team on and off the nest feeding young.

While not many birds were seen, the lack of numbers was compensated by the whales and the Powerful Owl: a beautiful day and good company.

Bird List for the Wednesday Walk 14/11/07 29 bird species

Wedge-tailed Shearwater	White-throated Treecreeper	Willie Wagtail
Australasian Gannet	Superb Fairy-wren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Pied Cormorant	Variiegated Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie
Little Black Cormorant	White-browed Scrubwren	Pied Currawong
Great Cormorant	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven
Australian Pelican	Lewin's Honeyeater	European Goldfinch
Silver Gull	New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Topknot Pigeon	Eastern Whipbird	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Golden Whistler (F)	Silvereye
Powerful Owl	Grey Fantail	

Bits And... Gouldian Finch research

'I am conducting PhD research on the Gouldian Finch at Macquarie University as part of a group working for the conservation of this threatened species alongside the Save the Gouldian Fund. As well as being one of Australia's most endangered birds, the Gouldian Finch is almost unique in that it occurs in three discrete morphs, with birds having either a red, yellow, or black head. Currently in the wild, populations are made up of 70% black, 30% red and less than 1% yellow birds. We are trying to find out whether these frequencies were similar historically, and across the wider range of the species before the decline.

'I am trying to locate all sources of information on past and present wild Gouldian populations and wondered if you had any old records that you could pass onto me, particularly where the head morph and sex have been recorded? Could any of your members have recorded these details on any trips to the Northern Territory where they saw Gouldians, or even if any members received Gouldians that were exported from Australia up to 1986?

'Any information you can give me would be greatly appreciated, Thank you, Amanda Gilby. CISAB, Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW 2109, Australia. Tel: +61 (2) 9850 4187; Fax: +61 (2) 9850 9231 Email: gouldian.finch.research@gmail.com

THE WINDHOVER

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin,
 dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
 Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
 High there, how he wrung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
 In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing
 As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
 Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
 Stirred for a bird- the achieve of, the mastery of the thing !

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
 Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
 Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
 Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
 Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Shoalhaven Heads Walk 18.11.2007

The first birds we saw near the carpark were Chestnut Teals. Then walking along the track toward the distant waterline in a small patch of weedy bush we saw Scarlet Honeyeaters feeding on the flowers. A cool breeze made the walk enjoyable.

We were soon on the sand, and saw Bar-tailed Godwits feeding in quite large numbers, while overhead a Swamp Harrier patrolled the waterways. Standing in pools of water were Caspian and Crested Terns. At our morning tea stop, we saw White-fronted Chats resting on top of a mangrove bush. More water was just around the corner with Golden Plovers and Eastern Curlews. When disturbed the plovers flew a short distance away in groups of 8 to 10.

Sylvia Garlic

Lots of mozzies surrounded us at lunchtime, but fortunately we had plenty of repellent. After lunch we took a 10 minute walk into Rainforest, and a Black-faced Monarch was calling and was seen flying around in the sunshine. Also heard calling was an Olive-backed Oriole. On the return trip the group split into two, some on the beach and some retracing their steps. On the damp sand lovely little Red-capped Dotterels and Red-necked Stints ran backwards and forwards. For a short time an Osprey was seen, flying and dropping to the water to take a catch in its claws.

And back near the car park Martin saw two Striated Herons and a Sanderling. Thanks Betty for another great walk

Bird list of Sunday 18th November Walk - Shoalhaven Heads.

Black Swan	Silver Gull	Eastern Whipbird
Chestnut Teal	Caspian Tern	Rufous Whistler
Pied Cormorant	Crested Tern	Grey Shrike-thrush
Australian Pelican	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Black-faced Monarch
White-faced Heron	Galah	Grey Fantail
Striated Heron	Common Koel	Willie Wagtail
Osprey	Superb Fairy-wren	Olive-backed Oriole
Swamp Harrier	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie
Bar-tailed Godwit	Brown Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Little Curlew	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Raven
Eastern Curlew	Striated Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Sanderling	Lewin's Honeyeater	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Red-necked Stint	New Holland Honeyeater	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Pied Oystercatcher	Scarlet Honeyeater	Silvereye
Pacific Golden Plover	White-fronted Chat	
Red-capped Plover	Eastern Yellow Robin	

Nymboida Camp

Betty Hudson, Neil & Tera Wheway, Penny Potter

BH During the week 28 members enjoyed the spring camp held at the Nymboida Canoe Centre near Grafton. This was a delightful spot with those in tents and vans having river views as well as shade. The "River" was the exit channel for water pumped to the hydro-electric power station from the Nymboida River. This channel had been customised as a white water canoe course with access tracks along the banks. In common with all the rivers and creeks in the area it was lined with scarlet bottle brushes in full flower, and what a magnificent sight they made as well as attracting many birds.

