

## White-fronted Tern

Scientific Name: *Sterna striata*

Atlas Number: 114

### Description:

The White-fronted Tern has grey back and wings with white everywhere else except a black cap. When in breeding plumage, the black cap extends from the crown down to a line parallel with the bottom of the eye but not all the way to the top of the beak, and down the back of the neck. In non-breeding plumage, the cap does not extend so far leaving the



photo by Charles Dove

forehead white. The tail is grey and deeply forked, extending past the wing tips. In non-breeding plumage, the White-fronted Tern's beak is black as are the legs and feet. In breeding plumage, the legs and feet are a deep red or mottled red and black. The juvenile has strong barring on the wings.

### Similar species:

The Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) is similar when in non-breeding plumage but it is a bit smaller and there is only a small overlap in the ranges of the two species. The Common and Arctic Terns (*Sterna hirundo* and *S. paradisea*) in their non-breeding plumage are also very similar but they have shorter bills and greyer upper parts.

### Distribution:

The White-fronted Tern is distributed along the south-east coast of Australia, and in New Zealand. They can occur as far north as Bribie, Moreton and Stradbroke Islands in Qld, and all around the coast to the Coorong and the south coast of Kangaroo Island in SA. In Tasmania they are widespread from the Furneaux Group down the east coast to Boat Harbour and Cockle Creek. The White-fronted Tern is the most widespread tern in New Zealand.

### Habitat:

The White-fronted Tern occurs in coastal seas and exposed rocky coasts. They can be found also in sandy beaches of sheltered coasts such as bays, harbours, estuaries and lagoons (this is less frequent in Australia than New Zealand).

### Seasonal movements:

Most White-fronted Terns breed in New Zealand and then disperse after the breeding season (October to February), with some migrating to Australia for the winter. The movements of the Terns that breed in Tasmania are not known.

### Feeding:

White-fronted Terns forage mostly on fish on, or just below, the surface of the water, preferring turbulent water in or just beyond the surf zone, or near rocks and reefs. They dive from 6-10 m above the surface and can submerge to about 50 cm.

### Breeding:

White-fronted Terns build their nests in colonies that may contain several hundred or thousand breeding pairs, and frequently in association with other species. Colonies can be on islets, reefs, cliffs, sand dunes and beaches or shingle bars. The nest is usually a scrape in the sand or soil, with no nesting material so the one or two eggs are laid directly on the surface. Both sexes incubate and all the sitting birds will face the same direction - into the wind. It is thought that White-fronted Terns mate for several years and possibly even for life.

Bird species cover 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

### ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.

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# MAY ACTIVITIES

## CLUB MEETING:

**Monday<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm**

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

## **No Meeting due to Camp**

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

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## MIDWEEK WALK

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> at 9.00 am**

Leader - Richard Miller

Sandon (Bulli) Point - McCauley's Beach & Creeks  
Meet at 9am in the Sandon Point car park at the corner of Point Street / Blackall Street. If travelling on Princes Highway turn at the stone church opposite Bulli Showground. Bring a carry morning tea. Toilets are available in the surf club buildings at Sandon Point.

*In the event of inclement weather phone Richard on 02 4267 2274 before 8:30am*

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## MONTHLY OUTING

**No Scheduled walk due to camp**

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## Newsletter:

**DEADLINE 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

For all articles & photos in the next IBOC newsletter PLEASE E-mail contributions:  
To Charles Dove [newsletter@iboc.org.au](mailto:newsletter@iboc.org.au) or post to 3/15 Shepherd Street, Mollymook 2539.  
Ph: 0417 422 302

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## Illawarra Bird Observers Club Reports

**Report of Club Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> April:**

by Ross Gowans

After quite a brisk day, a smallish group of members and one guest were greeted by an even brisker evening.

Once the meeting was underway an early item on the agenda was a presentation of a life membership badge to Betty Hudson. Congratulations once again Betty. The speaker for the evening was Dr Katarina Mikac, Senior Lecturer in Science from UOW, speaking on the subject of Spotted-tail Quolls in the Illawarra. All seemed to find it another piece of the local environment about which we knew very little. There appears to be much for researchers to look into, at this stage they are working to try and establish the numbers and distribution in local areas including Barren Grounds NR.

Some members managed to have some surprises for the speaker with Alan Cousins showing her an article on Quolls in the latest CWA magazine and Charles Dove showing her a picture he had taken of a Quoll in the Porters Creek Dam area.

All in all an informative evening for all.  
Thank you Dr Mikac

## Mid-week walk 12<sup>th</sup> April

### Koonawarra Bay Area

Rupert Jarvis

For once the weather did not frustrate our plans and 11 of us met up at the lakeside at the end of Kanahooka Road. From here a foot / cycle path led us north to Mullet Creek. Over the lake two Caspian Tern were conspicuous and we continued to spot them throughout the morning. Reaching Mullet Creek we encountered a very large flock of Coot. Trying to count them for Jann's bird list brought us face to face with the difficulties of counting a large flock, especially as the more we counted the more arrived. I think we each came up with a different approach to the counting and a consequent different final number. On the other side of the creek was a flock of large and very robust looking goats and in the trees a Striated Heron. The low scrub provided sightings of small birds ....Wrens, Silvereye, New Holland Honeyeaters, Spinebills etc.

