

Black-browed Albatross

Scientific Name: *Thalassarche melanophris*
 Atlas Number: 88

Description:

The Black-browed Albatross is the most common albatross seen in southern Australian waters for most of the year, and is the only one of the mollymawks (another name for the smaller black-and-white albatrosses) with a yellow bill. The bill has a pink tip. The back, upper wings and tail are a slaty black. The underwing is white



photo by Charles Dove

with broad black margins, especially the leading edge. The face is white, with a small black brow over a dark eye. The legs and feet are blue-grey to flesh-pink. This species is also called the Black-browed Mollymawk.

Similar species:

The Shy Albatross, *D. cauta*, is similar to the Black-browed Albatross in body colour, but its bill is olive-grey, there is a dark line through the eye almost to the bill, and the underwing is mainly white with narrow black margins.

Distribution:

The Black-browed Albatross wanders throughout the oceans of the Southern Hemisphere, south of the subtropics. The Falkland Islands hold over 85% of the global population, making them the most important breeding location in the world for this species.

Habitat:

The Black-browed Albatross lives on the wing over the southern oceans for most of the year.

Seasonal movements:

Black-browed Albatrosses migrate in winter and spring to as far north as Geraldton on the west coast and the Tropic of Capricorn on the east coast, but they are most commonly seen off the south-east coast of the mainland and around Tasmania.

Feeding:

Black-browed Albatrosses fly over the ocean surface, searching for plankton, squid, cuttlefish, crustaceans and fish, and follow ships for galley refuse and carrion. They settle on the water near fishing boats in anticipation of food.

Breeding:

The Black-browed Albatross breeds colonially on many sub-Antarctic islands, including Heard and Macquarie Islands. It is a long-lived species, (30 years or more) with a strong bond to its birth colony and birds will generally take the same breeding partner each season. The nest is a solid pile of mud and guano (droppings) mixed with some tussock grass and seaweed and is re-used each year. The nests are made on terraces on top of coastal tussocky cliffs and steep slopes up to 300m above sea level. Newly hatched chicks are covered with pale grey down, and are fed by both parents. Young birds leave the nest between mid-March and early April.

Living with us

Long-line fishing snares drowns many Black-browed Albatrosses.

Text courtesy of <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

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**ILLAWARRA
 BIRD
 OBSERVERS
 CLUB Inc**

**'ONE GOOD TERN
 DESERVES ANOTHER'**

Founded in 1977

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

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APRIL ACTIVITIES



Club Meeting:

Monday 13th No Meeting due to Annual Camp

The next indoor meeting will be May 11th when Heather Milroy from WIRES will talk on "WIRES: The Rehabilitation of Birds".

Midweek Walk:

Wednesday 15th No Walk due to Annual Camp

Monthly Outing:

Sunday 20th No Walk due to Annual Camp

Next Committee Meeting:

Monday April 27th at 7.30pm

To be held at Pam Hazelwood's home 34 Hunter Street, Balgownie. 4284 6140
Any members with anything they wish to raise are welcome to attend the meeting.

Newsletter:

Deadline for articles and photos in the next IBOC newsletter is **26th April 2015**

E-mail contributions: to Charles Dove newsletter@iboc.org.au

or post to 8 Carroll Avenue, Lake Conjola 2539. Ph: 0417 422 302.

IBOC WISHES TO WELCOME ALL OF ITS NEW MEMBERS

CLUB REPORTS



Report for club meeting 9th March 2015

By Bill Zealey

"Bill & Joan's Excellent Adventure" provided an entertaining overview of outback Australia and its birds. It clearly brought back memories of similar, past trips in members' minds. Days before the roads were sealed, minor mishaps and above all great birding experiences. Bill & Joan spent seven months in 2014 travelling in a meandering route across Queensland, NT and WA before joining IBOC in their October Lake Cargelligo camp. The presentation, of necessity, proceeded at a fast pace. In the 26000 km that

they travelled they managed to spot most of the Australian parrots, experience the migrating shorebirds of Roebuck Bay Broome, and seek out much of Cape York's birdlife. They even managed to include a week fossil hunting near Quilpie, the wildflowers of WA and snorkeling off Exmouth.

[For those wondering why Bill is writing this review...He got so caught up on the night, he forgot to finger an unsuspecting IBOC member to do the honours.]

Donations

We would like to thank Tony Van Krevel for the donation of bird books to the IBOC Library. Sorting through these proved really interesting as they included many fascinating books that are no longer available.

