

**AUSTRALIAN RAVEN**

Scientific Name: *Corvus coronoides*  
 Atlas Number: 930

**Description:**

Australian Ravens are black with white eyes in adults. The feathers on the throat (hackles) are longer than in other species, and a bird tends to extend these when calling, while holding its head and body in a horizontal position. Australian Ravens are usually seen in pairs. Another aid to



identification of this species is the absence of wing-flicking while calling. Young birds resemble the adults, but have dark eyes, shorter throat hackles and often the presence of a pink, fleshy gape. This species is sometimes called a crow.

**Similar species:**

There are six members of the family Corvidae found in Australia: five native breeding species and one infrequent self-introduction. Three are called crows and three ravens, although there is really little difference. Most Australian species are similar in size and colouration, and can be difficult to tell apart. In some cases, identification is aided by the separate ranges of different species, but differences in plumage, habits and calls offer good clues for distinguishing them. The bases of the feathers of the crows are white, while those of the ravens are grey, although this is only useful if birds are held in the hand or if discarded feathers are found.

**Distribution:**

The Australian Raven is found in eastern, southern and central Australia.

**Habitat:**

The Australian Raven is found in all habitat types, with the exception of the more arid areas of Western Australia.

**Feeding:**

The Family Corvidae has a wide-ranging diet that may consist of grains, fruits, insects, small animals, eggs, refuse and carrion; however, the Australian Raven is mainly carnivorous.

**Breeding:**

Australian Ravens construct a large untidy nest, normally consisting of bowl or platform of sticks, lined with grasses, bark and feathers. Both sexes construct the nest and feed the young. The incubation of the eggs is performed solely by the female, and only one brood is 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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- PRESIDENT :** Ross Gowans
- VICE PRESIDENT** Andy Knowlson
- SECRETARY:** Betty Hudson
- TREASURER & MEMBERSHIP :** Ken Brown
- EDITORS:** Charles Dove, Janina Dove
- RECORDS OFFICER:** Darryl Goldrick

## MAY ACTIVITIES

### **Fellow IBOC friends,**

We hope everyone is coping well with our 'new normal' and not feeling too cooped up. It's a good time to enjoy indoor hobbies and do some gardening and check out your local birds and insects. Everyone, please continue to stay safe, sane and well.

### **Here are this month's challenges:**

#### **Lockdown list update**

Those who participated through the end of April can submit your list including which property category, along with a short write-up or you can just include the number of species and any unusual sightings (don't forget to report those to Darryl as well!). Feel free to reset and keep a list of birds that you see or hear (only if you know the call well/reliably!) on your property\* for the month of May.

\*Two categories with blocks  $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 acre or smaller and also larger blocks.

#### **Name photo challenge**

Create a 'puzzle' for your first or last name with a bird photo for each letter of your name to be included in the June newsletter. For example, a tawny frogmouth could be used for the letter T or F. Please use Australian birds, unless the bird you wish to include is fairly well known. Hopefully, enough people will participate to have a bird ID puzzle to solve for next month's newsletter!

#### **Submissions to:**

newsletter@iboc.org.au

### **NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

#### **Monday on the 18<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**

The next committee meeting **ON ZOOM** will be at 2pm on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020  
Hosted by KEN AND SUE BROWN

Any members with anything they wish to raise are welcome to log on.

### **NEWSLETTER**

#### **DEADLINE 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

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 1/13 Horrocks Crescent, Kearneys Spring, Toowoomba QLD 4350.

## Illawarra Bird Observers Club Reports

**Bellambi Lagoon and Point**, April 9/19, 2020

*By Jann Gowans*

Party of two Gowans. The two of us represent a gathering in these strange COVID-19 days of social distancing and isolation. Nevertheless, exercise is a reason to go out and we haven't been called to account for having binoculars on our walks. We haven't run into any police yet enforcing restrictions, though we've heard of encounters. Given the Easter long weekend and weather forecast, we decided to head to Bellambi lagoon on the Thursday **before** school holidays in the hopes fewer people would be out.

