

Flame Robin

Scientific Name: *Petroica phoenicea*
 Atlas Number: 382

Description:

Male Flame Robins have a bright orange breast and throat, and are white on the lower belly and undertail. The top of their head and back is dark slate grey and there is a clear white stripe on the folded wing. The bill is black and the legs dark brown. The female is quite



different from the male, being mostly grey-brown with a pale buff wing stripe, and a mostly white outer tail feather. Young Flame Robins resemble the adult female, but the brown of the back is heavily streaked with buff and the pale belly is streaked with brown.

Similar species:

The male Flame Robin may be confused with the male Scarlet Robin, *Petroica multicolor*. This species is black above and on the head, extending to the throat, with a scarlet breast and upper belly. Female and young Flame Robins can easily be confused with those of several other robin species. The main difference is that the outermost tail feather is white, and the next one has only a white edging.

Distribution:

Flame Robins are found in a broad coastal band around the south-east corner of the Australian mainland, from southern Queensland to just west of the South Australian border. The species is also found in Tasmania.

Habitat:

Flame Robins prefer forests and woodlands up to about 1800 m above sea level.

Seasonal movements:

In winter, Flame Robins may move to lower and more open areas, including gardens, and some Tasmanian birds move to the mainland.

Feeding:

Flame Robins feed on insects, spiders and other small arthropods. Birds take prey from the ground, pouncing on it from exposed lookouts, then return to a perch to eat. Outside of the breeding season, Flame Robins often forage in scattered flocks, but are otherwise seen alone.

Breeding:

The Flame Robin may lay up to two clutches during breeding season. The eggs are pale green or blue eggs, spotted with brown marks. These marks are mostly at the larger end. The nest is built by the female, and is a grass and bark cup, bound with spider web and decorated with lichen. It is normally placed in a cavity in a tree or rock face, or other similar area up to 20 m above the ground. The female also incubates the eggs, while the male supplies her with food. Both sexes feed the young chicks.

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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SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

CLUB MEETING:

Monday 10th at 7.30pm

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

Jann Gowans - More Adventures in American Birding

This presentation will share some of the birds and animals encountered on a recent American trip. Travels included diverse environments from the Everglades around the Chokoloskee area in southern Florida, to the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and the desert areas at Joshua Tree National Park in southern California! Join us for the adventure and perhaps add a few places to your bucket list.

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

MIDWEEK WALK

Wednesday 12th at 9.00am

Leader Rupert Jarvis

Cringila Park

Meet at 9 am at the entrance to the park in Lockwood Street Cringila. To reach the meeting point turn from Five Islands Road (at the junction with Springhill Road) into Lake Avenue. After approx 1 km turn right into Auburn Parade then left into Lockwood Parade. Bring morning tea.

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

MONTHLY OUTING

Sunday 16th at 8.30am

Leaders Alan and Anne Cousins

Mt Annan Botanical Gardens - Meet at 8.30am at the main car park.

Bring morning tea and lunch. Hopefully the Spring flowers will be starting to show.

In case of uncertain weather contact Alan or Anne Cousins on 0413869534 before 7.30am

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING:

Next Committee Meeting on the 17th September 2018

The next committee meeting will be at 2pm on Monday 17th September 2018 at the home of Terry & Mark Edwell, 28 Blanchard Crescent Balgownie.

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

NEWSLETTER

DEADLINE 21st September 2018

For all articles & photos in the next IBOC newsletter PLEASE E-mail contributions: early To Charles Dove newsletter@iboc.org.au or post to 3/15 Shepherd Street, Mollymook 2539.

Wishing a big welcome to all new members

REPORTS

IBOC July Monthly Meeting Report

by Ross Gowans

Beth Mott on the Powerful Owl Project

Beth who worked on the Powerful Owl Project for a number of years presented the findings of the research up to this time.

The project has not finished, but unfortunately Beth's employment on the project has; reports to the project can still be sent in via the bird data app available through the Birdlife Australia's website. Data from the project has found active sites exceeded the predicted findings for the project, this is good news as it is believed that other owl species are in more dire straits than the Powerful Owl.