PP The location of the Camp was well chosen being directly on Goolong Creek. This provided us with regular sightings of Scarlet Honeyeaters feeding on the flowering eucalypts, a Striated Pardalote flying into its nest in the riverbank and an Azure Kingfisher watching over the river from the ropes strung across it for the canoeists.

NW Canoeing is done on a creek largely natural but with some help in the placement of rocks to create a challenging course. A hydro- power station which draws its water

from the Nymboida River discharges water into the creek. Rob the centre manager told us that because of the low water level in the Nymboida river the power station was due to suspend operating at any time. To us the water looked turbulent even though the power station was not generating at full capacity. It must be awesome in full flow.

TW Camping for me is always fun with the camper-trailer in tow, however, this time it was a new experience for us: bunkhouse (cabin) accommodation. I greatly enjoyed the camaraderie, especially around the joint cooking facility, and packing up was easier.

BH On the Sunday morning we walked along the riverside track marvelling at the number of Scarlet Honeyeaters we saw, and admiring the canoeists on the river. A leisurely stroll through the TSR across the road and onto "Valley View" farm helped to walk off lunch. Birds were scarce in the TSR but a creek with a profusion of bottlebrushes, revealed more Scarlet Honeyeaters than most of us had ever seen, and provided much discussion over the identity of a honeyeater. After all books had been consulted and much checking of the actual birds seen, it was decided that these were White-throated Honeyeaters, a new species for most.

PP A day trip to Dalmorton National Park brought us leisurely views of a Wompoo Fruit-Dove as it sat satiated under the canopy of a fig tree. Terry Dawson had spotted it on the way to the park and amazingly it was still there on our return three hours later, enabling everyone to see and photograph it. *(I was in Terry's car, bumping along a forest road, when he suddenly stopped, leapt out and had his goggles up and focused before you could say 'Jack Robinson.'* Amazingly, Terry spotted the Wompoo while he was driving and while it was partially hidden behind several leafy branches! Editor)BH Morning tea at a reserve beside the river and the entering Boyd River gave another great sighting-a male Red-backed Fairy-wren in full breeding plumage with the red shining

like gold in the sun. He even stayed put while every one had a good look and some took photos. A bevy of Brown Quail was also seen giving those near enough a good look.

BH Our long awaited visit to The Briary took place on a very hot morning, when we had an enthusiastic reception from Robyn the owner. Unfortunately due to the weather, birds were very scarce, and as the track was in the open, we quickly retreated to the shelter of the homestead trees. We tried an area across the road by the creek but no luck. *(Though some who remained filled the air with song)* After lunch 6 blokes tried their hand at rafting on inner tubes.

NW One hot afternoon, Tera suggested that we should have a go in the creek on inner tubes, I approached Rob, the Manager, and inquired about hiring the inner tubes. He reckoned if he was to let us have a go he'd blow his insurance. I convinced him we wouldn't do anything reckless. His next quip was the tubes wouldn't be suitable for us because they were not equipped with stubbie holders. I commented it was too early in the afternoon for 'happy hour'. Next he said we couldn't afford the hire charges. After telling him we were all very rich he said OK \$10 each. All the ladies reneged but six of us blokes had a go.



Josh Photo Tera Wheway

We had to wear crash hats, life vests and shoes that wouldn't come off, we were given instruction and had to demonstrate our ability to manouvre the tubes and get out of difficulties. This is mandatory for all, not

just for bird watchers. We had a great afternoon floating, swimming and getting tipped off the tubes while getting a few kilograms rubbed off our bums when getting bounced over the rocks. Our only mishap was a lost pair of glasses at the first dunking. Even while being tossed about in the creek we still looked for birds. (*Of course!*)

NW Alison Foley and David Bourne arrived with their two girls full of energy for a couple of nights. It was interesting to hear Alison, who speaks Spanish, talking to girls in Spanish. No doubt in time they will be able to converse in Australian, Spanish and Irish. (*On a hot afternoon Kevin McGregor also entertained the youngsters with grandfatherly water antics*)

PP One afternoon a few of us decided to go out to the swamps at Coutts Crossing as the day grew cooler. We were rewarded with sightings of Marsh Sandpiper, a Hobby hunting and several Comb-crested Jacana. The latter were on my own personal wish list. Brian Hales was also pleased to see the Jacana but added the comment that next he'd really like to see a Jabiru, whereupon one promptly arrived at the swamp! It was a spectacular sign as it circled with outstretched wings before landing, and was greeted with many excited exclamations by its wide-eyed audience. Thanks Brian!

