

Restless Flycatcher

Scientific Name: *Myiagra inquieta*
 Atlas Number: 728

Description:

The Restless Flycatcher has a glossy blue-black head, with a small crest, and is white below, from the chin to the undertail, with a blue-black bill surrounded by bristles. The back, wings and tail are darker grey and there may be a slight orange brown tint on the breast. Young birds are duller grey black above, with the throat



photo by Terry Edwell

and breast washed orange-brown. The slightly smaller northern Australian sub-species, nana, known as the Paperbark Flycatcher, has a smaller bill and has the glossy blue-black colouring extending further down the back. The Restless Flycatcher is an extremely mobile and active bird and is able to hover while feeding, uttering a grinding call that gives it yet another common name: Scissors Grinder.

Similar species:

The Restless Flycatcher is often found in the same habitats as the similarly sized and patterned Willie Wagtail. However, this species has a white eyebrow, and its black colouring extends down the throat and onto the upper breast; it also has a more rounded, fanned tail which it characteristically 'wags' and it lacks the Restless Flycatcher's head crest.

Distribution:

The Restless Flycatcher is found throughout northern and eastern mainland Australia, as well as in south-western Australia. It is also found in Papua New Guinea. The southern subspecies, inquieta, is found in south-western Australia and from eastern South Australia to Julia Creek and Mount Isa, Queensland. The northern sub-species, nana, is found from the Kimberley region, Western Australia, to Cooktown and Townsville, Queensland. The two subspecies do not seem to mix where their ranges meet in central eastern Queensland.

Habitat:

The Restless Flycatcher is found in open forests and woodlands and is frequently seen in farmland.

Seasonal movements:

South-eastern populations move north during winter.

Feeding:

The Restless Flycatcher feeds on insects, as well as other invertebrates such as spiders and centipedes and usually feeds alone or in pairs. It is able to hover, hanging almost vertically in the air with its head and spread tail pointing downwards as it picks insects off the leaves. It rarely comes to the ground, preferring to 'hawk' for insects from perches in the mid-level of the canopy.

Breeding:

The Restless Flycatcher builds a small cup-shaped nest of bark and grass bound with spider web, camouflaged with pieces of lichen and bark, and placed in an exposed position on a tree branch, often near or over water. Males and females both help to build the nest, incubate the eggs and feed the young. Up to three broods may be raised in one season and the young disperse quickly after fledging.

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

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Founded in 1977

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

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OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

Club Meeting:**Monday 13th**

7.30pm at Fairy Meadow Community Hall, Cnr. of Cambridge Avenue & Princes H'way Fairy Meadow.

Our speaker for October is **Leon Fuller**, the author of *Wollongong's Native Trees* and he will talk about bio-diversity. This subject will have consequences for the future of birds in our region.

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

Midweek Walk:**Wednesday 15th**

Leader Rupert Jarvis

Karoo Bay and Macquarie Rivulet

Meet at 9.00 am at Central Park, Oak Flats (no, not New York)!

From Wollongong via Princes Hwy after leaving Albion Park Rail take the off ramp to Shellharbour Square and onto Lake Entrance Road. At the first roundabout turn left into Pioneer Drive. At the next roundabout go right into Central Ave. Follow this straight through Oak Flats shopping strip. At the end of the road you will find Central Park.

Bring morning tea.

Contact Rupert 0403 932 635 if the weather looks doubtful.

Spring Camp**19.10.14 to 26.10.14**

Leader Betty Hudson

Lake Cargelligo**Committee Meeting -****Monday 20th**

The next IBOC Committee Meeting will be held on Monday 20th October 2014 at 7.30pm at **Lake Cargelligo Caravan Park**

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

Newsletter:

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

Email contributions to Charles Dove newsletter@iboc.org.au or post to 32 Martin Avenue Ulladulla 2539. Ph: 0417 422 302.

IBOC has pleasure in welcoming all our New Members

Nomination Forms for Positions on 2015 Committee

These forms are included in this newsletter to allow time for completed nomination forms to reach the Secretary no later than Monday 3rd November 2014. Completed Nomination Forms should be posted to the club mailbox, P.O. Box 56 Fairy Meadow or handed to the Secretary prior to this date.



CLUB REPORTS

Report for Club Meeting 8th September 2014

Alan Cousins

Not a very good start to the September meeting as our guest speaker unfortunately went down with the dreaded influenza and was unable to attend (Option 1) so I got in touch with the Puffins (Brian & Barbara Hales) as Brian has a good library of bird slides. No worries they said (Option 2), a few hours later, disaster struck again, both of Brian's projectors refused to co-operate, one with a blown bulb and the other 'who knows?' Thoughts and suggestions turned to Charles Dove's DVD (Option 3) so I retrieved one from my case. On arrival at the hall whilst setting up the laptop and projector, Joan Wylie came from the club library with 'The Life of Birds' DVD's which she thought might be a good

(Option 4). Would the equipment co-operate, NO! Suddenly Cara Eddington said that she thought she had a thumb drive of photo's etc. from her trip to Africa (Option 5) and it worked!! We were treated to a splendid 30 minute + presentation of African birds and wild animals such as Elephant, Rhino, Lion, Cheetah, Warthog etc. The birds were many and all with magnificent coloured plumage and Cara named all the species. Many thanks to Cara for stepping in at the last minute. The presentation by Cara was followed by a very funny narrative from Neil McKinlay regarding the antics of four Kookaburras in their yard. More on this subject next month, thank you Neil

Midweek Walk – Barren Grounds Wednesday 10th September

by Charles Dove

An extremely windy morning as we travelled up the coast from Ulladulla for the joint outing with CBOC and IBOC clubs to Barren Grounds. I was hoping it would ease off during the day, but, unfortunately it seemed to increase in strength when we arrived in the carpark. A continued line of arrivals, including a couple of fine birdos from the other clubs swelled the numbers to 30. Even though a few arrived a bit later than they expected, with the weather as it was making things very difficult on the road.