Data showed also that their preferred habitat is in the fringe of urban areas where they breed within 50-71mts of houses. This unfortunately puts them at higher risk of collision with structures (windows mainly) and cars. This is their greatest mortality risk.

On the website you can see about other studies being done on hollows as homes and attempts to provide suitable artificial hollows that can be used by wildlife of all shapes and sizes. Can you believe a recorded sighting of a possum and a powerful owl sharing a hollow? Another little bit of information: the reason an owl turns it's head to look around--through evolution to save weight they lost some of the muscle structures around their eyes, every little bit counts.

All in all, a very interesting and informative presentation.

Thank you, Beth!

MIDWEEK WALK REPORT

Walk at Bass Point 15th August 2018

by Terry Edwell

After winding our way past all the activity at the site where the Marina and Sub-division will eventually be, we arrived at the gate to Bass Point reserve. While we waited for the others to come we spotted a Nankeen Kestrel sitting in the sun hunched up against the wind and a couple of other birds were flying around but the wind was very gusty. We started to think we were the only ones there but Rupert and the others were in the picnic area so we drove the short distance to join them. Eight brave Birdos all rugged up and ready to go decided to look for a more protected place which turned out to be Bushrangers Bay.

It was so calm at the bay there was hardly any wind and the sea was calm it was amazing. The first bird we heard was a Yellow Robin and there were Silvereyes and Lewin's Honeyeaters whistling in the shrubs on the cliff sides. The beach is very hard to walk on as it is all rocks of different sizes and they slip under your feet as you walk. Out beyond the bay could be seen a lot of sea birds flying just above the water where the wind had whipped up the sea and it was all white caps. Some of the men walked around to get a closer look at the birds and they spotted Gannets, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, Albatross and Cormorants both Pied and Little Pied. There were also Silver Gulls, a Great Cormorant a White-faced Heron and a Sooty Oystercatcher. We returned to the cars and had our morning tea in the sunshine and decided on our way back we would call in to the first carpark as by now the wind had eased off quite a bit. On our way back, Neil joined us so now we were nine Birdos.

At this spot we had good sightings of the Superb Fairy-wrens, Eastern Spinebills, Red-whiskered Bulbuls, Little Wattlebird, Spotted Pardalote, Crimson Rosella, Welcome Swallow and of course the New Holland Honeyeater. As we were getting ready to leave a Ranger pulled up in his car and asked if we were coming or going as he had to close the park due to a "No Fire Ban" just issued. So, we were lucky to get our walk over. We spotted 33 species and had a very enjoyable day even with the strong wind. Two new members joined us which was very nice and we welcome you both Paul and John and hope you enjoy being with us and we see many more birds together.

Bird List for Bass Point 15 th August 2018		33 Species	8 Members
Bar-shouldered Dove	Sooty Oystercatcher	Eastern Spinebill	Magpie-lark
Black-browed Albatross	Crested Tern	Lewin's Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	Silver Gull	Noisy Miner	Silvereye
Australian Gannet	Crimson Rosella	Little Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow
Little Pied Cormorant	Satin Bowerbird	New Holland Honeyeater	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Great Cormorant	Superb Fairy-wren	Pied Currawong	Australasian Pipit
Pied Cormorant	White-browed Scrubwren	Australian Magpie	
White-faced Heron	Brown Thornbill	Willie Wagtail	
Nankeen Kestrel	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Raven	

WEEKEND WALK REPORT

Barren Grounds, Saturday 18th August 2018

by Ken Brown

After a cold and windy week, we were uncertain how Saturday morning would be at the top of the escarpment, but it was quite pleasant when we pulled into the car park, after avoiding a Crimson Rosella that nearly collided with our windscreen and stopping to avoid a Grey Shrike-thrush that was happy to hop along in front of the car. 16 of us turned up for the day, including a couple of our newest members.