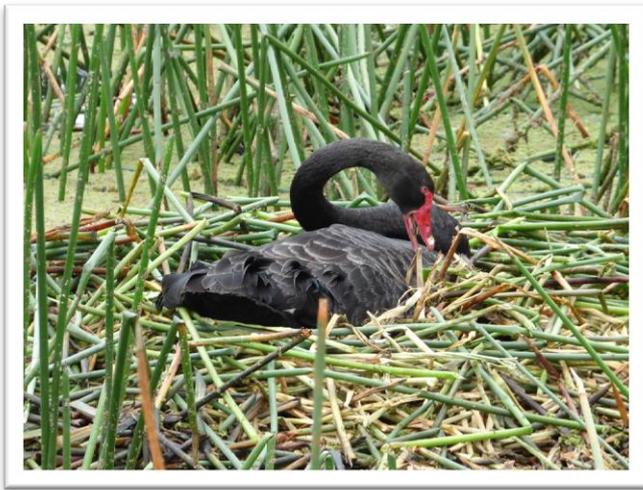
Returning to the cars we drove down to Lakeside Drive for morning tea and then walked along the foreshore track. The tide was quite high so there wasn't much mudflat for waders but we did see Darters, Cormorants, Gulls, Ibis and Little Egret. All of a sudden the weather changed with rain moving towards us across the lake so we returned quickly to the shelter of our morning tea spot. On this stretch we spotted the only raptor for the day, a White tailed Sea Eagle high in the sky.

Official activity at an end most of us headed off to the cafe at Forest Grove where we enjoyed a light lunch and were able to see the Magpie Geese and a Black Swan sitting on eggs. Doesn't it know that winter is coming??

All in all a rewarding morning and it was good to see Anne Cousins out and about again.



front runners of a conga line of Coots nesting Black Swan Forest Grove Lake by Mike Morphet



Nesting Black Swan Forest Grove Lake  
by Mike Morphett



Magpie Geese Forest Grove Lake  
by Mike Morphett

| Bird List for Purrah Bay 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2017 (8:30-9:55) |                   | 11 Members                | 31 Species       |
|--|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Black Swan   | White-faced Heron | Yellow Thornbill          | Willie Wagtail   |
| Chestnut Teal  | Purple Swamphen   | Eastern Spinebill         | Australian Raven |
| Pacific Black Duck   | Dusky Moorhen     | Little Wattlebird         | Magpie-lark      |
| Australasian Darter  | Eurasian Coot     | New Holland Honeyeater    | Silvereye        |
| Little Pied Cormorant  | Masked Lapwing    | Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike | Welcome Swallow  |
| Australian Pelican   | Caspian Tern      | Grey Shrike-thrush        | Common Blackbird |
| Cattle Egret   | Silver Gull       | Australian Magpie         | Red-browed Finch |
| Striated Heron   | Superb Fairy-wren | Grey Fantail              |                  |

| Bird List for Lakeside Park 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2017 (10:00-11:20) |                         | 11 Members       | 28 Species             |
|---|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Black Swan  | Little Black Cormorant  | Masked Lapwing   | New Holland Honeyeater |
| Chestnut Teal   | Australian Pelican      | Caspian Tern     | Australian Magpie      |
| Spotted Dove  | Striated Heron          | Crested Tern     | Willie Wagtail         |
| Crested Pigeon  | Little Egret            | Silver Gull      | Magpie-lark            |
| Australasian Darter   | Australian White Ibis   | Little Corella   | Silvereye              |
| Little Pied Cormorant   | Royal Spoonbill         | Rainbow Lorikeet | Welcome Swallow        |
| Great Cormorant   | White-bellied Sea-Eagle | Noisy Miner      | Common Starling        |

# ARTICLES OF INTEREST

## RAIDERS OF THE LOST PENGUIN POO DISCOVER SPECIES DEVASTATION

James Gorman  
91 reading now

About 7000 years ago, gentoo penguins came to Ardley Island in the South Shetlands chain just off the Antarctic Peninsula.

The island is a little over 1.6km long, almost small enough for a classic castaway cartoon, except that it is the Antarctic. And instead of a lone palm tree, there are now about 5000 breeding pairs of gentoo penguins, one of the largest colonies in the Antarctic, and a lot of guano (penguin excrement), much of which is washed into the freshwater Ardley Lake, where it accumulates in the sediment.

Examination of penguin excrement has helped scientists trace the rise and fall of gentoo penguins.

In that guano, scientists have found the record of a recurring natural historical drama. Three times since the gentoos arrived on Ardley, the colony was devastated by volcanic eruptions. The ash and smoke killed them or drove them away. Penguins gather in colonies to breed, so there may well have been chicks caught in the ash fall even if adults escaped. The landscape the eruptions left



Photo: David Merron Photography

cannot have been hospitable, because each time it took 400 to 800 years for a colony of similar size to re-emerge.

That is the story, reported in *Nature Communications*, that Stephen J Roberts of the British Antarctic Survey, Patrick Monien of Bremen University in Germany and other scientists from Poland, Scotland and England teased out of lake sediments that show, in the rise and fall of guano concentration, the rise and fall of the penguin colony.

Roberts said the team of scientists did not set out to study guano. Rather, their interest was in evidence of historical changes in climate and sea level. But something about the sediment samples drilled from the bottom of Ardley Lake prompted them to take a different approach this time. The samples were a bit ripe.

