

## PURPLE SWAMPHEN

*Scientific Name: Porphyrio porphyrio*

*Atlas Number: 58*

### Description:

The Purple Swamphen is a large 'Rail'. It is mainly dusky black above, with a broad dark blue collar, and dark blue to purple below. As the Purple Swamphen



walks, it flicks its tail up and down, revealing its white undertail. The bill is red and robust, and the legs and feet orange-red. For such a bulky bird, the Swamphen is an accomplished flier and will readily take to the air to escape danger. In flight, the long legs and elongated toes trail behind or hang underneath the body. Purple Swamphens are proficient swimmers, but prefer to wander on the edges of the water, among reeds and on floating vegetation.

### Distribution:

Purple Swamphens are common throughout eastern and northern Australia, with a separate subspecies common in the extreme south-west of the continent. Birds have transported themselves from Australia to New Guinea and New Zealand and throughout the islands of the south-west Pacific. It has been suggested that the New Zealand population of Purple Swamphens (locally called the Pukeko) originated in Australia.

### Habitat:

The Purple Swamphen is found around freshwater swamps, streams and marshes.

### Feeding:

The diet of the Purple Swamphen includes the soft shoots of reeds and rushes and small animals, such as frogs and snails. However, it is a reputed egg stealer and will also eat ducklings when it can catch them. The Purple Swamphen uses its long toes to grasp food while eating.

### Breeding:

Purple Swamphens are generally found in small groups and studies have shown that these consist of more males than females. More than one male will mate with a single female. All family members, and occasionally the young from a previous brood, share in incubation and care of the young. The nest consists of a platform of trampled reeds with the surrounding vegetation sometimes being used to form a shelter. Often two broods will be raised in a year.

Bird species cover 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.

### ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.

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## **JULY ACTIVITIES**

### **CLUB MEETING:**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm**

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

**Megan Rowlett** - Landcare Illawarra- Challenges and Opportunities

Landcare in the Illawarra has been working to restore the local environment since 1999. Today, there are over 24 Landcare groups, 90 Bushcare groups, and over 100 landholders working to restore the Illawarra environment. Megan Rowlett will give an overview of Landcare in the Illawarra, looking at the way community, government, and private landholders are working together to recover endangered ecological communities, recover threatened species, and are future proofing the landscape for generations to come.

Megan Rowlett is an experienced facilitator and public speaker and has worked in natural resource management for over ten years. She specialises in youth and community engagement, environmental awareness, and leadership development. Megan is passionate about community wellbeing and connection, personal development, conservation and sustainability, and finding new and creative ways for people to come together to restore the local environment.

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

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### **MIDWEEK WALK**

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> at 9.00am**

*Leader Rupert Jarvis*

**Macquarie Rivulet** - Meet at 9.00 am at the end of Shearwater Boulevard, Albion Park Rail.

Coming south on the Princes Highway pass the roundabout at the north end of Albion Park Rail and at the 2nd set of lights turn left into Creamery Rd. Continue straight across the rail crossing and turn left into Koon St., which becomes Shearwater Boulevard. Continue to the meeting point at the end. Bring morning tea.

*In the event of inclement weather phone Rupert 0403 932 635 7.30am or after*

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### **MONTHLY OUTING**

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> at 9am**

*Leader Alan Cousins*

**Carrington Falls, The South Rim** - Meet at 9am at Thomas Place parking area.

Follow Jamberoo Mountain, Mountain Road for just over 18k's then turn left onto Carrington Falls Road. Follow this for 1.6k's to Y junction, veer left and in 800m, turn right, signed to Carrington Falls lookout to reach Thomas Place. Bring morning tea and lunch

*Contact Alan or Anne on 42833197 or 0413869534 before 7am if the weather is doubtful*

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### **NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING:**

**Next Committee Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

The next committee meeting will be at 2pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at the home of Joan & Tom Wylie. 4 Daphne Street Bellambi 2518.

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

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### **NEWSLETTER**

**DEADLINE 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

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.

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***Wishing all those members who are not well a speedy recovery***

## REPORTS

### IBOC June Monthly Meeting Report

by Andrew Knowlson

#### Presentation by Martin Potter on Record-breaking Birds

Martin Potter gave an informative, humorous and entertaining presentation about 'Record-breaking Birds'. He received laughs, chatter, feedback and questions about the birds identified and quite often the audience got it wrong. There was always the question 'Did Google get it right'.

