



THE IBOC



NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 415

ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB INC NEWSLETTER

July 2017

Rockwarbler

Scientific Name: *Origma solitaria*
Atlas Number: 505

Description:

The Rockwarbler is a small bird restricted to the sandstone formations around the Sydney to the Shoalhaven regions of New South Wales. It is a dark brown-grey bird with a cinnamon-tinged face and forehead, a dull white throat speckled black, reddish-brown underparts, and a black tail, which is often



photo by Charles Dove

flicked sideways. The wings are dark grey-brown. Young birds are similar to adults but duller.

Similar species:

The Rockwarbler could be confused with the similarly shaped Pilotbird, but has a narrower tail that is flicked sideways (the Pilotbird holds its tail low or flicks it up and down). The Rockwarbler is also smaller, slimmer, and paler in colour, with a white chin and throat.

Distribution:

The Rockwarbler is confined to areas on and around the Great Dividing Range, mainly within a 240 km radius of Sydney.

Habitat:

The Rockwarbler is found on Hawkesbury and other Sydney and Shoalhaven sandstone, granite and nearby limestone formations. It is usually found around rocky outcrops, in steep rocky gullies and usually near water, including along sea-cliffs in coastal areas.

Seasonal movements:

Sedentary.

Feeding:

The Rockwarbler mainly eats insects and sometimes

seeds. It forages on the ground and in low branches, probing for insects in rock crevices, in caves and under ledges.

Breeding:

Rockwarblers live in monogamous pairs in a permanent home-range. The nest site is usually in a sandstone (occasionally limestone or granite) cave, in total or near-darkness and is re-used each year. It will also nest in darkened buildings, under rafters, on verandahs or in house eaves. The nest is a suspended dome-shaped structure made from roots, moss, grass and bark bound together with spider webs, and has a round side entrance that is sometimes hooded. The inner nest chamber is lined with soft materials, including feathers, fur, grasses and plant down. Both parents feed the young, which stay with their parents for some time after fledging. Sometimes parasitised by Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

Bird species cover text courtesy of <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

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'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

ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.

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JULY ACTIVITIES

CLUB MEETING:

Monday 10th at 7.30pm

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

Nicholas Carlile

Acting Principal Scientist Office of Environment & Heritage

An Update on the Seabird Research on the Five Islands

Five Islands Group, and particularly Big Island, has been one of the most visited seabird islands in NSW. However, since the 1970's the islands have not been formally surveyed for all breeding seabirds. Since 2014, systematic surveys of all the islands have commenced with all but Bass Islet now with a renewed knowledge of the baseline of seabirds breeding within the Group. Additionally, Big Island has been the focus of a number of seabird studies which have commenced on Little Penguins, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and the trial of experimental attraction of White-faced Storm-petrels back to their former breeding site. All this in a changing environment as the native vegetation is progressively restored here. The talk to the Illawarra Bird Observers Club on the evening of July 10 will give an insight to the changing mix of seabirds on the nearby islands and how the ongoing research will benefit our understanding of seabird ecology both regionally and on a broader scale.



Please bring a plate of 'goodies' and a mug for supper after the meeting.

MIDWEEK WALK

Wednesday 12th at 9.00am

Leader Joan & Tom Wylie

Bellambi Lagoon

from Rothery Street Bellambi, turn into Bott Drive then left into Waley Ave., after 50mtres right into Armour St. meeting at end of Amour Street Bellambi.

In the event of inclement weather phone Joan or after 8am 4284 2051

MONTHLY OUTING

Saturday 15th July at 9.00am

Leader Betty Hudson

Audley Weir National Park

The July Monthly walk will be to the Audley Weir area of the Royal National Park, meeting at the Willow Flat Picnic Area at 9.00am.

Travel north on the motorway to Waterfall, turn left then follow the RNP signs until a T-junction at Sir Bertram Stevens Drive, turn left and continue until you descend to the Audley River. Immediately before the Visitors Centre take a very sharp left turn back towards Lady Carrington Drive. Do not cross the white bridge but continue on to the 2nd parking bay by Willow Flat Picnic area (at the end of the road).

We will walk the first section of Lady Carrington Drive returning to the cars for morning tea. After this we will drive across the weir to the Reid's Flat Picnic area for a walk down river. Returning to the Visitors Centre we will take the right turn, cross the white bridge to Wattle Forest Picnic area for lunch and a walk. There are Picnic and toilet facilities at each place we stop.

Please note that there is an entry fee for the park payable at the Visitors Centre if you do not have a National Parks Pass.

If the weather looks doubtful phone Betty on 4236 0307 before 7.30am.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING:

Next Committee Meeting-

Monday 17th July, 2pm at Tom and Joan Wylie's home, 4 Daphne St, Bellambi, NSW2518.

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

Newsletter:

DEADLINE 23rd July 2017

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

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

Illawarra Bird Observers Club Reports

June Meeting Talk

Galveston Featherfest 2017- Bill and Joan Zealey

Bill and Joan managed to pack 240 slides of one of the top locations in the USA, Galveston Island into their presentation. In the course of their talk they touched on the Paleontology Collection of the Houston Natural History Museum, the not-to-be-missed NASA Space Flight Centre and the San Jacinto Wetlands. They related how four days of field trips to Texas Dyke, Bolivar Wetlands and High Island allowed them to mingle with some of the top birders in the country, including Greg Miller, of "The Big Year" book and movie.

