



birding  
nsw

# Newsletter

NSW Field Ornithologists Club Inc

Issue 266

December 2014

## President's Report

I begin this report with a request for help. At short notice, Rae Lister has had to give up editorship of the newsletter – this issue will be her last. If no one takes up the position, there may be a hiatus between issues, which could last for some time. If anyone is interested in assuming the task of newsletter editor, please let us know!

I take this opportunity to thank Rae for her work as editor over the last five years. She joined the Club in 2000. She has taken the newsletter into the electronic age, and due to her efforts, many of our members now receive the newsletter online, saving the club a considerable amount of money. Rae has been active on our committee, contributing many ideas. She has taken part in many Club activities such as the Grenfell Surveys, and recently coordinated our section of the NSW Bird Club Stall at the 1<sup>st</sup> Australasian Bird Fair held at Sydney Olympic Park in October.

The brainchild primarily of Phil Straw among others and supported by BirdLife Australia through BirdLife Southern NSW, this fair was a great success.

The NSW Bird Club stall relied on the participation of numerous volunteers. I would like to thank Rae, Graham Walters, Jill Molan, Ida Rohne, Elisabeth Karplus, Jason Smart, Robyn Price, Norma Ikin, Russell Beardmore, Adrian Nieuwenhuizen, Gisela and Arnold Fleischmann and Stephen Hey for helping out on the weekend. Elisabeth arranged a TV presentation of bird photographs and on behalf of the club I would like to thank the following photographers who allowed us to use their images – Daphne Gonzalvez, Steve Merrett, Ian Montgomery, Jodi Osgood, Trevor Qusted, Alfred Schulte, Jon Spicer-Bell, John Taylor and Andrew Walker.

In 2015 the Twitchathon will change to the 17–18 October and the Bird Fair will be on the 24–25 October. I encourage you to save the dates.

Douglas Bateman has been the Birding NSW Coordinator for the biannual Capertee Valley Tree Planting and the October Regent Honeyeater Survey for many years and has decided that it is time for him to hand over the reins. Madeleine Murray will be the Tree Planting Coordinator and Elisabeth Karplus has volunteered to take over the Regent Honeyeater

Surveys. The next Regent Honeyeater Survey will take place on the 2015 October Long Weekend. If you are interested in participating please email Elisabeth on emhodson@exemail.com.au. Alan Morris continues as our representative on the national Regent Honeyeater Recovery Project.

The raffle to support the Powerful Owl Project of BirdLife Australia raised \$350 and was drawn at the October Meeting of the Birding NSW Central Coast Group. The main prize-winner was Steve Merrett and the second prize went to Ann Pritchard.

The Outback Track Kangaroo Island Tour led by Mark Fuller was well appreciated by the participants. The Sydney tour of the members of the Nagoya Branch of the Wild Bird Club of Japan went off well and further tours are planned.

**Reminder:** The December Club Meeting is on the second Tuesday of the month this year ie 9 December, when the 2014 Annual General Meeting, the Arnold McGill Memorial Lecture and the Club Christmas party will also occur.

The December Meeting Date will revert to the first Tuesday of the month in 2015.

**Tom Karplus**  
President, Birding NSW

## New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Eileen Davy	Holgate NSW
Dennis Grimwood	Saratoga NSW
Jill Hanvey	Mona Vale NSW
Paddy de Klerk	Mona Vale NSW
Janet Ryan	Blackall NSW
Karen Smedley	Janet Ryan NSW
Mary Smith	Greenwich NSW
Robin Smith	Manly NSW
Joy Williams	Mt St Thomas NSW
Praveen Yerramothu	Randwick NSW



## CLUB ACTIVITIES

### FIELD OUTINGS AND MEETINGS

#### FIELD OUTINGS

Bring a snack, lunch and a chair.

#### NATIONAL PARK USE FEES

Club Outings are sometimes held in National Parks. A valid day pass or annual pass is necessary for 46 national parks in NSW and that includes most in the Sydney and Central Coast Regions. The pass must be displayed on your vehicle at all times while you are in the park.

#### TOTAL FIRE BANS

Members are reminded that no Central Coast outings are held on days when Total Fire Bans are in force. For Sydney outings in times of a Total Fire Ban, check with the outing leader.

#### SECURITY

Members are reminded not to leave anything of value visible in unattended vehicles while bird watching.

#### CENTRAL COAST OUTINGS

Sydney Members should advise the leader in advance if they are coming to an outing so that they don't leave without you!

#### FEES AT CAMPOUTS

A camping fee may be applicable at some campsites.

#### PETS

Members are reminded that pets including dogs are not allowed on any Club activity including campouts.

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY

When attending field outings ensure you are wearing appropriate clothing, including wet weather gear in inclement weather, and suitable footwear. It is advisable to bring a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and to carry water.

Please sign the attendance register at field outings and also at the meetings.

If you leave the outing early please let the leader know before you go.

Participants attend at their own risk and should refrain from any behaviour that might put themselves or others at risk. That includes assessing whether they have a level of fitness required for the advertised outing. If in doubt contact the outing leader beforehand.

## DECEMBER

**Saturday 6 December Christmas Outing:** Scheyville and Mitchell Park. Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Whitmore and Pitt Town Dural Roads, Maraylya. Flat but sometimes uneven walking tracks. Bring along some food to share for a Christmas picnic lunch in the first picnic area in Mitchell Park at about 12.30 pm. Leaders: Tom and Elisabeth Karplus 9816 2285; 0421 665 553

**\*\*\*Tuesday 9 December Club Meeting:** Please note this meeting is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month and not on the usual 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday. The Mitchell Theatre, Level 1, The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney at 7.30 pm. Annual General Meeting and Arnold McGill Memorial Lecture, 'Bird Flight', speaker: John Dengate. The Club Christmas Party will be after the lecture. Please bring finger food to share.

**Wednesday 10 December Central Coast Half-day Outing:** Brisbane Water NP. Meet at 8.30 am at Staples Lookout, Woy Woy Road, Kariong. Lunch at cars Leader: Graeme Catt 4340 2109

**Saturday 13 December Central Coast Christmas Outing and Break-up:** Mardi and Tuggerah. Meet at 7.30 am at Murrumbung Homestead, 37 The Valley Way, Mardi for an early morning walk. Morning tea at 10.00 am then an outing to McPherson Road Swamp and Central Coast Wetlands. Return at 12.30 pm to Murrumbung Homestead for BBQ Christmas Lunch and break-up (BYO meat and drinks). Leaders: John and Carole Carpenter 4352 1060

**Christmas Day 2014 to New Year 2015 Club Campout:** Coolah Tops National Park. Temperatures will be pleasant because of the high altitude and nights will be cool for sleeping. Please note that the access road is steep and could be rough if it has not been graded recently. Many of the roads within the park are closed during wet weather. Access to the main camping area at The Barracks is suitable for all vehicles with care. Turn off the Coolah-Merriwa Road about four km east of Coolah then travel about 20 km to the park. Bring everything that you need including drinking water. There is a pit-toilet at the campsite. Leader: Allan Richards 9660 8062

**JANUARY 2015**

**Saturday 10 January Club Outing:** Centennial Park and various other locations in the Botany Bay area. Meet at 8.30 am in Dickens Drive near The Learning Centre, Centennial Park. Bird watching within the park and other nearby areas. Leader: Allan Richards 9660 8062; 0432 064 660

**Saturday 17 Saturday Club Outing:** Warriewood Wetlands and Long Reef. Meet at 8.30 am at Katoa Close, Warriewood. Walking along flat paths and tracks towards the end of Irrawong Reserve. Descent from the cliff at Long Reef to the rock platform. Bring suitable footwear for wading. Leader: Trevor Waller 0467 977 508

**24–26 January Australia Day Long Weekend Club Campout:** A campout is being arranged on a private property at Yaouk near Adaminaby. Please contact the Activities Officer, Allan Richards, at activities@birdingsw.org.au or on 9660-8062 for directions.

**Tuesday 27 January Central Coast Meeting:** Meet in the Progress Hall in Anzac Street, Tuggerah opposite McDonalds at 7.30 pm. Members' night.

**Wednesday 28 January Midweek Outing:** Nurragingy Reserve, Doonside. Meet at 8.30 am just inside the entrance, which is at 25 Knox Road Doonside. There is a set of traffic lights at the intersection of Cross Street and Knox Road, stay in the right hand lane, to turn right into the reserve. We will find a picnic table for lunch. Gradient: Easy. Leader: Carol Abbott 99801201; 0414312538

**Saturday 31 January Central Coast Outing:** Breakfast with the Birds—a combined activity with the Central Coast Community Environment Network, Pioneer Dairy. Meet at 7.30 am at Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah. Bookings required: phone Kate on 4349 4757. Cost of breakfast \$10. Alan Morris 0418 269 482

**FEBRUARY**

**Tuesday 3 February Club Meeting:** The Mitchell Theatre, Level 1, The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney at 7.30 pm, 'Bush Stone-curlew Monitoring and Nest Site Protection, Brisbane Water, Central Coast', speaker: Alan Morris.

**Saturday 7 February Club Outing:** Sydney Olympic Park. Meet at 8.00 am at Belvedere Lake, Bicentennial Park, parking area P10D. Proceed through the main gates, along the road past the Conference Centre until the lake is on your left hand side. The parking area is on the right, just after crossing the bridge. Lunch at cars. Leader: Judy Harrington 9712 5904; 0403 026 660

**Saturday 14 February Club Outing:** Hawkesbury area. Meet at 8.30 am at the car park for Scheyville National Park Office off Scheyville Road. Lunch at cars. Leader: Trevor Waller 0467 977 508

**Tuesday 24 January Central Coast Meeting:** Meet in the Progress Hall in Anzac Street, Tuggerah opposite McDonalds at 7.30 pm, 'The Ethiopian Rift Valley', speaker: Jay Nicholson.