The bird with the largest wingspan the Wandering Albatross is found off our coast. The largest bird, the Ostrich also has the largest egg and the smallest egg as a proportion of body weight. The smallest bird is the Bee Hummingbird about 5cm long and weighing the same as a 5c piece. The fastest bird in horizontal flight proved to be the Swift.

This was only a small proportion of the Record-breaking Bird Statistics, diagrams and photos presented by Martin in his very enjoyable presentation.

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## MIDWEEK WALK REPORT

### I.B.O.C WALK 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018

by Terry Edwell

Ocean Beach Woonona and Blue Lagoon Walk Bellambi

The weather was beautiful for our walk. The beach looked great and all the fields around were very green after the recent rain. The New Holland Honeyeater was one of the first birds we spotted and a couple of Superb Fairy-wrens darting in and out of the undergrowth around the sand dunes. The rocks near the Woonona baths was a good place to see the water birds, there is a good lookout and carpark overlooking the whole area.

Two Sooty Oyster Catchers and a White-faced Heron were seen along with several Crested Terns and plenty of Silver Gulls.

We then walked across the oval and all the usual birds were there, the Masked Lapwing, Magpie, Magpie Lark, Welcome Swallow, Grey Fantail and a Willie wagtail. The floodlights on the oval were a good vantage point for a Nankeen Kestrel, it kept diving down and then back to the lights and down again. They must have wonderful eyesight. Further along we walked over a little bridge and watched as two Pacific Black Ducks fossicked in the reeds for food. There was a Great Cormorant drying his wings and a couple of Eurasian Coots there as well. Ross spotted a few Cattle Egrets in a paddock where two horses were still wearing their winter coats. We then returned to the cars and had our morning tea before visiting The Blue Lagoon for our next part of the walk.

The Lagoon was a busy place with plenty of ducks and Eurasian Coot along with Great Cormorants and Australian Grebes. A Black Swan was lying low, either resting or avoiding the wind gusts and the Purple Swamphens were building nests getting ready for spring. There were a few Hardheads and Chestnut teals and a beautiful Eastern Great Egret resting on the shore. A little flock of Silvereyes flew over and the Superb Wrens were busy as people walked past with their dogs. Gala's and Welcome Swallows were also flying around while Great Cormorants were roosting high in the trees.

It was a very enjoyable walk and thankyou to Rupert for organizing the Wednesday Walks. Seventeen Members attended.



*Purple Swamphen*



*Chestnut Teal*

Bird List for Ocean Beach Woonona Walk 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2018		32 Species	17 members attended
Pacific Black Duck	Little Black Cormorant	Silver Gull	Australian Magpie
Australian Wood Duck	Nankeen Kestrel	Galah	Grey Fantail
Rock Dove	Cattle Egret	Rainbow Lorikeet	Willie Wagtail
Spotted Dove	White-faced heron	Superb Fairy-wren	Magpie-lark
Crested pigeon	Eurasian Coot	Spotted Pardalote	Silvereye
Australasian Gannet	Sooty Oystercatcher	Lewin's Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Little Pied Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	Little Wattlebird	Common Myna
Great Cormorant	Crested Tern	New Holland Honeyeater	House Sparrow

Bird List for Blue Lagoon Walk Bellambi 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2018		28 species	17 members attended
Black Swan	Little Pied Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	Little Wattlebird
Australian Wood Duck	Great Cormorant	Silver Gull	New Holland Honeyeater
Chestnut Teal	Little Black Cormorant	Galah	Australian Magpie
Pacific Black Duck	Eastern Great Egret	Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey Fantail
Hardhead	Australasian Swamphen	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Raven
Australasian Grebe	Dusky Moorhen	White-browed Scrubwren	Welcome Swallow
Rock Dove	Eurasian Coot	Spotted Pardalote	House Sparrow

plus 2 feral-hybrid species White & Mallard Cross Ducks

## WEEKEND WALK REPORT

### Bents Basin SCA, Saturday 16th June 2018

by Alan Cousins

11 members ventured to Bents Basin SCA on a fresh, clear morning. Fortunately, the winds of the previous night had abated to almost calm. On arrival at the park gates just before opening time at 9am a Tawny Frogmouth was spotted roosting on the branch of a tree just inside the park entrance. A sign of a good days birdwatching.