After observing a few birds around the carpark, we headed off along the track to the east towards the Lookout. The track was in good condition, the walking was easy and there were plenty of wildflowers but the birds were rather scarce. The wind was picking up a bit, moving the trees around and making it a bit difficult to spot the birds that we could hear. We got to the Lookout and enjoyed the view while the tail of the group closed up and then returned to the main track to continue towards the trig station. As we got amongst the taller trees the birds became more frequent with Thornbills, Fantails and numerous Silvereyes around.

While the stop at the Lookout had been a bit early for morning tea, it looked as though the trig was going to be a bit far, so when the message came through that some at the back were turning around, the front group stopped at a clearing on the crest of a hill and enjoyed a pleasant cuppa with the sun still shining and only a light breeze keeping us cool. After morning-tea, we headed back to the carpark. Not many birds again on the way back until we got to within a couple of hundred metres of the carpark where we saw a number of birds in the taller timber, including a group of about half a dozen Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo.

Back at the cars it was a bit early, but the sun was nice and we had worked up an appetite so we had our lunch sitting around the shelter. After lunch the intention was to do a short walk down the southern track. The sky was starting to look a bit dark to the southwest but we had hardly left the carpark to be rewarded with a number of birds, including the Varied Sittella. At the hut we found a Copperhead snake coiled up at the base of the tank enjoying the last of the sun. He didn't appreciate the attention he was receiving and soon glided off into the thicker bush. We started again down the track but hadn't gone far when the clouds rolled in and we were retreating to the cars as the first drops of rain descended. Given the dryness I think everyone was happy to see the rain and didn't mind the day being cut short a little. Not a huge bird count, but thanks Tom and Joan, it was still a very nice day.

Barren Grounds Walk 19 th August 2018		24 species	16 members
Swamp Harrier	Superb Fairy-wren	Striated Pardalote	Grey Shrike-thrush
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Magpie
Crimson Rosella	Striated Thornbill	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Superb Lyrebird	Yellow Thornbill	New Holland Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
White-throated Treecreeper	Brown Thornbill	White-naped Honeyeater	Eastern Yellow Robin
Satin Bowerbird	Spotted Pardalote	Varied Sittella	Silvereye

NOTICES & ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Some early members may remember Mildred who I think attended a few meetings and outings during the early years of IBOC. Sadly Mildred has now moved to Care Accommodation but her son, Russell passed on a few books from Mildred's possessions which have now gone into The IBOC Library Collection.

An Australian Bird Book by J.A.Leach 8th Edition 1946 with the signature of D. Gibson

What Bird Is That by Neville Cayley 2nd Edition 1950

60 Camera Studies of Australian Birds by Donald Trounson and Molly Clampett and notes by Peggy Trounson

I assume that these books may have originated from Doug Gibson's personal collection but been passed on to Mildred at some stage.

Members may well be aware of Donald Trounson's early involvement with the National Photographic Index of Australian Birds and The Club, through Doug Gibson's personal contact, was able to welcome Donald Trounson as one of our early guest speakers when he showed a number of his slides. Those of us with a copy of the Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds would have enjoyed seeing many of his photographs.

The Trounsons came to Australia in 1959 when he was appointed a First Secretary at the British High Commission in Sydney. Donald & Peggy cultivated their early interest in Australian birds by collecting their calls on tape during their extensive travels.

Mr Trounson won wide acceptance of a \$100,000 scheme to create a central collection of colour photographs of Australia's '700' or so species of birds, to which photographers everywhere were encouraged to contribute. Known as the National Photographic Index of Australian Birds, it was to be housed at the Australian National Museum in Sydney with a replica for the National Library, Canberra. Initially a committee set up by the Museum with Sir Percy Spender at its head directed operations.

These three items are now available to view in The Club Library Collection and those club members with a particular interest in bird photography might like to see Donald Trounson's early studios as shown in the introduction to this publication.