**Wednesday 25 February Midweek Outing:** Narrabeen/Long Reef. Meet at 8.30 am at Jamieson Park. Turn into Mactier Street from Pittwater Road, this becomes The Esplanade, which bears right into Jamieson Park. We will visit Long Reef when the tides are best and hope to include Deep Creek as well. Gradient: Medium although there is a descent from the hill at Long Reef to the rock platform. Bring suitable footwear for wading. Leader: Elisabeth Karplus 9816 2285; 0421 665 553

**Saturday 28 February Central Coast Outing:** Ash Island and Stockton. Meet at 8.30 am Recreation Ground, Woodford Street, Minmi. Leader: Alan Morris 0418 269 482

## URGENT WANTED NEWSLETTER EDITOR

I haven't managed this transition as well as Stan! I began proofing for him in 2008—not so bad, with a few reports each newsletter, and then he asked me to take over as his circumstances had changed. Scary!

I was an easy target as I am a sucker for wanting to do what I can to make a contribution even if I am out of my depth. I fell for it and took over as he left. I am so grateful to the experienced birders I dealt with on the committee and still deal with who tolerated my inane questions and my general ignorance.

Can't say I am a that much more knowledgeable birder (an improvement) but I have learnt a heap from those experienced birders on the committee and those I have met in the Club and I have insights into what is happening in birding locally, and more generally, many more insights than I would have had just staying a Club member, which has been a bonus and enriching. I would never have known all those things if I hadn't taken on this role. So think about coming in to contribute to the Club and I guarantee you will get lots back.

I know someone very capable who is prepared to proof and edit the contributions but who also has other commitments. What I am asking for to keep this newsletter going is someone who can keep tabs on what is required each issue, chase it up and gosh even source novel contributions. It's really role sharing which can be rewarding but also really productive.

What do you think? Let's not even think about the alternative!

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2014 and CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Birding NSW (NSW Field Ornithologists Club Inc) will be held on Tuesday 9 December 2014 at the monthly Club Meeting, which commences at 7.30 pm in the Mitchell Theatre, Level 1, The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney.

The AGM will take place before the Arnold McGill Memorial Lecture - 28 November 2014.

All positions on the Club Committee automatically become vacant at the AGM. Nominations for the following positions should be submitted in writing by 28 November 2014, signed by the nominee, nominator and seconder, to the Returning Officer, Birding NSW, PO Box Q277, QVB Post Shop, Sydney, NSW 1230.

### OFFICE BEARERS:

President | Secretary | Treasurer | Public Officer

### OTHER SPECIFIED POSITIONS:

Membership Secretary | Minutes Secretary | Club Email Manager | Activities Officer  
Assistant Activities Officer | Speakers Coordinator | Publicity Officer | Newsletter Editor  
Website Coordinator | Conservation Subcommittee Chair + Conservation Officers  
Records Officer | General Committee Positions

## FEBRUARY TALK

### Bush Stone-curlew Monitoring and Nest Site Protection, Brisbane Water, Central Coast

**Speaker: Alan Morris**

The Gosford Friends of the Bush Stone-curlew have been continuously monitoring a small remnant population of five breeding pairs of Stone-curlews for almost 15 years. The birds live within an increasingly urban area under constant pressure from development and a growing human population. They inhabit private land, residential areas, bushland and foreshore reserves around the edge of the Brisbane Water, a tidal inlet with associated saltmarsh and mangrove habitats. Many of the foreshore reserves are heavily utilised by the general public and their dogs, and it appears that juvenile birds find it difficult to find suitable habitat as well as mates. This presentation highlights the challenges of conserving a small population of Bush Stone-curlews within a growing urban area, particularly conflicts arising from off-leash dog exercise areas, the control of foxes, and protecting nest sites in public spaces. This Bush Stone-curlew population is the most southerly on the east coast of Australia, and therefore significant, but may disappear if local and state governments remain relatively inert in their consideration of its requirements.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Membership renewals were due on 30 September 2014. If you are one of the people who have forgotten and plan to stay a member please renew now.

If you have any changes of email, address etc you can make those changes on a renewal form downloaded from the website and email it to [info@birdingnsw.org.au](mailto:info@birdingnsw.org.au) as an attachment then pay using direct deposit. Banking details are on the membership form available on the website. Use your surname and membership number as a reference so that the deposit can be traced to you!

Or send your change of details form with a cheque to the PO Box address.

Financial members will receive the February 2015 newsletter.

Financial online members will receive the new password for 2015 with the notification that the newsletter is available on the website.

**Adrian Nieuwenhuizen**  
**Membership Secretary – Birding NSW**

## Birding NSW - NSW Field Ornithologists Club Incorporated

### ABRIDGED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

Full accounts can be found on the website. The accounts will be presented and considered at the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 9 December. Any queries can be put to the Treasurer, Leigh Hall on 9449 8370.

#### Statement of Income For the year ended 30 June 2014

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
Revenue from sale of goods	308	417
Other revenues from operating activities	20,609	21,408
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<u>20,917</u>	<u>21,825</u>
Purchase of inventories	459	1,342
Decrease (increase) in inventories	15	(1,008)
Administration expenses	19,388	19,551
<b>Operating surplus/(deficit) before income tax</b>	<u>1,055</u>	<u>1,940</u>
<b>Accumulated surplus at the beginning of the year</b>	<u>63,853</u>	<u>61,913</u>
<b>Accumulated surplus at the end of the year</b>	<u><u>64,908</u></u>	<u><u>63,853</u></u>

#### Statement of Financial Position for the year ended 30 June 2014

	Note	2014	2013
		\$	\$
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash		67,575	66,124
Sundry debtors		0	0
Inventories		<u>1,068</u>	<u>1,083</u>
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>68,643</u>	<u>67,208</u>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment		<u>0</u>	<u>191</u>
<b>Total assets</b>		<u>68,643</u>	<u>67,399</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Payables & Deferred Income		<u>3,735</u>	<u>3,546</u>
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<u>3,735</u>	<u>3,546</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>64,908</u>	<u>63,853</u>
<b>Members' funds</b>			
Accumulated surplus		<u><u>64,908</u></u>	<u><u>63,853</u></u>

#### Statement of Cash Flows For the year ended 30 June 2014

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Interest received	2,560	3,204
Receipts from members subscriptions and sundry receipts	18,050	18,204
General administration expenses and direct expenses	(19,160)	(15,696)
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>	<u>1,451</u>	<u>5,711</u>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash held</b>	1,451	5,711
<b>Cash at beginning of financial year</b>	<u>66,124</u>	<u>60,413</u>
<b>Cash at end of financial year</b>	<u><u>67,575</u></u>	<u><u>66,124</u></u>

## BIRDING NSW'S IMPORTANT BIRD AND BIODIVERSITY AREA SURVEY AROUND GRENFELL

27 September 2014

*Elisabeth Karplus*

The seventh IBA survey around Grenfell took place on Saturday 27 September 2014. Thirty surveyors planned to take part in the survey – the largest number we have had so far. Alas two people could not make the trip at the last minute so 28 surveyors, including three from Grenfell, in seven teams surveyed the 28 sites. I would like to thank Allan Richards, David Winterbottom, Ted Nixon, Jill Molan, Russell Beardmore and Richard Webber for leading the survey groups. Seventy-seven species were seen during the survey and at other times over the weekend. This included five new species – Plumed Whistling-Duck, Straw-necked Ibis, Whistling Kite, Brown Falcon and Brown Songlark. The Brown Falcon was seen on Mark Shortis' place and Mark tells me that he has been seeing this bird around for some time. The Brown Songlark was seen on Ochre Arch and Phillip Diprose tells me that they love watching these birds. Up to 50 Plumed Whistling-Ducks were seen at various times over the weekend at or near the sewage ponds. We have now seen 130 bird species during the surveys or over the weekends at Grenfell.

Superb Parrots were seen at five sites during the survey times and at several other places including three flyovers of the caravan park. Two birds were seen investigating a nest hollow in a tree near the sewage ponds; alas Rainbow Lorikeets were also in the area and seemed interested in the same hollow. No Diamond Firetails were seen during the surveys though two were seen during the weekend. The number of species seen at each site varied between 5 and 19 species. We became more aware of the threats to the



*Superb Parrot. Photo: Jodi Webber*

survey areas; a site with one of the highest number of bird species is part of an enlarging housing estate.

Of the declining woodland species, we did not see any Brown Treecreepers during the weekend but we did see Speckled Warblers at four survey sites, Grey-crowned Babblers at five sites and Hooded Robins at three sites. Although we have not seen Swift Parrots during our Grenfell weekends, Dianne Deans, who joined us for this survey, saw seven Swift Parrots in April 2014 at Holy Camp in the Weddin Mountains National Park.



*Red-capped Robin. Photo: Jodi Webber*

As has become the custom, the weekend began at dinner on Friday night at the Railway Hotel in Grenfell. The cheerful staff at the hotel was unperturbed by having to feed an additional 30+ hungry guests. On Saturday afternoon, about half of the group went to Ochre Arch for a tour of the Aboriginal artefacts and other interesting natural areas. I would like to thank Phillip and Jan Diprose for organising this visit and for providing a marvellous afternoon tea. Then we met at Mikla and Wayne's place for a barbecue on Saturday evening. This has also become another tradition of the weekend and we are very grateful to Mikla and Wayne for their hospitality.