Upon the park opening we drove to the main car park and all had a gentle stroll around noting the numerous species for list master Tom to put in his book until morning tea was taken at the picnic tables. By now the temperature had started to rise and some members removed their top coats. We all then spread out and spotted many different species i.e. Rock Warblers, Grey Shrike-thrush, Rose Robin, White-throated Treecreeper, Azure Kingfisher, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle to name but a few. Meeting back at the picnic area for lunch. By now the sun was really up and the temperature reached 18C, not bad for a winter day.

After lunch we went down to the dam alongside the entrance driveway to see water birds i.e. Australasian Grebes and numerous Ducks. About this time the wind decided to pick up so we left the park and went to check out Cobbitty. Unfortunately, the farm that we used to visit after Bents basin has been sold and access is not available so following a good 4 hours observing we called it a day having spotted 48 different species between us.

It was a lovely day out enjoyed by all.

Bird List for Bent's Basin Walk Wallacia 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2018		48 Species	11 members attended
Australian Wood Duck	Whistling Kite	Brown Gerygone	Grey Butcherbird
Pacific Black Duck	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Striated Thornbill	Australian Magpie
Australasian Grebe	Dusky Moorhen	Yellow Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Common Bronzewing	Galah	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Wonga Pigeon	Little Corella	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Tawny Frogmouth	Australian King Parrot	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven
Little Pied Cormorant	Eastern Rosella	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Magpie Lark
Little Black Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet	Lewin's Honeyeater	Rose Robin
Australian Pelican	Azure Kingfisher	Bell Miner	Eastern Yellow Robin
White-necked Heron	White-throated Treecreeper	Noisy Miner	Silvereye
White-faced Heron	Superb fairy-wren	Golden Whistler	Welcome Swallow
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Rock Warbler	Grey Shrike-thrush	Red-browed Finch

## GRIFFITH CAMP REPORT

### Report & Bird List for Griffith Camp 5<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> May 2018

by Betty Hudson

Griffith is a large inland town in Central Western NSW, servicing the vast irrigated cropping, citrus & vineyard areas and allied services. While we were there irrigation water was being pushed up the canals but not into the paddocks. Due to the drought the only green apart from trees was irrigated pastures whose brilliant green was very obvious against the brown elsewhere.

The dry conditions dictated that bird watching was mostly confined to places with water with few birds found elsewhere.

The places near to town we visited were City Park with the main irrigation channel running alongside and Scenic Hill a low dry rocky ridge to the NW. City Park rewarded with a good list (35sp) of birds but Scenic Hill saw fewer birds (22 sp) with very few away from the water tanks by the museums at the top where there must have been some seepage. Birds also were found late in the day returning to roost in the trees on the golf course side of the ridge where there were a number of small dams. These include Major Mitchell Cockatoos (For those intrepid enough to go out at dusk) and Greater Blue Bonnets. City Park produced some surprises with Grey Crowned Babblers and Apostlebird's busy beside the channel and a Hobby scanning the area from a tall tree. 6 Honeyeaters, a Sea-Eagle and a number of Australian Ringnecks (Mallee form) were also recorded together with a Common Bronzewing.

Almost all-natural water had dried up with those few still holding water popular with birds. Our first special event of camp was our Biggest Morning Tea in aid of the Cancer Council which raised over \$300 for a very worthy cause. This was held in the Picnic Area at Lake Wyangan. A nice spot with a nearby TSR (16sp) adding bush birds to the water birds at the Lake (44 sp). After a mornings bird watching and a leisurely lunch we headed back to Lake Wyangan South ((30sp) & its adjacent Arboretum (18sp), now much neglected. The forest was very dry except at the immediate edge of the water. Very few birds were recorded here with a Superb Fairy-wren in the damp grass at the edge of the lake being the most outstanding.

Utilizing the continuing warm sunny weather, we headed out the next day to Woolshed Flat Campground & Picnic area (34sp) towards the northern end of Cocoparra NP. Birds were soon seen despite the very dry look of the area. The rain water tank which supplied water for the camp site had a pool of water on its roof which was attracting a number of interesting honeyeaters including White-eared & Brown-headed which unfortunately were only really visible to those intrepid & agile enough to clamber up onto a picnic table! Other birds seen were those usually associated with this dry country, Speckled Warbler, Splendid Fairy-wrens & both Grey-crowned & White-browed Babblers, a solitary flowering eucalyptus enticed Musk Lorikeets for a feed.

Another picnic area very close by in a Callitris Pine area but with no water had few birds (14sp) including a Southern Whiteface.