"When we opened them up they smelt differently," he said.

The team could see the ash from volcanic deposits and penguin bones, and began to compile information on the ash layers, biochemical analysis of the guano and similar samples from a lake whose shores did not have a penguin colony nearby.

They estimated penguin population by the percentage of guano in a sediment sample, figuring 85 grams of guano per day per penguin, and calculating how much of the colony's output would flow into the lake. Using a sample to determine the amount of penguin guano flowing into the lake in a given period of time, they could calculate how big the colony was.

This showed wide fluctuations in the colony's size, with the peaks similar to the current numbers. Overall, they did not find any consistent pattern related to climate or sea level. But three times the population crashed, indicating the near extinction of the colony, coinciding with eruptions from the Deception Island volcano, also in the South Shetlands chain.

The events do not have broad implications for climate studies, Mr Roberts said. But they show one case where local events had a far greater effect on the population than global trends.

Deception Island is an Antarctic landmark and a destination for tourists. The island is the rim of the volcano's caldera. It's a circle in the ocean, with only one entrance to the protected waters inside.

Heat from the volcano makes some spots swimmable, and many passengers on Antarctic cruises bring back a picture of themselves in the waters of the island caldera.

The scientists estimate that three large eruptions of the Deception Island volcano all but wiped out the penguins on Ardley Island - one 5500 to 5400 years ago, one 4500 to 4200 years ago, and the last 3200 to 3000 years ago.

In more recent times, there have been smaller eruptions. The last eruption was in 1970.

New York Times.

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## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA HOLDS WORST EXTINCTION RATE AS NATIVE BIRDS FALL OFF PERCH**

By [Chris McLoughlin](#)

Posted about 2 hours ago

[Photo: Mallee emu wrens are now found only in Victoria's Mallee. \(Supplied: Chris Tzaros\)](#)

[Map: SA](#)

Native bird species in South Australia's national parks are declining at an alarming rate — continuing a decades-long trend.

The South Australian Ornithological Association said data collected by Birds SA showed 15 species no longer found in parks were common 30 years ago.

The decline also indicated the worst extinction rate of birds in any region in Australia.

The gloomy outlook was contained in the association's submission to the State Government's Environment, Resources and Development Committee inquiry into biodiversity.

Its report was tabled in State Parliament yesterday.

Bird species added to the state's extinct list included the zebra finch, brown tree creeper, black-chinned honeyeater and restless flycatcher.

Ecologist Professor David Paton said other species were lost to South Australia in events such as fires in Ngarkat and Billiatt conservation parks.

"Mallee emu wrens were eliminated from SA ... from an extensive fire that could have been put out that wasn't put out," Professor Paton said.

He predicted the loss of bird species would rise even in well-managed environments such as the Mount Lofty Ranges.



"The predication would be probably 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the bird species that used to be found in [that] region will eventually go regionally extinct unless significant amounts of additional habitat are put back."

Planning laws 'are falling short'

Professor Paton estimated that the native habitat would need to treble in area to halt the decline.

[Photo: Zebra finches are on SA's extinct list. \(Wikimedia: Snowmanradio\)](#)

The Environmental Defenders Office told the inquiry local environment and planning laws fell "well short of what was required to reverse current trends in biodiversity decline".

Another submission said state legislation to introduce marine reserves showed governments could take political risks to preserve the environment.

The State Government's own submission to the inquiry said existing laws provided "a strong statutory framework for biodiversity management" but conceded some parts were "cumbersome ... relatively ineffective" and out of date.

## WORTH A LOOK

<http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2017/03/27/cuckoos-and-their-toxic-prey-urticated-inside-and-out/>




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## Global Big Day—13 May 2017

Hi Illawarra Bird Observers Club,

Did you have fun during the Great Backyard Bird Count? Here's a chance to be a part of birding's biggest day—four weeks from now. All you have to do is go birding for at least a few minutes, and submit your sightings to eBird. If you need an excuse to go enjoy birds on a lovely weekend day in May, we've got you covered.

Last year's [Global Big Day](#) featured more than 60% of the world's bird species in a single day. Sightings came in from more than 17,000 eBirders spread across 154 countries. To be a part of Global Big Day, just go eBirding and enter your lists for 13 May like you did for the Great Backyard Bird Count.

If you're looking to get started preparing for this year's Global Big Day, here are three quick ways to have the most fun:

1. **"Scout" your birding spots for May 13.** Finding where the birds are ahead of time makes the big day birding more fun, and also gives you more chances to be out enjoying birds. Perfect. [Learn how to use eBird to find birds.](#)
2. **Use eBird Mobile.** This free data-entry app makes it so you don't have to enter your sightings at the end of the day, and tools like [Quick Entry](#) mean you have less time with your face in a notebook. [Get eBird Mobile here.](#)
3. **Get a friend involved.** Perhaps this is a good birding buddy, or someone who has never been birding before. Make it a friendly competition, or join forces as a Global Big Day team, and put your marker on the [global participation map](#). Share on social media using #eBird\_GBD. Check out the [Facebook event](#).

No matter what you do—have a great time, enjoy the birds around you, and let us know what you find! We're excited to see what we can achieve together on Global Big Day.