On Sunday morning some of the surveyors joined people from Grenfell for a walk around Company Dam. As well as birds – we saw both Western and White-throated Gerygone among others – Mikla showed us many beautiful and delicate wildflowers including several species of orchids.

The next two IBA surveys will take place on 28 March and 26 September 2015. We hope that our existing volunteers and new volunteers will take part in the next survey. In particular we hope that more people from Grenfell will join us on the surveys. Please contact Allan Richards ([activities@birdingnsw.org.au](mailto:activities@birdingnsw.org.au)) or me ([emhodson@exemail.com.au](mailto:emhodson@exemail.com.au)) if you are not already on our contact list and would like details of the next survey.



*Bird watching at Company Dam. Photo: Jodi Webber*

## 32<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL BIRDING NSW PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to the following winners:

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>FIRST PRIZE:</b>           | 1. Alfred Schulte– Australasian Grebes (\$1000) |
| <b>SECOND PRIZE:</b>          | 2. Michael Harvey–Black-shouldered Kite (\$500) |
| <b>GROUP OF BIRDS PRIZE:</b>  | 3. Eric Yan–Red-rumped Parrots (\$250)          |
|                               | 4. Eric Yan–Black-winged Stilts                 |
|                               | 5. Eric Yan– Pale-headed Rosella                |
|                               | 6. Michael Harvey– Speckled Warbler             |
| <b>IN FLIGHT PRIZE:</b>       | 7. Jodi Webber–Black-necked Stork (\$250)       |
|                               | 8. Eastern Spinebill– Alfred Schulte            |
| <b>SINGLE BIRD PRIZE:</b>     | 9. David Turner–Nankeen Kestrel (\$250)         |
|                               | 10. Michael Harvey– Budgerigars                 |
| <b>MEMBERS' CHOICE AWARD:</b> | Michael Harvey–Spotted Pardalote (\$200)        |

Thanks again to Charlie Andrews for coordinating the group and compering the proceedings on the night. It ran very smoothly. There were 103 entries from nine photographers in the 2014 Photographic Competition. All photographs entered in the competition were shown. The audience voted for their favourite before the prize-winning photographs, chosen by the three judges Ofer Levy, Adrian O'Neill and Charlie Andrews were announced. The winning photographers of the main prizes who were in the audience were presented with a cheque as well as a certificate. Birding NSW is especially grateful to have the expertise of Ofer as a judge for the first time and we thank him along with Adrian and Charlie who agreed to be a part of the judging for a fifth year. Special thanks go to Adrian for gathering the entries and putting them all on disk and who had the unenviable task of making the individual entries compatible with the Birding NSW projector. The winning photographs are available for viewing on the Birding NSW website.

## CAPERTEE VALLEY REGENT HONEYEATER SURVEY

3–6 October 2014

*Douglas Bateman*

An almost perfect weekend weather-wise was not matched by any sightings of Regent Honeyeaters unfortunately. This was also the case in the August and September surveys run by BirdLife Southern NSW and Cumberland Bird Observers Club. There are now two extra sites making a total of twelve to be surveyed. This meant earlier starts in the mornings and an extension into Monday. Generally there were large numbers of birds but fewer species and a good selection of honeyeaters apart from Regents, including Painted, Black-chinned, Striped, Brown-headed, White-naped, Yellow-faced and the ubiquitous White-plumed. The site at Glen Alice Hall was the most prolific with over 40 species observed in the 45-minute time frame.



*Striped Honeyeater. Photo: Jodi Webber*

Plum-headed Finches were seen only at the Genowlan Bridge (South) site in a patch of bramble near the curve in the river.

The two new sites are: 1) Wiraki, a road site stretching 800 m from Noola Road south along Glen Alice Road. 2) Crown Station Road another 800 m stretch from Rockview Property back towards Glen Davis Road. They both have potential but did not offer up anything exciting this time.

Observers: Douglas Bateman, Sharyn Brown, Richard Webber, Jodi Webber, Lori Warren, Max Harris, Charlie Andrews, Susie Giuffre, Maurice O'Donovan and welcome to first timers to the October Survey Jill Molan, Phillip Cuomo and Alexander Cuomo. The latter is the 13-year-old son of Phillip who is to be commended on his knowledge,

attitude and enthusiasm, he rose early in the mornings to scout out the farm and found a pair of Yellow-rumped Thornbills feeding a cuckoo possibly the offspring of a closely attentive Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo. We very much enjoyed your company Alexander. Thanks also to the proprietors Di and Bob Page for their hospitality. The cottage at Brymair Station was the headquarters with eight guests whilst the remainder stayed in accommodation in Rylstone or Glen Davis. The cottage is free to the first eight participants containing two doubles and two twin share, so in October 2015 show interest early to take advantage of this or be prepared to organise your own accommodation. Maurice O'Donovan has offered to share his cabin in Glen Davis with anyone who can't get into the cottage.



*Plum-headed Finch. Photo: Jodi Webber*



*Plum-headed Finch (juvenile). Photo: Jodi Webber*



## Forum4Nature - ADELAIDE 26 MAY 2014

### ROLLING BACK THE YEARS - REGRESSION IN COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

*John Spiers*

Forum4Nature was a meeting of conservation organisations held in Adelaide on 26 May 2014. It was put on by the Conservation Council of South Australia and the purpose was to discuss the changes that have been put in place by the Abbott Government since winning the election in September 2013. The keynote address, which is summarised here, was by Adjunct Professor Rob Fowler of the Law School, University of South Australia. Rob is past president of the Conservation Council and a specialist in Environmental Law.

#### A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Over the past 40 years it has been the Commonwealth that has provided a level of leadership and objectivity in environmental assessment that is difficult to identify at the State level. The newly elected Commonwealth Government is intent on dismantling what has been erected behind the oft-repeated mantra of 'red tape/green tape' reduction. What is happening is not attracting the attention of ordinary people but is, in fact, a matter of the most profound importance and concern in terms of the future protection of the Australian environment.

The Abbott Government argues that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures under the EPBC Act are a duplication of state processes. In fact it was the Commonwealth that first adopted EIA legislation in the *Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974 (EPIP)*. It was the States and Territories that adopted similar legislation after 1974 and where this was done there were cooperative arrangements put in place to avoid duplication of processes between the Commonwealth and State EIA systems.

#### COMMONWEALTH CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS RE THE ENVIRONMENT

It is clear from a series of High Court decisions ranging back to the *Tasmanian Dam Case (Tasmania vs The Commonwealth)* in 1982 that the Commonwealth has extensive power to legislate on environmental matters by making use of its authority under section 51 of the Constitution to make laws with respect to matters such as trade and commerce, corporations, external affairs, the peoples of any race and taxation. This capacity has been used in about 50 separate Acts including the Howard Government's *Water Act 2007 (Cth)*. However the Commonwealth Government has only rarely used this power to over-ride relevant state legislation.

Assertions of excessive Commonwealth 'green tape' have little foundation in reality but this has not discouraged the Abbott Government from making them.

#### COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM – FORTY YEARS OF STEADY EVOLUTION

The political practice of 'cooperative federalism' with respect to environmental matters has extended over the past 40 years, well beyond legislative measures, to include a large range of strategies, policies and programmes that involve collaborative arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States. Negotiations were conducted within a long

line of Councils, the most recent of which was the Standing Committee on Environment and Water (SCEW). These arrangements were abruptly brought to an end with an announcement on its website, in December 2013, that SCEW was no longer to continue.

The COAG communique at the end of December 2013 stated that the Commonwealth respects that the States and Territories are sovereign in their own sphere and should be able to get on with delivering on their responsibilities without unnecessary interference from the Commonwealth. This evidences the view within the Abbott Government that environmental matters are a State responsibility. This is a restatement of what in the 1980's was commonly called 'States' rights' and which had ceased to have any real impact since the election of the Hawke Government in 1983. There are indications that this retreat will extend to other matters such as health and education. Such a radical re-conceptualisation of the role of the Commonwealth government surely warrants a broader public debate.

#### RECENT COMMONWEALTH REGRESSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Here is a list of current environmental initiatives by the Abbott Government:

- repeal of the carbon price legislation and replacement by a Direct Action programme
- National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) to be sole assessor for environmental approval of offshore petroleum projects
- 26 March 2014 designated as a repeal day for the purpose of repealing 1000 'redundant' federal laws and some 9500 regulations including measures relating to agricultural and veterinary medicines, regulation of ozone-depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases, permit and levy processes for sea installations, and repealing S255A of Water Act 2007 which relates to the assessment of mining operations in the Murray-Darling Basin
- review of Renewable Energy Target and proposed abolition of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation
- attempt to have 70 000 hectares of Tasmanian World Heritage forest areas delisted by the World Heritage Committee
- refusal to include climate change on the agenda for the forthcoming G20 meeting in Brisbane
- review of Water Act 2007 announced
- approval of extensive dumping of sediments in the Great Barrier Reef in connection with expansion of port facilities at Abbott Point
- abandonment of management plans for Commonwealth designated marine parks

- termination of National Wildlife Corridors initiative
- termination of funding for Environmental Defenders Offices
- termination of funding for GVESHO funding for environmental NGO's
- proposed extinguishment of a number of national bodies addressing environmental matters, including Climate Commission, National Water Commission and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency
- repeal of energy efficiency opportunities program
- reduction of funding for Land Care by \$484 million, whilst allocating \$525 million to a new 'Green Army'
- referral by Attorney General George Brandis to the Australian Law Reform Commission of a reference to enquire into the incursion into 'freedoms' (eg property rights) by particular types of laws, including environmental laws.