After lunch we headed back down the Whitton Stock Route going beyond the turning back to Yenda and arrived at Stores Creek Picnic Area. The creek was bone dry and not a bird to be seen by those who walked to the end of the track, while those who elected to walk back towards the stock route were rewarded with several interesting sighting. (16 sp) including Peaceful Dove, Brown Treecreeper, and Splendid Fairy-wren. Leaving here to head back to Yenda & then camp those relying on "sat nav" Systems for directions found them doing odd things, some even ended up miles from the Yenda turning, back at Woolshed flat intersection and had to ring for help! This was maybe a timely reminder that it does pay to have an idea of where you are heading the distance and the direction.

The next day we headed off to Whitton for morning tea in the park before some members joined the daily tour of Southern Cotton's Gin south of the town. Before this we had a special morning tea for two anniversaries which occurred during camp. The cakes with fresh cream were appreciated by all. Those not going to the Gin birded around Whitton (34 sp) and then headed off to Gogeldrie Weir on the Murrumbidgee River. The water level below the weir was very low. The party from the Gin arrived for lunch just as the others had finished. Another 34 sp were recorded here with Yellow and Eastern Rosellas, Brown Treecreeper, Restless Flycatcher and Striped Honeyeaters being of most interest. On leaving the weir a group stopped alongside an irrigation canal with vegetated banks for some good birding while Betty & Rupert went on to Leeton to check out the prospects Fivebough Wetlands for the next day. They decided it was looking good after they saw plenty of water as well 16 species of birds in 15 mins along the entry track. Heading back to Griffith they ran into a cloud of dust being generated by farmers rushing to prepare their land for seeding before the imminent rain made it impossible. Back at camp it was best foot forward to get ready for our night out at Giuseppe's Italian restaurant. A good Italian meal with pizza by the meter. We all took boxes of 'left-overs' back for morning tea and lunch the next Day. A great convivial night out.

The long drive to Leeton and Fivebough Wetlands on a fine but cold & windy morning was rewarded with plenty of birds (58sp) including large numbers of Avocets, Straw-necked Ibis and Royal Spoonbills which started on the ephemeral wetland area but transferred to the main wetland ponds on the appearance of a Whistling Kite. This gave us much better sightings. While having morning tea at the picnic area we watched a Red-capped Robin, while walking around on the tracks several Spotless Crakes darted across into the reeds, while Little Grassbirds popped out now & then. Walking on to the hide overlooking the sewage ponds birds got very scarce and few except several Nankeen Kestrels and a Swamp Harrier were seen. Notable sightings were Australasian Shelducks, large numbers of Black swans, Black-winged stilts and Nankeen Kestrels. A great day helped by the reappearance of the sun. Ross & Jann as well as Alan and Anne ended up at the Hoey Lookdown part of Fivebough on

the far side of the ephemeral Wetland. Ross was lucky enough to see 2 Brolgas from there over on the ephemeral wetland.

Lunch was again at the picnic area before returning to Griffith ahead of a rain front. Another rewarding days birding.

The last day of camp was washed out by the very cold wet windy weather with some members opting for an early return home and others taking the opportunity to see some of Griffiths cultural attractions. Ross and Cara headed out and Ross added 3 more species to the list from a sheltered area beside the irrigation canal on the southern part of Whitton stock route. This made the total for camp of 131 species.

It was pleasing to see 34 members including some new members enjoying a good camp and very good birding considering the very dry conditions.

Despite the sudden change in the weather a good camp was had by all.

My thanks to Tom for meticulously recording birds at every location, Neil W & Nick for arranging dinner at Giuseppe's, to Jann for arranging the Biggest Morning Tea, to everyone who helped me find birds and to you all for your company and companionship during Camp.

On my return from South Australia I called at Fivebough Wetlands and was rewarded with a Southern Boobook which was full in the sun in the middle of the day & low down by the path. A perfect opportunity for some good pictures as it never moved only opened its eyes more & more.