We arrived to the lagoon at 10:00 am, the beauty of suiting ourselves! We parked at our usual spot on Birch Cr. near the trash rack and headed towards the point first. It was nice to see Yellow Thornbills, a Grey Fantail and Red-browed Finches. We were treated to a male Variegated Fairy-wren with two off-siders in the low bushes. Rainbow Lorikeet, Masked Lapwings and Australian Ravens were all seen as they flew by overhead. We doubled back to the lagoon, staying off the bike path for the most part as we dodged others out and about. Wood Ducks, Chestnut and Grey teal were the only ducks around, seen in low numbers. Silvers Gulls were the most numerous birds but a dozen Eurasian Coots, several Dusky Moorhens and a pair of Purple Swamphens were also seen. We were pleased to see one White-faced Heron, although we've frequently seen a pair in the area. We added a single Australian Magpie and a few Common Myna birds as we returned to our car. We tallied 31 species in the short hour we were out but missed the company of our friends.

On the Sunday, a week after Easter, we went to Bellambi Point on a separate walk. Breaking all the rules of our usual walks, I know, but we decided to add these birds to our previous list

since we hadn't heard from any others who ventured out to the Bellambi lagoon area. We made our way across the sports field and took the track towards the beach, again seeing Variegated Fairy-wrens! Yellow Thornbills, Red-browed Finches and Silvereyes were all twittering and darting through the bushes along with Superb Fairy-wrens. We were pleased to see so many birds as other walks we've done have been much quieter.

When we could see the beach, we added a Great Cormorant, Sooty Oystercatcher, Crested Terns and Silvergulls. There were many people walking their dogs along the beach but we had the bush track to ourselves. We retraced our steps and then took the fire trail in a bit to see what was around. Again, the bush was lively with birds; a pair of Yellow Robins, Grey Fantail, Brown Thornbill and even White-browed Scrubwrens were flitting all around. We skirted the field where gum trees were flowering nicely to observe Rainbow Lorikeets, New Holland Honeyeaters, and Little Wattlebirds vying for turf, along with a few Lewin's Honeyeaters. There were also a few Masked Lapwings and a large gathering of Crested Pigeons (no fair that THEY can gather!) in the paddock but sadly no Australian Magpies or Magpie-larks.

We got 26 species for that quick sojourn but I must confess I may have missed something as I hadn't taken my notebook with me on that walk. After we saw such a nice variety of birds, we raced back to the car to write them down! By staying away from the bike path, it was an excellent outing, except for once again missing the company of our fellow birdos. Note: I combined the two lists for a grand tally of 40 species, although it won't be recorded into eBird that way.

Bird List for Bellambi Lagoon and Point Walk April 2020				2 Members	40 Species
Australian Wood Duck	Dusky Moorhen	Yellow Thornbill	Willie Wagtail		
Grey Teal	Eurasian Coot	Brown Thornbill	Australian Raven		
Chestnut Teal	Sooty Oystercatcher	Spotted Pardalote	Magpie-lark		
Spotted Dove	Masked Lapwing	Lewin's Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin		
Crested Pigeon	Crested Tern	Little Wattlebird	Silvereye		
Little Pied Cormorant	Silver Gull	New Holland Honeyeater	Red-whiskered Bulbul		
Great Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet	Eastern Whipbird	Common Starling		
White-faced Heron	Superb Fairy-wren	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Common Myna		
Nankeen Kestrel	Variiegated Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie	Red-browed Finch		
Purple Swamphen	White-browed Scrubwren	Grey Fantail	House Sparrow		
Ken and Sue Brown went down to the Bellambi Lagoon and managed 17 species on the 12 <sup>th</sup> April The following three are the ones that Jann and Ross missed out on during their visit.					
Little Black Cormorant	Australian Pelican	Welcome Swallow			

Sue and Ken visited the Bellambi Lagoon on 12<sup>th</sup> April. They only walked along the bike track and a bit to the side. Not into the sandhills and still managed some good sightings. Silver Gull, Little Wattle Bird, Chestnut Teal, Dusky Moorhen, Welcome Swallow, Spotted Dove, Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, Coot, Willie wagtail, Wood duck, Masked Lapwing, Raven, Pelican, Grey Fantail, Magpie Lark, White Faced Heron.