### THE ONE STOP INITIATIVE

The 'one stop shop' (OSS) initiative which will ultimately see the transfer of Commonwealth approval powers under the EPBC Act to the states involves three steps:

- execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with each State
- revision of existing assessment bilateral agreements
- execution of approvals bilateral agreements with each State transferring approvals powers to the States under the EPBC Act.

The first stage was completed by December 2013, and the further steps are well advanced in Queensland and New South Wales.

It is the proposed abdication by the Commonwealth of any further role in relation to environmental approvals that has most concerned ENGO's.

### JUSTIFICATIONS OFFERED FOR THE OSS INITIATIVE

#### Avoidance of duplication and streamlining of environmental approval processes

The resource sector and State Governments are the parties behind the 'green tape' argument. They argue that it is necessary to eliminate excessive 'green tape' and the duplication of functions already performed by the States so that the costs and delays experienced by their industries will be significantly reduced. The Abbott Government has enthusiastically embraced this rhetoric in advancing its one-stop-shop initiative.

In practice the Commonwealth has pursued a highly coordinated and collaborative approach in this area. It has confined itself to addressing the listed matters of national significance and has left the States to address all other environmental aspects separately. Any lack of coordination could be addressed by means other than the complete withdrawal of the Commonwealth.

#### Extensive costs and unnecessary delays for industry

In relation to the arguments of excessive costs and delays Professor Fowler notes that:

- independent assessment has found that the allegations of excessive costs by the BCA in an April 2012 submission to COAG have been found to be spurious and greatly exaggerated
- the level of costs genuinely occurred in complying with the EPBC Act represent only a small proportion of the overall development costs of most major resource projects and
- delays have often been a result of State processes rather than Commonwealth processes and are often attributable to project proponents having failed to produce adequate scientific analysis in their EIS's
- it is also arguable that when considering the costs of the EIA process one should also take into account the benefits of the process.

### THE WIDER AGENDA BEYOND THE ONE STOP SHOP INITIATIVE

The resources industry has been waging a campaign against Commonwealth involvement in EIA since adoption of the EPIP Act in 1974. The current 'green tape' propaganda is simply the latest stanza. Underlying this campaign is the growing pressure to shift Australia's energy generation from fossil fuels to renewables in response to the challenge of climate change. The Abbott Government has become the handmaiden of the fossil fuel industry and is vigorously promoting its cause.

The one-stop-shop agenda has found willing ears at the State level, where governments are keen to eliminate Commonwealth involvement in decision-making concerning large-scale resource projects that they wish to attract to their state. The South Australian Premier, Jay Weatherill, indicated as much in a recent letter to Professor Fowler. The Premier used a report by the Productivity Commission to justify his decision to negotiate an approval bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth. The report in fact recommended that bilateral agreements should only be proceeded with if five other conditions are satisfied.

### THE MAINTENANCE OF HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS UNDER THE OSS SYSTEM

The Abbott Government has insisted that the handover of its approval powers to the States will only be pursued where the State systems offer equivalent standards of protection to those required under the EPBC Act. For this to happen there must be:

- **Legal equivalence.** For this to happen there would have to be substantial modification of most State environmental legislation. This could result in substantial delays in the implementation of the proposed handover of Commonwealth powers. The Abbott Government is attempting to circumvent this by amendments to the EPBC Act.
- **Practical equivalence.** The principal argument against the OSS scheme is that the States are overly influenced by the economic benefits they expect from resource development. They do not take into account the needs of the whole of Australia in their decisions. There have been a number of cases where the Commonwealth has stepped

in to prevent a State Government proceeding with an environmentally damaging project – sand mining on Fraser Island, the Franklin River Dam, and the Traveston Crossing Dam in Queensland.

There are checks on the misuse by the states of their newfound powers in the form of judicial review actions. Judicial review, however, is hard to secure unless some reasonably obvious flaw in the decision-making process is evident. The reduction of government resources in Canberra will greatly limit the practical ability of the Commonwealth to review State assessments.

#### OTHER ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE OSS

- The elimination of the Commonwealth as an ‘honest broker’ is likely to result in a return to direct action protests, legal proceedings and the new tactic of discouraging financial investment in contentious projects.
- A likely outcome is more complexity and uncertainty for industry. There will in practice develop an ‘eight stop shop’ with differences in the detailed procedures and practices of the States and Territories.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The OSS initiative may be no more than a cost shifting exercise rather than a red-tape reduction one. Staffing levels have already been reduced within the Commonwealth Environment Department. Most States, on the other hand, have made significant reductions within their own environment departments. It is difficult to see how they can effectively perform their new tasks at the same level as

the Commonwealth has done. Increased litigation against inadequate performance may cause them to seek handing back their powers to the Commonwealth.

Where should we go from here?

The scale of the environmental challenges needing to be faced make it difficult to understand the rationale for a withdrawal from the field of environmental management by the Commonwealth. Professor Fowler advocates:

- The establishment of a Commonwealth Environment Protection Authority to administer State of Environment Reporting, establish national standards for environmental quality, administer the EIA process and replace the Environment Minister in the performance of many biodiversity-related functions needed to be performed under the EPBC Act.
- A reversal of the OSS process so that the Commonwealth process prevails over State process in regards to matters of national environmental significance.

While it may be difficult to prevent the Abbott Government from undertaking the transfer of its responsibilities under the EPBC Act every effort should be made to do so, while looking forward to a next generation Commonwealth environmental law that could offer the possibility of truly effective protection for the Australian environment.

This article was first printed in *Birds SA Newsletter* No 213, August 2014 and is reprinted with permission from John Spiers.

## BOOK REVIEWS

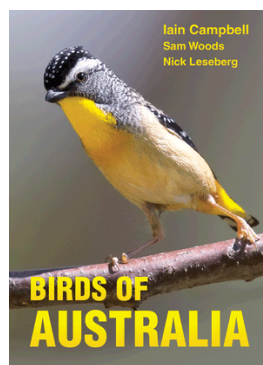
### *Birds of Australia* *A Photographic Guide*

Iain Campbell, Sam Woods  
& Nick Leseberg

Paperback \$49.95 391pp

This has been published by Princeton University and is actually intended for serious birders who are visiting Australia, but that isn't to say that Australian birders won't find this guide valuable. It covers 714 species and has more than 1100 photographs, which include photos of sub-species and plumage variations. It is well organised and easy to use, with the clearly marked photographs facing the descriptions and distribution maps. Seabirds are usually shown in flight, raptors in flight and perched, waders also usually both on ground and in the air, so the photographs are quite useful. It mightn't replace your prized Slater or Pizzey, but it will be an excellent addition to your library!

Lindy Jones

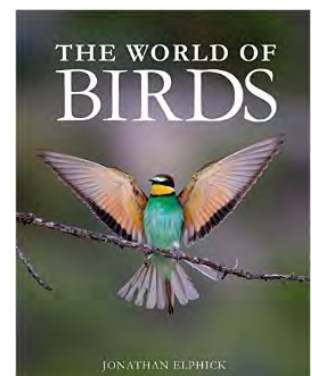


### *The World of Birds*

Jonathan Elphick  
Hardback \$89.95  
608pp

This handsome volume is a succinct and accessible guide to bird biology, covering evolution, anatomy, physiology, habitat, migration and human interaction. It relates the key facts, appearance and behaviour of every one of the 195 families of birds alive today. Beautiful photographs (over 1000) are a joy to behold and enhance the clear text. When I brought an advance copy in to show off at one monthly meeting, those who saw it didn't want to give it back - and one respected member even learnt something new! Put it on the Christmas wishlist...

Lindy Jones



## FROM A COUNTRY PERCH

*Stephen Debus*

To continue the occasional item from a country member, I report briefly on a project that was partly funded by the then NSW Field Ornithologists Club Research Grants. I should like to thank the FOC (now Birding NSW) for supporting that project (a PhD on declining woodland birds at the University of New England in 2000–2003), and convey some of the essentials. The study sites were primarily Imbota and Yina Nature Reserves near Armidale, and the study subjects were Eastern Yellow Robins and Scarlet Robins (and, opportunistically, a few Hooded Robins).

Among a range of woodland remnants surveyed, reserves greater than 300 ha in size supported more bird species than remnants of less than 100 ha on private land. Threatened and other declining species occurred mainly in patches of more than 100 ha, whereas guilds of small and medium-sized insectivores were impoverished in degraded patches of less than 100 ha on private land.

Eastern Yellow Robins typically nested low in sheltered positions in saplings, live trees and shrubs, whereas Scarlet Robins typically nested high in exposed positions in live trees, dead branches or dead trees. Both, but particularly the Scarlet Robin, suffered high nest predation, with correspondingly poor fledging success. Fledging success and juvenile survival in the Eastern Yellow Robin were related to habitat complexity around nest sites, and to the density of wattles, other shrubs, and rough-barked eucalypt saplings. Nest success of Scarlet Robins was too low to identify relevant habitat factors, but the availability of foraging substrate (logs, coarse woody debris), and hence food supply, may determine nest attendance (ie hiding of the eggs or chicks) by the cryptically coloured sitting female. Males feed incubating or brooding females, but hungry females will leave nests exposed while they forage for themselves.

Protection of nests by predator-proof cages, and removal of Pied Currawongs, identified currawongs as a nest predator significantly affecting the robins' breeding success. Hence, there is a case for control of overabundant currawongs, preferably by eradication of the exotic, invasive, berry-bearing bushes (ie environmental weeds) in gardens, farms and bushland that sustain high winter populations of currawongs. That includes the pepper tree, the 'privet of the inland' now going feral on the western slopes, as well as the usual suspects (privet, camphor laurel, firethorn, hawthorn etc).