They introduced us to the beaches, wetlands, grasslands, woods, ponds, and bays of Galveston Island. These form part of the Central Flyway, a broad, hourglass-shaped migratory flight path that extends from Alaska to South America. More than three hundred species of birds stop here on their migration.

Feather Fest, one of the many USA birding events is timed to coincide with the Spring migrations. Although Bill and Joan missed the main "blow-ins" across the Gulf of Mexico by three weeks, they managed to spot exotic Tanagers, Orioles and Vireos. We were regaled with images of Black Skimmers, Loons, Grebes and Red-breasted Mergansers, but some of the most beautiful birds were the Roseate Spoonbills nesting on the predator-free rookery at High Island.

Best wishes Bill

MID-WEEK WALK REPORT

MT. KEMBLA WALK WEDNESDAY 14th JUNE 2017

text & Photos by Terry Edwell

Seven of us set out on a cool but good walking day. We had a mixture of birds on the walk up to the gate, mainly Scrub Wrens and Thornbills accompanied by the very loud calls of Sulfur Crested Cockatoos and the whistling of Lewin's Honeyeaters. A Golden Whistler was chasing around after bugs and was very obliging as he went from tree to ground and back again. Such a beautiful bird.



The Cockatoos were screeching when Joan spotted a Wedge-tailed Eagle chasing them. The Eagle flew around and around then disappeared over the escarpment. The Lyrebird was calling and there was a Yellow Robin watching us closely as we continued on. Betty and Tom were in front a little way and they had good sightings of a couple of Bassian Thrush.



It was an enjoyable day and it was lovely to walk along hoping for a Logrunner to pop out of the bush (not this time) but we did see 32 species altogether. We arrived back at the gate and Brian and Barbara were there waiting for us.

Bird List for Mt Kembla Ring Track Walk		14 th June 2017	7 members
Pacific Black Duck	Rainbow Lorikeet	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Golden Whistler
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Australian King Parrot	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Shrike-thrush
Wonga Pigeon	Crimson Rosella	Brown Gerygone	Pied Currawong
Topknot Pigeon	Superb Lyrebird	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Wedge-tailed Eagle	White-throated Treecreeper	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Raven
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Green Catbird	Eastern Spinebill	Eastern Yellow Robin
Galah	Satin Bowerbird	Lewin's Honeyeater	Silvereye
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Superb Fairy-wren	Eastern Whipbird	Bassian Thrush

WEEKEND WALK REPORT

Report on the Bellawongarah/Fitzroy Falls Walk Sunday 18th June 2017 by Betty Hudson

On a fine warm sunny early morning 14members left for Berry and Bellawongarah only to travel in heavy rain as a bitterly cold change moved through. Arriving at Bellawongarah Ash Mountain reserve the rain had not reached there but the wind was straight from the ice. Rugging up warmly, we all headed off along the track hoping for at least a glimpse of the logrunners. No Luck, although a Yellow-throated Scrubwren tried to fool us in the gloom of the understory. There were numerous wombat burrows in the banks on the side of the track and one wombat had obviously set his alarm incorrectly, as it was still feeding in a distant paddock. Reaching a much more open area birds became more obvious and a mixed flock of small birds added greatly to our list, including, Superb Fairy-wren; Grey Fantail, Brown Thornbill; Silvereye, while a Wonga Pigeon was calling in the distance. Returning to our cars for a welcome hot cuppa we took advantage of the sheltered verandah on the RFS garage and their chairs.

It was now time to move on to Fitzroy Falls, a stop was made at Cambewarra Lookout where a Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen riding the thermals along the cliffs. We met up again at a very busy Fitzroy Falls Picnic area for lunch before having a walk. A Satin Bowerbird and a Yellow Robin were very active around the picnic area hoping for some crumbs no doubt.

After lunch we walked around the picnic area and some way along the river towards the reservoir. The old holiday cabins along here have now been converted into picnic shelters although the fire places have been bricked up. By now the sun was shining in a clear but cold sky so the birds were becoming much more active. Shortly after leaving the main area by the visitors centre we spent a long time watching fascinated as two Bassian Thrushes were feeding alongside the track and it appeared that one was feeding tit bits to the other, as we moved slowly along they moved with us but were joined by several Yellow-throated Scrubwrens. All the birds looked splendid in the sunlight. Further along the track the ground was littered with fallen Mistletoe Blossom but no sight or sound of Mistletoebirds. Once we started on the track to the Falls and the western rim track the number of tourists kept the birds hiding in the bush. The waterfall was very impressive with a large volume of water going over. The original planned walk along the Eastern Rim Track was unfortunately closed. The afternoon only produced 12 species but the Bassian Thrush & Yellow-throated Scrubwrens made up for that.

A good days birding, despite the weather and the threat of disruption, at Berry, due to the Official Opening of the bypass and consequent road closures. Personally, I really enjoyed the day especially finally feeling fit & well again and walking easily.