We eventually moved out around 9.40 with a modest bird count from the carpark, now hoping to see the Bristlebird and Beautiful Firetail in the first section of the track, unfortunately a lone New Holland Honeyeater was the only bird braving the winds. We continued on towards Cooks Lookout in a casual sort of jovial mode with lots of conversation being passed around, with eyes peeled into the many bushes alongside the track and every sound being questioned, what was that? The bird list increased slowly as the odd Thornbill or Fairy-wren peered out of the dense foliage. Even the blossoms one would expect to be flowering in heath still had not managed to come out on display as yet. The

wind ended up pulling us up before we managed to reach the lookout so we enjoyed morning tea in somewhat of a wet track from the previous rains over the last week. We set off back along the pathway to the car park for lunch, with the wind now pushing us along at a quickened pace, a few missed the appearance of a number of Beautiful Firetail about half way along. Having a long lunch with many stories being passed around, a few of us ventured to the nearby service track in search of the elusive Bristlebird and Emu-wren only to be confronted by the Mountain Copperhead snake which resulted in a hasty retreat back to the luncheon area. All in all it did turn out to be a very enjoyable day with all the great company.



PS: On the way home and stopping at Jamberoo a phone call came through from Stan and a few others who stayed on at the car park letting us know the Gang-gang Cockatoos had just arrived.

Barren Grounds Bird List		10/09/2014	30 attendees
Brown Goshawk	White-throated Treecreeper	New Holland Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Southern Emu-wren	White-naped Honeyeater	Silveryeye
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Eastern Bristlebird	Eastern Whipbird	Welcome Swallow
Australian King-Parrot	Brown Thornbill	Golden Whistler	Beautiful Firetail
Crimson Rosella	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Shrike-thrush	European Goldfinch
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Spinebill	Pied Currawong	
Superb Lyrebird	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Fantail	

**Monthly Outing – Sunday 16th September:
Yalwal Walk**

by Elizabeth Hudson

On a fine morning 13 members met at the entrance to Bamarang Reservoir, West Nowra and were rewarded with a number of water birds as well as bush birds in the surrounding forest. We then drove on down a steep hill over Bamarang creek and then took a left turn onto a gravel road. This road went steeply uphill and generated a lot of dust, while passing through dry forest. Reaching a plateau we continued for some considerable distance through an area which had been burnt until we reached some moister forest where a stop was planned for the afternoon. Shortly after this the road narrowed, turned sharply to the right through a gap in the rocks before descending steeply down a narrow track cut into the hillside. Luckily there were no oncoming vehicles at this point. A long descent took us down into rain forest past a Morton National Park picnic area, then across the large creek into Yalwal Reserve. Here we climbed up a sharp hill to the 1st campground for a stop for bird watching and morning tea. The water was spilling down the rocks from Danjera Dam (part of Nowra’s water supply) like a beautiful waterfall. A walk along the service track beside the spillway gave us a Superb Lyrebird, & Superb Fairy-wren among others. We then drove further up the main track to the top of the ridge where we stopped in a forest of Acacia regrowth with a grassy understorey. Birds had to be

sought in the forest away from the noise of the motorbikes on the track. But were varied once found. A walk further down the track towards the old mine site added to the list. Some members walked up the paddock to the historic cemetery. Lunch was a welcome stop in the shade of the trees as the bikes had gone and all was peaceful. After a leisurely lunch some members returned home while the others drove back down the hill and took a turning to the old picnic area, now a campsite, beside the lake. This gave us a number of new birds that appreciated the closeness of the water. Having decided that we would return to Bamarang Reservoir to see if any more water birds were evident we negotiated the road out. Now being at the back of the cars I appreciated the amount of dust we generated. At Bamarang only two Black Swans were added to the list. Most members then decided to stop at Flat Rock Dam to see if the Tufted Honeyeaters were there, and were rewarded with a perfect picture opportunity – a bird close and full in the sunshine in the open – but alas no camera. A fine end to a good days birding. My thanks to all who came as a number of members had just returned from long trips away. This is a place that would most likely reward a mid-week visit at a different season – but not in the summer as it can be very hot then.