Chris, Marshall, Brian, and Ian—for Team eBird

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Dear Members of BIGnet

As representatives of member groups of BIGnet, you are invited to a Workshop on Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) on August 5-6, 2017. This will be hosted by BirdLife Shoalhaven and will be held at St Georges Basin Community Centre in St Georges Basin, which is about 2 hours drive south of Sydney and just off the Princes Highway. At the Workshop on August 5, Golo Maurer, BirdLife Australia Key Biodiversity Area Program Manager, will talk about KBAs – what they are, why are they important, why have we changed from IBAs to KBA, how to complete the annual Health-Check - and Alan Stuart will talk about how to do bird surveys and how to enter the data in Birddata among other speakers. On August 6, we will visit Jervis Bay National Park and do bird surveys to put into practice the learnings.

This is the second workshop held in NSW. Richard Jordan organised a workshop in Urunga near Coffs Harbour in February 2017 for Guardians and surveyors of the KBAs in northern NSW. This was very successful and was attended by about 40 people. We plan to hold a third workshop in early 2018 for the Guardians and surveyors of KBAs in the west and south-west of NSW.

Guardians of KBAs along the coast of NSW have priority for attendance at this workshop. However we will have room for at least 40 people so you might like to encourage members of your club to join the workshop particularly if your club is located along or close to the coast between the Hunter and the Victorian border and your members survey in KBAs in your area. Some of the KBAs are large and cover areas surveyed by members of more than one bird club.

The Workshop is free for participants.

I will circulate a programme for the Workshop in the next few weeks. Meanwhile please consider whether or not you can attend and let me know.

With best wishes

Elisabeth Karplus

[emhodson@exemail.com.au](mailto:emhodson@exemail.com.au)

NSW KBA Co-ordinator

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## **POWERFUL OWL BACK IN THE ILLAWARRA AFTER A FEW YEARS AWAY**

Ben Langford

13 Apr 2017, 5:30 p.m.

Here's looking at you, kid: A powerful owl fixes its gaze.

**They're back:** our largest and most charismatic owl has returned.

After an absence of a few years the powerful owl is back in numbers in the Illawarra, and you may be hearing them making their presence felt, calling out in the night.

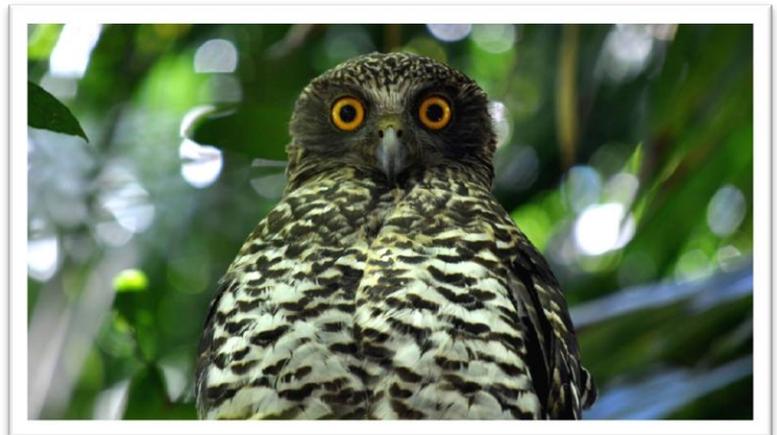
Even if you haven't noticed this emperor of the night, if you live near the bush there's a good chance it has noticed you from one of its sophisticated hides.

"Despite being our largest species of owl, powerful owls aren't always easy to see," said Dr Beth Mott, BirdLife Australia's powerful owl project manager.

"They often hide among the dense foliage, and they nest in large tree hollows, but once you've seen one, they're hard to forget."

But the powerful owl is not invincible, and it listed as a vulnerable species as its numbers decline. Dr Mott is conducting a "citizen science" project to look after these owls, and wants help from you if you have seen or heard a powerful owl.

"These owls are our largest and most charismatic owl, are an important top predator and are a vulnerable species," Dr Mott said.



You talkin' to me: The powerful owl will be making its presence felt in this part of NSW - and even if you can't see them, they may be watching you.

"They are currently back in the Illawarra after a bit of a break for the last few years.

"They are our biggest nocturnal bird and one that many people in the region will probably start to hear more of them at night, as they get noisy over the breeding season just starting."

Powerful owl numbers are declining and it's estimated that around Sydney, 10 per cent of the population is killed each year by cars. But their breeding success is improving.

"Sightings from the public can help us better understand how these magnificent birds are using the urban environment, and how we can keep them around."

Dr Mott will give an information session on the powerful owl on Saturday, April 29, from noon-1pm at the Thirroul Community Centre.

These owls are our largest and most charismatic owl, are an important top predator and are a vulnerable species - Beth Mott

If you've seen a Powerful Owl lately, please contact Dr Mott at [powerfulowl@birdlife.org.au](mailto:powerfulowl@birdlife.org.au) or phone 9647 1875.

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## Birdlife April 2017

### Regents on the loose

Wednesday morning, 50 captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters were released into the box-ironbark forest of the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park in north-eastern Victoria to bolster the wild population. Another 50 will be released in a few days. It's the biggest ever release of the species, and, with fewer than 400 of these Critically Endangered birds surviving in the wild, this latest release will provide a significant boost.

The birds were bred in captivity at Taronga Zoo in Sydney, and now that the birds are free in the wild, their every movement will be monitored by the most intensive monitoring initiative seen for this species.