Richard Miller

Back from extinction:

The Mallee Emu-wren makes a comeback in South Australia

Sun 22 Jul 2018 at 2:43pm ABC Riverland By Sowaibah Hanifie

Image The Mallee emu wren weighs only as much as a 10 cent piece. (Supplied: Natural Resources SA Murray Darling Basin)

After a series of catastrophic wildfires in 2014, the Mallee Emu-wren became extinct in South Australia, but the birds are making a comeback in the state with the help of environmentalists. When the tiny bird — weighing only as much as a 10cent piece — could no longer be found in SA, there were still numbers that existed in parts of Victoria's north-west, but they were listed as endangered. In one of the three national parks where they remained, Victoria's Wyperfeld National Park, their numbers were only in the hundreds. Researchers were concerned a severe bushfire season would threaten the remaining population. Numerous organisations in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, together with the support of the South Australian Government, devised a breeding program over four years to boost the birds' numbers.



A number of Mallee Emu-wren have been released into Ngarkat Conservation Park in South Australia. More to be released in lots of 40 at various location over the next few months

Spring 2018 Camp

Ulladulla – Kings Point Retreat 13th - 20th October 2018

The IBOC Spring 2018 Camp will be held at Ulladulla on the NSW Coast south of Wollongong at Kings Point Retreat from Saturday 13th October to Saturday 20th October 2018. Ulladulla is a major tourist centre and regional town situated 140km S of Wollongong. Kings Point Retreat is at the southern end of the town just before Burrill Lake.

Kings Point Retreat **300 Kings Point Drive, Ulladulla 2539. Ph 02 4454 4261.** (Do not book online as Charles has arranged for special rates for IBOC) please phone the caravan park for bookings and mention the Bird Club.

Accommodation

Cabins all ensuite and include kitchen wear (plates, cups, pots, cutlery etc,) and linen.

8x1 Bedroom Cottages,

1 bedroom with Queen Bed. Sleeps 2 \$110 per night for 2

3x2 bedroom cottages

1 bedroom with Queen Bed & 1 with double bed + bunk over \$195per night for 4

11x2 bedroom cottages

2 bedrooms, 1 queen bed and other single bed + bunk Bed \$195 per night for 4

1x3 bedroom cottage

2 bathrooms Queen bed 1 room, bunk bed other 2 – dishwasher - 2x TV's
\$245 per night for up to 4 adults.

Powered sites **No en-suite** \$38 per night for 2

Powered sites **with en-suite** \$50 per night for 2

When booking a deposit of 1 night's fee is required as a deposit

It was recommended that members requiring cabins and sites **book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment** as they can get very busy at certain periods especially weekends

When booking, remember to tell them that you are with the Illawarra Bird Observers Club

Directions: From Wollongong travel via the Princes Hwy to Ulladulla. Continue south through the town and turn right 1.5km south of the second roundabout into Kings Point Road. The entrance to the Retreat is on the left immediately round the corner Once you have booked please let Betty know as usual, on 4236 0307, by text on mobile 0432 892 945 or by email elizabethjudson@bigpond.com

'Miraculous' feather transplant saves Tawny Frogmouth

Updated 7 Aug 2018, 2:07pm

In what has been described as a "miraculous" rescue, a Brisbane vet has surgically implanted feathers into a badly injured wild bird, saving it from certain death.

A tawny frogmouth was recently found tangled in a barbed wire fence at Jimboomba, south-west of Brisbane. The distressed bird was cut free by wildlife carer Annette Bird and taken to the Brisbane Bird and Exotics Veterinary hospital at suburban Greenslopes on the city's south side.

"When I saw him I thought game over," Ms Bird said.

"Clearly he was stuck and I realised he was in big trouble, so I had to cut his main flight feathers to get him free, or it was going to end badly."

The tawny frogmouth, called Koura, was sedated and cut from the fence but before it could be taken to the vet, Ms Bird received a call from the RSPCA to rescue another tawny frogmouth nearby.

"Unfortunately the other bird had a horribly smashed wing from a car strike and wasn't going to live, but I gathered it up anyway and rushed both birds to the vet," she said.

"As it turns out it was the best decision I've ever made."



The Tawny Frogmouth bird was found tangled in a barbed wire fence at Jimboomba.