TW A great time was the day six excited men (boys) floated and tumbled down the river on rubber rings while us girls relaxed and swam, cooled off in the flowing stream. We girls then escaped and went bird watching leaving the men to their fun.

The highlight for me was to see the beautiful majestic Australian Jabiru come out of the sky float down onto the lagoon in all the splendour of beautiful white and black wings. I've seen this bird a few times before but never in flight. A great sight to behold.



Robyn, Sylvia, Joan Photo Tera

BH Shopping day in Grafton was next on the agenda. On the way we stopped at the swamps at Coutts Crossing checked out the previous night. Birds were less numerous and the Black-necked Stork had left. The jacanas were still there and several raptors were seen as well as Great & Intermediate Egrets which made comparison very easy.

Grafton was a beautiful sight with the Jacaranda Trees at their peak. Successfully negotiating the town without losing anyone, we met at Carr's Island Bridge, but decided to return a little way into town for morning tea in a lovely park we had seen. Returning to the island we had sightings of many waterside birds, including the Golden-headed Cisticola. The Nutmeg Mannikin however eluded us. Carr's Peninsular, the next stop was disappointing, so we pushed on to Cowan's Pond Wetland reserve on the Gwydir Highway. Lunch over we walked to the bird hide which gave good views of an extensive wetland and many birds, including an Australian Shoveller, jacanas, and many types of ducks. Black Winged Stilts made light of the deeper areas. Shopping followed, as well as another visit to the swamps at Coutts Crossing. An evening of fellowship followed with dinner at the Coaching Station Inn after drinks in the garden watching the Double-bar Finches, parrots and pigeons vying for the seed left for them. Even a young White Headed Pigeon was seen feeding.

BH Next day we said goodbye to some early leavers and then headed up into Chaelundi National Park on another fine hot day. After climbing steadily we stopped for morning tea and a walk along an overgrown track beside a large rainforest gully, hoping to see some different birds, but were disappointed. Next we turned along the track to a picnic area shown on the NP map, but which was badly eroded at one point. Along here we saw families of both Glossy Black Cockatoos and Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos. The picnic area was run down and a walk along tracks in the area produced few birds of any sort. Returning we visited the property of Ken Tucker just before reaching Nymboida. Here we found the shade and lush riverside grass welcome, although birds were not plentiful, with the Jacky Winter being added to the growing list. Storms that evening saw campfire transferred to the dining shelters. This was a bonus as laptops were produced and photos shown.

NW Our dinner night was at an old coach house inn just a few kilometres from the canoe centre. From the inn's grounds we were able to look down on the Nymboida

River and watch the cat fish and platypus swimming, and at the same time look at birds in the beer garden. Our evening out was a success as was the whole camp and once again we were chaperoned and organized by our secretary Betty Hudson. Betty enjoys her camps and birds and makes every minute of time away count, and in doing so makes sure we also are kept busy. Thank you Betty you make it all possible and happen.

PP As usual the IBOC camp was a great success and on behalf of all present I would like to offer our sincere thanks for the time and effort put in by Betty Hudson, our leader and organizer; to Tom Wylie and Neil Wheway for keeping the campfire going and making sure everyone was accounted for on the outings; and to Neil for also arranging the Wednesday night dinner.

BH A rollcall of birds on the last night showed a tally of 149 species for the week, and all within 40km of camp. This is an area and campsite well worth a future visit. My thanks to all who made this camp such a success. It is the members who attend who make the camps not the organiser.

...Pieces

*Alan Cousins asks, 'Has any club member has ever seen an Elephant bird ??? My dad used to tell us this amongst a lot of other "Silly Rhymes." Goodness knows where they came from.

An elephant is a dainty bird
It flits from bough to bough
It lays its eggs in a rhubarb tree
And whistles like a cow.

*At short notice Chris Brandis showed some fine photos at the AGM. They were of a recent trip to Queensland which he did with Chris Chafer. First up was a Wompoo Fruit-Dove which had caused much excitement at the recent Nymboida Camp. (*It even brought forth a cheer when read out at the campfire that night*) Chris showed some great shots and finished with lovely photos of dragon flies ! Interestingly, later that week the *S M Herald* had an article about cleaning up some Blue Mountain creeks. Sewerage effluent previously put into the creeks had at last been diverted from the creeks to the sewerage farm at Winmallee. As a result, there had been a great increase in the number and variety of native flies. May-flies, for instance, had increased from 5 to 10 varieties in a very short time. Many thanks Chris.