Bird List for Bellawongarah & Fitzroy Falls Walks Sunday 18.06.17

Bellawongarah Black Ash Reserve		20 species sighted	14members
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	Laughing Kookaburra	White-browed Scrubwren	Pied Currawong
Wonga Pigeon	Superb Lyrebird	Brown Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Satin Bowerbird	Lewin's Honeyeater	Australian Raven
King Parrot	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Butcherbird	Eastern Yellow Robin
Crimson Rosella	Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Australian Magpie	Silvereye

Fitzroy Falls Picnic Area & Western Rim Track		12 Species sighted	
King Parrot	White-browed Scrubwren	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Satin Bowerbird	Brown Thornbill	Eastern Whipbird	Bassian Thrush
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	Eastern Spinebill	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Blackbird

3 additional species sighted while travelling between locations.

Australian Wood Duck; Cattle Egret; Black-shouldered Kite

REPORT ON BINGARA COPETON CAMP OCTOBER 2017

by Betty Hudson

17 IBOC members met at Bingara Caravan Park on a glorious autumn day – warm, sunny with plenty of birds calling. Bingara is a historic town set in a wide valley at the crossing of the Gwydir River and ringed by steep volcanic hills. Consequently, the area is renowned as a gem, especially sapphires fossicking place.

In order to make the most of our limited days we visited as many places with different habitats as possible for a shorter time than we would have preferred as well as birding along the side of back roads often with surprising sightings, Sunday Warialda district; Monday Bingara Area; Tuesday Horton River & Eulowrie Creek; Wed travelling to Copeton Dam.

Despite it being late autumn, all the Caravan Park's Ironbark's and flowering Eucalyptus trees were in full bloom and attracting a wide variety of Honeyeaters (13 sp recorded). In addition, 2 orange trees with ripe fruit made rich pickings for the Blue-faced & Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters. Early morning or late afternoon walks around the perimeter of the park was always worthwhile – an Azure kingfisher on the banks of Hope Creek, the southern boundary of the park, as well as Red-winged Parrots screeching through the trees showing off their brilliant colouring in the sun. 61 species were recorded in the Caravan Park (61sp)

With the Gwydir River, just across the road in its deep wide channel unfortunately with little water due to no dam releases. Many other birds were found including Musk Lorikeets, & White-browed Treecreeper. The sand banks along the edges were made of a wide variety of large pebbles of many colours held in place by vegetation. (40species)

At visit to Bingara STW and adjacent native fish farm added to the list, apart from House Sparrows the only other introduced species were found here including a lone Common Myna. A juvenile Magpie Goose & numerous Plumed Whistling Ducks were at the fish farm. In the adjacent trees a Spotted Bowerbird, Scaly-breasted Lorikeets & White-winged Chuffs were both busy and noisy. 36 species in all sighted.

A trip to Warialda STW was very rewarding 35 species & more time would have been appreciated. The ponds were easily accessible and mature gum trees provided habitat for other birds. Pink-eared Ducks; Hardheads; Australasian & Hoary-headed Grebe; Pale-headed Rosella; Australian Reed-Warbler; Golden-headed Cisticola, Double-barred Finch & Chestnut-breasted Mannikin were the outstanding sightings. A stop at Cranky Rock Nature Reserve provided an interesting walk and the information that the rock formation shaped like a turtle and perched on top of a large cliff was named after the tale of a Chinese station cook known as "Cranky" who jumped from there into the creek. Due to the high water in the creek we were unable to continue on the walk and returned to the picnic area taking the track to the lookout. Good views from the top. Bird life was sparse with the notable sightings being Common Bronzewing; Brown Treecreeper; 5 species Honeyeaters including Scarlet; Buff-rumped Thornbill; Tree Martins; a total of 24 species. The return trip to camp was via Miall Creek, along back roads where we could stop as we wished to check out birds flitting across. One stop to try to see the small birds darting across the road produced a Tawny Grassbird in the tall roadside grasses. When we reached the bitumen the Zealey's detoured to a fossicking area they knew and were rewarded with a flock of 50+ Diamond Firetails! 24 Species seen roadside.

A day out along Horton River produced some interesting birds but the main reserve by the Elcome Rd Bridge was disappointing. A stop along Eulowrie Ck for morning tea surprised with some interesting birds, including the Singing Honeyeater; Brown Falcon; Striped Honeyeater. A stop was made for lunch at the Glacial Area just off the Narrabri Rd. This is a small council reserve around a section of Eulowrie Ck which has exposed ancient rocks showing signs of glaciation with beds of conglomerate made of large rocks interleaved with lava sheets a very interesting place geologically, but not many birds - a pleasant spot for lunch.

We then kept on along the next section of Horton Rd hoping to see birds by the roadside. At first not promising but a sudden corner and birds popped up everywhere. A stop saw us with a good list including Rufous Songlark; Grey-crowned Babbler; Plum-headed Finch; Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater; and White-browed Scrubwren. A total of 20 species, were seen in this small area by a little creek. We later crossed Horton River on a water covered causeway seeing Moorhens, Fairy Martins & a White-necked Stork. We then hurried back to camp to get ready for a dinner at the Imperial Hotel. Leaving camp with a storm threatening, we just made the hotel as the rain started to fall heavily and lightening flashed. The rain luckily had stopped by the time we left.