Successful reintroduction and radio-tracking of Eastern Yellow Robins to patches where they had become extinct (Yina and other remnants) showed that they have trouble recolonising small, isolated patches. However, several factors may be operating, including: low production of potential emigrants in source patches (like Imbota); predation (eg by Grey Butcherbirds) in the agricultural matrix or

in small patches with little cover; poor habitat quality in small remnants; and/or harassment and exclusion by Noisy Miners. Some data on an unauthorised Noisy Miner cull, that fortuitously came my way, showed the profound positive effect of Noisy Miner removal, and establishment of native shrub cover, on small bush birds. Despite a hostile matrix, some Eastern Yellow Robins were able to move up to 7 km between patches, provided that dispersal routes had tree cover (eg paddock trees) less than 100 m apart, or corridors of natural or planted woodland.

Finally, it was apparent that Hooded Robins in fragmented native woodland on the tablelands have very poor nest success, owing to nest predation. However, a few pairs on the edge of exotic pine plantations, where there is a range of pine ages and densities, and with some open areas and eucalypt woodland nearby, managed to rear young. Hence, certain pine plantations can have some value to native birds, especially (as in this case) where densities of currawongs and other avian nest predators were low in the plantation.

Two upshots of this project are that (i) the Scarlet Robin is now listed as Vulnerable, and (ii) competitive exclusion by the Noisy Miner is now listed as a key threatening process, under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act*. Publications arising from the project are listed below, and can be accessed and downloaded as PDFs from my website: [www.une.edu.au/staff/sdebus.php](http://www.une.edu.au/staff/sdebus.php)

Debus, S.J.S. 2(006a). Breeding and population parameters of robins in a woodland remnant in northern New South Wales, Australia. *Emu* 106: 147–156.

\_\_\_\_ (2006b). Breeding biology and behaviour of the Scarlet Robin *Petroica multicolor* and Eastern Yellow Robin *Eopsaltria australis* in remnant woodland near Armidale, New South Wales. *Corella* 30: 59–65.

\_\_\_\_ (2006c). Breeding habitat and nest-site characteristics of Scarlet Robins and Eastern Yellow Robins near Armidale, New South Wales. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 12: 261–271.

\_\_\_\_ (2006d). The role of intense nest predation in the decline of Scarlet Robins and Eastern Yellow Robins in remnant woodland near Armidale, New South Wales. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 12: 279–287.

\_\_\_\_ (2008). The effect of Noisy Miners on small bush birds: an unofficial cull and its outcome. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 14: 185–190.

\_\_\_\_ (2013). Breeding of the Hooded Robin *Melanodryas cucullata* in native and exotic woodlands near Armidale, New South Wales. *Corella* 37: 49–56.

Debus, S.J.S. & Ford, H.A. (2012). Responses of Eastern Yellow Robins *Eopsaltria australis* to translocation into vegetation remnants in a fragmented landscape. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 18: 194–202.

Debus, S.J.S., Ford, H.A. & Page, D. (2006). Bird communities in remnant woodland on the New England Tablelands, New South Wales. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 12: 50–63.

See also:

Ford, H.A., Walters, J.R., Cooper, C.B., Debus, S.J.S. & Doerr, V.A.J. (2009). Extinction debt or habitat change? – Ongoing losses of woodland birds in north-eastern New South Wales, Australia. *Biological Conservation* 142: 3182–3190.

Dr Stephen Debus is Adjunct Lecturer, School of Environmental and Rural Science at the University of New England Armidale NSW.

## THE 2014 AUSTRALASIAN BIRD FAIR

*Norma Ikin*

I arrived very early on Saturday morning, 25 October at the 2014 Australasian Bird Fair held at Sydney Olympic Park. I came with my friend Jill and we were both doing a shift volunteering on the Birding NSW Stall. Jill was on the first shift of the day and I was on the last of the day. As the weather was warming up even at 9.30 am I headed straight for cover into where the lectures were being held. These were free talks by world experts and so good that I listened to them all of the morning. After lunch I visited the many marquees. A whole range of travel brochures were being offered for birding tours overseas and in Australia but my main interest was in the bird artists and I bought a beautiful calico apron with Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos printed on it. I also found the live frog exhibit was interesting. Another friend had bought new binoculars from one of the binocular outlets represented at the fair. Birding NSW shared a marquee with Blue Mountains Bird



*Norma Ikin and Robyn Price volunteering at the Birding NSW Stall.  
Photo: Elisabeth Karplus*

Observers, The Hunter Bird Observers and Cumberland Bird Observers Club. The interest from the public in what these local clubs had to show and offer was consistent.

### POSTSCRIPT

Congratulations—we reached our target of raising \$20 000 to go towards the recovery programs for two endangered species, the Plains-wanderer and the Rock Wren of New Zealand. These two species were selected by a panel of experts chaired by Professor Stephen Garnett because their recovery programs would significantly benefit from relatively small amounts of money (up to \$10 000 each).

We attracted more than 2000 people to the event. Get ready for the 2015 Australasian Bird Fair the weekend **after** the Twitchathon! *Phil Straw*

## BIRD-WATCHING PELAGIC TRIPS

**Sydney Pelagic Trips** are scheduled for Saturday 13 December 2014. They depart Mosman Wharf at 6.45 am and Rose Bay Public Wharf at 7.00 am—return to Mosman will be by 4.00 pm. The tour costs will be \$120 and seniors /students \$110. Please contact Roger or Hal to make a booking. Roger McGovern 9953 3484 roglou@bigpond.net.au or Hal Epstein 0411 311 236 hepstein@bigpond.net.au

**Wollongong Pelagic Trips** depart on the 4th Saturday of each month. To make a booking on a SOSSA Wollongong pelagic trip, contact Lindsay or Janice of SOSSA by phone: 02 4272 4626 or email: sossa@tpg.com.au or visit the website: www.sossa-international.org <<http://www.sossa-international.org>>

**Port Stephens Pelagic Trips** are arranged sporadically throughout the year, with usually about ten trips including two trips held in the peak months of March, April and October. Additionally occasional trips out of Swansea, south of Newcastle, are also being organised. For enquiries or bookings contact Mick Roderick by mobile: 0421 761 237 or email: mickhbb@yahoo.com.au

## TWITCHATHON REPORT

25 - 26 OCTOBER 2014

### REPORT FROM THE CHAMPAGNE SHRIKE-TITS– TWITCHATHON 2014

Elisabeth Karplus

Each year Alan Morris, Frances Czwalinna and Pixie Maloney organise the twitchathon to raise funds for a research or conservation project. The project to be funded is determined on alternate years by BIGnet (Bird Interest Group Network), which comprises bird clubs from throughout NSW, and by BirdLife Southern NSW. In 2014 the proceeds from the Twitchathon will go towards the Bird Conservation Portal project, to complement the BirdLife Australia Bird Atlas Project. The Bird Conservation Portal will draw together bird monitoring reports, the synthesis and analysis of bird data and biological, ecological and conservation reporting for BirdLife Australia, into one place. A user-friendly free **App** (Android and iOS) will be developed to allow volunteers to record and submit data. Hopefully a user-friendly portal will encourage repeat surveys of fixed sites, which are needed to support bird conservation. Certainly I hope that entering data from the Grenfell surveys will prove easier via the new portal. Each year there are 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes for the Main Race and the Champagne Race and for the individuals raising the most money. In 2013, thanks to the generosity of Birding NSW members, we won second prize in the third category.

Once again Philip Brook, Tom and I comprised the team of Champagne Shrike-tits. In 2013 we saw 135 bird species in the Champagne Race in the 24 hours of the Twitchathon – a record for us. We hoped to beat this score. Our route changes little from year to year. This year at 4 pm on Saturday 25 October, we started at Lake Belvedere in Sydney Olympic Park, where one can rapidly add a number of waterbirds including Royal Spoonbills. Using a tip off from Judy Harrington, we found a Latham's Snipe and a Buff-banded Rail at one of the water quality ponds. In another pond there was a single Glossy Ibis. The walk from Wentworth Common to the hide at the Waterbird Refuge provided the usual Brown Quail while from the hide, we saw Red-necked Avocets, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers as well as Cattle Egrets in beautiful breeding plumage. At the final stop, we found a Tawny Frogmouth on a nest – a tip off this time from Adrian Dick. By the end of the day we had reached 54 species.

On Sunday, we met up at the beginning of Boundary Road on the way to Maraylya. On a warm morning, many birds



*Tom and Philip relaxing with champagne and nibbles at the end of Twitchathon 2014.  
Photo: Elisabeth Karplus*

were singing so that during the day we identified many species on call including six species of cuckoos. After several stops along Boundary Road, we spent some time at Maraylya Park, on the corner of Dunns Road and Boundary Road. A Common Bronzewing was calling and we soon located him walking on the ground. Other birds there were Red and Little Wattlebirds, Rufous Whistlers and Eastern Whipbirds. Our next stop was on Pitt Town Dural Road beside Scheyville Forest. Despite large numbers of Bell Miners, that infest the forest and drive out other birds, we did see or hear White-winged Trillers, Pallid Cuckoo, Eastern Yellow Robin, Olive-backed Oriole and our namesake, a Crested Shrike-tit. However this year there were no nesting Jacky Winters or Dusky Woodswallows. On the track alongside the forest, we did hear/see White-throated Gerygones, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Scarlet Honeyeaters as well as a pair of Jacky Winters – the only ones seen during the day. Scarlet Honeyeaters were heard at many sites but we never actually saw one. A Cicadabird called as we returned to our car. We went to the park headquarters at Scheyville National Park for morning tea and to see Striated Pardalote – we managed this and added Fuscous Honeyeater and Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo to the list. The next stop was at Mitchell Park around 11 am. By now the temperature was rising significantly. We heard Wonga Pigeon but missed out on Brown Cuckoo-Dove. Both Sacred Kingfisher and Dollarbird were calling.