* Our Treasurer reported that our bank balance was \$443 at the end of October. Expenses in the previous month were some \$1061 and included rent for the hall, website fees, books for the library and other items. PS You can pay annual Club Fees early in December!

* A feast of articles were sent in for this IBOC News. Thanks to all. Naturally some have had to be held over for later, but never fear – they will appear.

IBOC UNUSUAL/INTERESTING SIGHTINGS NOVEMBER 2007

Compiled by Martin Cocker

Species	Number	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Australian Brush-turkey	1	10-Nov	Excelsior Reserve, Thirroul	woodland	Mike Morphett
Australian Brush-turkey	1	30-Sep	Cordeaux Road	Woodland	Peter Nolan
Cape Petrel	200+	27-Oct	off Wollongong	pelagic	Graham Barwell
Black Petrel	1	28-Oct	off Wollongong	pelagic	Graham Barwell
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	100+	29-Oct	off Wollongong	pelagic	Graham Barwell
Darter	1	14-Nov	Myamba wetland, Shellharb	wetland	Bob Ashford
Little Pied Cormorant	numerous	14-Nov	Dunmore Lakes	rural/swamp	Darryl Goldrick
Striated Heron	2	27-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Nankeen Night Heron	1	13-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	David Marshall
Glossy Ibis	13	19-Nov	Tallawarra Ash Ponds	rural/swamp	Bob Ashford
Osprey	1	25-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Square-Tailed Kite	1	19-Nov	Dunmore	rural/swamp	Bob Ashford
Swamp Harrier	2	19-Nov	Tallawarra Ash Ponds	rural/swamp	Bob Ashford
Swamp Harrier	1	11-Nov	Killalea State Park	rural/swamp	Graham Barwell
Swamp Harrier	1	12-Nov	Albion Park	river foreshore	Bruce Coyte
Swamp Harrier	1	5-Nov	Berkley	urban/paddock	Joshua Coyte
Swamp Harrier	1	20-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Brown Goshawk	1	11-Nov	Albion Park	urban/woodland	Joshua Coyte
Grey Goshawk White Morph	1	14-Nov	Dunmore Lakes	rural/swamp	Darryl Goldrick
Little Eagle	1	14-Nov	Dunmore Lakes	rural/swamp	Darryl Goldrick
Little Eagle	1	10-Nov	Bulli	overhead	Roger Truscott
Brown Falcon	1	14-Nov	Terragong Swamp	rural/swamp	Darryl Goldrick
Black-tailed Native-hen	1	1-Nov	Why Juck Bay	estuarine	Gleniss Wellings
Bar-tailed Godwit	100+	19-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Eastern Curlew	10	21-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Terek Sandpiper	1	14-Nov	Lake Conjola Outlet	estuarine	Graham Barwell
Ruddy Turnstone	1	8-Nov	Comerong Island	estuarine	David Marshall
Sanderling	1	24-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Red-necked stint	100+	22-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Pacific Golden Plover	100+	18-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Red-capped Plover	100+	23-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Hooded Plover	1	14-Nov	Berrara Beach	estuarine	Graham Barwell
Caspian Tern	1	26-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Fairy Tern	3	14-Nov	Lake Conjola Outlet (nesting)	estuarine	Graham Barwell
Long-billed Corella	1	7-Nov	Woonona Beach	suburban	N. Hudspith
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	27	12-Nov	Albion Park	urban/woodland	Bruce Coyte
Brush Cuckoo	1	4-Nov	Bulli Pass	forest	Graham Barwell
Brush Cuckoo	1	18-Nov	Wollondilly River NR	woodland	Graham Barwell
Powerful Owl	1	14-Nov	Bass Point	woodland	IBOC
Azure Kingfisher	1	13-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	creek side	David Marshall
Sacred Kingfisher	1	8-Nov	Comerong Island (nesting)	woodland	David Marshall
Scarlet Honeyeater	1	15-Oct	Jamberoo	gardens	Betty Hudson
White-fronted Chat	4	28-Nov	Shoalhaven Heads	estuarine	IBOC
Black-faced Monarch	2	14-Nov	Jamberoo	rural	Darryl Goldrick
White-winged Triller	1	18-Nov	Wollondilly River NR	woodland	Graham Barwell
Green Catbird	2	19-Nov	Bellawongarah	rainforest	Bob Ashford

Satin Bowerbird	1	5-Nov	Bulli	creek	N. Hudspith
Skylark	numerous	14-Nov	Terragong Swamp	rural/swamp	Darryl Goldrick
Rufous Songlark	3	18-Nov	Wollondilly River NR	woodland	Graham Barwell
Bassian Thrush	2	25-Oct	Excelsior Reserve, Thirroul	woodland	Mike Morphet

Many thanks to you all for submitting these records. Look at all those raptors, particularly the Swamp Harriers. I am especially envious of Graham Barwell's Terek Sandpiper, a lifer for me, and what a marvellous bird so evocative of all those wild places!