Report for Audley Weir Midweek walk Wednesday 11th March 2015

By Neil Wheway

To get to Audley Weir for an eight thirty start most of us were up before the chooks, after a very good drive with nearly all traffic lights green we arrived nice and early. After everyone arrived we left the car park, and headed off along the river with the Sulphur Crested Cockatoos screeching their heads off. Some of the first birds seen were a female Black-faced Monarch and male Rufus Fantail, but alas the Powerful Owl was nowhere to be seen. We had no leech screams from walkers however there was no shortage of mozzies. We shared our morning tea with a hopeful Laughing Kookaburra sitting in one of the roof trusses. Our instructions for next walk were drive over the bridge and turn left and park near the shelters, but like sheep most of us turned right apart from our present and past presidents they listened to an instruction that's why they became presidents. The walk along Lady Carrington Drive was hot but we did see a Brown Cuckoo Dove, Leaden Fly-catcher (hope I remembered that correctly) Eastern Spinebills and Lewin's

Honeyeater. After lunch the walk was back across the weir and along the opposite bank of the Hastings River by now it was quite warm. I along with a few others decided a chair on the river bank was a much civilised way to pass the rest of the days outing. It was good to catch up with the Cumberland Club, and say hello to members we knew and get to meet other members. Tera and I were keen to say hello to Sue and Jill whom we had met on Christmas Island for last years Bird Week unfortunately they didn't arrive. Arriving back home an email waited for us they thought that the drive both ways in Sydney peak traffic was not on. Because I was conveying two VIP passengers I had washed and vacuumed my vehicle, and of course Murphy's Law applied just after we had dropped them back at their place it started to rain. Why does this happen after washing a car? We all had a very good day with some nice birds spotted. Thank you Charlie and Janina you had a long drive there and back.



Audley Weir		11th March 2015	51 species	22 participants
Australian Wood Duck	Little Corella	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Magpie	
Grey Teal	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	
Chestnut Teal	Azure Kingfisher	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Rufous Fantail	
Pacific Black Duck	Laughing Kookaburra	White-plumed Honeyeater	Grey Fantail	
Spotted Dove	Superb Lyrebird	Noisy Miner	Willie Wagtail	
Brown Cuckoo-dove	White-throated Treecreeper	Red Wattlebird	Australian Raven	
Common Bronzewing	Green Catbird	Eastern Whipbird	Leaden Flycatcher	
Australasian Darter	Satin Bowerbird	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Black-faced Monarch	
Little Pied Cormorant	Superb Fairy-wren	Golden Whistler	Magpie-lark	
Great Cormorant	White-browed Scrubwren	Rufous Whistler	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Purple Swamphen	Brown Gerygone	Grey Shrike-thrush	Silvereye	
Dusky Moorhen	Brown Thornbill	Olive-backed Oriole	Red-browed Finch	
Eurasian Coot	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Butcherbird		

Killalea Monthly Outing Saturday 14th March 2015

By Ken Brown

Rain was still threatening as Saturday dawned so we threw in the wet weather gear when we headed off to meet at Killalea at 8.30. But it was already looking much improved by the time we arrived at a very crowded car park. By the time we had sorted out the bird watchers from the fun-runners there were 11 of us and a couple of hundred of them. They were finishing up one hill as we headed down the other side, so there were no problems.

We headed first down the many timber steps towards the beach (hoping that we didn't have to come up the same way). There had been some recent lantana clearing beside the track, which drew in the Variegated and Superb Fairy-wrens hopping around in the debris. Whipbirds were also calling from the lantana but not showing themselves as usual. Down at the beach there were plenty of surfers enjoying the good waves and a big flock of Silver Gulls on the water's edge. Another flock was on the rocks at the southern end of the beach, accompanied by a pair of Masked Lapwings and a White-faced Heron. While we were watching a pair of Sooty Oystercatchers flew in and a few Cormorants flew past as we walked up to the north end of the beach.

From the beach we headed inland onto the track that goes anticlockwise around the lagoon. Between the first dune and our first view of the water we started to pick up a lot of the bush birds – Little Wattlebirds, Silvereyes, New Holland Honeyeaters, Bulbuls and the Whipbirds still calling unseen from the undergrowth. Then, as the sun came out, we came onto a low mound which gave a good view of the waterbirds on the lagoon. The selection included Coots, Pacific Black Ducks and Australasian Grebes close to our shore. Further out were Black Swans, Cormorants and a Musk Duck. Purple Swamphens foraged around on the edges.

For a while we enjoyed the shade of the Casuarina as we moved along the shoreline with the bush birds behind us and the waterbirds in front. Then it became more open and we climbed up the hill away from the lagoon in warm sunshine. At the top Rupert called a halt for morning tea in the shade of the Casuarina that flanked the trail along the ridge. Not long after the break Pam noticed a cuckoo sitting in the shade at the back of one of the trees. While it did not oblige by coming right out in the open, it did stay around for several minutes which allowed plenty of time for viewing, photographing, debating and referring to the book before deciding it was a Shining Bronze-cuckoo. Further along the ridge were more Silvereyes, Yellow Thornbills and a Crimson Rosella made our first parrot for the day. A Grey Butcherbird flew in front of us into a tree where the track headed back down towards the water.