## **NOTICES & WHATS AROUND**

During the Endeavour's great voyage up the east coast of Australia in 1770, James Cook has been naming everything after himself: Cooktown, Cooks River, Cook Reef. The list goes on and on, much to the chagrin of the aristocratic botanist on the voyage, Joseph Banks. One day, the two are ashore, marvelling at the strange wildlife, when they see and hear a previously unknown bird. It's a bit like a Kingfisher but with a strong beak and a strangely magnetic, laughing cry. Banks, as ever, wants to name it a " Banksoburra' " but Cook, as ever, overrules him.

Recommended viewing for those housebound and access to Netflix.

**Beak & Brain**  
Genius Birds from Down Under

Netflix - 52 mins - 2013

"Whoever came up with the term 'bird brain' never met these feathered thinkers, who use their claws and beaks to solve puzzles, make tools and more".

### **Links :**

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/apr/26/i-can-see-a-bird-what-is-it-a-beginners-guide-to-backyard-birding>

<https://www.paperbarkwriter.com/portfolio/riverina-grassland-ramblings/>

[http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/successful\\_breeding\\_season\\_for\\_endangered\\_orange-bellied\\_parrots](http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/successful_breeding_season_for_endangered_orange-bellied_parrots)

# We're hosting a Biggest Morning Tea

## Please support us!



YES friends, that's right! We're hosting a virtual morning tea for Cancer Council on Zoom! Mark your calendars for **Sunday, 17 May at 10:30 am**. If you have a laptop, tablet or mobile phone, you can get ready to participate (I'd suggest your laptop if you have one, as then you'll have more room to see everyone!). Just download the Zoom app and be ready to click on your meeting invitation for the designated time after it arrives.

RSVP: please provide email and phone number to Jann & Ross or Ken & Sue or to [info@iboc.org.au](mailto:info@iboc.org.au)

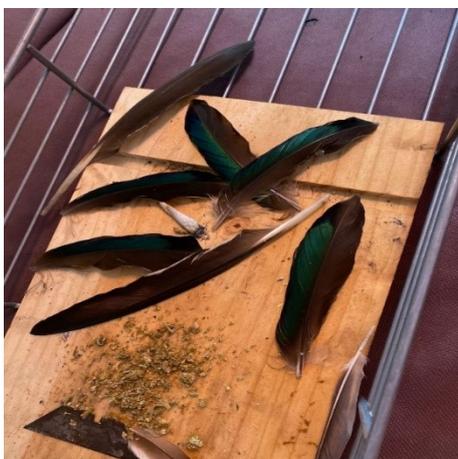
Host: Ken and Sue Brown

If you require any additional assistance getting your Zoom account set up, please don't hesitate to contact Jann at 4285 9070 or Sue at 0438 298 057

Further details and Zoom invite will be provided to those that RSVP. It's TIME to learn a new skill in lockdown! Join us for a cuppa, catch up and a great cause! Note: we hope that the success of this event will allow us to then host a virtual bird club meeting. We'll keep you posted...

### Bird identification: a smoke of genius

Mike Morphet



In the recent Easter break, Bob, my brother-in-law and fellow bird-keeper residing in South-East Queensland, sent me this photograph of some feathers a friend of his had sent him, with a request for him to identify what species they had belonged to.

Like Bob, I couldn't oblige. It was equally hard to determine how the bird had met its maker, whether as a road- or raptor-kill or whatever. As yet, despite my counter-request for location and habitat, no further details have been forthcoming.

However, on closer examination I detected the presence of a cigarette butt among the feathers, so I was pleased to offer Bob an interim solution: I deduced the bird in question had preferred smoking roll-your-owns to tailor-mades; the cause of death perhaps?

Furthermore, from the feather colouring one could eliminate three different species, despite any association with tobacco, taking into

account their popular names. They are the Grey Falcon, also known as the smoke hawk; the Regent Parrot or smoker; and the Yellow Rosella or Murray smoker – all referring to their smoky plumage. So, bird enthusiasts, any other offers to smoke out this mystery bird? In these prevailing times of coronavirus rules, there's no restriction on exercising, at least of one's investigative powers of the imagination.