Koura's luck continued when vet Hamish Baron was on duty at the Brisbane Bird and Exotics Veterinary Clinic.

He examined Koura and found that he would not be able to fly and survive in the wild in his current condition and drastic measures were needed to save him.

"Fortuitously, I've just got back from three-and-a-half months training doing falconry medicine in Dubai and we did feather implants every day over there because the birds were breaking their wing feathers during training," Dr Baron said.

"This bird was the perfect candidate, because it came in with another bird that had passed away — a tawny frogmouth of the same size and sex — and so we were able to transplant the feathers without any dramas trying to find a donor bird.

"The stars really did align for this bird."

Dr Baron said a delicate procedure called "imping", or feather transplant, was used to save Koura.

"We trimmed the feather shafts really short and placed a little bamboo skewer inside the shaft and attached that also to the feather that we're replacing it with," he said. "Then we used some glue and bicarb soda just to provide a good seal and then just use an emery board to smooth all the feathers down. "It was a very, very lucky bird and it was a little bit of a miracle that everything came together, that we had the skill and the time that day to do it and we also had the feathers from the donor bird."

Koura was released into the care of Ms Bird that afternoon and five days later, after a couple of test flights, was released back into the wild. "I took him back out to Jimboomba to release him in his area, and he flew straight, he flew high — it was just awesome to see," Ms Bird said. "The outcome was unbelievable as far as I'm concerned, it was miraculous really.



X-ray showed no fractures on the Tawny Frogmouth bird found tangled in barbed wire.



The vet used glue and bicarb to make an extra strong bond at the joined area of bird's wing.

MAGPIES START NESTING

It's time to keep an eye to the sky – Magpie swooping season is with us.

Whether it's kids on their way to school or someone going out for a bike ride along the coast, Magpies in the Illawarra have been attacking since July.

It's led some to think the swooping season has started a bit earlier this year, but a National Parks and Wildlife Service spokesman said that wasn't the case.

"Magpies generally breed between July and November each year," the spokesman said.

"Magpies start breeding as soon as conditions are suitable including when weather begins to warm up.

READ MORE: [Illawarra magpie swoop caught on camera: video](#)

The spokesman said the diving behaviour was the birds protecting their newborn chicks.

"Magpies are very protective of their chicks," the spokesman said.

"Some, but not all, Magpies swoop anyone they see as an intruder in their territory.

"This protective behaviour lasts only a few weeks, so be prepared to avoid them, or risk being injured."

In case someone was thinking about taking out some drastic action after being swooped, the spokesman warned that Magpies were a protected species and it was illegal to capture, harm or kill them.

It was also against the law to collect their eggs or harm their young.

The spokesman said the best thing people can do is avoid nesting areas.

If that wasn't possible people should walk past the area confidently, do not stop and watch the bird as they walk past.

A hat or bike helmet can help protect your head from the swooping magpie's beak – and sunglasses can do the same for your eyes.

Cyclists should get off their bike and quickly walk past.

Clever Crows trained to pick up litter at French theme park

David Chazan – SMH - 13 August 2018

Paris: Traditionally seen as harbingers of death or symbols of evil, the crow family of birds are often considered to be pests.

But a French park has taken advantage of their innate intelligence and trained the birds to pick up litter. Six rooks have been taught to patrol a popular historical theme park in the western Vendée region and clear up cigarette butts and other rubbish in return for food.

When a bird deposits a cigarette butt or a piece of rubbish in a box, a morsel of food is dispensed as a reward. Some rooks have already started work and others will begin this week.

Rooks are considered "particularly intelligent" members of the Crow family, said Nicolas de Villiers, head of the Puy du Fou park.

"In an affectionate, supportive atmosphere, they like to communicate with humans and establish a relationship through play," he said.

"The goal is not just to clear up, because visitors are generally careful to keep things clean, but also to demonstrate that nature itself can teach us to take care of the environment."

The rooks are quick workers, able to fill a bucket with rubbish in less than 45 minutes, Mr Villiers said.