At the bottom of the hill some of us were looking at Musk Ducks, Sacred Kingfishers and other small birds when those in front waved us up for great views of a raptor which was gliding around the small valley in front, it was a juvenile Square-tailed Kite. It put on a great display, dipping and soaring low over the trees for several minutes. This was the start of a good selection of raptors. A bit further on we stopped for a short rest under a shady fig tree while a Black-shouldered Kite watched over us from a nearby perch. As we started up the slope the Juvenile Square-tailed Kite swooped low over us, being chased by a Brown Goshawk. The climb up the hill brought us out of the heat of the gully to a cooler breeze at the carpark where we took our lunches to the shade of a tree overlooking the beach. A nice end to a great morning and a good view of a Swamp Harrier gliding past before we packed up and headed for home.

Killalea Saturday		14 th March 2015		52 species	
Musk Duck	Straw-necked Ibis	Sacred Kingfisher	Grey Butcherbird		
Black Swan	Black-shouldered Kite	Satin Bowerbird	Australian Magpie		
Grey Teal	Square-tailed Kite juv.	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Fantail		
Pacific Black Duck	Brown Goshawk	Variegated Fairy-wren	Willie Wagtail		
Australasian Grebe	Swamp Harrier	White-browed Scrubwren	Australian Raven		
Australasian Gannet	Purple Swamphen	Yellow Thornbill	Magpie-lark		
Little Pied Cormorant	Eurasian Coot	Eastern Spinebill	Eastern Yellow Robin		
Great Cormorant	Sooty Oystercatcher	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Reed-Warbler		
Little Black Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	Little Wattlebird	Silvereye		
Pied Cormorant	Silver Gull	New Holland Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow		
Australian Pelican	Rainbow Lorikeet	Eastern Whipbird	Red-whiskered Bulbul		
White-faced Heron	Crimson Rosella	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Red-browed Finch		
Australian White Ibis	Shining Bronze-cuckoo	Golden Whistler	European Goldfinch		

Killalea Pics

Square Tailed Kite juv. By Pam Hazelwood



Brown Goshawk by Pam Hazelwood



Shining Bronze Cuckoo by Ken Brown

Members taking in the view at Killalea
by Pam Hazelwood

Report on Hunter Wetlands Trip February 2015

By Betty Hudson

Monday 23rd February saw 21 members met at Karuah Jetty Caravan Park for what we hoped would be a good few days birding.

Stopping at Ash Island for lunch I then made my way to Stockton Spit, where the waders were on the sand in large numbers. A walk around to the far side to get a good view with the scope, I identified many waders including the Curlew Sandpiper which was confirmed by Joan Zealey from a rather poor photograph (due to the distance from the birds). Time now pressing I headed to Raymond Terrace to shop & refuel the car. Several missed phone calls & text messages made me realise that everyone in Karuah was worried about where I was. Thanks for that one & all.

After a hasty unpack & meal we all met in the camp kitchen area, but the mozzies were extra attentive making life unpleasant even with repellent. Arrangements for the next day finalised we all headed off to vans or cabins.

Tuesday morning we headed to Ash Island managing not to lose anyone at any of the traffic lights on the way. After a short stop just over the access bridge to look for the Mangrove Gerygone seen by some & heard by others. On to the Old School Masters House for a walk around the board walk then back for morning tea in the shade of some big old trees. A good list of birds was the result. Those hoping for a cuppa were sadly disappointed as it was only Nescafe & powered milk meant mainly for the volunteers.

Now we drove along potholed gravel roads towards Wagtail Way where there was the best chance of waders. Two Bar-shouldered Doves sitting in the middle of the road in the sunshine gave me my best ever view of their splendid colourings. Wagtail Way proved elusive as the track had moved since the map was drawn. With the new railway work dominating the skyline we negotiated the potholes & puddles to find a lagoon with large numbers of Black-winged Stilts. Returning to the Old Radar Station we again found shade to have lunch and then a short walk before heading off to Stockton Spit for yet more waders. Seven species of raptors were seen over Ash Island in the morning. A total of 69 species were seen both bush birds & waders.

Negotiating the numerous traffic lights on the road into Newcastle without anyone missing the lights was amazing. Arriving at the Spit we found that we were rather late for the tide and the birds were mostly outside on a mud bank between the Spit lagoon & the adjacent large mangrove trees. A Double-barred Finch showed itself off in the shrubs along the pathway by the bridge. With the aid of the scopes we identified Bar-tailed Godwits, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-capped Plovers, & Red-necked Stints as well as Red-necked Avocets. As the tide fell lower the terns came in, Gull-billed, Caspian, Crested and Fairy (identified after much discussion as to whether Little or Fairy Terns) while the Eastern Curlews & Masked Lapwings paraded on the bank of the lagoon. Time soon got away and we reluctantly headed back to Karuah. That night's meeting was in Brian & Barbara, Alan & Anne's cabin away from the mozzies. Next morning those in caravans said that they thought they had heard a Bush Stone-curlew. Some people had heard an Eastern Curlew about the same time. Playing the various calls on the I-pod convinced them that it was the Bush Stone-curlew's short call. Again the next night it was heard, and on Thursday night a report was made by someone (not in our group) to Birdline re a Bush Stone-curlew heard calling at the same caravan park. Friday morning very early Peter Salvair heard one give its full call. There was a record on Eremaea of a Bush Stone-curlew at Karuah – west of the old highway.