A brood of chickens



A brood of hens



A cast of falcons



A colony of gulls



A colony of penguins



A colony of vultures



A company of parrots



A convocation of eagles



A dole of doves



A dopping of geese



A flight of birds



A flight of cormorants



A host of sparrows



A mew of hawks



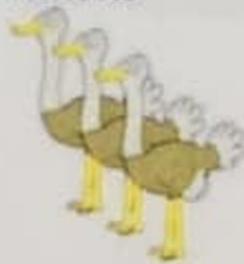
A murder of crows



A mustering of storks



A stand of flamingos



A pride of ostriches



A pod of pelicans



A parliament of owls

# East Coast waterbird populations are plummeting due to drought, urban development but scientists say there is hope

ABC Capricornia By Melissa Maykin and Erin Semmler  
Posted 5 Apr 2020, 6:30am

[Photo: The Little Tern as an endangered species in Queensland, Tasmania and New South Wales. \(Supplied\)](#)

Despite a 74 per cent drop in Central Queensland's waterbird population, there is hope for the endangered Little Tern.

## Key points:

- A survey has found the waterbirds population in the Fitzroy Delta and Floodplain has decreased from 13,801 to 3,539 since 2014
- The birds include ducks, geese, swans, waterhens, herons, ibis, spoonbills, cormorants and pelicans
- The population decline is being attributed to prolonged drought and urban development



During a six-year survey of 28 wetlands across the Fitzroy Delta and Floodplain, BirdLife Capricornia monitored species including ducks, geese, swans, waterhens, herons, ibis, spoonbills, cormorants and pelicans. The survey found a significant decrease in the overall waterbird population from 13,801 in 2014 to 3,539 in 2020. The conservation group's secretary, Allan Briggs, put the devastating decline down to prolonged drought conditions and urban development.

"It is concerning but it's a direct result of the fact that there are so many wetlands that were dried up," he said. "We did have good rain at the end of February [and the] beginning of March which filled a lot of these wetlands. "Birds had gone and moved away because there was no way for them to get any food. "It will take some time for the birds that normally populate these wetlands to return."

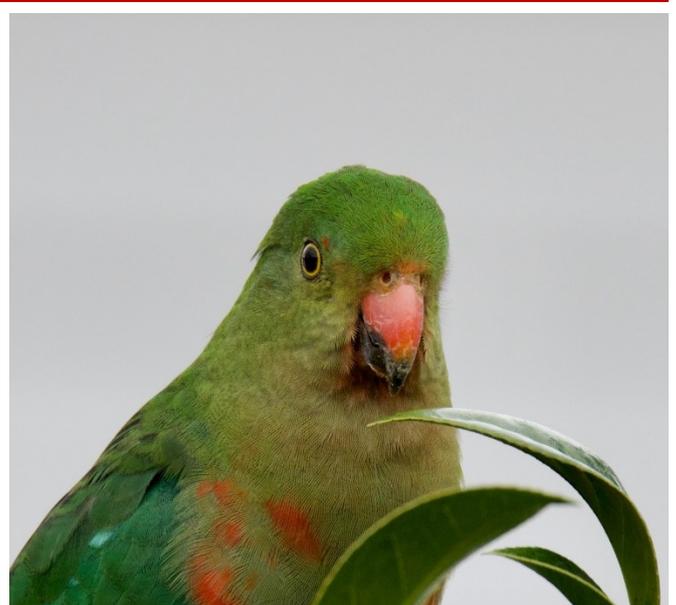
'Heartening' community response to endangered bird  
Although Mr Briggs is concerned about declining populations, he is heartened by the Central Queensland

community's response to protecting an endangered species. The Little Tern is a small, partly migratory seabird less than 25 centimetres long and found on beaches along the coasts of eastern and northern Australia and Asia. The conservation group was saddened to see beachgoers unknowingly driving over a sand bar where about 50 of the endangered birds were nesting. If their breeding is disturbed, or they aren't able to breed, the numbers are just going to continue to decline [and] these birds will move further towards extinction

'It's a real problem' Sydney scientist, Richard Kingsford, and his team from the University of New South Wales, have been studying the population of waterbirds across eastern Australia since 1981. "Our data is showing the same thing over a massive area; about a 60 to 70 per cent decline in waterbird numbers," he said. "That seems to be occurring right across the board, from pelicans to ducks to the shorebirds, and it's a real problem."



Musk Lorikeet



Young king enjoyed our camellia Bush today.