A park falconer hatched the idea of putting them to work. Christophe Gaborit, who is accustomed to training birds of prey, said: "They were motivated by the reward and they soon understood how the game worked."

Crows can damage crops by eating seeds and grain. They are noisy and have been known to attack cars and wrench off windscreen wipers.

Yet they are highly sociable and so intelligent that some biologists say they are as smart as the average seven-year-old child.

They make tools, tearing strips from leaves and using them to winkle bugs out of tree trunks. Experiments have shown them to be capable of solving relatively complex puzzles. They will bend wire to fashion hooks, even if they have never encountered wire before.

Scientists tested whether the rooks were really clever enough to pick up the litter by placing them in a room with a worm in a tube of water just below pecking distance, with a small pile of pebbles nearby. The birds dropped the pebbles into the water until the worm came within reach.

They avoided objects that would float in the water and those too large for the container, demonstrating a grasp of volume displacement acquired by children between the ages of five to seven.

Frédéric Jiguet, an ornithologist at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, said Crows are capable of recognising individual human faces. "I captured a series of crows in a park, tagged them and released them.

"They didn't like it. Many weeks later, I returned to the park with colleagues, and the Crows I had tagged attacked me but ignored the others."

Mr Villiers said visitors to his theme park, the second most visited in France after Disneyland Paris, were entranced by the birds' performance as cleaners.

World's biggest King Penguin colony shrinks 90 percent

The planet's largest colony of King Penguins has declined by nearly 90 percent in three decades, The last time scientists set foot on France's remote Ile aux Cochons — roughly half way between the tip of Africa and Antarctica—the island was blanketed by two million of the flightless birds, which stand about a metre (three feet) tall.

But recent satellite images and photos taken from helicopters show the population has collapsed, with barely 200,000 remaining, according to a study published in Antarctic Science. King Penguins are home bodies. While adults will set to sea for days at a time foraging for food, the species does not migrate. Why the colony on Ile aux Cochon has been so decimated remains a mystery. "It is completely unexpected, and particularly significant since this colony represented nearly one third of the King Penguins in the world," said lead author Henri Weimerskirch, an ecologist at the Centre for Biological Studies in Chize, France, who first set eyes on the colony in 1982. Climate change may play a role. In 1997, a particularly strong El Nino



Recent satellite images and photos taken from helicopters show the King Penguin population on Ile aux Cochon has collapsed, with barely 200,000 remaining

remains a mystery. "It is completely unexpected, and particularly significant since this colony represented nearly one third of the King Penguins in the world," said lead author Henri Weimerskirch, an ecologist at the Centre for Biological Studies in Chize, France, who first set eyes on the colony in 1982. Climate change may play a role. In 1997, a particularly strong El Nino

weather event warmed the southern Indian Ocean, temporarily pushing the fish and squid on which King Penguins depend south, beyond their foraging range.

"This resulted in population decline and poor breeding success" for all the King Penguin colonies in the region, Weimerskirch said. El Nino's are cyclical events that occur every two to seven years. But they can be amplified by global warming, which itself produces many of the same results, albeit on a longer timescale. Indeed, Weimerskirch and colleagues showed in an earlier study that climate change, on its current trajectory, will likely make the Iles Crozet—the archipelago that contains Ile aux Cochons—unviable for King Penguins by mid-century. Migration is not an option because there are no other suitable islands within striking range. Other factors may be contributing to the decline of the Ile aux Cochons colony, including overcrowding. **One egg at a time** "The larger the population, the fiercer the competition between individuals," noted a statement from France's National Centre for Scientific Research, which funded the study. "The repercussions of lack of food are thus amplified and can trigger an unprecedented rapid and drastic drop in numbers." But this so-called "density-dependent effect" can also be made worse by climate change, the study notes. Another possible culprit is avian cholera, which has affected seabirds on nearby Marion and Amsterdam Islands, including some King Penguins. But until Weimerskirch and other researchers return to Ile aux Cochons—hopefully, he said, in early 2019—they won't know for sure. It is also possible that invasive species such as rats, mice or cats, have found their way onto the island. The Red List of Threatened Species conservation status for King Penguins is currently "least concern," but the new data may prompt a re-evaluation. King Penguins are the second-largest penguin species after the Emperor. They do not make a nest, but rather lay one egg at a time and carry it around on their feet covered with a flap of abdominal skin, called a brood patch. Parents take turns incubating the egg, switching every couple of weeks over a two-month period. There are two sub-species of kings. *Aptenodytes patagonica patagonicus* inhabits the Falklands and South Georgia Island, while *Aptenodytes patagonica halli* resides in the southernmost reaches of Indian Ocean and South Pacific.