Wednesday was our trip to Hexham Swamp. Ann Lindsay from Hunter Bird Club kindly came with us to ensure that we got through all the construction disruption on the access track despite having a recently aggravated an old back injury which had severely handicapped her. Thanks very much to Ann, who proved a fount of knowledge of the birds and their usual haunts. The birds didn't cooperate, but we still recorded 40 species including a Black-necked Stork on a nest and both Peregrine Falcon & Australian Hobby hunting over the marshes. A Marsh Sandpiper gave us all a good view of its long legs and long thin beak. At one point we were able to compare the Welcome Swallow, Fairy & Tree Martins perched close in dead trees. A flock of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers showed how that at each pass over the swamp a few birds peeled off and landed at the bases of small clumps of reeds until all were down. If you had not seen them land you wouldn't have known they were there. Golden-headed Cisticola's teased by jumping up & down in the reeds at a rapid pace. Actually getting the binoc's on them was almost impossible. If only they would stop on the top for a short time! Turning round at the end of the track we headed back as Ann had to leave, after guiding us back through the construction maze.

Leaving Ann we all headed to the Hunter Wetlands Centre at Shortlands. Traffic lights were not so kind this time but Peter S soon caught up.

Arriving at Shortlands the main carpark was full, but we had the nice grassy No 2 carpark to ourselves and decided to eat lunch there in the shade of the trees. We all made our own way around the centre to see whatever specially interested us. Several headed to the Freckled Duck enclosure where there were good photo opportunities. Walking around I soon realised that my repellent had worn off, but where were Joan & Tom, as I had travelled in their car. I rapidly retreated to the cafe area. Just as the stragglers were leaving, the new CEO was wandering around and approached us with the offer to visit the new Freckled Ducklings in their special enclosure. A very special opportunity indeed!

Leaving here a few of us called in at Stockton Spit to see what was around and were rewarded with four Black-tailed Godwits, again on the outside sandbar.

Thursday morning saw most of us packing up & heading home after a stop at Tarro Swamp which we had briefly visited to meet up with Ann. A Grey-headed Babbler was recorded here on the Wednesday. The swamp is on the edge of a recreation park bordered by the north coast railway. Both, Plumed & Wandering Whistling Ducks, Australasian Shoveler, & Northern Mallard were added to the list very quickly. In a large bottle brush in full flower a Brown Honeyeater & a Striped Honeyeater were seen as well as Long-billed Corella's as we drove in. The grassy areas produced Yellow-rumped Thornbills & Red-rumped Parrots, while we kept out of the way of a school cricket match on the oval.

This was an interesting area with good potential. After morning tea we all went our separate ways.

A good camp with an impressive bird list of 131 species for the 3 days

My thanks go to Joan & Tom for driving me around for the 2 days in spite of my bad cold & cough. I sincerely hope that they haven't succumbed to the infection and that no one else caught it.

Hunter Bird List		131 species recorded		21 members attended	
Brown Quail	Eastern Osprey	Fairy Tern	Grey-crowned Babbler		
Magpie Goose	Black-shouldered Kite	Gull-billed Tern	Eastern Whipbird		
Plumed Whistling-Duck	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Caspian Tern	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		
Wandering Whistling-Duck	Whistling Kite	Crested Tern	Golden Whistler		
Black Swan	Brown Goshawk	Silver Gull	Rufous Whistler		
Australian Wood Duck	Collared Sparrowhawk	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Grey Shrike-thrush		
Australasian Shoveler	Grey Goshawk	Galah	Australasian Figbird		
Grey Teal	Swamp Harrier	Long-billed Corella	Olive-backed Oriole		
Chestnut Teal	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Little Corella	White-breasted Woodswallow		

Northern Mallard	Nankeen Kestrel	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Butcherbird
Pacific Black Duck	Brown Falcon	Rainbow Lorikeet	Pied Butcherbird
Australasian Grebe	Australian Hobby	Eastern Rosella	Australian Magpie
Rock Dove	Peregrine Falcon	Red-rumped Parrot	Pied Currawong
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Purple Swamphen	Eastern Koel	Spangled Drongo
Crested Pigeon	Dusky Moorhen	Azure Kingfisher	Rufous Fantail
Bar-shouldered Dove	Eurasian Coot	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Fantail
Tawny Frogmouth	Bush Stone-curlew	Sacred Kingfisher	Willie Wagtail
White-throated Needletail	Australian Pied Oystercatcher	Dollarbird	Australian Raven
Australasian Darter	Black-winged Stilt	Satin Bowerbird	Leaden Flycatcher
Little Pied Cormorant	Red-necked Avocet	Superb Fairy-wren	Magpie-lark
Little Black Cormorant	Red-capped Plover	Mangrove Gerygone	Golden-headed Cisticola
Pied Cormorant	Black-fronted Dotterel	Yellow Thornbill	Australian Reed-Warbler
Australian Pelican	Masked Lapwing	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Little Grassbird
Black-necked Stork	Black-tailed Godwit	Brown Thornbill	Silvereye
Eastern Great Egret	Bar-tailed Godwit	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Intermediate Egret	Whimbrel	Noisy Miner	Fairy Martin
Cattle Egret	Eastern Curlew	Little Wattlebird	Tree Martin
Striated Heron	Common Sandpiper	Red Wattlebird	Common Myna
White-faced Heron	Grey-tailed Tattler	White-fronted Chat	Double-barred Finch
Little Egret	Marsh Sandpiper	Brown Honeyeater	Red-browed Finch
Australian White Ibis	Red-necked Stint	White-cheeked Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Straw-necked Ibis	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Australasian Pipit
Royal Spoonbill	Curlew Sandpiper	Striped Honeyeater	