Bird List 131 Species		34 members attended the camp		14 locations visited	
Emu	Brown Goshawk	Greater Blue Bonnet	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		
Black Swan	Swamp Harrier	Red-rumped Parrot	Golden Whistler		
Australian Shelduck	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Mulga Parrot	Rufous Whistler		
Australian Wood Duck	Nankeen Kestrel	Laughing Kookaburra	Grey Shrike-thrush		
Pink-eared Duck	Brown Falcon	Brown Treecreeper	Masked Woodswallow		
Grey Teal	Australian Hobby	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Butcherbird		
Chestnut Teal	Black Falcon	Splendid Fairy-wren	Pied Butcherbird		
Pacific Black Duck	Brolga	Speckled Warbler	Australian Magpie		
Hardhead	Australasian Swamphen	Weebill	Pied Currawong		
Australasian Grebe	Buff-banded Rail	Western Gerygone	Grey Fantail		
Hoary-headed Grebe	Spotless Crake	Yellow Thornbill	Willie Wagtail		
Rock Dove	Black-tailed Native-hen	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Australian Raven		
Common Bronzewing	Dusky Moorhen	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	Little Raven		
Crested Pigeon	Eurasian Coot	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Restless Flycatcher		
Peaceful Dove	Black-winged Stilt	Inland Thornbill	Magpie-lark		
Bar-shouldered Dove	Red-necked Avocet	Southern Whiteface	White-winged Chough		
Australasian Darter	Black-fronted Dotterel	Spotted Pardalote	Apostlebird		
Little Pied Cormorant	Red-kneed Dotterel	Striated Pardalote	Jacky Winter		
Great Cormorant	Masked Lapwing	Singing Honeyeater	Red-capped Robin		
Little Black Cormorant	Gull-billed Tern	White-eared Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin		
Pied Cormorant	Silver Gull	White-plumed Honeyeater	Golden-headed Cisticola		
Australian Pelican	Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	White-fronted Honeyeater	Little Grassbird		
White-necked Heron	Galah	Noisy Miner	Silveryeye		
Eastern Great Egret	Long-billed Corella	Yellow-throated Miner	Welcome Swallow		
White-faced Heron	Little Corella	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	Fairy Martin		
Australian White Ibis	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Red Wattlebird	Common Blackbird		
Straw-necked Ibis	Cockatiel	White-fronted Chat	Common Starling		
Royal Spoonbill	Rainbow Lorikeet	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Mistletoebird		
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Musk Lorikeet	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Zebra Finch		
Black-shouldered Kite	Superb Parrot	Noisy Friarbird	Double-barred Finch		
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Crimson Rosella	Striped Honeyeater	House Sparrow		
Whistling Kite	Eastern Rosella	Grey-crowned Babbler	European Goldfinch		
Black Kite	Australian Ringneck	White-browed Babbler			

The fully detailed Bird List will be posted on the club web site as soon as it is available



Eastern Great Egret  
Irrigation Canal at entry to Fivebough Wetlands 9.05.18  
By Betty Hudson



Southern Boobook  
Fivebough Wetlands 24.05  
By Betty Hudson

## Adventures in Griffith and Beyond May 2018

### Griffith Autumn Camp

By Jann Gowans

Just a few memories from the recent camp in Griffith. Firstly, a great big thank you to everyone who donated to and participated in the Cancer Council biggest morning tea on Monday morning at Lake Wyangan, especially Ken and Sue Brown who as usual, excelled in helping set up and clean up! We collected a whopping **\$350** that will go towards helping those affected by cancer. Judy was the recipient of 'President's favorite cake' with the jam scroll she brought which was very popular!

On the advice of Cara and Carol, Ross and I ventured to the airport late afternoon on Monday and then the golf course to observe the Parrots. The strategy was sound with our best viewing of Blue Bonnets ever, as they intently grazed on the green grass of the course. Numerous groups of Red-rumped Parrots also gathered and we pulled into a small laneway to get a better look. We were awestruck as first one, then another and more and more Major Mitchell Cockatoos landed (over the fence) at the speedway. In the end, over 40 birds were observed and it was exciting and fantastic to see! We spread the word but sadly, the spectacle was not repeated. It was also great to get good looks at the yellow form of the Crimson Rosella and see a few Superb Parrots at the Murrumbidgee Valley National Park, after Gogeldrie Weir on Wednesday.

On Thursday, despite a grey and misty day, we ventured to Fivebough wetlands in Leeton. We arrived early and set off with Pam, closely followed by Andy and Anna. It was a fruitful morning as our small group saw 45 species on our walk around. Unfortunately, due to various misunderstandings, we set off well before the rest of the group (shortly after the designated meeting time): waiting around in the cold wasn't a desirable option. Despite the minor issues, Betty's new approach of having folks meet at the birding spot seemed to work quite well. Especially as there were so many of us, following each other on the highways was deemed unsafe as traffic often hurtles along so quickly. Our return to Griffith from Leeton was via some minor roads, including Evan Smyles Rd (due to its inclusion as an interesting birding spot!) and it made for an adventurous afternoon when the threatening storms broke. We made our way along the gravel road while great dust clouds rolled across the plains, before giving way to dark skies after we returned to the pavement. One good sighting at Fivebough was the native, Black-tailed Hen which we later saw much more closely at Lake Wyangan. Except for the cooler weather, we really enjoyed the camp and even sampled some local wines at Warburn Estate which we can recommend.