By Pam Hazelwood

# Grace is only six years old but she is already a published scientific researcher

By [Shelley Lloyd](#) Posted 31 Mar 2020, 5:49am

**Photo:** Grace Fulton was only four years old when she started helping her father with field research. (Supplied: Graham Fulton)

Since the age of four, Brisbane girl Grace Fulton has been helping her father with field research to help protect precious owl species around South East Queensland.



## Key points:

- Grace was lead author on a scientific paper about owls
- Her dad believes she might be Australia's youngest scientist
- Grace says she also likes leeches "because they walk funny"

She has even had a research article published in a scientific journal, which her father believes makes her Australia's youngest scientist. Grace, now 6, regularly joins her dad — University of Queensland ecologist and researcher Graham Fulton — capturing data about owl species, including Powerful, Southern Boobook, Sooty and Masked owls. "I like owls because they are soft, which makes them fly quietly," Grace said. Mr Fulton is delighted his daughter is so passionate about protecting birds. "She was only four when she started spending nights with me in the rainforest searching for owls and now she knows all of their calls," Mr Fulton said. "Like any parent, I love to involve my daughter in anything that I think is very beautiful and I find going out at night into the rainforest very beautiful. "She got lead authorship on one paper and author on another paper because she spotted what the birds were doing and had the curiosity to follow it up. "I suspect she is the country's youngest scientist; I don't know that for sure, but I suspect she is."

Their most recent research was conducted at two sites, one close to their home in suburban Brisbane and the other in the rainforests of Mount Glorious. "We were keen to compare how forest owls and other nocturnal birds do in dense urban areas compared to leafy, wild places like Mount Glorious," Mr Fulton said. "It came as no surprise that there was a distinct lack of owls in the Brisbane suburb. "The habitat is just so poor when compared to Mount Glorious' lush rainforest." Grace's passion for wildlife is not limited to owls. She also shows a great interest in snakes and leeches. "I like leeches because they walk funny and they suck your blood," she said. Grace wants to follow in her father's footsteps when she grows up. "I want to be a butterfly scientist," she said. Mr Fulton said he hoped his daughter would maintain her love for nature, though he would not push her that way. "I will lead her to the forest and if the rest follows, then good," he said.

*The research has been published in Pacific Conservation Biology.*

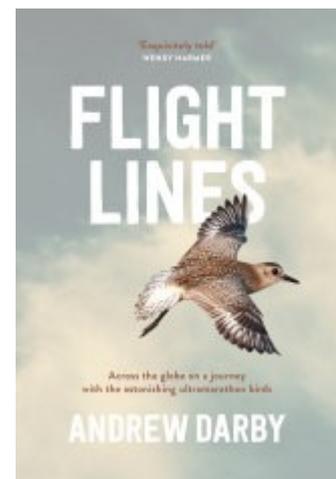
## **In yesterday's SMH - a big article - you may want to mention the book with a precis in the IBOC Newsletter. Interesting only the females return from Siberia.**

*Even among your average birdwatcher, the migratory shorebirds have been somewhat overlooked. Also known as waders, this group of birds spend much of their time scurrying about on tidal mudflats and difficult-to-access swamps, often in remote areas away from people.*

*The 35-odd species that regularly visit Australia are generally decked out in variations of grey and brown when they are here, reserving their handsome breeding plumage for when they are on their northern hemisphere nesting ground, mostly north of the Arctic Circle. Only the most hardcore birder has traditionally been bothered with the distant beige blobs darting about in the distance in the shimmering heat haze of a coastal estuary.*

The Grey Plover doesn't attract much attention but has an extraordinary tale to tell.

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/books/the-story-of-a-long-neglected-bird-soars-20200323-p54d2i.html>





Melissa Markham and Anzac memories

### OUR JAPAN TRIP

*Joan Zealey*

We visited Japan in February with Sicklebill Safaris. During our two-week tour we visited the three main islands, arriving at Narita airport, then traveling as far south as Kagoshima, and as far north as Rausa on Hokkido. Japan has had a mild winter this year, so the threatened -26C on Hokkido, turned out to be a relatively balmy -6C. Mind you we still needed thick coats and warm hats and gloves.

We saw over 140 species of bird. Highlights would undoubtedly be the large numbers of waterfowl that winter in Japan, the flocks of cranes, the boat trip to see the rare Japanese murrelet, and the sea eagles which winter around Rausa.