A Leaden Flycatcher confused us in the riverine forest along Cattai Creek but we could not make it into a Satin Flycatcher, which generally avoid rainforest.

Now it was time for lunch at Pitt Town Lagoon. There were House Sparrows to see and a Goldfinch went by. Beside the bird hide, a Collared Sparrowhawk was surprised out of its hiding place where it was presumably watching for small birds. Pitt Town Lagoon was disappointing with many of the birds seen on the previous weekend during Trevor Waller's outing no longer there. We did manage to see Pink-eared Duck and Freckled Duck but no Australasian Shoveler, Hoary-headed Grebe or Red-kneed Dotterel. Where we had seen Caspian Terns on the previous weekend, there were now Whiskered Terns with several birds in breeding plumage. If anything the water level at Pitt Town was too

high. At McGrath's Hill, the water level was so low that we had no chance of seeing the large numbers of Red-kneed Dotterels, the Chestnut-breasted Mannikins or the Baillon's Crake seen on the previous weekend. Finally we visited the turf and lucerne farms on the flats between Windsor and Richmond, where the temperature was 40°C. We had great views of a Brown Songlark before it took off making its harsh cry and finally found several White-necked Herons. We ended the Twitchathon at Pugh's Lagoon near Richmond at 4 pm with the last bird seen being a Black-shouldered Kite to get to our total of 126 species. We finished the day with champagne and nibbles under a tree, which was home to two noisy fledgling Restless Flycatchers, and we were joined by the picnic ground Willie Wagtail, who was happy to accept some biscuit crumbs.

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## REPORT FROM THE CENTRAL COAST CHAMPION CHOUGHS - TWITCHATHON 2014

Alan Morris

*The Big Twitch, Round Hill Nature Reserve to the Central Coast 25–26 October 2014*

It has been the usual practice for the past few years for our Twitchathon Team to start our 24-hour search for birds in the annual Twitchathon in the Macquarie Marshes, somewhere in the vicinity of The Mole Station Wetlands, but alas, the Marshes are very dry and there is no water in The Mole Wetlands. This was very unfortunate because our team of Mike Kuhl, Nick Carson and myself have had our best result of 211 birds in 24 hours by spending the first four hours at this site. So following on from a recce 10 days before the Twitchathon down to Lake Cargelligo and the adjoining Round Hill and Nombinnie Nature Reserves located in the mallee country, it was decided to start this year's Twitch at the Lake Cargelligo Sewage Treatment Works (STW) and then go onto Round Hill Nature Reserve (NR) and the famous former 'wheatfield' paddock in the mallee because there were plenty of good birds at both sites.

During the recce in mid-October the temperature out at Lake Cargelligo did not reach 30°C, there were some showers and the nights were quite cool. Alas the weekend of 25–26 was very hot, the temperature reached 41°C and during the preceding 10 days the countryside had dried out a lot more and the birds had become scarce. We had left on the Friday to check out some sites and drove straight through Euabalong to Round Hill NR and searched out a number of locations for mallee birds and then came onto Lake Cargelligo to stay the night and plan our route. While at the old wheatfield in the mallee we saw Chestnut Quail-thrush, Southern Scrub-Robin, Shy Heathwren and Gilbert's Whistler, all birds we dipped on later that evening when the Twitch had started. We had decided to commence at the far section of the Waste Water Treatment Plant and then take half an hour to walk out counting all the way. In

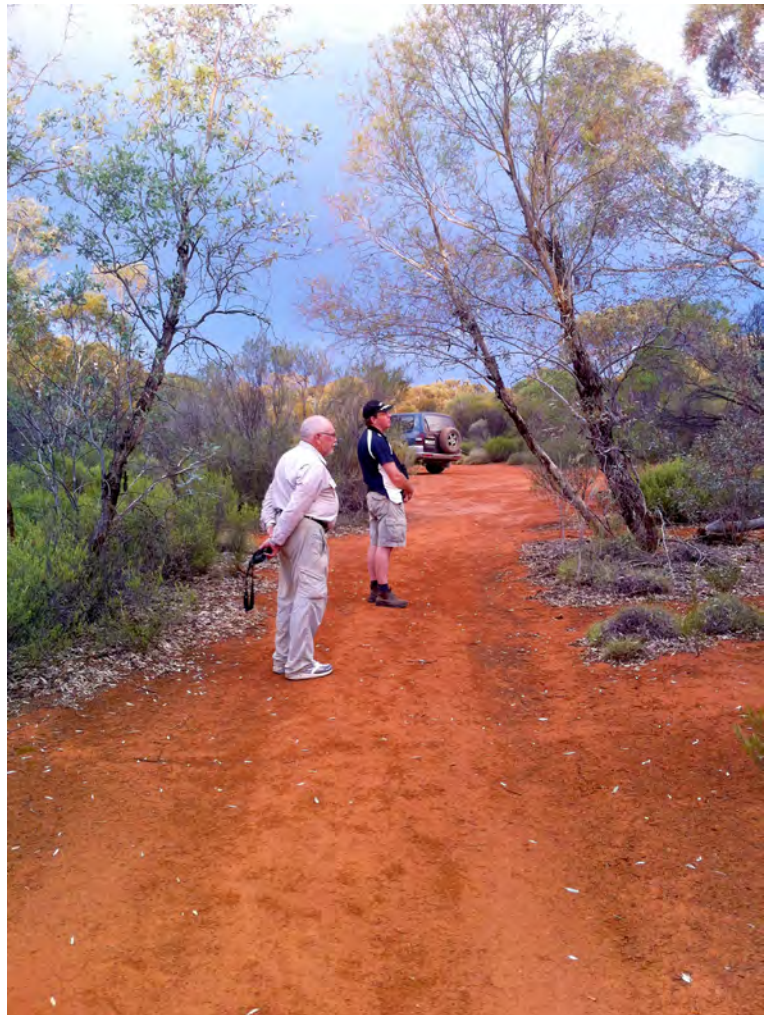
checking out various sites around the mallee and the lake, we ran into three other teams, the *Hunter Home Brewers*, the *Cowra Woodland Birdbrainers* and the *Feathered Rustlers* plus the Illawarra Bird Observers (IBOC) were also out at the lake on their annual camp! There were birders everywhere!

We started on time at 4 pm at the STW and at the end of 30 minutes we had seen some 35 species, like Freckled and Pink-eared Ducks, Variegated and White-winged Fairy-wrens, Common Greenshanks, Red-necked Stints, Latham's Snipe, Marsh and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Baillon's and Australian Spotted Crakes, Red-capped Plovers and Plum-headed Finches. Great Birds! But here is where we had our biggest dips, in that around 3.55 pm, a flock of 20 White-fronted Chats and a pair of Australian Shelducks took off but did not circle back to the wetlands so that by 4 pm they were nowhere to be seen and we did not see either species during the Twitch! But it was while we were checking out some sites around the shores of the lake at 5 pm that disaster struck, in the form of a thunderstorm and a severe dust storm. The strong winds some rain and very thick dust made bird watching impossible for some time. All the birds hid and became silent so we had great difficulty finding any at all. Then when we were in the mallee about 7 pm another thunderstorm struck us again and made all the mallee birds go totally quiet and not move so that extra time in the mallee was almost a write off. One of the other teams out there operating on a schedule like ours had a similar disaster, but the other two teams were in different locations and did not receive the intensity of the storm that we did. Later that night, on the gravel Euabalong-Condobolin Road we had a flat tyre that put us back 45 minutes, which made us arrive at our

three-hour sleeping place that much later and then we were 45 minutes behind starting next morning! (This was my first flat tyre in any twitch since they began about 1985.) We did have a bonus at night at the Lachlan River Bridge at Euabalong, where we picked up Barn Owl, Little Corella, Southern Boobook and Tawny Frogmouth all at the one stop! While changing the tyre we were serenaded by two different Boobooks; pity they were not Barking Owls!! Our count by midnight was 102 species but we had hoped to be 120!

Our departure from Lithgow at 4.45 am was in fog and the fog continued over the Blue Mountains until about 7 am making planned bird watching in the Richmond-Windsor area well nigh impossible. It was not until Wisemans Ferry and we commenced the drive through St Albans up Settlers Road to Mogo and Bucketty that we began any serious birding as the fog lifted. Along those windy roads we soon saw Wonga Pigeons, Satin Bowerbird, Superb Lyrebird, Australian Brush-turkey and Brown Cuckoo-Doves. Driving with the windows down enabled us to hear and stop for Glossy Black-Cockatoos, Little and Musk Lorikeets, White-winged Choughs, Channel-billed and Fan-tailed Cuckoos and White-throated and Brown Gerygones. Mogo Camp came good with the pair of Spotted Quail-thrushes feeding in the camping area and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, seen there only a few days before, while the Bucketty Waterhole rewarded us with Gang-gang Cockatoos and Common Bronzewing. We did a quick prearranged diversion through Dan Tomich's place at Kulnura (a BNSW member) to tick the Double-banded Finches at his bird feeder (yeah!!!) and headed to Ourimbah Creek RTA Reserve, arriving there at 9.50 am with 146 species under our belt.