Bamarang Reservoir Bird List				20 species
Australian Wood Duck	Great Cormorant	Brown Thornbill	Red Wattlebird	
Black Swan	Little Black Cormorant	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Shrike-thrush	
Australasian Grebe	Eurasian Coot	Eastern Spinebill	Grey Butcherbird	
Great Crested Grebe	Masked Lapwing	Lewin’s Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	
Little Pied Cormorant	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Raven	
Bird List for morning tea stop at 1st camping area Yalwal				7 Species
Superb Lyrebird	Eastern Spinebill	Golden Whistler	Pied Currawong	
Superb Fairy-wren	White-eared Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush		
Bird List for Main Ridge area with Acacia regrowth forest Yalwal				20 species
Australian King Parrot	Brown Thornbill	Grey Shrike-thrush	Australian Raven	
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Lewin’s Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole	White-winged Chough	
Laughing Kookaburra	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	Jacky Winter	
White-browed Scrubwren	Bell Miner	Grey Fantail	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Yellow Thornbill	Eastern Whipbird	Willie Wagtail	Welcome Swallow	
Bird List for camping area beside Danjera Dam Yalwal				15 species
Australian Wood Duck	Eurasian Coot	Striated Thornbill	Australian Magpie	
White-faced Heron	Laughing Kookaburra	Lewin’s Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	
Australian Hobby	Superb Fairy-wren	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail	
Purple Swamphen	Yellow Thornbill	Eastern Whipbird		
Total Species for the Day 44				
Bird List for Flatrock – extra stopover				16 species
Hoary-headed Grebe	Eurasian Coot	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Australian Raven	
Chestnut teal	Crimson Rosella	Red Wattlebird	Magpie-lark	
Pacific Black Duck	Superb Fairy-wren	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Australian Reed-Warbler	
Little Black Cormorant	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Magpie	Welcome Swallow	

Bush Walk for Children- Sunday 21.9.14

Sylvia Garlick.

On a lovely sunny morning Stella, Erin, Alana and Bryn accompanied by their Mum or both parents came along for the walk in Integral Park Dapto. Lots of birds were seen including Red-browed Finches, Rainbow Lorikeets, Noisy Miners, Galah's Eastern Spinebill, Grey Fantail, Variegated Fairy-wrens, Superb Fairy-wrens European Goldfinch, Lewin's and New Holland Honeyeaters, Eastern Whipbird, Eastern Yellow Robin, Australian Magpie, Spotted Pardalote, Little Wattle Bird, Willie Wagtail.

A flock of approximately 15 Chestnut-breasted Manikins sat in a dead shrub and we all had a great sighting. A Fan-tailed Cuckoo was heard. They all enjoyed the walk and morning tea and would like to come along to the next outing early 2015. Also seen on the road on the way out of the park an Eastern Great Egret
Thank you to Betty, Anne, Alan and David for leading the walk.

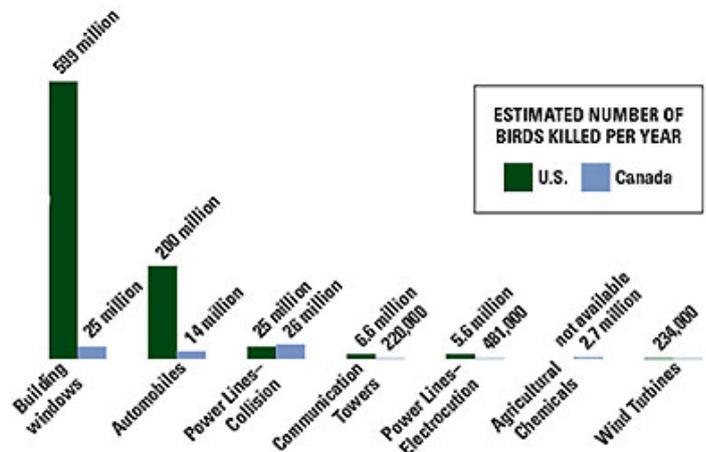
ARTICLES OF INTEREST

BIRD LOSS

Habitat loss is by far the greatest cause of bird population declines. Humans also kill billions of birds throughout the world annually through more direct actions, such as allowing outdoor cats to prey upon birds. Data-driven assessments of how different human-caused sources of bird mortality contribute to population declines are essential for developing strategic conservation objectives and science-based policies.

Reducing or eliminating direct sources of mortality could save millions, if not billions, of birds annually. The best ways to reduce bird mortality include:

- **Cats:** Keeping pet cats indoors and implementing policies to eliminate feral cat colonies.
- **Collisions:** Following bird-friendly window practices, reducing night lighting in and on tall buildings, warning auto drivers in high collision areas, installing flashing rather than steady-burning lights on communication towers, and locating wind turbines away from areas of high bird concentrations (especially areas that pose threats to particular species such as Eagles).
- **Chemicals:** Limiting the broadcast spraying of pesticides and insecticides and introducing integrated pest management practices (which reduce or eliminate chemical applications) in agricultural areas.



Bar chart based on independent assessments of direct human-caused mortality in the United States and Canada. This data is adapted from Loss SR, Will T, Marra PP. Direct human-caused mortality of birds. Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics In prep.

Flying Birds Introduction

When birds fly in cluttered environments, they must tailor their flight to the gaps that they traverse. We trained budgerigars, *Melopsittacus undulatus*, to fly through a vertically oriented gap of variable width, to investigate their ability to perform evasive manoeuvres during passage.

Results

When the gap was wider than their wingspan, the birds passed through it without interrupting their flight. When traversing narrower gaps, however, the birds interrupted their normal flight by raising their wings or tucking them against the body, to prevent contact with the flanking panels. Our results suggest that the birds are capable of estimating the width of the gap in relation to their wingspan with high precision: a mere 6% reduction in gap width causes a complete transition from normal flight to interrupted flight. Furthermore, birds with shorter wingspans display this transition at narrower gap widths.