Bill has cut his 3000 slides down to about 400, and hopefully we will get a chance to show them to IBOC once the coronavirus crisis has passed.



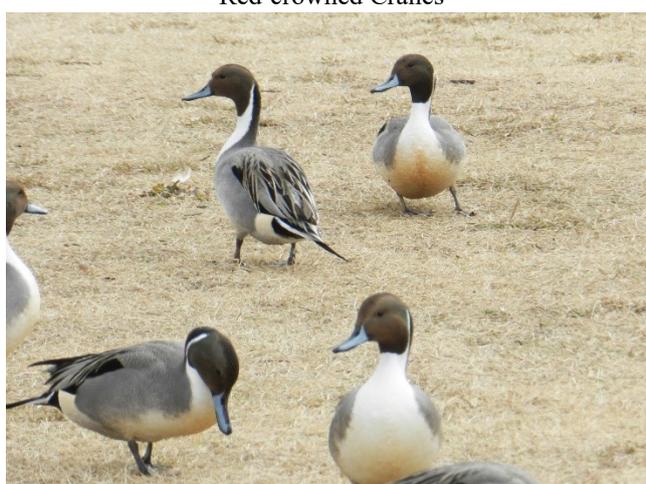
Snow Monkeys



Red-crowned Cranes



Sea Eagles round one of the tourist boats



Pintailed Ducks

A few taken in the garden this week at Alan and Anne Cousins.



Eastern Spinebill



Superb Fairy-wren female



Superb Fairy-wren male



Little Wattlebird

Two days running we've had a crested pigeon visit our back verandah, but has it been the same bird?



March 27

By Mike Morphett



March 28

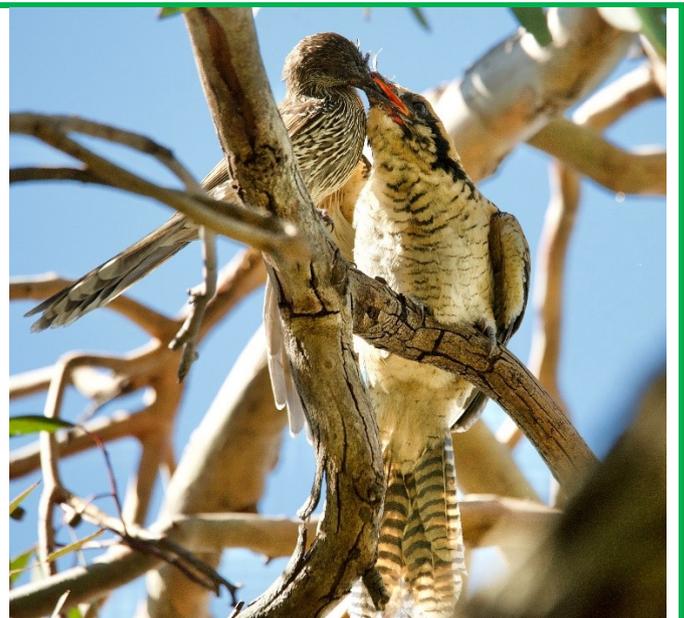
Plumage, behaviour, whistling flight and call all identical, but the crest is the giveaway, unless it's had an overnight growth spurt. The first part of this species taxonomic name 'Ocyphaps lophotes' comes from the Greek 'okua', meaning a spear. The second visitor's crest, unlike the first's, to me is suggestive of a woomera. This species has certainly settled well in our coastal and urban region from the arid and semi-arid inland.

Essentially a granivore (seed and grain-eater), these birds no doubt find the much more plentiful supply of water a bonus.