As we came into the reserve we met the members of the *Which is it Team* coming out, we reckoned that they chased all the birds away that we expected to see there! We did pick up the Yellow-throated, White-browed and Large-billed Scrubwrens, Rufous Fantail and Green Catbird so time was not wasted. At McPherson Road Swamp disaster struck again for while I both saw and heard Golden-headed Cisticolas each time my other team members were looking the other way, so we dipped on that species but did pick up Tawny Grassbird. Much time was wasted looking for common species like Red Wattlebirds, Chestnut Teal, Little Egrets and Eastern Koel but eventually they turned up. No luck with a Red-whiskered Bulbul! For the first time ever we failed to find any new species at The Entrance due to our Twitch coinciding with the annual Hot Rod Car Display and the whole area was a car park with people and dogs all over the sand flats. At



Alan Morris and Mike Kuhl looking for Gilbert's Whistlers in the mallee at Round Hill NR. Photo: Nick Carson

Soldiers Point it was high tide and a flat sea, no seabirds other than a pretty sick Short-tailed Shearwater close in (tick!!) and a pair of Wedgies flying past! A few Ruddy Turnstones, Grey-tailed Tattlers, Curlew Sandpipers, Pied Oystercatcher and Golden Plovers did bring our count to 188 at 2 pm. We only got six species in the next two hours, dipping on Tawny-Crowned Honeyeaters at Munmorah SCA, but finding Scaly-breasted Lorikeets at Budgewoi and half an hour spent at the Dairy Swamp before the finish at 4 pm at the Dairy Cottage, Central Coast Wetlands, did yield Intermediate and Cattle Egrets, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Torresian Crow. So we finished the day with 194 species, coming 6<sup>th</sup> in the Main Race out of a field 13 teams. We joined the other Birding NSW teams *Which is it* (Margaret and Kaye Pointer, Carole and John Carpenter) and the *Lousy Jacks Team* (Paul Burcher, Deryk Engel and Ross Rapmund) for a sumptuous afternoon tea on the verandah of the Dairy Cottage, organised by Anne Morris. The hot dry conditions meant that we arrived home exhausted but will we do it again next year; of course we will!! The teams on the Central Coast raised \$600, \$350 and \$1000 respectively for the BirdLife Australia Bird Atlas Special App Project.



## A BIRD-WATCHING TOUR BY MEMBERS OF THE WILD BIRD SOCIETY OF JAPAN

10 – 17 October 2014

*Allan Richards*

Our Club is twinned with the Aichi chapter of the Wild Bird Society of Japan which is based in Nagoya. An invitation was extended to any of their members visiting Sydney to contact the Club and arrangements would be made for Club members to accompany them bird watching. Their response was that they would like to arrange a tour for 5–10 of their members lead by Satoshi Kanazawa.

We eventually decided on a seven-day itinerary which would include bird watching around Sydney as well as time in the Blue Mountains. Outback Track Tours handled the bookings and provided the transport. I acted as their bird guide for the duration of the trip.



*Our Japanese visitors with Club members at Royal NP. Photo: Furihata Mitsuhiro*

With Werner driving the coach, fellow Club member, Yuko Chiwata, and I were at the airport in plenty of time to meet the group of eight early on the morning of Thursday, 10 October. Being too early to book into their accommodation, we took them to Centennial Park to introduce them to our Australian birds. Many are keen photographers so were quickly out of the coach to start their adventure. It was difficult to drag them away from photographing Noisy Miners to show them the pair of Powerful Owls! We spent the morning in the park finding many interesting birds including two Tawny Frogmouth nests.

They booked into the hotel and we then shared pizza for lunch. I had thought they would want to rest after lunch but they arrived armed with their binoculars and cameras ready for an afternoon's birding. We walked through Hyde Park and then along Macquarie Street to the Royal Botanic Garden. Again they had plenty of opportunities for more photographs including another Powerful Owl. A highlight was a family of Australian Wood Ducks with nine young. After viewing the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge, Yuko and I put them in taxis at 6:30 pm to go back to their hotel. A very long day for them!

We were joined by another club member, Norma Ikin, the following day in the Royal National Park. They were delighted to see the male Satin Bowerbird attending his bower. Sadly we couldn't find a Superb Lyrebird for them but we did see an Azure Kingfisher. We watched a large Lace Monitor on the other side of the river before we realised that there was one almost at our feet on our side. While eating our lunch in the picnic area at Bonnie Vale, we spotted Royal Spoonbills and a Nankeen Night Heron at the pond. We finished the day on the cliff tops at Wattamolla where a White-bellied Sea-Eagle put on a show for us – at one stage, carrying a fair-sized fish. A Rock Warbler chattered away from the top of a rock.

On our way to the Blue Mountains, we spent several hours at Featherdale Wildlife Park, which specialises in Australian native fauna. The group were very enthusiastic about it and we could have stayed for much longer. However we wanted to stop at some other places before reaching our accommodation at Katoomba. At Kings Tableland, we searched in vain for Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos but were rewarded with excellent views of Australian King-Parrots.

We spent a whole day searching the Blackheath, Katoomba and Megalong Valley area. We visited Grovetts Leap and Evans Lookout several times but failed to find a Superb Lyrebird. The only Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos were a pair flying through the trees. Their request to try meat pies was accomplished at the tearooms in the Megalong Valley. They got the tick of approval!

They wanted to see kangaroos so we went to a spot in Hartley Vale where I have regularly seen them. They weren't disappointed; there were about twenty Eastern Grey Kangaroos in a paddock. Nearby they watched a Wedge-tailed Eagle soar overhead. A visit to Lithgow Sewage Treatment Ponds added many species of ducks including Freckled, Pink-eared and Shovelers. Lake Wallace was also fruitful although most missed a female Blue-billed Duck that I spotted from the coach. However other birds were more cooperative with good views—a Black-tailed Native-hen, Hoary-headed Grebe and Eastern Rosella but the best was a displaying male Musk Duck. It had become bitterly cold and started to rain heavily as we left the lake.

Our plan to drive back to Sydney via the Bells Line of Road was thwarted by overnight snow. The Causeway between Mt Victoria and Bells was blocked so we came back to Sydney via Winmalee, Yarramundi and Windsor. Highlights were Rufous Songlarks and Golden-headed Cisticolas at Cornwallis and close views of White-necked



*Tawny Frogmouth. Photo: Kazuko Yada*

Hérons at Pitt Town Bottoms. A flock of Straw-necked Ibis flew overhead.

Their last chance to see new birds was at Sydney Olympic Park and they were not disappointed. Pied Cormorant, Black-fronted Dotterel, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Black-winged Stilt, Red-necked Avocet, Red-rumped Parrot and Australasian Figbird were all added to their list. We finished the day early so that they had time to shop for souvenirs and books in the city.

They saw over 140 species in all, many of which were photographed many times! I always enjoy showing overseas visitors our birds but it is an added bonus when they are such a pleasant, happy group.

## MIDWEEK OUTING KU-RING-GAI CHASE NATIONAL PARK

27 August

Coleen Southall

Five members met at the Duck Holes Picnic Area on a wet and not a very promising day weather-wise. The first birds we saw were an Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Spinebill, Eastern Whipbird and a Pacific Black Duck swimming against a very strong current and making headway.

Our next stop was the Elvina Trail. This was a great site for honeyeaters. We observed Little Wattlebirds, New Holland, and Fuscous Honeyeaters and we had great views of a Scarlet Honeyeater feeding on *Darwinia fascicularis* at eye level. We found White-cheeked and White-naped Honeyeaters. A Brown Goshawk flew overhead as well as a White-bellied Sea-Eagle and on our way back along the

track we saw a Grey Fantail, Grey Shrike-thrush, Welcome Swallow and a Golden Whistler.

Throughout the day we managed to dodge the showers. At our lunch stop we found a pair of Masked Lapwings zealously guarding two eggs. Our last stop was the Chiltern Trail where we found Red-browed Finches, Silvereyes, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Red Wattlebird and a pair of Scarlet Honeyeaters feeding with a Fuscous Honeyeater on a *Darwinia fascicularis* again at eye level.

Thank you to the four hardy members who joined me for an enjoyable day in spite of the weather.

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## HALF-DAY OUTING YARRAMALONG AND GLENOLA RESERVE, BUNNING CREEK

10 September 2014

Margaret Pointer

Nine birders met opposite the historic Yarramalong Church at 8.30 am. Overnight rain had dampened the already sodden soil and no doubt deterred people from coming but in the end the rain cleared and the day proved to be very pleasant. At the meeting place at Yarramalong Church we saw and or heard 31 species, including a flock of 18 Australian Magpies, a calling Wonga Pigeon, seven Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos, and in the distance Jacky Winter was spotted singing heartily on power lines. A Green Catbird fed on the path to the cemetery and we all had great views of this interesting bird. A small flock of Long-billed Corellas flew by and Striated, Yellow and Brown Thornbills were observed. En route to Glenola Reserve we saw White-faced Heron, Pacific Black and Australian Wood Ducks. The track up the slope to the second gate at Glenola was slushy, so a good run up was required to get the vehicles on site. Once at the shelter shed we enjoyed morning tea. A brilliantly plumaged Galah spied on us from the entrance to its nest hole in a nearby gum tree. A Common Mynah, none of which were sighted, usually occupies this

hole. A Shining Bronze-Cuckoo called from the creek trees and White-faced Heron, Masked Lapwings and Australian Magpies enjoyed the waterlogged areas. On the waterhole we had seven Pacific Black Ducks, four Australasian Grebes, one secretive Eurasian Coot and a lone Purple Swamphen. Absent were the usual Golden-headed Cisticolas, Grassbirds and Brown Quail but wet conditions limited where we could go but a lone Black-shouldered Kite remained on a perch. A pair of Australian King-Parrots fed on the ground in the paddock. Yellow-faced, White-naped and Lewin's Honeyeaters were seen in the riparian areas, while Brown Gerygones, Superb Fairy-wrens and Grey Fantails were the most common small birds seen at the site where 25 species were counted. Only seven birders remained to walk around Jack Gear Oval in Yarramalong Village where we recorded 19 species including Dusky Moorhen, Grey Goshawk, Red and Little Wattlebirds, Bar-shouldered Dove, Yellow-throated Scrubwren and Eastern Spinebill. A small friendly group shared another enjoyable birding experience when 47 species were seen.