Conclusion

We conclude from our experiments that the birds are highly aware of their individual body size and use precise, anticipatory, visually based judgements to control their flight in complex environments.

author: Ingo Schiffner.

Bathing Birds Survey .

We were blown away by the response to this gorgeous project. Close to 2000 people registered to take part and we had over 40000 individual sightings of birds at bird baths over the month – that's a lot of birds! Participants came from all over the country, with both Grainne Cleary from NPA and myself doing interviews in Perth, Broken Hill, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and beyond.

We are still analyzing all of the fantastic data entered but here are some early statistics for you all. The top 10 species seen were:

Some expected ones in there but some surprises as well!

There are some unusual observations coming out and no doubt we are going to be able to make some recommendations on the types of baths that different birds try to use. Early indications include:

Species	Proportion of surveys seen
1 Rainbow Lorikeet	7.2%
2 Noisy Miner	6.6%
3 Pied Currawong	4.1%
4 Australian Magpie	3.8%
5 Crimson Rosella	3.4%
6 Eastern Spinebill	3.3%
7 Satin Bowerbird and Lewin's Honeyeater	2.9%
8 House Sparrow	2.7%
9 Spotted Dove, New Holland Honeyeater and Red Wattlebird	2.5%
10 Magpie Lark	2.4%

Rainbow Lorikeets and Noisy Miners are in the lead across bath types, however they were not in the top 10 birds using ponds. Willie Wagtails, White-cheeked Honeyeaters, Brown Honeyeaters and Spangled Drongos were recorded at hanging baths/saucers, while Crested Pigeons and Brown Thornbills were recorded at pots and saucers on the ground. Interestingly, none of these were in the top 10 birds using other bath types.

I will keep you all updated as we find out more (and also check out www.bathingbirds.com.au). And don't forget – its not too late to join in. We are going to be running Bathing Birds in summer (January 2015) so if you have a bird bath, please take part! A big thank you to all of you who did take part this round – we are so thankful for your efforts.

Dr Grainne Cleary, Citizen Science Ecologist for National Parks Association of NSW In partnership with

Dr Holly Parsons, Birds in Backyards Program Manager for BirdLife Australia

Dr Adrian Davis, Honorary Associate at the University of Sydney

Complex social lives gave parrots big brains

By Virginia Morell 17 September 2014

Living in a complex social world—one with shifting alliances and competitors—is often cited as the key reason humans, dolphins, and spotted hyenas evolved large brains. Now, researchers say that **social complexity also underlies the braininess of parrots**, which have big brains relative to their body size. To understand the social lives of these birds, the scientists observed wild populations of monk parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*), a small parrot, in Argentina and captive ones in Florida. They recorded how often the birds were seen with other individuals and how they interacted—and then analyzed the parakeets' social networks. The birds, the researchers report online today in *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*, prefer to spend time with one specific individual, usually their mate. In the captive populations, the birds also had strong associations with one or two other individuals, numerous more moderate relationships, and only a few that were weak. The scientists also recorded aggressive interactions among the captive birds, revealing that Monk Parakeets have a dominance hierarchy based on which birds won or lost confrontations. Thus, the Parakeets' society has layers of relationships, similar to those documented in other big-brained animals. Living in such a society requires that the birds recognize and remember others, and whether they are friend or foe—mental tasks that are thought to be linked to the evolution of significant cognitive skills.



Explore Hidden Aviaries during Taronga's Bird Festival

MEDIA RELEASE 1/09/2014

Taronga will be hosting a celebration of all things feathered on land, in the air and in the water in its inaugural Taronga Bird Festival from September 29 – October 31.

There's something for twitchers, as bird watchers are known, of all ages with a range of daily bird talks, bird tours and bird-themed activities at Taronga Zoo, and special events such as lecture nights and art shows hosted by supporters outside the Zoo.

Taronga has an array of aviaries that are home to hundreds of colourful bird species just waiting to be discovered by keen young twitchers during the upcoming Twitchathon.

Daily free presentations including a Cassowary Talk, Penguin Talk and a Pelican talk. Tours and activities will include a guided bird walk and a rainforest bird walk, bird-themed touch tables, and a bird-attracting plant display.

Curator, Nick Atchinson, said "The Taronga Bird Festival is a celebration of birds and all the wonderful ways that they influence our lives.

"Birds have been cultural symbols since the earliest civilisations. Still today they represent countless sports teams and corporations as mascots and logos.

"Even the smallest, plainest birds can possess the most extraordinary personalities. Once people engage with birds they develop a fascination that just grows and grows," said Nick.

Taronga supports the Regent Honeyeater National Recovery Plan which has seen the successful breeding and release of over 70 birds at Taronga which have been released into the wild. Regent Honeyeaters are critically endangered with estimates of only 500 to 1500 birds left in the wild.

In partnership with the Taronga Bird Festival there will be a bird-themed movie night at the Orpheum Cinema, a Lecture at the Australian Museum and Landside Gallery will be hosting a Bird Art Exhibition.



More details about the Bird festival including timetables and external events are available here: <http://taronga.org.au/bird-festival>

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Feather Tales



Red-browed Finches. At one time yesterday we had between 35 & 40 red-browed finches on our back verandah, jostling for seed. A delightful scene. This species has made a daily appearance for several months now, triggered off by just one pair. Obviously word has gotten around the local red-brow community: Hey, there's good, easy tucker to be had round at number 15! Just pop round the back.