We recorded a total of 114 species for the Bingara Area including 14 species of Honeyeaters.

Pack up day and travel to Copeton Dam arrived so everyone was in the shops in Bingara stocking up on perishable food. The 50km trip to Copeton was slow due to bends & hills on the road. We arrived to find that they had been deluged by the previous night's storm and many of the campers were still trying to dry out.

We had our meeting around a great campfire in a specially constructed fire pit with surrounding benches and plenty of firewood. Luxury! We already had a list of 36 species.

A Tawny Frogmouth was seen in the early morning by the amenities block. The morning saw us heading off to Sepoy Point the most distant from the camping area. The dam was only 40% full and had been that way for a long time judging from the regrowth on the banks. An area of regrowth scrub produced many small birds including Double-barred Finch; Speckled Warbler; Yellow-rumped Thornbill; Rufous Whistler and an Emu. Heading back to the picnic area we had our Biggest Morning Tea with goodies bought in Bingara and raising \$85. Thanks to Anne Cousins for organising this.

A stroll down to the opposite bank saw Australasian Pipits added to the list before a circuitous walk back to the cars through the maze of tracks. The afternoon was spent by the tennis courts walking the first part of a well maintained walking track followed by a brisk walk along the road to the end where Turquoise Parrots were supposed to appear late each afternoon. No Luck! We recorded total of

69 species for the day. A wet night forced our campfire indoors where we had a convivial evening saying goodbye to Bill & Joan and Pam & John who were leaving early the next morning.

Another fine day saw us walk the 2nd section of the walking track, a short part with flowering eucalypts which was very rewarding 10 species of Honeyeater, 3 Wood Swallow's, Crested Shrike-tit, & Brown Treecreeper. Lyndall found herself a "Bean Bag" rock lounge for a comfortable snooze as we passed through an area of Callitris forest. Then it was over the road into the unoccupied golf course where White-browed & Grey-crowned Babbler's, as well as Hooded Robins were sighted.

Later in the afternoon we had another try to see the Turquoise Parrots better luck this time with two briefly seen flying overhead. That evening we said goodbye to Lyndall, Terry & Eduardo who left early the next morning, 43 species for the day.

Our last day, of what was proving to be an exceptional area for birding saw us head towards the dam wall where three Common Bronzewing as well as Diamond Firetails, Speckled Warblers and Jacky Winters in the tall roadside regrowth which demonstrated the length of time the dam has been so low. A low flying White-bellied Sea-Eagle was a splendid sight in the sunshine. Yet another well appointed picnic area for morning tea before a walk to the dam wall through Callitris Forest. A female Turquoise Parrot was seen hiding at the base of a tree looking at first glance like a Yellow Robin in the grass. Further on a large Stag with an impressive set of antlers was seen and two more Turquoise Parrots flew over to be seen by most of us. Then it was back to camp for lunch and packing up ready for an early start the next morning. 45 Species for the day. The list reaching 92 species, for the Copeton Dam part of the camp with a total of 141 for the week.

My thanks to Alan for arranging the dinner in Bingara, Tom for his excellent job of keeping a list of sightings, also to all who came and helped to make it such a successful Camp.

Bingara-Copeton Camp October 2017		141 species	17 members
Emu	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	White-plumed Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler
Magpie Goose	Tawny Frogmouth	Fuscous Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole
Plumed Whistling-Duck	Azure Kingfisher	Scarlet Honeyeater	Australasian Figbird
Australian Wood Duck	Laughing Kookaburra	Brown Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail
Pacific Black Duck	Nankeen Kestrel	White-eared Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Grey Teal	Australian Hobby	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Magpie-lark
Pink-eared Duck	Brown Falcon	White-naped Honeyeater	Restless Flycatcher
Hardhead	Galah	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Torresian Crow
Brown Quail	Little Corella	Striped Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Australasian Grebe	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Little Friarbird	White-winged Chough
Hoary-headed Grebe	Cockatiel	Noisy Friarbird	Apostlebird
Little Pied Cormorant	Australian King-Parrot	Spotted Pardalote	Jacky Winter
Little Black Cormorant	Red-winged Parrot	Striated Pardalote	Flame Robin
Pied Cormorant	Turquoise Parrot	White-browed Scrubwren	Hooded Robin
Australasian Darter	Crimson Rosella	Speckled Warbler	Eastern Yellow Robin
White-necked Heron	Eastern Rosella	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Eastern Great Egret	Pale-headed Rosella	Inland Thornbill	Fairy Martin
White-faced Heron	Red-rumped Parrot	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Tree Martin
Australian White Ibis	Musk Lorikeet	Yellow Thornbill	Horsfield's Bushlark
Straw-necked Ibis	Little Lorikeet	Weebill	Australian Reed-Warbler
Black-shouldered Kite	Rainbow Lorikeet	Western Gerygone	Tawny Grassbird
Little Eagle	Scaly -breasted Lorikeet	Grey-crowned Babbler	Rufous Songlark
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Spotted Bowerbird	White-browed Babbler	Golden-headed Cisticola
Brown Goshawk	White-throated Treecreeper	Masked Woodswallow	Silvereye
Whistling Kite	Brown Treecreeper	White-browed Woodswallow	Common Blackbird
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Superb Fairy-wren	Black-faced Woodswallow	Common Starling
Purple Swamphen	Eastern Spinebill	Dusky Woodswallow	Common Myna
Dusky Moorhen	Lewin's Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird	Mistletoebird
Eurasian Coot	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird	Australasian Pipit
Masked Lapwing	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	House Sparrow
Black-fronted Dotterel	Noisy Miner	Pied Currawong	Diamond Firetail
Spotted Dove	Yellow-throated Miner	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Red-browed Finch
Common Bronzewing	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Crested Shrike-tit	Plum-headed Finch
Crested Pigeon	Red Wattlebird	Grey Shrike-thrush	Double-barred Finch
Peaceful Dove	Singing Honeyeater	Golden Whistler	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
Bar-shouldered Dove			