Lastly, among our stop-overs prior to heading home was a trip to Chiltern-Mt Pilot NP (Ross has renamed Chiltern, Chill Town due to the cold temperatures!). Although, we did not see any of the more exciting birds, we returned from our walk around the honeyeater picnic area to see a male Scarlet Robin practicing its blue steel look in our side mirror (see photo), the female was nearby as well. We were especially surprised when at Bartley's paddock, we heard the scissor grinder sound of a Restless Flycatcher. We walked forward looking for the bird and were astonished to find again it was on our car's side mirror. Perhaps the addition of the extra caravan mirrors made them particularly tempting! Now we are back home and planning our next adventure...



Major Mitchell's quail



Black-tailed native hen



Scarlet Robin



Yellow form of crimson rosella



Superb Parrot



Blue Bonnet



Mallee Ringneck



Photos by Ross and Jann Gowans

# NOTICES & ARTICLES OF INTEREST

## Finches of Australia

A new set of stamps released 16 March 2018 features four of Australia's Finches. Australia is home to 19 species of Finches, including Mannikins and Firetails. Also known as Grass-Finches, Australia's Finches are separate from the Ploceidae, or true Finches, of the Americas, Eurasia and Africa.

The stamp designs focus closely on the birds, presenting them on a largely white background to highlight their distinctiveness and beauty. The habitat of each species is indicated through just a suggestion of relevant vegetation.

The stamp illustrations are by Kevin Stead, an Adelaide-based wildlife artist, who has worked as an illustrator for more than 30 years. He paints in watercolour, gouache on paper and in acrylic on canvas. As well as being a frequent contributor to *Australian Geographic* magazine, Kevin has illustrated several stamp issues for Australia Post, including Australian Parrots (2005), Species at Risk (2009) and Australian Poultry (2013).

The 4 Finches featured are the Blue-faced Parrot-Finch (*Erythrura trichroa*), Double-barred Finch (*Taeniopygia bichenovii*), Star Finch (*Neochmia ruficauda*) and the Zebra Finch (*Taeniopygia guttata*) and are available singularly or in various philatelic packs from most Post Offices or online from Australia Post.

Chris. Cartledge



With deep regret we wish to announce the passing of Meri Stefanidakis after a short illness.

Our condolences go out to her family and friends.

A lovely Lady who loved the birds may she rest in Peace.

## Global Big Day 2018: a birding world record

By Team eBird May 9, 2018

This Black-throated Mango is one of the incredible 1,546 species of birds reported from Colombia on Global Big Day. Photo by Juan Diego Castillo/Macaulay Library.

Birds are incredible. Their power to inspire and amaze brings people together across every imaginable boundary. Global Big Day is the embodiment of this worldwide connectedness: a single day to celebrate birds in every place on Earth. On 5 May, Global Big Day, 28,000 people ventured outside in 170 countries, finding 6899 species: 2/3rds of the world's bird species in one day. This is a new world record for birding and more birds seen by the Global Big Day team than any one person has ever seen in an entire year. Incredibly, more than 10% of species were reported by only one person, showing the impact that *you* have. This record belongs to every single person who took part. Thank you, and congratulations.



Importantly, this impossibly fun event also provides valuable information to help the birds we all care about. eBirders gathered more than *1.6 million* bird sightings on 5 May, which are now freely available to researchers and conservationists. As a global birding team, together we can gather information on where, when, and how birds make use of the landscape and we can use that information to aid conservation and research that can help keep birds around. And the best part? We can all have fun doing it.

Our favourite part of Global Big Day is the stories. There are the amazing travels: hiking on Friday to a remote campsite to be at the right spot for a specific species at dawn, or boating down a river for a half-day and then racing back to internet to enter your sightings before the results are announced. There is the community: everything from groups of local guides scouring the countryside of Uganda to local community monitors in Mexico representing their country's incredible biodiversity. And, of course, there are the birds: the rare; the beautiful; the unexpected finds; the crushing misses. Perhaps the most remarkable report on Global Big Day was an Ibadan Malimbe (*Malimbus ibadanensis*): a new species for eBird for all-time, [reported by Adewale Awoyemi from Nigeria](#). Explore all of Global Big Day's birds here: <https://ebird.org/globalbigday>.