Mike Morphett



Past 2 days we've had 7 topknots circling round our immediate neighbourhood & late this arvo (13/9) this pair spent a few minutes atop our casuarina. Their head profile makes them look real crazy, reminiscent of the mullet of Jason Gillespie, successful as a former Aussie fast bowler and now as coach of Yorkshire Cricket Club. Taxonomists could change the nomenclature of this species to *Lopholaimus jasoni gillespiensis*.

Mike Morphett

Mylestom again. Lots of birds about. On our last day saw a pair of Bazzas but couldn't get a very good photo. The Regent bowerbird proved hard to capture too. Saw him several times but too fast for me.
Judy Baker



Black Shouldered Kite



Regent Bowerbird

Bill and Joan Zealey still travelling

We spent a great few day at the Broome Bird Observatory, until chased out by a bushfire - which didn't reach the Observatory but was only 15Km down the road. We saw most of the waders that we are familiar with in the Illawarra, and a few, Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Wood and Marsh Sandpipers which we haven't seen since the UK. In addition we saw several waders we've never seen before - Terek's and Broad-billed Sandpipers, Long-toed Stint, and an Asian Dowitcher which refused to take its long bill out from under its wing and give us a good view. In addition we've seen several mangrove birds, Mangrove and Dusky Gerygone, Mangrove Grey Fantail, Red-headed Honeyeater, White-breasted Whistler and Collared Kingfisher. North Western Australia is also a land of finches-Crimson and Longtailed in Kunnanurra, Painted and Zebra at the Bungle Bungles, Star at Mt Tom Price.



Mixed waders from Broome



Chiming Wedgebill



Thick-billed Grasswren

As we've come south we seen more birds of sandy scrub areas, including Chiming Wedgebill, Southern Whiteface , a great view of three Thick-billed Grass-wrens at Monkey Mia, and on the cliffs south of Geraldton, six Crimson Chats. Depending on whether you count Red-collared and Rainbow Lorikeets and or the western and eastern Little Wattle Birds as one species or two, our 400th bird for the year is a White Cheeked Honeyeater or a White-backed Swallow or a Carnaby's Black Cockatoo.

Regards. Joan and Bill.

Can snakes hear: "Short answer: Yes. Although snakes lack an external ear or ear drum, their skin and bones pick up vibrations and transmit them to a functional inner ear. It was once believed that snakes could only detect vibrations transmitted through the ground, but is now known that they can indeed pick up even airborne sounds this way. "

"How well do snakes hear? Snakes don't actually have external ears - they pick up sound by picking up vibrations from there tongue and there body."

Do snakes have good eyesight?

NO THEY DONT BUT THEY HAVE PITS THAT CAN SENSE THE HEAT IN AN ORGANISM no they have very *poor eye sight* but **they can see heat waves.**

Snake Season has started so caution in the bush please

Courtesy of Peter Butler

The Attack of the Kookaburras

Pam & Neil V Gang of 4

Day 1. Returned home Saturday afternoon and found a light plastic rectangle on the concrete driveway near our letterbox. We did not recognise what the plastic bit was so after a time it was put in the bin.

Day 4 Early Tuesday heard a rattling noise in the cupboard above the stove. This cupboard contains the range hood exhaust duct which rises from the stove hood and then turns horizontal and exits through a brick veneer wall about 300mm below the eave about 4 m above the driveway. The grill on the face of the brickwork is a 4 blade louvre that is blown open by the airflow created by the exhaust fan and then closes due to self-weight when the exhaust fan is switched off. Went outside to see if anything was visible from the outside. Immediately found another rectangular plastic item same as the finding on Day 1. It was one of the louvre blades. At the exhaust grill, with 2 blades missing there were Kookaburra tail feathers protruding from the opening. There was audible scratching coming from the duct. The first impression was that the bird had poked its head into the duct and become stuck. I thought I was going to have to get the ladder and climb up and pulled a frightened Kookaburra out by grabbing its tail feathers. I was a bit concerned for my safety at the thought of climbing up about 3m and then grabbing the back-end of a frightened bird, knowing there was a strong beak at the other end. By the time I had the ladder in position the bird had backed out and flown away. Almost immediately another bird arrived and did the same thing. We threw a tennis ball up that hit the wall near it, but the birds seemed intent on pecking out whatever it was that they wanted to modify in the duct. I climbed up after the birds had left and looked into the duct. It was made from wire reinforced silver insulation sheeting and it had a few small holes pecked in it. It was approx. 180mm diameter Pam tweeted that our house was under attack. We tried taping a sheet of Glossy Paper across the opening to see if that would put them off. Tape and paper no match for a kookaburra beak. We needed to catch a train so there was no time for elaborate defense construction so I stuffed 2 old shirts into the duct, that will stop them. They came back and had a close look at my shirts but then the birds flew away. Problem solved in the short term. We arrived home at about 5 pm, no sign of the kookas but my old shirts were lying on the driveway, so they must have been working at dragging the shirts out during the day. I rolled the shirts together into a long sausage and slid them back into the duct as a block as that would make it more difficult to get them out.