141 species for the Week

The detailed list of birds seen at each location has been posted on the club web site

IBOC NEEDS A SECRETARY. HAVE YOU GOT IT IN YOU?

WHAT IS A SECRETARY?



What does the IBOC secretary need to do?

They basically need to keep things the President needs focused and on track.

The President is responsible for setting up the program of speakers.. they will contact speakers, confirm talks and get abstracts...but they need someone to check they have got the right dates. So they send all emails via the Secretary. The Secretary then checks that the President hasn't double booked speakers, has got the right date etc. Some Presidents are more senile than others.. but so far I haven't stuffed up irrevocably...but it's only a matter of time.

Committee Meetings

At Committee meetings they take the minutes....this usually means they make jottings on the agenda...note the action items ..and write these up in a short document which they circulated to all members of the Committee..

The President uses the action items to prepare the agenda for the next meeting. This agenda forms the framework for the next set of minutes.. and so it goes.

Correspondence

The Secretary is the focus of email queries/ letters. They either answer these or forward them to the President or other relevant committee member.

Record maintenance

They make sure that minutes and correspondence are filed on the Club computer system.

SO WHO IS UP FOR IT

UPCOMING EVENTS

COWRA Woodland Bird Survey: Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 July. If you are interested in participating, please email Malcolm Fyfe malcolmfyfe33@gmail.com

Key Biodiversity Areas Workshop: Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August

You are invited to a KBA Workshop hosted by BirdLife Shoalhaven be held at St Georges Basin. This workshop is aimed at KBA guardians, KBA survey volunteers and members of bird clubs and others who want to learn more about KBAs.

On the first day topics covered include an introduction to KBAs and workshops on how to use Birddata, bird surveys, how to complete the KBA Health Check forms and how to spread the word about KBAs in communities.

On the second day, survey techniques will be tested in the field at Booderee National Park Botanic Gardens. For the programme and registration form, please contact Elisabeth Karplus on emhodson@exemail.com.au.

Workshop using Birdata (BirdLife Australia Atlas).

Saturday 26th August at the Education Centre Bicentennial Park

Presenter: Alan Stuart BirdLife Australia manages a national Atlas database for records of Australian birds.

Cost: \$15 per person (includes lunch and morning tea)

You must pre-register to attend. See registration form Before the workshop you will need to download the free app on your mobile or tablet. <https://birdata.birdlife.org.au/>

Birdata is the newly released portal which facilitates user access for data entry and data retrieval. At the workshop, attendees will learn how to use the Birdata portal and the smartphone app. The format is intended to be highly interactive and participation is encouraged.

Program

9:30-11:15. - An Introduction to Birdata • Birdata's relationship to other databases • How Birdata is used: Nationally, Regionally, Locally • The survey types and how to select which one to use • How to register • Entering data using the portal • Entering data using the mobile phone app • Amending a record before submittal • Amending a survey after submittal

11:15-12:00.- Field practice session

12:00-12:45. Lunch

12:45.- Retrieving and Analysing Data • Your own records • Other peoples' records • Data for a site • Data for an area • Data for a species .Other Survey Types: when and how to use them • Shared Sites • Shorebirds 2020 • Special Projects • Troubleshooting / Open Forum • Share questions, problems and solutions

16:00. Close

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

EAGLE CAM NEWS

From BirdLife Southern NSW

The Eagles are on the nest and preparing for new eggs! The cameras and equipment have been replaced and/or repaired and are up and running, though as I write this we are still without sound. Thank you for all of your efforts and support: Judy Harrington, Stephen Davey, Geoff Hutchinson, Cathy Cook, Helen Stibbs, Shirley McGregor plus many many more at home and abroad.