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*National Geographic*

### Why Falcons and Parrots share hooked beaks

May 28, 2018 Tim Low

**Previously, Falcons were classified with Hawks and eagles as birds of prey, but new research suggests they're closer to parrots**



Tim Low lives in a state of perpetual surprise at everything wild and alive. His response is to write searching books, *Australian Geographic* articles and this blog. His book *Where Song Began* (Penguin, 2014) recently became the first nature book ever to win the Australian Book Industry Award for best general non-fiction. Tim's newest book is called *The New Nature*.

PARROTS AND FALCONS both have hooked beaks but are otherwise so different that most experts have thought nothing of this. Falcons were always classified with Hawks and Eagles as birds of prey. They are dedicated predators with sharp talons.

DNA studies in recent years have yielded amazing surprises, and one of the big ones involves falcons. They are now regarded as relatives of parrots and perching birds rather than hawks and eagles. A falcon shares a more recent ancestor with the thrush or honeyeater it hunts than with other birds of prey, given that thrushes and honeyeaters are perching birds.



We now know that parrots and perching birds are each other's closest relatives, and falcons come next in the family tree. The parrot-perching bird relationship counts as another giant surprise, given how different they look, although they do have intelligence in common. The smartest birds on Earth include crows and ravens, which are perching birds, and large parrots. The world's perching birds, whose ranks include swallows, starlings, finches and all the birds with pleasing songs, probably had a predatory ancestor with a hooked beak.

*A Brown Falcon. (Image Credit: Benjamint444/Wikimedia)*

Evidence for this comes from old fossils of birds that mix parrot and falcon features, and parrot and perching bird features. Experts strongly suspect that the extinct 'terror birds' of South America (Phorusrhacids) – giant flightless predators up to three metres tall with powerful hooked beaks – were related to these smaller birds in a group called Australaves.

The biggest surprise of all, from an Australian point of view, is the evidence implicating Australia as the birthplace of songbirds, which make up most of the world's perching birds. I am talking here of such iconic birds as nightingales, cardinals, blue jays and nutcrackers. Birds that departed Australia long ago gave rise to all of these. The DNA findings point to lyrebirds and scrub-birds as the oldest surviving branches of the songbird family tree. The world's earliest identifiable songbird fossils are those of Lyrebirds, Treecreepers and Logrunners found at Riversleigh in Queensland.

The evidence implies that Parrots, Falcons and perching birds all arose in Gondwana. Australia, South America and Antarctica were the last pieces of Gondwana to separate, and the first two continents are richest in Parrots, while South America has the most diverse Falcons. Songbirds and Parrots poured out of Australia, colonising other lands, while Falcons and other perching birds (suboscines) and some Parrots spread from South America. Perching birds make up more than half the world's bird species, and far more than half the world's individual birds, which makes the Falcon-Parrot-perching bird group of birds the most successful in the world, and Australia the most important exporter of birds, and the source of the smartest birds.

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## Wildlife warning as 'road killing' season is upon us

**Ben Langford**

June 3 2018 - 10:00AM

**PROUD DISPLAY:** Watch out for the Superb Lyrebird when driving on roads around the Illawarra Escarpment.

At this time of year the Illawarra's WIRES volunteers prepare for a dramatic increase in the number of native animals being found dead or wounded on the roadside.

With the days shorter, the number of peak-hour cars on the road at dusk and dawn is significantly higher, and this means trouble for nocturnal animals crossing roads looking for food and water.

It's not only the nocturnal animals that are popping up at this time of year – the native Superb Lyrebird has also been being spotted in numbers around the Illawarra Escarpment.

The young male Superb lyrebirds will often hang around together in small groups, with their lyre-shaped major tail feathers not developing until they are three or four years old.

Until this occurs they are known as "plain-tails".

But their dark feathers and preference for walking makes them vulnerable on the roadside.

Leanne Taylor, CEO of the wildlife rescue organisation WIRES, is asking motorists to slow down during the coming months.

"Last year WIRES was called to assist nearly 7000 kangaroos and wallabies and over 800 wombats, with the majority either killed or injured due to vehicle collisions," Ms Taylor said.

"Many of these animals were carrying joeys which we then hand-raise thanks to the goodwill of our dedicated volunteers."

Depending on their age, joeys can be in care for up to 18 months, cared for by more than 2000 WIRES members across New South Wales.

With injuries and deaths increasing for wildlife on the roads, WIRES will need more volunteers.