1 August 2018

Spacewalkers fling satellites into orbit by hand to track bird behaviour

Media player: "Space" to play, "M" to mute, "left" and "right" to seek.

[Video: Sergey Prokopyev flings a Sirius nano-satellite into space \(ABC News\)](#)

Spacewalking cosmonauts have flung tiny satellites into orbit and set up an antenna for tracking birds on Earth. Russian Sergey Prokopyev released four research satellites by hand, with the first tumbling away as the International Space Station soared 402 kilometres above Illinois.

By the time the fourth one was on its way 14 minutes later, the station was almost to Spain. Two of the satellites were the size of a tissue box, while the other two were longer.

With that quickly behind them, Mr Prokopyev and Oleg Artemyev spent the next several hours installing the antenna for a German-led, animal-tracking project known as Icarus — short for International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space. The cosmonauts had to unreel, drag and connect long, white cables in order to provide power and data to the system. At one point, Mr Artemyev had to pull out a sharp knife to deal with a twisted cable.

"Can you give us some more difficult tasks please?" Mr Artemyev joked as he routed the cables, a long and tedious chore. The space station is an ideal perch for the antenna, compared with a typical satellite, said project director Martin Wikelski of the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Germany. That was because spacewalkers could fix something if necessary and the computer was better protected from space radiation, he noted.

The project will start out tracking blackbirds and turtle doves already outfitted with small GPS tags, then move on to other songbirds, fruit bats and bigger wildlife.

Mr Wikelski said researchers had ear tags for big mammals like gazelle, jaguars, camels and elephants, as well as leg-band tags for larger birds such as storks. The tags are easy to wear and should not bother the animals, he said.

Mr Wikelski, who watched the spacewalk from Russian Mission Control outside Moscow, said researchers could better understand animal behaviour through lifelong monitoring.

Among the things to learn — where the animals migrate, and how they grow up and manage to survive.

"We also learn where, when and why they die," he explained, "so we can protect our wild pets".

The space station is also home to three Americans and one German. They have two spacewalks next month.