Thank you to those generous donors who

have contributed much needed funds to help with the replacement and repair costs. Please click on the following link to view the EagleCam: <http://www.sea-eaglecam.org/video.html>



Taken from BIGnet Conservation Officers Workshop held on Saturday 1 April 2017 -

Among the discussions on conservation issues Michelle Rower of Illawarra birders gave a presentation about the fight to save Tallawarra Ashponds. This site is owned by Energy Australia, and lies 15 kilometres south of Wollongong on the western shores of Lake Illawarra. Coal ash from the power station was dumped there and the site has been abandoned for many years. The ponds have been tested and found not to be contaminated, however there are two asbestos dump sites on the surrounding lands. A developer has been engaged for residential development on the northern and central sections of the land but the southern section containing the ash ponds has been retained by Energy Australia. The developer will undertake restoration work on Duck Creek which runs through the southern section but Illawarra Birders are concerned about the proposed road to link Tallawarra with the existing adjacent suburb or Hayward's Bay.

The area is becoming one of the Illawarra's most important biodiversity hotspots. The first ecological study showed 70+ species of birds and this has now grown to 168 species. Many are species that are significant for the Illawarra eg breeding Osprey, Whistling Kite, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Blue-billed Duck, Black-fronted Dotterel, and Nankeen Kestrel. Seven endangered species are also present. Illawarra Birders are campaigning to save the site and recently gave a presentation to Energy Australia at a community liaison group meeting. The site could possibly be turned into a wetland centre. The development approval provides for three of the ponds to be filled in for light industrial development and there is no other suitable habitat in the Illawarra for any of the species that would be displaced by the development of this site.

Phil Straw suggested that the database of records for the Tallawarra site should be broken down into sub-sites to provide more accurate information. A concept plan was needed for the whole area and access to other parts of the land should be sought from leaseholders. He agreed that a Wetland Centre would be the best option to protect the main pond and requested that he be invited to a meeting with Energy Australia. The meeting agreed that the Illawarra Birder's sub-committee needed to work with the Council and the developer to be seen as pro-active, and also with Energy Australia to get them involved in a long-term solution. Seed money needed to be put into trust to develop the wetlands and create a recreational opportunity for the public. It was suggested that a member of the local tourist office should be taken to see the site and the local member should also be contacted.

Biodiversity sites threatened by water diversion, development, report finds

Peter Hannam – Sun-Herald – June 4, 2017

Some of Australia's richest wildlife regions are at risk – including in national parks – from encroaching development, invasive species and disrupted water flows, a study by BirdLife Australia has found.

Of 315 so-called key biodiversity areas around Australia, 19 are listed by BirdLife as "in danger", up from 12 in 2014. Many include threatened and endangered birds such as the plains-wanderer. The quail-like ground bird, found in grasslands including the NSW Riverina, is so genetically unique it has its own family.

The important biodiversity sites include Victoria's Bellarine Wetlands, where development pressures from Melbourne's swelling population have pushed the threat rating to "very high", to Tasmania's Bruny Island where logging risks have flared again.

In NSW, major wetlands such as the Macquarie Marshes face depleted water flows as among their main threats.

"Generally, conditions across Australia are getting worse," Sean Dooley, a spokesman for BirdLife Australia, said. By identifying the "real hotspots", the group hopes to focus private and government conservation efforts "where they are going to have the greatest effect".

Richard Kingsford, a professor of environmental science at the University of NSW who has helped lead bird counts for decades, said bird populations in the Murray-Darling Basin – with its 240 sizeable dams – have declined more than two-thirds over the past 32 years.

"We know where the important areas are but we just don't seem to be able to look after even them," Professor Kingsford said. "If they don't coincide with a national park – or even if they do – [plans] don't adequately deal with the outside threats such as climate change and environmental flows."

BirdLife said over-extraction of water and land-use for agriculture in the Macquarie Marshes, for instance, mean the region already exists on "life support". That's undermining the survival chances of the endangered Australasian bittern and the Australian painted snipe, and the other 70 bird species reliant on it for habitat.

Worse, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's review late last year determined too much water was being earmarked for the environment, and recommended slashing annual flows by 70 gigalitres to 320 gigalitres to ease the social and economic impacts of water recovery.

"It's bizarre ... and flies in the face of the [government's] responsibility," Professor Kingsford said, in an appeal to Canberra to reject the authority's recommendation.

In good years, as many as 500,000 waterbirds breed in the region, including birds that fly as far as Russia, China, and Japan – all countries which have migratory bird agreements with Australia.

Elsewhere, such as in Tasmania, state government efforts to open up new areas for logging on Bruny Island are putting at risk the critically endangered swift parrot. The National Recovery Plan for the bird projected a 94 per cent decline in numbers of the bird over the next 16 years, without action, BirdLife said.

The collection of waterbird data has allowed scientists to show that while individual counts rise and fall during relatively wet and dry years, the recovery "bounce" during good time is falling over time.

"We seem to have gone backwards in the past five years or so," Professor Kingsford. "A whole series of flashpoints seem to be going the way of the development imperative rather than the environment."

Have you heard the news?

Overnight the Tasmanian Upper House has [voted down](#) a disastrous proposal to hand over 356,000 hectares of native forest for logging, including more than 12,000 hectares of Critically Endangered Swift Parrot habitat.

The proposed bill would have seen forests on Bruny Island and Wielangta – two of the most important breeding sites for Swifties in the world – opened up as production forests.