Those who don't have the time or the space to become hands-on carers can add their support by becoming a "virtual WIRES carer".

"Animal lovers everywhere can always join our Virtual Carers program for a behind-the-scenes look at what's involved in being a WIRES rescuer," said Ms Taylor.

Virtual carers are donors, whose financial contribution helps WIRES.

For more information or details of how to volunteer see the WIRES website [www.wires.org.au](http://www.wires.org.au)



**MONTHLY SIGHTINGS: -May/June 2018**

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

SPECIES	N <sup>o</sup>	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Australian Brush-turkey	1 juv	May/June	Marshall Mount	Rainforest edge	Anna/Andrew Knowlson
Black-winged Stilt	30	25/05/2018	Milton	Wetland	Charles Dove
Grey Teal	40	15/06/2018	Kings Point	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Chestnut Teal	65	15/06/2018	Kings Point	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Australasian Grebe	3	12/06/2018	Dolphin Point	Dam	Charles Dove
White-headed Pigeon	10	18/06/2018	Balgownie	o'head	Joan Zealey
White-headed Pigeon	2	12/06/2018	Balgownie	Electrical O'head wires	Bill/Joan Zealey
Crested Pigeon	2	15/06/2018	Thirroul	Back yard	Mike Morphett
Red-necked Avocet	3	25/05/2018	Milton	Wetland	Charles Dove
Topknot Pigeon	6	18/06/2018	Balgownie	Flushed from street Postie	Joan Zealey
Red-capped Plover	1	14/06/2018	Ulladulla	Tidal rock	Charles Dove
Cattle Egret	~200	18/06/2018	Jamberoo	Rural paddock	Darryl Goldrick
Double-banded Plover	2	14/06/2018	Ulladulla	Tidal rock	Charles Dove
Caspian Tern	1	23/05/2018	Boonerah Point	Rock shelf	Paul Charlier
Hooded Plover	3	14/06/2018	Ulladulla	Tidal rock	Charles Dove
Little Egret	25	15/06/2018	Kings Point	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Pacific Gull	3juv	4/06/2018	Ulladulla	Harbour	Charles Dove
Little Black Cormorant	120	15/06/2018	Kings Point	Foreshore	Charles Dove
White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	05-Jun-18	Minnamurra	River Mouth	Carol Fowler
Nankeen Kestrel	1	? May	Saddleback Mountain - west lookout	O'head	Paul Charlier
Eastern Rosella	5	6/06/2018	Wollongong City	Trees	Terry Edwell
Eastern Rosella	1	11/06/2018	Kiama Downs	O'head	Carol Fowler
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	9/06/2018	Balgownie	Garden Fence- 1st in 35yrs	Pam Hazelwood
Powerful Owl	1 heard	15/06/2018	Thirroul-Excelsior Mine site	Rainforest	Mike Morphett
Powerful Owl	heard	mid May	Marshall Mount	Rainforest	Anna/Andrew Knowlson
Superb Fairy-wren	3	21/06/2018	Thirroul	Front Yard	Mike Morphett
Brown Gerygone	2	21/06/2018	Thirroul	Front Yard	Mike Morphett
Golden Whistler	1 fem	21/06/2018	Thirroul	Front Yard	Mike Morphett
Olive-backed Oriole	10	early June	Marshall Mount	Rainforest edge	Anna/Andrew Knowlson
Grey Fantail	1	21/06/2018	Thirroul	Front Yard	Mike Morphett
Scarlet Robin	1	10/06/2018	Budderoo	Carpark environs	Kara Eddington
Rose Robin	1	1/06/2018	Dunmore Swamp	Cycle track	Carol Fowler
Rose Robin	1m	12/06/2018	Jamberoo	Bushland	Kara Eddington
Golden-headed Cisticola	20	25/05/2018	Milton	Wetland	Charles Dove
Bassian Thrush	1	26/05/2018	Ulladulla	Forest	Charles Dove
Bassian Thrush	1	8/06/2018	Ulladulla	Millards Creek	Charles Dove
Common Myna	~ 30	13/06/2018	Staites Mews, Bellambi		Mike Morphett

Sightings of our birdlife helps us to collect and maintain knowledge base of the movement and populations of species so we can note any specific changes that might occur. Please take note when your out and send your sightings to

[Darryl Goldrick, records officer](mailto:darryl@iboc.com.au)

**NEXT CAMP FOR 2018 AT ULLADULLA**

<https://www.iboc.com.au/activities.html>

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