Day 5 Wednesday the gang was back working away at the shirts. The shirts had been tugged out a bit but the intertwined sausage of shirts had slowed the birds down. They would arrive and have a "working bee" and then disappear for a hour or two. Some who responded to Pam's tweets suggested we build an alternative nest box. They attached plans of a kookaburra nest box. So I made one and mounted it nearby but only about 1.5m off the ground. The nest box was not as per plan, but it incorporated the features that are important to the birds. I made it from a large plastic box on its side (550 long x350 high x300 mm) and lined floor and back wall with some off-cuts of an old hardwood plank. I cut a sheet of plywood for the front of the box and cut a 130x150 mm hole for the entrance. Using the plastic box allowed me to get it done quickly.

Day 6 Thursday no action at the box. There was occasional action at the exhaust duct as the birds worked at trying to get shirts out of the duct. They had managed to move the shirt sausage about 150mm so they were making progress slowly but they were still blocked

Day 7 Friday I trimmed some branches around the box, trying to make sure it was visible to the birds and that they had a clear glide path to the box.

Day 8 Saturday No action at the box. Still occasional attacks at the shirts blocking the exhaust duct. Early in the afternoon I decided to move the box onto our back deck so the box would be at a similar height to the exhaust duct opening and also facing east like the exhaust duct. I positioned a 1.8 m aluminium step ladder on the deck and fixed it to the handrail for stability. A plywood plate was bolted to the top platform and the box was screwed to the plywood. Within an hour of the nest box appearing on the back deck the birds were there. One at a time each bird flew to box and disappeared inside and reappeared at the entrance after a few seconds and then flew back to the nearby tree. There was a bit of discussion and the individual inspections were repeated several times. Then a dispute erupted. It seemed that 2 of the 4 were given their marching orders. The birds disappeared but individuals came back a few times during the afternoon and did further inspections into the box.

Day 9 Sunday The nest box plan made no mention of nesting material. Thinking about kookaburras in natural tree hollows they have rotting crumbling wood from the sides of the hollow to use as nesting material. In our box there was solid timber. So I thought I would strip a handful of paper bark from one of our trees and put it into the box. When the birds returned most of the paper bark was moved to the box entrance and a few pieces were dropped onto our deck, but there were still a few pieces still in the box. We could see kookaburras perched on TV aerials of adjoining houses up to 60 m away. From their vantage points they could see the box. There was a fair amount of group laughing going on. Then we were seeing one bird sitting in the tree adjacent to the box and the deck. The bird would sit for up to an hour?. Other birds of the group were on the TV aerials and would occasionally come into the tree and there were a few brief visits to the box. It looked to us like they were keeping watch over the nest box but perhaps they were not fully committed to it. We were also seeing occasional attempts to move the shirt block at the exhaust vent.

Day 10 Monday More paper bark pushed out of the box. We watched 2 birds chortling to each other in the tree adjacent to the box, followed by a flight to the box and I think both birds may have been briefly in the box together. Later in the day I watched one bird sitting on a prominent high perch above our garage, a 2nd bird flew to the perch and a fight erupted. Both birds fell 3 m from the perch and hit

the garage roof and continued to struggle with each other and then fell a further 3 m to the concrete driveway. They remained locked together (beak to beak) for 1-2 minutes and then flew off.

Day 11 Tuesday Bird on watch in tree near box, a 2nd bird arrives and perches beside it, it appears that a morsel is passed to the sitting bird. Shortly after the sitting bird flies to the box and is briefly in the box and then flies to another close-by perch and sits. Both birds sit for 10 minutes or so then one fly off and the other follows. I had the chance to study both birds on separate perches. The only definite difference I can see is that one bird has an uneven white band on the tip of its tail. No birds about for some time. I looked into the box through the opening. There is still some paper bark in there, enough to prevent me from seeing if there are any eggs at the back. One bird arrives back in the tree at about 1.30 pm sits for 10 minutes and then flies to the box, inside for about 15 seconds and then flies back to the tree and sits for a further 10 minutes. This bird has an even white band at the tip of its tail. Saw one bird fly to the exhaust duct opening and have a tug at the shirts that are now hanging out of the duct by about 600 mm out of the duct. Birds were still sitting on TV aerial 60 m away at 5.30 pm close to sunset.

Day 12 Wednesday Birds on surrounding TV aerials around 7.30 am but disappeared shortly after. No guard bird in tree. Around 9.15 one bird in tree and then a 2nd bird arrived at garage perch with what looked like a legless lizard firmly gripped in beak. Sat for a while but then moved off to TV aerial. No attempt to eat lizard, possibly a gift. No observable activity during middle of the day. When I arrived home at about 5 pm there were birds on the TV aerials and a bird arrived at the tree and may have flown to the box. At about 5.30 I saw a bird fly to the top of the box. I saw a bird make a tug at the shirts in the exhaust duct. Birds had departed by about 6 pm. When it was dark I got my red light torch and peered into box. It was empty

Day 13 Thursday At 7.15 am there were birds on the TV aerials but disappeared by about 7.30. No activity at the box or tree. One bird on the closest TV aerial at 9am. It stayed there for about 45 minutes. No sign of the birds through middle of day. Looks to me that they have another nest site elsewhere. At about 4pm the birds arrived on the nearby aerials and two came to the tree. One bird went in and out of the box 3 or 4 times that I saw and was staying in the box much longer than previously observed, ie: now staying in for a couple of minutes. There was some chortling between birds in the tree. I saw a very quick copulation or at least an attempt at copulation. At dusk there was one bird on the nearest TV aerial and one in the tree. The next time I looked there was only the bird on the aerial. I don't know if the other is in the box or has gone elsewhere. I have not used a torch tonight to check the box as I hope there is a bird inside.