Each bird has been fitted with individual colour-bands on its legs to allow individual identification, while 50 of the birds are also wearing light-weight radio-transmitters which will allow researchers and a bevy of committed volunteers to follow their every movement.

By following the birds, we can monitor their activities—where they feed, what they feed on, who they breed with and where, and how successful they are—to gain an accurate understanding of what they need to survive.

Such monitoring of previous releases of captive Regent Honeyeaters has provided invaluable data.

"The success of the 150-person strong volunteer monitoring program in Victoria has documented terrific results, including successful breeding of captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters in the wild," said Dean Ingwersen, BirdLife Australia's Regent Honeyeater recovery coordinator.

"The wider community has also been fantastic, with numerous bush and even backyard Regent Honeyeater sightings reported to our national hotline," he continued, saying that one call to the hotline revealed an unexpected result. "We've shown in recent years that our released birds can travel long distances, with one bird from the 2015 release seen late last year in South Gippsland, 270 kilometres from the release site."

If you've seen a Regent Honeyeater with bands on its legs, please call the National Regent Honeyeater Hotline on 1800 621 056.

The Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program is a collaborative affair—the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Team has representatives from BirdLife Australia, Taronga Zoo, governments (both Federal and State) and independent researchers and community groups.

### Please Tell Us!

BirdLife Southern NSW wants to do as much as it can to help native birds and their habitat across Southern NSW, including all regional areas as well as the Sydney region. If you know of an issue that may result in birds or their habitat being harmed, please send an email to [conservation.birdlifensw@gmail.com](mailto:conservation.birdlifensw@gmail.com). We cannot always guarantee to respond immediately and will not be able to resolve every issue, but we will exercise our power within the BirdLife Australia and BirdLife Southern NSW policy frameworks to help with your issue and most importantly, help the birds we love.

### Bird Walks

10 AM, last Sunday of each month.

FREE Guided Bird Walks around the Newington Armory – on the last Sunday of the month, for one hour. Please meet near the bicycle hire, just inside the gates to the Armory, at 10 am.

This fascinating walk around the Newington Armory helps people of all ages to identify and spot birds in their natural habitat. Tours are led by knowledgeable guides who will open up the world of birds for you. The walk is suitable for all ages.

Please call (02) 9647 1033 or email [southernsw@birdlife.org.au](mailto:southernsw@birdlife.org.au) if you require any information. Bookings are not necessary, just meet at the Visitor's Centre inside the gate to the Armory (near the bicycle hire) at 10am

### From the IBOC President – Bill Zealey

How many of us are recording the birds we see and wondering what to do with the records? How many IBOC members wonder where the records from our walks and camps are records, other than in the IBOC newsletter?

The Committee thought it a good idea to organise a talk on bird records, how we archive them and their subsequent use. Coincidentally Birdlife have extended an invitation to organise Birddata workshops.

This year, BirdLife Australia staff are planning a series of presentations and workshops on Birddata - how to use it, and more importantly, why to use it.

The information they take from Birddata underpins our State of Australia's Birds Reports, as well as population and species trend and distribution analyses. These analyses inform threatened species nominations, which in turn influence the government allocation of conservation dollars and resources to those species.

They are keen to get out and about to meet clubs and talk all things Birddata.

This will only work if we have enough interested members....so I will be seeking input from you at our next meeting in June [ remember there is no meeting in May as many of us will not be back from Camp.

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## SOME MORE ITEMS FROM THE IBOC NEWSLETTER COLLECTION

These are taken from 1977 and 1987 Newsletters which exist as scanned images. I have image processed the interesting items and then using Abby Finereader converted the images to Word documents. I've tried to correct any mistranslated words, but some may slip through...my apologies. It adds to the fun.

Bill Zealey

### APRIL MEETING REPORT.

The April meeting was our annual members night and once again showed the varied talents of our members. The evening commenced with Hazel Emery displaying a selection of bird paintings on porcelain. This was followed by a short talk by Richard Jordan outlining the work being carried out at Barren Grounds Bird Observatory on the Ground Parrot. Included was a selection of slides of this rare bird.

Then came a selection of bird slides by Ron Imisides, Richard Fackender, Peter Fackender G Kevin Wood. A change of pace was introduced by Dave Thomson and Jack Hyslop with slides of the 1986 Christmas meeting and Murga camp.

Lindsay Smith's painted leatherwork engravings of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Golden Whistlers and Gang-gang Cockatoos created a great deal of interest. The evening finished with Peg McKinlay showing her tapestry of a pair of beautiful Pink Cockatoos. Thanks to all those who contributed to making the evening "the success it was.

### APRIL 1987 FIELD OUTING REPORT. Badgery's Lookout.

When I arrived at the lookout car park just before 9.00am, I had the place to myself. While waiting, I had a cuppa and noted that the trees overhead had Brown-headed, White-naped, Yellow-faced and White-eared Honeyeaters feeding in them, and I could hear the Bell Miners chiming down in the gorge. After about 20 minutes I was about to give it away when the cars started arriving and before long 22 IBOCS were peering over the edge of the lookout down to the Shoal haven River, a silver thread 600 metres below in the gorge.

We all started down the steep descent towards the sounds of the Bell Miners with Striated Thornbills foraging about and a flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos flying overhead. Soon the sound of the miners were all around us, but it was some minutes before Laurie actually spotted one a little way off, although it sounded as if it was in the trees overhead. After a short rest for morning tea, on the only flattish bit of the track there, we headed off down again and with the track becoming steeper and the river still looking some way off, some decided to stop there for a slow climb back up. It was about this time a male Rose Robin was spotted in the trees alongside the path giving some of us a good view while an Eastern Whipbird was calling down in the gully.