A detailed bird list showing species recorded at each location is posted on the club's web site. www.iboc.org.au



Rufous Whistler by Alan Cousins



Plumed Whistling Duck by Alan Cousins



Freckled Duck by Betty Hudson



Plumed Whistling Duck by Betty Hudson

Bird Identification books

A number of years ago we bulk ordered Morcambes Australian Birds Guide for sale to members at a slightly reduced rate. This involves the Club investing several hundred dollars in purchasing the books for on-sale to members. Before contacting the publishers and negotiating a reduced price to the Club we need to gauge our members interest. Could any members who are interested in taking part such a bulk order please email me at zealey@uow.edu.au.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

The girl who gets gifts from birds

By Katy Sewall – from Seattle

Lots of people love the birds in their garden, but it's rare for that affection to be reciprocated. One young girl in Seattle is luckier than most. She feeds the crows in her garden - and they bring her gifts in return.

Eight-year-old Gabi Mann sets a bead storage container on the dining room table, and clicks the lid open. This is her most precious collection.

"You may take a few close looks," she says, "but don't touch." It's a warning she's most likely practised on her younger brother. She laughs after saying it though. She is happy for the audience.

Inside the box are rows of small objects in clear plastic bags. One label reads: "Black table by feeder. 2:30 p.m. 09 Nov 2014." Inside is a broken light bulb. Another bag contains small pieces of brown glass worn smooth by the sea. "Beer coloured glass," as Gabi describes it.

Each item is individually wrapped and categorised. Gabi pulls a black zip out of a labelled bag and holds it up. "We keep it in as good condition as we can," she says, before explaining this object is one of her favourites.

There's a miniature silver ball, a black button, a blue paper clip, a yellow bead, a faded black piece of foam, a blue Lego piece, and the list goes on. Many of them are scuffed and dirty. It is an odd assortment of objects for a little girl to treasure, but to Gabi these things are more valuable than gold.

She didn't gather this collection. Each item was a gift - given to her by crows.

Gabi's relationship with the neighbourhood crows began accidentally in 2011. She was four years old, and prone to dropping food. She'd get out of the car, and a chicken nugget would tumble off her lap. A crow would rush in to recover it. Soon, the crows were watching for her, hoping for another bite to eat.



Grazier captures spectacular images of rare grey falcon in outback Qld

By Blythe Moore and Ash Moore

A western Queensland grazier and naturalist has captured stunning images of one of Australia's most elusive birds - the grey falcon.

Angus Emmott, from Noonbah Station at Stonehenge, recently travelled through remote western Queensland with a friend in the hope of spotting the even more elusive night parrot.

Instead he managed to see several grey falcons.

"They're very, very restricted in numbers and ... they're in very remote and arid parts of Australia mostly," he said.

"So it's one of the really big ticks for those bird people, who call themselves 'twitchers', who want to go and find every bird they can.

"A lot of people put a lot of effort into looking for [grey falcons] and never see them.

"On this trip we actually managed to see three pairs, so it's pretty amazing to see that many in just one short trip over a week."

Mr Emmott said the grey falcons looked similar in build to the brown falcon but were not sighted nearly as often.

"They're not out in the open nearly as much as the brown falcon.

"The brown falcons spend a lot of time out hunting. The greys most of the time, they sit very quietly in a tree or up a microwave tower, and unless you look very closely you miss them."

Mr Emmott said grey falcons were rarely spotted near the roadside because they preferred to hunt their own prey.



LEFT PHOTO: The elusive grey falcon stares down the barrel of Angus Emmott's lens in remote western Queensland. (Supplied: Angus Emmott)



BOTTOM PHOTO: The grey falcon in flight in western Queensland. (Supplied: Angus Emmott)

Colour Flagging for Migratory Shorebirds In the East Asian-Australasian Flyway(EA-AF).

Darryl Goldrick, IBOC Records Officer.

One of the world's great natural wonders is the migration of shorebirds between their breeding grounds in Alaska and Siberia and their non-breeding grounds in Australia and New Zealand. This amazing phenomenon is in danger of imminent collapse because vital staging sites on the migration route are being lost.