Day 14 Friday One bird on the TV aerial 60m away at about 6.45. Three birds gathered on same aerial just before 8.00, 2 departed 1 remained. Bird on garage perch (9 m from box) at 9.00 but then flew back to TV aerial. No indication of a bird in the box, we just hope that is what is happening. King Parrots still visiting the deck.

Day 15 Saturday some activity near the box and in the tree early. 3 birds in tree and flying to the box during afternoon while Pam was sitting on the deck. Saw one bird have a tug at the shirts blocking the exhaust duct.

Day 16 Sunday Saw all 4 birds at once this morning. Had not seen that for about 10 days. 3 birds in tree and one on nearest aerial. This afternoon we watched a Kooka having multiple dips in our swimming pool. The bird would hit the water about 2m out from the wall and then "swim" for about a metre towards the wall and then flap its wings hard and struggle to get onto the pavers at the pool edge. It was making quite a splash. Peered into the box tonight with a red light torch, sadly there was no bird nesting in there, so either it has been a false alarm right from the start, or the birds are still getting themselves organised.

Day 17 Monday No sign of any kookas this morning, 7 to 8 am. Birds on near by aerials in sight of box 10-11am. Bird in tree near box at dusk. Had been sitting patiently for about an hour.

Day 18 Tuesday Bird in tree at 8am. At 9am bird arrived in tree and made a couple of quick visits to box but did not stay long. A 2nd bird on the aerial about 60 m away sitting and watching. Perhaps these birds are too young to breed and are just play acting. Birds around in late afternoon with occasional quick visits to box.

Day 19 Wednesday 3 birds around at about 7.30am. No birds since early, no birds at midday. Bird in tree adjacent nest box at 2pm. Two birds in tree at 5.30 pm one sat for about 15 minutes then flew off.

Day 20 Thursday no birds around 7-8 am. Bird on aerial 60 m away around 9am. Removed the shirts blocking the louvre duct. Note that the birds had managed to pull the shirts such there was only about 1/3 still in the duct. Made up a wire guard and installed it over exhaust vent. Replaced the louvre blades. The birds must have been watching because it did not take long for them long to be back inspecting the wire guard to see if they could get it off the wall. Birds in the tree at dusk but departed. Checked box after dark, it was empty

Day 21 Friday Birds on aerials about 8 am and then saw a 4 of the gang together about 9 am. Mid morning birds flying to the wire guard and trying to pull it off. Two birds in tree and multiple flights back and forth to the box but only spending short time in the box (10-15 sec). Late afternoon birds on aerials and one in tree near the box. Birds gone at dark.

Day 22 Saturday No birds seen today

Day 23 Sunday One bird seen two houses away.

Day 24 and beyond I suspect that they have found a nest hole somewhere else. Once they discovered the entry to the exhaust fan vent was definitely blocked they left our yard.

N.B. This week while I was getting a haircut I told the hairdresser about our kookaburras. The woman next to me told me that they had a similar problem several years ago with an unknown bird pair. The young were abandoned by the parents and subsequently died and were discovered due to the smell by the human occupants. Then the bird lice started coming down the wall.....

4 photos from my time in Western Australia.
I had a great time there and on Christmas Island.

Elizabeth Hudson.

Pics

Rufous Treecreeper -right

White-breasted Robin - bottom left

White-browed Scrubwren – bottom centre

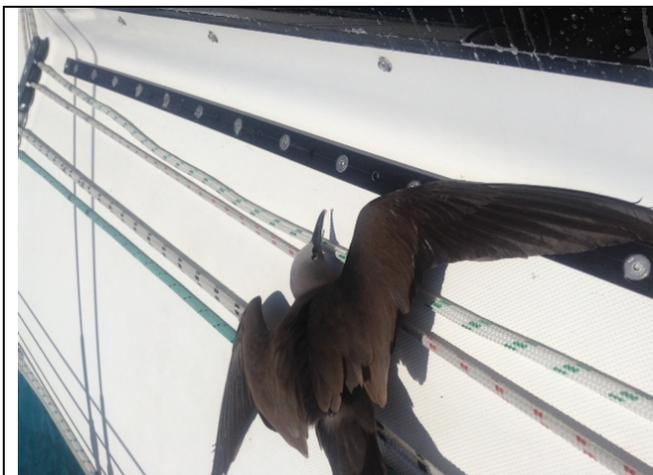
Red-winged Fairy-wren – Bottom Right



Lately we've had up to 3 Brown Cuckoo-doves visiting the seed bowl on our back verandah, often sparring with a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets.

One in particular has been the most frequent visitor and between feeds often rests on top of the lattice side. With the recent topsy-turvy weather and temperatures it made the most of yesterday's bright sunshine. Today I was privileged to have it feed from my hand. Also known as the Pheasant Pigeon, this species, according to my 1979 edition of the Reader's Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds, was shot more than any other coastal pigeon and not by a camera.

Mike Morphett



QLD Boat trip

This Noddy dropped in to say hello when we were anchored off Green Island. We think it was not well. We sprinkled some water on it and then persuaded it to leave.