With fewer than 2,000 Swift Parrots left in the wild, this bill would clearly have had devastating consequences.

A win for native birds!

In March this year, we raised the alarm, and the BirdLife community answered the call. While Tasmanians wrote letters and made phone calls to their elected representatives, donors from around Australia [gave generously](#) to support efforts to stop this bill in its tracks. Thank you.

In April, I joined Tasmanian Branch Convenor, Eric Woehler, in Hobart to brief Upper House Members, and in May, our Key Biodiversity Area in Danger [report was published](#) emphasising the international importance of protecting critical habitat on Bruny Island.

Thanks to you, we sent a clear message to decision-makers that Australians will not allow the Swift Parrot to go extinct on our watch.

But it's not over yet.

While we're pleased to see this bill defeated, the fight is far from over. To safeguard the future of Swifties, we must protect all remaining critical habitat, especially breeding habitat.

On behalf of everyone at BirdLife Australia, thank you for your support in making this happen.

Paul Sullivan

Chief Executive Officer#

**Clever Kelly***

Mike Morphett

Birdlife Australia's website attributes the increase in Australian Raven populations in built-up areas to our disposal of garbage. In recent times I've often seen this species in the Bellambi housing estate, vying with Silver Gulls and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos (no White Ibises as yet) in raiding bins and ripping open plastic bags for food scraps. Craig Reucassel could have included such a scenario in his recently aired ABC TV documentary series 'War on Waste'. It's only over the past six months or so that I've observed and heard a pair of ravens on a regular basis in my neighbourhood. Do I infer that Thirroul is at risk of becoming an Untidy Town? In my 38 years of residence here, members of the Artamidae family have been far more common: the Grey Butcherbird, Australian Magpie and Pied Currawong.



Sizing up suitable nestbuilding material



Balancing a branch in its beak before take-off

Mid-morning of 16th June, some activity in my neighbour's jacaranda (much of which overhangs my side of the territorial fence-line) alerted me. A raven was tugging at some thinner branches and soon broke one off. After holding it in its beak about halfway along, it flew eastward out of the tree, landing in the canopy of a tall eucalypt two gardens away, using it as a kind of staging-post, before heading off towards the railway line and out of sight. It twice repeated this process, whilst its mate briefly scoured my neighbour's back lawn. For me, this was a display of a corvid's intelligence: working out which twigs or branches were gettable and suitable for nestbuilding. The breeding season runs from July to October. The fourth and final visit was accompanied by much calling by one bird from the jacaranda and then my other neighbour's back verandah, eventually eliciting a faint reply from its mate down near the railway line, to where it took off, empty-billed. Incidentally, the neighbour has spoken of having the jacaranda felled; we'll have a long wait if he's relying on Raven Tree Care Service to do a free-of-charge demolition job.



Calling to its mate in typical raven-calling pose, but without displaying its throat hackles

[* One of the common names for *Corvus coronoides*, the source of which is unknown.]

A Shore Bird Christmas

I am a little bird who's lost his way'
late from the arctic sea.
I flew quite low, picked up a blow,
and got sent to eternity.
Up there I saw a strange rotund man,
with a burden on his back,
big bushy beard and hearty laugh,
offered me a lift.
With sleigh bells chiming my hopes were climbing
to catch-up with fam-ily.
He said he would take me somewhere far,
I said aah-ha.
With sleigh bells chiming, my hopes were climbing,
to see my fam-ily.
We travelled high thru a big star-lit sky,
till we dropped-in to a south Oz beach.
With sleigh bells chiming, my hopes were climbing to
see my family.
Get off! said Santa,
Why you'll soon see; a present your to be,
for two of yours below.
G' Day! happy Days! cried two shore-birds fine!
That's when I knew my trip was thru,
and with sand beneath my feet,
looked up, and saw:
With sleigh bells chiming ho-ho's still climbing'
my hero on his way.



The White Kookaburras seen recently at the entrance to Killalea State Park. Actually, just outside the entrance. Both busy feeding on supersize worms.

Ralph Stadius



According to J.D. Macdonald in his 'The Illustrated Dictionary of Australian Birds by Common Name', the **Yellow-throated Scrubwren** has gained the common name of **Devil-Bird** on account of its living in "dark places beside mountain streams 'where neither sun nor moon can penetrate'". It has been a particularly popular name in southern Queensland.

That sun and moon reference got me searching: Archibald James (A.J.) Campbell (1853-1929) settled in Victoria from Scotland and became a naturalist, collector, photographer and writer and founded the Bird Observers' Club; he used this description in his observations of this species.

It is to be found in 'Poemes barbares' (Poems on Barbarian races) by the French Parnassian poet, Charles Marie Rene Leconte de Lisle (1818-1984).

Further back still, it appears in 'The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment' by Tibetan Buddhist Tsong-Kha-Pa (1357-1419) under the heading of 'The fault of having no companions'.

This male YTSW has been skulking around our garden, mainly out the back, over the past few days and, so far as I can see, without a companion. It appears to have been attracted by the several red-browed finches in the bird-feeder I relocated from the back verandah to the dark and sheltered west side of the backyard. In all the 37 years of residence, I had never sighted this species here.