15 of us arrived at the bottom and after lunch with a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles soaring overhead, a few wandered off through the dense casuarinas along the river flats and turned up Brown Thornbills, Yellow Robin, Eastern Spine-bill and a Superb Lyrebird gave a vocal summary of all the birds in the area, a real performer.

We than started on the way back up and if we had thought it was steep going down; it was much worse going back up. The rest stops started to closer together and every log alongside the track was like a Woodswallow perch, with the best sighting of the day being the cars as we staggered over the edge of the car park.

While resting, a tally of the sightings were made and counting the White-winged Choughs and the Common Bronzewing an the roadside just prior to the look-out, 37 species were noted, not bad when most of the time was spent looking down.

Chris Brandis.

**1977 Newsletter** I'm not sure of the providence of this item, but it reminds me somewhat of the magazine *Punch* around the 1920s. While it is fairly long it does reflect on the various types of birders that still exist today.

### ***The Pursuit of Birds***

Here comes along this knickerbockered woman, with binoculars about her neck, prodding the spongy turf with her shooting-stick at every other stride, and I know that she is going to ask me whether I have seen anything interesting. For I too have binoculars about my neck, and my shooting-stick is impossible to conceal. I am neither knickerbockered nor a woman, yet there is a feeling as our paths converge that one is the victim of some kind of grossly distorting mirror. It is possible that she also undergoes the same momentary illusion?

"Seen anything interesting?" she grunts, pausing.

The reply needs careful phrasing. A man may easily be excited by redstarts, if they don't grow on trees in his own part of the country, but he had better not lay himself open by admitting it. This woman probably has them in shoals for breakfast. A curtain of contempt will be drawn; down over her leathery features, seamed and scarred as they are by a thousand hours spent watching Temminck's stints in the teeth of an easterly gale. She is a girl of the marshlands and the sewage farms, that's for sure, and has only strayed to these wooded pastures because of reports of a bee-eater or a pair of hoopoes. It's a fair bet that she has a squacco heron on her life-list.

On the other hand, she could be an eager tyro who would breathe through her nose and cry "*Where? Where?!*" at the mention of long-tailed tits. Or again, grievous possibility, she might be one of those assured ignoramuses who can be told nothing and taught nothing, who draw no distinctions between a marsh tit and a willow tit and assume "pied flycatcher" to be a local misnomer for "spotted." The best plan, as ever, will be to lay no emphasis on *what* one has seen but only on what it was *doing*. I learnt this *vcv* early from a stranger in East Anglia who confessed to me, as he passed by that he had no idea the pectoral sandpiper flew off, when flushed, in quite so snipelike a manner.

"Nothing much." I say to this woman in knickerbockers. "I've been amused by the nuptial antics of a pair of pied flycatchers."

"Jolly little beggars." she agrees. "We had a practically tame one running about our lawn in Essex last winter."

Class 3. or lower. Wrong habitat, wrong district, wrong season, wrong behaviour. The poor lumbering old creature is talking about pied wagtails. The contempt she feels for a man who calls them "flycatchers" flickers across her extraordinary features, swift as a flight of dunlin but not, to me, so delightful. "Ah, well," I say, and we part, each with a word unsaid. Two bird-watchers, bound together by the silken threads of a shared passion, have made their brief salute and gone their ways.

Mr. Robert Mudie, who wrote about birds in the 1830s and from whom I have not quoted in these pages since 1964, thought that "the estrangement of the different ranks of society from each other" since the breaking up of the feudal system—"a state of things which has every day become more and more unwholesome"—could be put right by birdwatching. "The study of nature," he writes, "will bring the different ranks together again, and unite them by a bond far more secure than anything feudal"; and he goes so far as to add that "if all mankind would study nature, all mankind would be brothers." I doubt this myself. Indeed the thought of a nation of birdwatchers—and, for that matter, of botanists and badger-spotters and lepidopterists and snake fanciers—makes my blood run cold. I should say there were just about enough of them around already, and some of them not too brotherly, either.

How many birdwatchers are there, then? Information is lacking. Ornithologists are extremely fond of counting things and have devised many curious expedients for the nationwide enumeration of starlings and little owls and even of wildfowl, which at times scutter about lakes and reservoirs in such mazy multitudes as to bamboozle the keenest computer. But they have not, so far as I know, taken a census of themselves. It would not, of course, be easy. Enumerators, on a given day, would have to be stationed at every Bird Reserve, and Refuge and Field Centre and Research Station and Migration Watch Point and Observatory and Ringing Station in the country—and the enumeration of such localities would itself cover many sheets of foolscap. Simultaneous counts would be necessary at all sewage farms and reservoirs, on marshes and estuaries, bleak foreshores, on islands, moors, cliffs, in larch woods where the crossbill may be bagged, in disused gravel pits beloved by the little ringed plover, and in the high, hyperborean haunts of the dotterel. Reed-beds would have to be combed. Secretive watchers might have to be flushed from hides. Unobtrusive enumerators ought also to penetrate into private gardens, for this strange heterogeneous tribe of ornithologists includes many who scorn to seek out rarities or to time the submersion periods of gannets, believing that the secrets of birdlife may best be plumbed by observing blue tits at the bird table.