Thank you for giving me such a rousing start in my new role. Keep me busy and send all your records to me at cocker@speedlink.com.au. Good Birding!

Bird List for Nymboidae Camp October 20th to 27th 2007.....

There was a total of 149 species recorded during the camp on the camp site and the various other locations in the area we visited

Brown Quail	Latham's Snipe	Superb Fairy-wren	Magpie Lark
Plumed Whistling-Duck	Marsh Sandpiper	Variiegated Fairy-wren	Rufous Fantail
Black Swan	Comb-crested Jacana	Red-backed Fairy-wren	Grey Fantail
Australian Wood Duck	Black-winged Stilt	Spotted Pardalote	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Masked Lapwing	Striated Pardalote	Spangled Drongo
Australasian Shoveler	Crested Tern	White-browed Scrubwren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Grey Teal	Rock Dove	White-throated Gerygone	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike
Hardhead	White-headed Pigeon	Brown Thornbill	Cicadabird
Australasian Grebe	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Yellow Thornbill	White-winged Triller
Darter	Emerald Dove	Striated Thornbill	Olive-backed Oriole
Little Pied Cormorant	Crested Pigeon	Noisy Friarbird	Figbird
Little Black Cormorant	Peaceful Dove	Little Friarbird	White-breasted Woodswallow
Great Cormorant	Bar-shouldered Dove	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Dusky Woodswallow
White-faced Heron	Wonga Pigeon	Bell Miner	Grey Butcherbird
White-necked Heron	Wompoo Fruit-Dove	Noisy Miner	Pied Butcherbird
Great Egret	Glossy Black-Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Intermediate Egret	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Cattle Egret	Galah	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Black Bittern	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Fuscous Honeyeater	Torresian Crow
Australian White Ibis	Rainbow Lorikeet	White-plumed Honeyeater	White-winged Chough
Straw-necked Ibis	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Satin Bowerbird
Black-necked Stork	Musk Lorikeet	White-throated Honeyeater	Richard's Pipit
Pacific Baza	Little Lorikeet	Brown Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Black-shouldered Kite	Australian King Parrot	White-cheeked Honeyeater	Double-barred Finch
Whistling Kite	Crimson Rosella	Eastern Spinebill	Red-browed Finch
Brahminy Kite	Eastern Rosella	Scarlet Honeyeater	Mistletoebird
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Pallid Cuckoo	Jacky Winter	Welcome Swallow
Swamp Harrier	Brush Cuckoo	Eastern Yellow Robin	Tree Martin
Brown Goshawk	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Grey-crowned Babbler	Fairy Martin
Collared Sparrowhawk	Common Koel	Eastern Whipbird	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Channel-billed Cuckoo	Varied Sitella	Little Grassbird
Brown Falcon	Pheasant Coucal	Golden Whistler	Golden Headed Cisticola
Australian Hobby	Azure Kingfisher	Rufous Whistler	Silvereye
Nankeen Kestrel	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Starling
Buff-banded Rail	Sacred Kingfisher	Black-faced Monarch	Common Myna
Purple Swamphen	Rainbow Bee-eater	Leaden Flycatcher	
Dusky Moorhen	Dollar Bird	Satin Flycatcher	
Eurasian Coot	White-throated Treecreeper	Restless Flycatcher	

Places Visited During Camp, Nymboidae Canoe Centre, "The Briary", The TSR opposite the Canoe Centre, & "The Valley

View" property beyond the TSR, Nymboidae Coaching Station Inn, Buccarumbi & Dalmorton, Chaelundi National Park Picnic area on

Shannons Creek Rd & Mr Ken Tucker's property off Boundary Creek Road, Laytons Range Road & Nymboi-Binderay NP. Coutts Crossing -Geregarow Rd

swamp & Black Swan Drive swamp on roads East & West of the Town. Grafton - Cowans Pond Reserve, Carrs Island and Carrs Peninsular.