AP

MONTHLY SIGHTINGS: -July/August 2018

compiled by Darryl Goldrick

SPECIES	Nº	DATE	LOCATION	HABITAT	OBSERVER
Freckled Duck	26	12/08/2018	Sth Nowra	Twin waters dam	Charles Dove
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	2	9/08/2018	Lake Conjola	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Australasian Grebe	3	6/08/2018	Botanic Gardens	Lake	Alan/Anne Cousins
White-headed Pigeon	2	6/08/2018	Balgownie	Yard	Terry Edwell
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	4	9/08/2018	Thirroul	Backyard	Mike Morphett
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	3	2/08/2018	Thirroul	Backyard	Mike Morphett
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	4	9/08/2018	Thirroul	Yard	Mike Morphett
Sooty Oystercatcher	2	30/07/2018	Wollongong Harbour	Beach	B Hales/AI Cousins
Red-necked Avocet	6	11/08/2018	Koona Bay, Oak Flats	Shallows	Paul Charlier
Tawny Frogmouth	2	29/07/2018	Ulladulla	mixed Forest	Charles Dove
Tawny Frogmouth	2	3/08/2018	Ulladulla	River Bank Forest	Charles Dove
Tawny Frogmouth	2	9/08/2018	Lake Conjola	Casuarina	Charles Dove
Tawny Frogmouth	1	17/08/2018	Ulladulla	Banksia over Rd	Charles Dove
Red-capped Plover	7	9/08/2018	Lake Conjola	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Cattle Egret	2	11/08/2018	Tarrawanna	Front Residential Yard	Sue/Ken Brown
Double-banded Plover	1	14/08/2018	Lake Conjola	Foreshore	Charles Dove
Fairy Prion	50	29/07/2018	Ulladulla	Ocean	Charles Dove
Masked Lapwing	30	12/08/2018	Thomas Dalton Park	Oval	Ken Guymer
White-faced Heron	1	8/08/2018	Uniting Church, Bellambi	Grounds, grazing	Mike Morphett
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	15/08/2018	Ulladulla	mixed Forest	Charles Dove
Royal Spoonbill	5	16/08/2018	Dolphin Point	Dam	Charles Dove
Black-shouldered Kite	1	18/08/2018	Jamberoo Rec Park/A/Park	Hovering side of road	Mike Morphett
Square-tailed Kite	1	11/08/2018	Balgownie	Overhead	Pam Hazlewood
White-bellied Sea-eagle	1	09-Aug-18	Lake at Albion Park Rail	O'head	Peter Fackender
Little Eagle	1	6/08/2018	Botanic Gardens	Roosting	Alan/Anne Cousins
Nankeen Kestrel	2	31/07/2018	Ulladulla	Sports ground	Charles Dove
Lewin's Rail	1	4/08/2018	Puckey's Estate	Swamp Edge	Susan Edwell
Long-billed Corella	~30	19/08/2018	Lake Illawarra South	High School Grounds	Darryl Goldrick
Little Corella	~30	19/08/2018	Lake Illawarra South	High School Grounds	Darryl Goldrick
Cockatiel	2	17/08/2018	Lake Illawarra South	Neighbour's Euc.Tree	Darryl Goldrick
Musk Lorikeet	6	31/07/2018	Botanic Gardens	Tree	Tom/Joan Wylie
Crimson Rosella	1	9/08/2018	Primbee	Oval	Walter Boles
Eastern Rosella	1	9/08/2018	Primbee	Oval	Walter Boles
Sacred Kingfisher	1	26/07/2018	Primbee	Powerline	Walter Boles
Green Catbird	1	31/07/2018	Botanic Gardens	Rainforest	Tom/Joan Wylie
Satin Bowerbird	m+f	6/08/2018	Botanic Gardens	Bower near woodland garden	AL/A Cousins
Spotted Pardalote	2	31/07/2018	Mollymook	River Bank	Charles Dove
Spotted Pardalote	2	3/07/2018	Ulladulla	Heathland reserve	Charles Dove
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	4	25/07/2018	Bomaderry Creek	Bush	Tom/Joan Wylie
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	3	7/08/2018	Porters Crk Dam	mixed Forest	Charles Dove
Fuscous Honeyeater	1	9/08/2018	Albion Park Rail	Backyard	Peter Fackender
White-naped Honeyeater		25/07/2018	Bomaderry Creek	Bush	Tom/Joan Wylie
White-naped Honeyeater	2	9/08/2018	Albion Park Rail	Backyard	Peter Fackender
Eastern Whipbird	2A -1im	1/8/2018	Thirroul	Backyard	Mike Morphett
Crested Shrike-tit	1	28/07/2018	Yattah Yattah	Eucalyptus Forest	Charles Dove
Australasian Figbird	1m+1f	12/08/2018	Jamberoo	Magnolia Tree	Betty Hudson
Grey Butcherbird	1	1/08/2018	Tarrawanna	Yard- bird bath	Alan/Anne Cousins
Pied Currawong	30	13/08/2018	Avondale	Overhead	Tera Wheway
Bassian Thrush	1	8/08/2018	Balgownie	Yard	Terry Edwell
Bassian Thrush	1	14/08/2018	Thirroul	Yard	Mike Morphett
Red-browed Finch	25	3/08/2018	Thirroul	Backyard	Mike Morphett
Australasian Pipit	1	4/08/2018	West Dapto	Roadside verge	Bruce Coyte