Lorikeets

By Col and Melissa Markham



Koel & Little Wattlebird

By Pam Hazelwood

**MONTHLY SIGHTINGS :- March/ April 2020**

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

SPECIES	Nº	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Eurasian Coot	34	15/3/2020	Bellambi	Bellambi Lagoon	Mike Morphett
Pacific Black Duck	2	08/4/2020	East Corrimal	stormwater channel leading into Towradgi Creek	Mike Morphett
Crested Pigeon	23	07/4/2020	Bellambi	powerlines Cawley St	Mike Morphett
Crested Pigeon	4	14/4/2020	Bulli Beach	Collins Creek dune vegetation	Mike Morphett
Crested Pigeon	12	16/4/2020	Thirroul Beach	Tingara Park	Mike Morphett
Wonga Pigeon	1	09/4/2020	Thirroul	backyard	Mike Morphett
Eastern Great Egret	1	15/3/2020	Bellambi	Bellambi Lagoon	Mike Morphett
Eastern Great Egret	1	14/4/2020	Bulli Beach	Whartons Creek outlet	Mike Morphett
Masked Lapwing	4	08/4/2020	Bellambi	nature strip Gladstone St	Mike Morphett
Masked Lapwing	2	09/4/2020	East Corrimal	Corrimal Beach Tourist Park	Mike Morphett
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	2	19/4/2020	Thirroul	in flight north over residential	Mike Morphett
Kelp Gull	1 imm	14/4/2020	Woonona Beach	aerial over Flat Rock	Mike Morphett
Little Pied Cormorant	1	14/4/2020	Woonon Beach	Flat Rock rock platform	Mike Morphett
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	08/4/2020	Thirroul	overhead above Excelsior	Mike Morphett
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	4/18/2020	Thirroul	aerial high over residential area towards sea	Mike Morphett
Galah	7	07/4/2020	Bellambi	grass median strip Cawley St	Mike Morphett
Galah	8	07/4/2020	Corrimal	grass verge Meadow St	Mike Morphett
Galah	15	14/4/2020	East Woonona	Ocean Park	Mike Morphett
Dusky Moorhen	3	15/3/2020	Bellambi	Bellambi Lagoon	Mike Morphett
Dusky Moorhen	1	16/4/2020	Thirroul Beach	Flanagans Creek outlet	Mike Morphett
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	32	08/4/2020	Bellambi Rothery St	on & around garbage bin	Mike Morphett
Australian King-Parrot	2 M&F	4/03/2020	T'wana Village Green	Foothills	Alan & Anne Cousins
Crimson Rosella	5	4/03/2020	T'wana Village Green	Tree	Alan & Anne Cousins
Crimson Rosella	1	16/4/2020	Thirroul Beach	Tingara Park	Mike Morphett
Eastern Koel	1	15/4/2020	Balgownie	Tree in backyard	Pam
Powerful Owl	1 m	31/3/2020	Thirroul (heard)	southern edge of Excelsior	Mike Morphett
Powerful Owl	1	07/4/2020	Thirroul (heard)	Excelsior northern end	Mike Morphett
Powerful Owl	1	16/4/2020	Thirroul (heard)	Excelsior (southern edge)	Mike Morphett
Barking Owl	1	02/4/2020	Escarpment (heard)	Foothills	Alan Cousins
Barking Owl	1	02/4/2020	Escarpment (heard)	Foothills	Alan Cousins
Barking Owl	1	16/4/2020	Illawarra Escarpment	Bushland- heard @ 10.00pm	Alan Cousins
Laughing Kookaburra	2	12/04/2020	Lake Illawarra Sth	Perched Powerpole- residential	Darryl Goldrick
Green Catbird	2	13/4/2020	Thirroul	backyard	Mike Morphett
Superb Fairy-wren	6	09/4/2020	East Corrimal	bank of stormwater channel leading into Towradgi Creek	Mike Morphett
Superb Fairy-wren	3	19/4/2020	Thirroul	Coast Street watercourse vegetation	Mike Morphett
Grey Butcherbird	1	18/04/2020	Coniston	Perched Powerline	Darryl Goldrick
Pied Currawong	2	12/04/2020	Lake Illawarra Sth	Eucalypt -backyard	Darryl Goldrick
Willie Wagtail	1	09/4/2020	East Corrimal	Corrimal Beach Park nr Towradgi Creek outlet	Mike Morphett
Willie Wagtail	2	16/4/2020	Thirroul Beach	Tingara Park	Mike Morphett
Welcome Swallow	1	09/4/2020	East Corrimal	Corrimal Beach Park aerial	Mike Morphett
Welcome Swallow	1	19/4/2020	Thirroul	MacCauleys Beach	Mike Morphett

**Thank you to those members who posted their sightings to me for records and newsletter. So, please email me or phone.**

[www.iboc.com.au](http://www.iboc.com.au)

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