The 9th Australasian Shorebird Conference was held in Darwin in Sept 2014 and the principal theme focused on what is happening to the dwindling bird population numbers. Paper after paper at the Conference painted a bleak picture of the range of adverse impacts including accelerating loss of staging sites especially of tidal mudflats in the Yellow Sea due to agriculture and landfill, aquaculture and urban and industrial infrastructure, pressures from pollution, hunting and increasing recreational pursuits. Findings from the Conference are to be published in a near future issue of **Australian Wildlife** magazine – keep an eye out.

The EA-AF's 23 countries include nearly half the world's human population and some of its fastest growing economies. This combination is applying extraordinary development pressure on tidal flats and wetlands where the birds find food to fuel their journeys. Traditional livelihoods of the many people within the Flyway who depend on coastal wetlands and tidal flats are also disappearing.

The program of flagging waders has revolutionised wader migration studies. The flag is a small coloured plastic band with a tab on the end. Unlike with banding, the bird does not have to be caught to find out in which region it has been flagged. The program started in Australia in 1990, where a flagging protocol has been developed for the Flyway, which enables any country, or in some cases regions within a country, to join the scheme.

At present Australia (5 locations), New Zealand (North and South Island), Japan (3 locations), South Korea, China (Hong Kong, Yellow Sea and

Shanghai) and Taiwan are colour flagging shorebirds.

It is now possible to use flag sightings to show differing arrival dates and median migration dates of different populations of the same species from different parts of Australia, through Asia. The flagging program can be used to answer all sorts of long standing questions about movements of waders eg, to what extent is South Australia used as a stop-over for waders migrating to and from S.E Australia? To what extent do southern Australian waders stop on the north coasts of Australia on northward migration or do they overfly them? What is the entrance point on the Qld coast for Bar-tailed Godwits on southward migration after their assumed direct flight from Alaska? What is the role of the island arc route through Indonesia as opposed to the direct non-stop route to the Yellow Sea? To what extent do waders relocate their non-breeding areas, in subsequent seasons and do some spp relocate to the inland Australia when conditions are suitable?

The flagging program gives solid, robust scientific evidence in assisting in the formation of conservation programs. Anybody, anywhere can help in this program by looking for and reporting legband/flag sightings. The more that are seen and reported, the greater the value.

In most cases, the colour flag(s) is placed on the *right* leg, and the metal band on the left leg. The position of the flag(s) and which leg is the most important determination as to where they were originally flagged/banded. In *large* birds, two flags are attached to the right tibia whilst in *smaller* birds one flag is attached to the right tibia + another to the right tarsus. Metal bands are usually on the left tarsus (except birds flagged in North-West Australia and Vic in which case the metal band is on the right tarsus).

(a) The following position/colour flag combination apply to birds flagged in Australia:

NSW-Australia: orange –r.tibia + green r.tarsus - metal band on left tarsus

Victoria: Orange – r.tibia + metal band on right tarsus

Tasmania: Orange – r.tibia +blue r.tarsus – metal band on left tarsus

S.A: Orange-r.tibia + yellow r.tarsus – metal band on left tarsus

South-West Aust: Yellow – r.tibia + orange – r.tarsus – metal band on left tarsus

NZ (nth Is): White – r.tibia – metal band on left tarsus

NZ (Sth Is): White r.tibia +green l.tibia – metal band on left tarsus

Qld: Green r.tibia – metal band on left tarsus.

(b) The following positions/colours are for some Overseas sites:

Alaska: Silver metal band- r.tibia + yellow metal band- l.tibia + green flag on left tarsus

Tong-Jing- Korea: white- r.tibia + orange- r.tarsus+ silver band left tibia.

Mongolia: Blue- r.tibia + green- r.tarsus – silver band left tarsus

Cambodia –Inner Gulf Thailand: Green- r.tibia + black- l.tarsus – silver band on left tarsus

Indonesia: Black r.tibia + orange r.tarsus – silver metal band left tarsus.

Shorebird ID is often difficult in the southern hemisphere and a useful guide is found in Birdlife Australia's magazine 'Australian Birdlife' under the section "How to be sure about shorebirds"

I also strongly recommend you visit the Australasian Wader Studies Group web site (www.awsg.org.au) which has a wealth of shorebird and migration information, incl drawings of flag/band positions for the Flyway flagging sites, and past + current migration patterns and populations data. It is a fantastic site and you also have access to downloading the two publications: Tattler and Stilt.

Additionally, you can download a Leg flag sighting report form which can be forwarded to them for entry into the database.

The ibis: a native bird misunderstood

Hannah Paine – Sun-Herald March 1, 2015

It's a bird known for its colourful nicknames: dumpster diver, flying rat and tip turkey, with these names considered well justified by most.

However, one man who has helped manage and monitor the Australian white ibis since 2000 thinks this kind of reputation is at least partially undeserved.