Graham Pizzey's 1999 Field Guide describes its habitat as 'gloomy understorey of coastal/mountain rainforests, woodlands, gullies, often near water'. So, I feel privileged in having this bird visit my 'estate' and today gladdened to hear its song. The species makes up for its small size by being accomplished in mimicry.

Its taxonomic nomenclature is *Sericornis citreogularis*, meaning Citrine-throated Silken Bird.

Mike Morphet 28 May 2017

MONTHLY SIGHTINGS:- May - June 2017

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SPECIES	Nº	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	12/06/2017	Thirroul	Hewitt's Crk Estuary	Ian McKinlay
Tawny Frogmouth	2	15/06/2017	Lake Conjola	Casuarina	Charles Dove
White-necked Heron	20	15/06/2017	Milton	Farmland	Charles Dove
Eastern Great Egret	1	23/05/2017	Sandon Point	Grassy Dune	Mike Morphet
Cattle Egret	18	16/05/2017	Bellambi Dunes	Holy Spirit Playing Field	Mike Morphet
Kelp Gull	1	2/06/2017	Woonona	Pool Rock Platform	Ian McKinlay
Straw-necked Ibis	60	15/06/2017	Milton	Farmland	Charles Dove
Black-shouldered Kite	1	5/06/2017	Thirroul	Norfolk Isl. Pine	Ian McKinlay
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	2 imm	2/06/2017	Mollymook	Gumtrees	Charles Dove
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	2 ad	1/06/2017	Ulladulla	Bare tree	Charles Dove
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	05-Jun-17	Rickson's Pass Esc.	O'head	Ian McKinlay
Nankeen Kestrel	1	16/06/2017	Lake Conjola	Powerline	Charles Dove
Nankeen Kestrel	1	17/06/2017	Bulli Showground	Floodlight	Mike Morphet
Sooty Oystercatcher	1	7/06/2017	Wollongong Harbour	Breakwall	Peter McCulloch
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	2/06/2017	Woonona	Pool Rock Platform	Ian McKinlay
Ruddy Turnstone	3	3/06/2017	Woonona	Pool Rock Platform	Ian McKinlay
Double-banded Plover	1	7/06/2017	Ulladulla	Tidal Rock	Charles Dove
Hooded Plover	1	1/06/2017	Mollymook	Tidal Rock	Charles Dove
Hooded Plover	5ad 3 imm	7/06/2017	Ulladulla	Tidal Rock	Charles Dove
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	14/06/2017	Ulladulla	Gumtree	Charles Dove
Galah	13	17-Jun-17	Bulli Bowling Club	Grassy nature strip	Mike Morphet
Long-billed Corella	~100	22/06/2017	Oak Flats	Beer Garden Hotel	Darryl Goldrick
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	13/06/2017	Bellambi Dunes	Forested Park Edge	Ian McKinlay
Powerful Owl	1 heard	14/06/2017	Excelsior Mine Site	Rainforest	Mike Morphet
Barking Owl	1 heard	22/05/2017	Tarrawanna	Escarpment	Alan Cousins
Southern Boobook	1	17/06/2017	Milton	Rainforest	Charles Dove
White-throated Treecreeper	1	11/06/2017	Narrawallee	General Bush	Charles Dove
Green Catbird	1	14/06/2017	Thirroul House	Attacking reflection in window	Mike Morphet
Green Catbird	1	15/05/2017	Thirroul	Robinia shrub in Backyard	Mike Morphet
Variiegated Fairy-wren	Family	13/06/2017	Bellambi Dunes	Forested Park Edge	Ian McKinlay
Southern Emu-wren	Pair	13/06/2017	Bellambi Dunes	Bladdy Grass clearing	Ian McKinlay
Rockwarbler	1	15/06/2017	Porters Creek Dam	open scrub	Charles Dove
Yellow-throated Scrubwren	1	19.28/5/17	Thirroul	Garden	Mike Morphet
White-cheeked Honeyeater	7	11/06/2017	Narrawallee	General Bush	Charles Dove
Golden Whistler	2	21-Jun-17	Thirroul	Garden	Mike Morphet
Grey Shrike-thrush	1	11/06/2017	Narrawallee	General Bush	Charles Dove
Grey Shrike-thrush	1	26/05/2017	Thirroul	Garden	Mike Morphet
Rose Robin	1m	26/05/2017	Thirroul	Garden-first in many yrs	Mike Morphet
Wonga Pigeon	1 heard	10/05/2017	Hyam's Ck, Jamberoo	Rainforest	Betty Hudson
Olive-backed Oriole	1 heard	10/05/2017	Hyam's Ck, Jamberoo	Rainforest	Betty Hudson
Mistletoebird	1	10-May-17	Drualla Rd, Jamberoo	Garden	Betty Hudson
Australasian Bittern	2	11/06/2017	Tallawarra Power Station	Ash Pond reeds	Ralph Stadius

Please remember to forward all your sighting that you think would be appropriate and not necessarily a rare sighting to Darryl Goldrick.

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