Other birdwatchers are at least as mobile as birds. A man looking at roseate terns at Blakeney in the morning may easily be out after stone curlew in the Brecklands before tea, so that some system of trapping and ringing might be advisable, to avoid duplication. There are "list" enthusiasts who try to see a hundred, or it may be a hundred and fifty, species in a day, and who flit from sewage farm to mountain top at a speed that would drive even a trained enumerator of puffins out of his wits. The whole enterprise bristles with difficulties, and I am no longer surprised that it has never, to the best of my belief, been attempted. In any case, the answer, whether it were two hundred thousand or ten million, would not alter my conviction that there are quite enough. Robert Mudie should have been in Richmond Park when the little bittern was there. Friith could have caught the spirit of the occasion.

We have the devil of a job avoiding each other, as it is. And here, to point the argument, comes another of them—bald as a coot and bearded and making enough noise to send every golden oriole in the neighborhood scurrying for cover. If we were in eagle country I should ask him whether he was wise to go about without a hat. Do eagles actually eat tortoises, by the way? There are so many matters of bird lore on which I am ignorant; whereas this blundering ass is probably president of his county society and could pick out a second-year eider drake in eclipse by moonlight at 2,000 yards. For that alone I hate him already. Still, the civilities must be observed.

"Seen anything interesting?" I ask.

"We ell," he says, "I've seen a woman in knickerbockers."

We are brothers.



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## **Name of the Game --**

*By Wal Emery*

Although I wasn't seeking fame  
To be a good Birdo became my aim  
So with past knowledge I'd accumulated,  
I decided to find out how I rated.

When I cried out aloud, I can see a Blue Jay,  
A tubby chap said, "it's going to be a lovely day"  
"Though before we continue with our hike,  
I really must correct you, it's a Cuckoo Shrike."

Now though I am not a learned bloke,  
I was sure I was right when I cried out "Mowpoke",  
But a voice in the group with a bit of a scowl,  
Said "you're wrong you know, it's a Spotted Owl"

Well, we all can be wrong, then I saw in a tree,  
What I knew for a fact was an old PeeWee.  
Another voice from the crowd came like a bark  
"You're wrong again it's a Magpie-lark".

Undaunted I began to glow,  
Pointing skyward I shouted, "There's a Crow",  
Again came a cry with a finger wavin',  
" Surely you can tell an Australian Raven".

Although frustrated, I wouldn't quit,  
Look in that bush, it's gotta be a Tomtit,  
But someone mumbled, "what a dill,  
He can't even pick a Brown Thornbill

Well here I go another try,  
Any fool can tell that's a Buck White Eye.  
Then a lady spoke, and though the tone was sweeter,  
The message came the same, It's a Lewin's Honeyeater.

It was one of those days when you just can't win,  
At this point in time, I should have thrown the towel in,  
But although me eyes were strained and sore, I focused even harder  
And I'm still sure there were feathers on that orange Cicada

The walk has ended, all check your card,  
I thought to myself that won't be hard  
Surprise and joy, "Hey I've got twenty seven",  
Then a pipe smokin' gent said "one hundred and eleven"

Now here's my advise to birdo's new  
Who think they may know a thing or two  
Don't try to name ever species that you see from afar,  
Or you find the group staring at a BIG GALAH!