"It's about a fifty-fifty: they definitely do scavenge sometimes but people don't manage that very well, so they do seem to get chased away by the birds," said Dr John Martin, ecologist and wildlife officer at the botanic gardens and centennial parklands, who has worked with the Australian white ibis for 15 years.

Instead, he thinks the bird is one of Australia's most interesting native species. Highly adaptive and mobile, their natural habitat in interior wetlands was significantly diminished in the 1970s due to changed water flow and urbanisation. However, unlike other affected species, the ibis made the surprise move to near the coast, where their numbers thrived.

"The ibis have actually been one of the survivors that have shifted to the coast and adapted their behaviour," said Dr John Martin.

Since their move to the big smoke, ibis have altered their diet and developed a fearless approach to human contact. This less-than-timid behaviour makes them disliked by locals but a hit with tourists.

"They're really interested in this bird that looks so different – it's got these long legs and long bill and they think it's a bit like a dinosaur. To them it's fascinating that they can get really close to these birds," said Dr Martin.

In its new urban habitat, the ibis relies on rubbish for food, with 40 per cent estimated to eat at landfills every day, leading to concern about disease. However Dr Martin said tests carried out do not support health fears and he recommends similar precautions to those taken with pets.

"You have to behave with these wild birds in pretty much the same way, you wouldn't go and touch something dirty and put your hands in your mouth, you would go wash your hands," he said.

The Australian white ibis is known to live a highly mobile 11 years, with adults able to make 70-kilometre round trips in a day. This makes numbers hard to measure, but surveys are done through an annual sighting report at the height of breeding season.

"In October we counted about 5700 birds in the Sydney region, it's a fairly accurate count but it definitely is an underestimate," said Dr Martin.

He also said that, despite its nuisance status, the ibis didn't deserve to be controlled in the same way as other perceived pests.

"What we really need is refuge habitat where they can breed and everyone is happy for them to be there and it doesn't impact on anyone. They are a native species, they deserve to have their space as well," he said.

Spotted an Australian white ibis with a wing tag in Hyde Park, Coffs Harbour or Townsville? Let Dr Martin know at: ibis.sightings@gmail.com

Relief for endangered snipe: Science prevails

13 March 2015

BirdLife Australia has welcomed the announcement by the Queensland Government that the spoil from proposed Abbot Point development will no longer be dumped on wetland habitat important to the endangered Australian Painted Snipe.

BirdLife has repeatedly warned decision makers that the Abbot Point development would have had a severe impact on the Caley Valley wetlands, which have been recognised as internationally significant. "These wetlands provide one of the most important habitats known for the Australian Painted Snipe," said Chris Purnell, Threatened Bird Network Project Officer at BirdLife Australia.

Mr Purnell explained, "There are fewer than 1500 of the birds remaining in the wild, and they depend heavily on coastal wetlands such as the Caley Valley as a refuge." In 2012, 24 Snipe were seen there, one of the largest concentrations of the birds ever recorded.

"The Abbot Point project would have been an irreversible blow to the Australian Painted Snipe's chances of recovery," Mr Purnell said. "The snipe is a nomadic shorebird that has very specific habitat requirements. The species is endangered due to a significant decline in wetlands", he continued. "It only occurs in Australia".

The Federal Government officially recognised the Snipe as being an endangered species in 2013 based on a nomination by BirdLife Australia. In a response to declines BirdLife established a National Recovery Project to secure the species' survival.



The habitat is not only international significant for the endangered Australian Painted Snipe, it meets many of the criteria for Ramsar listing as a Wetland of International Importance and provides nationally important habitat for Little Tern, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Latham's Snipe.

"About 1700 migratory shorebirds (consisting of 15 species) and nearly fifty thousand waterbirds (from 52 different species) rely on the wetlands". "All of which are safer today than they were before yesterday".

"We are very relieved that the Queensland Government has stuck to its election promise and ruled out disposing the dredge spoil on these important wetlands" said Mr Purnell.