This morning we had to clean bird shit off the windows. I think we must have had a Booby on the spreader last night.

Neil McKinlay

MONTHLY SIGHTINGS: August/September 2014

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

SPECIES	NUMBER	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Topknot Pigeon	7	11/09/2014	Thirroul	Trees/residential	Mike Morphett
Topknot Pigeon	20+	16/09/2014	Thirroul	O'head	Richard Miller
Tawny Frogmouth	1	1/09/2014	Lake Conjola	Casuarina	Charles Dove
White-necked heron	3	6-8/9/14	Balgownie	Playing Field	John Cashman
White-necked Heron	1	4/09/2014	Jamberoo Mountain	Rural	Anne-Alan Cousins
Black-shouldered Kite	1	15/09/2014	Russell Vale	Hovering	Mike Morphett
Square-tailed Kite	1	4/09/2014	Ulladulla	overhead	Charles Dove
Brown Goshawk	1	1/09/2014	Thirroul	Garden	Mike Morphett
Nankeen Kestrel	1	16/09/2014	Woonona	Campbell St -houses	Mike Morphett
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	1	3/09/2014	Huskisson	Beach	Sheila Emery
Sooty Oystercatcher	9	3/09/2014	Huskisson	Beach	Sheila Emery
Sooty Oystercatcher	18	16/09/2014	Ulladulla	Tidal Rocks	Charles Dove
Masked Lapwing	1ad + 4 chicks	10/09/2014	Bellambi	Chounding Cres Park	Mike Morphett
Masked Lapwing	1ad + 1 chic	11/09/2014	Woonona	Collins Park	Mike Morphett
Long-billed Corella	25	25/01/1900	Lake Illawarra South	High School Grounds	Darryl Goldrick
Musk Lorikeet	30+	8/09/2014	Fairy Meadow/Guest Park	Flowering Gum	Joan Wylie
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	8/09/2014	Bulli	Bushland	Max Davies
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	20/09/2014	Russell Vale	O'head	Mike Morphett
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1 heard	16/09/2014	Thirroul	O'head	Richard Miller
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	1/09/2014	Tarrawanna	Escarpment	Anne-Alan Cousins
Southern Boobook	1	7/09/2014	Bulli	Bushland	Max Davies
Laughing Kookaburra	4	6/09/2014	Balgownie	Residential	Neil McKinlay
Rockwarbler	2	12/09/2014	Boyd's Lookout	Mossy Rocks	MUD birders
White-browed Scrubwren	2 +2juv	20/09/2014	Thirroul	Garden	Mike Morphett
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	4	21/09/2014	Lake Illawarra South	Garden	Darryl Goldrick
Brown Thornbill	2	31/08/2014	Tarrawanna	Garden	Anne-Alan Cousins
Rose Robin	1m	12/09/2014	Granite Falls	Forest Tree	MUD birders
Common Blackbird	1m	6/09/2014	Corrimal	Residential	Max Davies
Mistletoebird	4m +1f	23/09/2014	Minnamurra	John Holt Reserve	Richard Miller
Red-browed Finch	35-40	4/09/2014	Thirroul	Garden	Mike Morphett
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	15	21/09/2014	Dapto	Integral Park	Betty Hudson

As seen in the above list, migrants are beginning to return to the region. No local reports as yet of the Koel though they are slowly appearing in the Hunter area. Please keep a lookout for and report any nesting activity. The Chestnut-breasted Mannikin sighting at Integral Park was excellent. There has been a dramatic decline in the number of members submitting sightings through the website link over the past year and consequently the back page is getting smaller each newsletter edition. Submitting your observations via the website is very easy and uncomplicated - so please avail yourselves of the facility. Spring is here and bird activity will abound.

*Pleasant birding.
Darryl Goldrick,
Records Officer*

I.B.O.C. 2014 Annual General Meeting Monday 10th November 2014

Nomination Forms for Positions on 2015 Committee

These forms are included in this newsletter to allow time for completed nomination forms to reach the Secretary no later than Monday 3rd November 2014.

**Completed Nomination Forms should be posted to the club mailbox
P.O. Box 56 Fairy Meadow 2519 or handed to the Secretary prior to this date.**

Please note that all nominations must be signed and dated by the Nominee, the Nominator and the Secunder, as well as clearly indicating the position sought.

If any of these are missing the nomination will be invalid.

If no valid nomination forms are received for a position, then nominations will be called from the floor of the Annual General Meeting on 10th November 2014.

The positions to be elected are President; Vice-President; Secretary, Treasurer and 4 Committee Members.

If you are interested in assisting in any of the non elected positions i.e. Records Officer, Activities Officer (Monthly Walks), Activities Officer (Mid Week Walks), Activities Officer (Camps), Editor, Librarian, please let the President know prior to the AGM



Illawarra Bird Observers Club Inc

NOMINATION FOR OFFICE BEARERS - 2014

The AGM will be held at the start of the November meeting and nominations are invited for the following positions:

President; Vice-President; Treasurer; Secretary and Four (4) Committee Members.

Nominations should be received in writing by the Secretary no later than 7 days prior to the meeting.

****This year nominations are required to reach the Secretary by Monday 3rd November 2014****

Position nominated: _____

Members Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Nominee)
Nominated by: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Secundered by: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

IMPORTANT NOTE: All other positions are also available but these are not Committee positions and nominations are not required.