**MONTHLY SIGHTINGS :- March/April 2017**

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

| SPECIES                      | N <sup>o</sup> | DATE      | LOCATION                       | HABITAT                 | OBSERVER              |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Magpie Goose                 | 2              | 07-04-17  | Forest Grove                   | Village Pond            | Brian & Barbara Hales |
| Australian Wood Duck         | 14             | 02-04-17  | Cradle Way, Bulli              | S/water Detention Basin | Mike Morphett         |
| Eurasian Coot                | 1000+          | 07-04-17  | Forest Grove                   | Village Pond            | Brian & Barbara Hales |
| Hardhead                     | 3              | 07-04-17  | Woonona                        | Pioneer Est Lagoon      | Ian McKinlay          |
| White-headed Pigeon          | 1              | 03-04-17  | Gwynneville                    | Power Pole              | Alan & Anne Cousins   |
| Common Bronzewing            | 9              | 27-03-17  | Sanctuary Point                | Open Forest             | C&J Dove              |
| Tawny Frogmouth              | 1              | 08-04-17  | Primbee                        | Garden                  | Ron Imisides          |
| Striated Heron               | 2              | 08-04-17  | Blue Divers Creek              | Riparian                | Alan & Anne Cousins   |
| Striated Heron               | 2              | 01-04-17  | Lakeside Dr Reserve, Kanahooka | Lake edge+Jetty         | Ian McKinlay          |
| Striated Heron               | 1              | 07-04-17  | Bellambi Surf Club             | Creek                   | Ian McKinlay          |
| Caspian Tern                 | 2              | 01-04-17  | Lakeside Dr Reserve, Kanahooka | Lake shoreline          | Ian McKinlay          |
| Kelp Gull                    | 1              | 07-04-17  | Bellambi Surf Club             | Creek                   | Ian McKinlay          |
| Eastern Osprey               | 1              | 07-04-17  | Burrill lake                   | Power Pole              | Charles Dove          |
| White-bellied Sea-Eagle      | 1              | 17-04-17  | Thirroul                       | O'head                  | Ian McKinlay          |
| Collared Sparrowhawk         | 1              | 30-03-17  | Mollymook                      | Open Forest             | Charles Dove          |
| Swamp Harrier                | 1              | 06-04-17  | Swamp Rd, Jamberoo             | O'head/post roosting    | Kara Eddington        |
| Nankeen Kestrel              | 1              | 29-03-17  | Austinmer                      | Pinecourt Park          | Mike Morphett         |
| Brown Falcon                 | 1              | 11-04-17  | Bellambi                       | O'head on Dunes         | Ian McKinlay          |
| Australian Hobby             | 1              | 06-04-17  | Swamp Rd, Jamberoo             | O'head/post roosting    | Kara Eddington        |
| Peregrine Falcon             | 1              | 06-04-17  | Swamp Rd, Jamberoo             | O'head/post roosting    | Kara Eddington        |
| Sooty Oystercatcher          | 3              | 12-04-17  | Coledale Beach                 | Rock platform           | Mike Morphett         |
| Ruddy Turnstone              | 7              | 10-04-17  | Woonona                        | Rock platform           | Ross & Jann Gowans    |
| Hooded Plover                | 11             | 04-04-17  | Racecourse Bch Ull.            | Tidal Rock              | Charles Dove          |
| Glossy Black-Cockatoo        | 7              | 15-04-17  | Booderee Botanical Gard.       | Casuarina               | Charles Dove          |
| Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo | 7              | 07-04-17  | Freeway Kanahooka              | O'head                  | Brian & Barbara Hales |
| Musk Lorikeet                | 20+            | 28-03-17  | Primbee                        | Garden                  | Ron Imisides          |
| Musk Lorikeet                | lots           | all March | Balgownie                      | Flowering Gums          | Terry Edwell          |
| Musk Lorikeet                | 3              | 03-04-17  | Ulladulla                      | Flowering Gum           | Charles Dove          |
| Swift Parrot                 | 2              | 06-04-17  | Bulli Hospital                 | Flowering Paperbark     | Kara Eddington        |
| Eastern Koel                 | 1 juv          | 17-04-17  | Thirroul                       | Backyard Figtree        | Ian McKinlay          |
| Powerful Owl                 | 1 heard        | 09-04-17  | Balgownie                      | Eucalypt tree           | Terry Edwell          |
| Barking Owl                  | 1 heard        | 06-04-17  | Blackbutt Reserve              | Woodland                | Sandy O'Connor        |
| Southern Boobook             | 1 heard        | 14-04-17  | Tarrawanna                     | Residential             | Alan & Anne Cousins   |
| Azure Kingfisher             | 1              | 02-04-17  | Narrawallee                    | Creek                   | Charles Dove          |
| Satin Bowerbird              | 6              | 02-04-17  | Maccauley's Hill, Thirroul     | Garde lawn              | Ian McKinlay          |
| Superb Fairy-wren            | 3              | 06-04-17  | Thirroul                       | Garden                  | Mike Morphett         |
| Brown Gerygone               | 2              | 06-04-17  | Thirroul                       | Garden                  | Mike Morphett         |
| Noisy Friarbird              | 3              | 28-03-17  | Primbee                        | Garden                  | Ron Imisides          |
| Eastern Whipbird             | 1              | 02-04-17  | Jamberoo                       | Garden                  | Betty Hudson          |
| Varied Sittella              | 10+            | 14-04-17  | King Point lopop track         | Forest                  | Charles Dove          |
| Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike    | 3              | 02-Apr-17 | Bulli Tennis Courts            | O'head                  | Mike Morphett         |
| Crested Shrike-tit           | 3              | 15-04-17  | Booderee Botanical Gard.       | Forest                  | Charles Dove          |
| Australian Figbird           | 12             | 02-04-17  | Maccauley's Hill, Thirroul     | Small leafed Figs       | Ian McKinlay          |
| Pied Currawong               | 4              | 15-04-17  | Lake Illawarra South           | Eucalypt - Yard         | Darryl Goldrick       |
| Rufous Fantail               | 1              | 01-04-17  | Thirroul                       | Garden                  | Mike Morphett         |
| Rufous Fantail               | 1              | 09-04-17  | Burrill lake                   | Lawn                    | Charles Dove          |
| Rufous Fantail               | 1              | 15-04-17  | Thirroul                       | Yard                    | Mike Morphett         |
| Black-faced Monarch          | 1juv           | 30-03-17  | Mollymook                      | Open Forest             | Charles Dove          |
| Scarlet Robin                | 1m             | 15-04-17  | Booderee Botanical Gard.       | Forest                  | Charles Dove          |
| Rose Robin                   | 2 m/f          | 15-04-17  | Booderee Botanical Gard.       | Forest                  | Charles Dove          |
| Eastern Yellow Robin         | 2              | 06-04-17  | Thirroul                       | Garden                  | Mike Morphett         |
| Silvereye                    | 2              | 10-04-17  | Thirroul                       | Garden                  | Mike Morphett         |
| Silvereye                    | 30 Tas.        | 11-04-17  | Mollymook                      | Mixed shrubs            | Charles Dove          |

Keep an eye out for unusual bird sightings around your area and report them to Darryl Goldrick [sightings@iboc.org.au](mailto:sightings@iboc.org.au)



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