Satin Flycatcher - Audley Weir - Pam Hazelwood



Brown Gerygone - Audley Weir - Pam Hazelwood



Brown Gerygone - Audley Weir - Pam Hazelwood



Variegated Fairy-wren Killalea Alan Cousins



Red-tailed Tropicbird - Ulladulla - Charles Dove



Spotted Pardalote - Lake Conjola - Charles Dove



Eastern Ground Parrot - Booderee NP - Charles Dove



Australian Hobby - Milton - Charles Dove

MONTHLY SIGHTINGS: February/March 2015

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

SPECIES	N ^o	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Red-tailed Tropicbird	1	20/03/2015	Ulladulla Lighthouse	Overhead	Charles Dove
White-headed Pigeon	5	4/03/2015	Botanic Gardens	Keiraville	Joshua Coyte
White-headed Pigeon	2	4/03/2015	Gwynneville	Electricity Wires	Terry Edwell
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	1	8/03/2015	Jerrara Dam	Rainforest	David Eddington
Tawny Frogmouth	2	8/03/2015	Lake Conjola	Casuarina	Charles Dove
White-throated Needletail	>20	1/03/2015	Lake Conjola	Overhead	Charles Dove
Brown Quail	8	11/03/2015	Woodlands Creek	Footpath grass verge	Mike Morphet
Royal Spoonbill	1	2/03/2015	Bellambi Lagoon	Lagoon/Pond	Ross/Jann Gowans
Black-shouldered Kite	1	9/03/2015	Killalea State Rec Park	Grassland	Joshua Coyte
Square-tailed Kite	1	8/03/2015	Old Erawal Bay	O'head	Peter Salvair
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	09-Mar-15	Killalea State Rec Park	Cliffs	Joshua Coyte
Brown Goshawk	1	18/03/2015	Wollongong Showground	O'head	Mike Morphet
Grey Goshawk	1 w.ph	6/03/2015	Killalea State Rec Park	Post - carpark	Bruce Coyte
Grey Goshawk	1 w.ph	8/03/2015	Bellawongarah	Rainforest	Ralph Stadius
Spotted Harrier	1	6/03/2015	Killalea State Rec Park	O'head	Joshua Coyte
Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	22/02/2015	Balgownie	Escarpment	Joan Zealey
Little Eagle	1 l. & d.ph	8-9/3/15	Killalea State Rec Park	Wood/grasslands	Joshua Coyte
Buff-banded Rail	1A 5chics	3/03/2105	Lions Park Burrill Lake	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	3	7/03/2015	IYC	Lakeside lawn	Neil McKinlay
Sooty Oystercatcher	35	20/03/2015	Ulladulla Lighthouse	Tidal Rock	Charles Dove
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	21/03/2015	North Beach	Rockshelf	Anne Cousins
Pacific Golden Plover	>150	1/03/2015	Shoalhaven Heads	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Double-banded Plover	>10	1/03/2015	Lake Conjola	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Hooded Plover	6	7/03/2015	Racecourse Beach Ull.	Tidal Rock	Charles Dove
Bar-tailed Godwit	>50	1/03/2015	Shoalhaven Heads	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Eastern Curlew	>10	1/03/2015	Shoalhaven Heads	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Caspian Tern	1	8/03/2015	Werri	Beach	Kara Eddington
Caspian Tern	2	7/03/2015	IYC	Lakeside lawn	Neil McKinlay
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	5	10/03/2015	Sanctuary Point	Golf Course	Peter Salvair
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	3	20/03/2015	Tarrawanna	O'head	Anne Cousins
Musk Lorikeet	>10	3/03/2015	Burrill Lake	Flowering Gum	Charles Dove
Eastern Rosella	1	6/03/2015	Botanic Gardens	Keiraville	Anne Cousins
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1 juv	24/02/2015	Port Kembla Golf Course	Open Forest	Max Davies
Powerful Owl	1	19/03/2015	Thirroul	Gum canopy garden	Mike Morphet
Powerful Owl	1 heard	20/03/2015	Excelsior Mine Site	Rainforest	Mike Morphet
Azure Kingfisher	1	2/03/2016	Pattimores Lagoon, Lke Conjola	Dead Tree	Charles Dove
Green Catbird	5	4/03/2015	Botanic Gardens	Keiraville	Joshua Coyte
Variagated Fairy-wren	3m 6f	2/03/2016	Pattimores Lagoon, Lke Conjola	Dead Tree	Charles Dove
Southern Emu-wren	5	2/03/2015	Little Forest Porters Crk	Heath	Charles Dove/Chris Brandis
Eastern Bristlebird	2	8/03/2015	Booderee N.P	Heathland	Ralph Stadius
Eastern Bristlebird	4	8/03/2015	Barren Grounds	Trackside	Terry Edwell
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	1	14/03/2015	Grevillea Park	Adjacent Rainforest	Ross/Jann Gowans
Large-billed Scrubwren	3	15/03/2015	Burrill Lake	Mixed Trees	Charles Dove
Spotted Pardalote	1 heard	21/03/2015	Tarrawanna	Forest	Anne Cousins
Varied Sittella	>20	1/03/2015	Lake Conjola	Mixed Trees	Charles Dove
Crested Shrike-tit	1	8/03/2015	Jerrara Dam	Rainforest	David Eddington
Crested Shrike-tit	1	14/03/2015	Grevillea Park	Adjacent Rainforest	Ross/Jann Gowans
Golden Whistler	1	1/03/2015	Killalea State Rec Park	Rainforest	Joshua Coyte
Golden Whistler	1 Imm	23/03/2015	Thirroul	Garden	Mike Morphet
Black-faced Monarch	1	1/03/2015	Killalea State Rec Park	Rainforest	Joshua Coyte
Bassian Thrush	8	2/03/2015	Little Forest Porters Crk	Pathway	Charles Dove/Chris Brandis
Beautiful Firetail	2	2/03/2015	Little Forest Porters Crk	Heath	Charles Dove/Chris Brandis
Beautiful Firetail	4	8/03/2015	Barren Grounds	Casuarina	Terry Edwell