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## SYDNEY PELAGIC TRIP

13 September

Roger McGovern

We departed from Rose Bay with 14 passengers, our smallest group of birders this year, and while we were still in the harbour we sighted a group of the resident Inshore Bottlenose Dolphins and a distant loafing fur seal. As we left the heads, the fish offal berley immediately brought in good numbers of Silver Gulls and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters along with some Greater Crested Terns and the odd Australasian Gannet. These were joined by a few immature Black-browed Albatross and several groups of Fluttering-type shearwaters flew by which were very hard to identify in the gloomy conditions. However, examination of photographs revealed that most of these birds were Fluttering Shearwaters and just a few were Hutton's Shearwaters. A classic newly fledged Shy (White-capped) Albatross in very fresh plumage joined us for a while and a few Short-tailed Shearwaters were seen in passing. About 12 NM off Sydney, we had to make a detour to pass behind a large merchant vessel which was travelling northwards and, as we crossed its wake, the throng of birds following our boat suddenly



*Providence Petrel. Photo: Stephen Hey*

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peeled off and instantaneously disappeared all in the space of about 30 seconds - it was a very strange occurrence which I haven't seen before. For the rest of the trip to the shelf break at Brown's Mountain, we had no birds following the vessel despite attempts to berley them in. We had distant views of a small group of False Killer Whales and a brief visit from a pod of Short-beaked Common Dolphins. A giant petrel was seen at some distance and did not approach the boat closely enough to allow identification as to species and a distantly seen storm petrel was thought to be a White-faced. (A second storm petrel was seen later in the trip and examination of a very fuzzy photograph the next day confirmed that it was indeed a White-faced Storm Petrel).

As we approached Brown's Mountain medium distance views of both Great-winged and Providence Petrels were obtained but none came very near the boat.

Similarly, our only Wandering-type albatross of the day passed by the boat at a distance of 400 metres and wasn't seen again. The large size and very white appearance of the bird indicated that it was indeed a Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) rather than the Gibson's race of Antipodean Albatross. We started a drift at Brown's Mountain and, for the first time in my memory and despite the good berley trail, we did not see a bird of any sort for 45 minutes. The decision was taken to motor northwards and see if we could find some birds by travelling, and to a certain degree this tactic paid off. We had the visit of a



*Humpback Whales. Photo: Stephen Hey*

giant petrel with quite indistinct coloration on the bill tip but examination of photographs on board showed it to be a Northern Giant-Petrel.

Shortly after turning for home, we spotted a group of Humpback Whales travelling south and motored over for a closer look. While we drifted waiting for the whales to appear, we were visited by several Black-browed and Shy (White-capped) Albatross, the Northern Giant-Petrel and a Southern Ocean Sunfish. The four Humpbacks eventually re-surfaced close by giving great views and photo opportunities.

On the journey back to Sydney, no new species were seen but we came across some large flocks of Fluttering and Hutton's Shearwaters resting on the water. For the regulars on board, it was something of a disappointing day but there were several people for whom this was their first pelagic trip and they found plenty to hold their interest during the day.

## BIRD LIST SYDNEY PELAGIC TRIP

(Note that the numbers in parentheses represent the approximate maximum number of that species in view at one time)

Wandering Albatross	1	(1)	White-faced Storm Petrel	2	(1)
Black-browed Albatross	12	(5) no adult birds	Australasian Gannet	8	(3)
Shy Albatross	5	(2) all thought to be White-capped	Greater Crested Tern	8	(4)
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	1	(1) seen by only one person on board	Silver Gull	80	(60)
Northern Giant Petrel	1	(1)	<b>OTHER</b>		
Giant Petrel (sp)	1	(1)	Humpback Whale	4	
Great-winged Petrel	4	(1)	False Killer Whale	6	
Providence Petrel	3	(1)	Inshore Bottlenose Dolphin	6	
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	200	(120)	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	20	
Short-tailed Shearwater	15	(6)	Southern Ocean Sunfish	2	
Fluttering Shearwater	500	(450)	Fur seal (sp)	4	
Hutton's Shearwater	20	(15) numbers estimated based on the proportions of those identified	Flying fish	1	

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## OUTING TO WARRIEWOOD WETLANDS

13 September 2014

Graeme Stevens

There were occasional heavy showers along the coast and a grey and overcast morning with soft rain falling as nine members met at Katoa Close. Birders though are a hardy lot and encouraged by the forecast of clearing weather later in the day, we headed for the boardwalk through the wetlands with Russ Beardmore leading the way. With occasional sunny breaks arriving in line with the forecast it lifted bird activity so we were in for a very satisfactory morning. The boardwalk had already produced many of the usual suspects with Australian Grey Teal, Pacific Black Duck, nesting Eurasian Coot and courting Chestnut Teal when a Nankeen Night Heron flew in and landed in the reeds giving brief but excellent views. A small flock of about twelve Topknot Pigeons then flew over giving very unsatisfactory views when Coleen Southall located the juvenile Striated Heron recently reported on Eremaea. The bird provided excellent viewing as it hunted with great success and at some detriment to the local frog population. The resident Australian Brush-turkey males are now in full breeding trim with bright red heads and extended yellow wattles and the Warriewood Wetlands and neighbouring Irrawong Reserve have a few active breeding mounds. The deep booming calls were heard many times as a backdrop to the morning. Further along the boardwalk Russell showed us an active Brown Gerygone nest neatly suspended as usual and appearing to be just a natural extension of the vegetation and vines where it is positioned. Adorned as usual with lichen and with the hooded entrance; surely one of the most delightful nest constructions. At this point we concluded that the weather was having odd effects on the birds! We had seen White-browed Scrubwrens foraging quite high in the canopy, Eastern Whipbirds foraging along tree trunks like

Treecreepers and here was a Purple Swamphen perched well above head height on a Tree Fern watching us pass. Which perhaps only goes to prove that bird behaviour is not always restricted to the textbook version.

We then walked through Irrawong Reserve to the large waterfall and returned to the settlement ponds where the first Australian Reed-Warbler of the spring announced its presence and gave fleeting views. Perhaps it had overwintered. A skulking Little Grassbird was much less obliging. Willie Wagtails had just finished building their neat spider web plastered nest and with the position over water it was unusually below eye level giving very clear views. Returning along the boardwalk to the cars Varied Sittellas were sighted and Judy Clark spotted a bird returning to the nest. Brilliantly camouflaged it would have been almost certainly missed without Judy's work and everyone agreed that it was a highlight of the morning. As is generally the case the outside of the nest was covered with bark fragments of the nest tree perfectly aligned to make the nest appear to be just an extension of the woodwork. The Striated Heron then made another appearance close to the end of the boardwalk.

There were 49 species sighted by the group with another four heard only, including for many the first Channel-billed Cuckoo of the year. Five breeding records were noted as well: Eurasian Coot, Dusky Moorhen, Brown Gerygone, Willie Wagtail and Varied Sittella. A very satisfactory morning for Warriewood considering the lack of blossom at this time of year, the winter visitors having departed and the summer migrants only just starting to appear. Many thanks to Russell for a very enjoyable morning.

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## CENTRAL COAST PARKES CAMPOUT

19–21 September

Carole and John Carpenter

Parkes and the surrounding areas had been lucky to have rain at the appropriate time so the paddocks of golden canola and lush green grain crops were a delight to see. The weather generally was also kind to us with warm sunny days but a couple of zero temperatures overnight made us grateful for our warm clothes although some campers had to get extra blankets from the camp ground managers! The Spicer Park Caravan Park was spacious and conveniently placed at the base of Memorial Hill and close to all our needs. In the caravan park we had resident nesting Apostlebirds, many, many Noisy Friarbirds, Musk Lorikeets, Blue-faced Honeyeaters, and a single Australian Hobby and Little Friarbird were seen.

On Friday we headed east out of town stopping near the airport road where our special finds were Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Western Gerygone, White-winged Triller, Olive-backed Oriole, Peaceful Dove and a Black-shouldered Kite hovering over a paddock. We continued onto the old Parkes water supply dam, called Bumberry Dam, where we saw Dusky Moorhens, Hardhead, Australian Grey Teal, Eurasian Coot, Australasian Grebe, Pacific Black and Australian Wood Ducks. The bush birds were plentiful with Grey-crowned Babbler, Spotted Pardalote and Grey Fantail all nesting and or feeding young. Rufous Whistler, Rufous Songlark, Yellow-rumped and Yellow Thornbills, White-

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winged Choughs, Mistletoebird, Common Bronzewing and a surprised Nankeen Night Heron were all good bird finds. After our morning tea we drove further on and stopped in a section of Goobang National Park on the Ridge Trail Bumbery where we added Buff-rumped Thornbill, Brown-headed, Fuscous and White-eared Honeyeaters before heading back to camp for lunch. Our afternoon outing was to the Parkes Sewage Treatment Works (STW) where we had been given permission to drive or walk around the ponds. Whiskered Terns were dipping and diving over the ponds as the usual common waterbirds were present and we also saw c.10 Red-necked Avocets, Black-winged Stilts, Red-kneed and Black-fronted Dotterels, a Glossy Ibis, several Freckled Ducks, many Pink-ears, Australasian Shovelers, two Australian Shelduck, five Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, a Black-tailed Native-hen and a Swamp Harrier made a brief appearance. After our Bird Call back at camp we dined out at the Services Club. Saturday we headed south towards Forbes, atlassing in the Tichbourne area, finding Wedge-tailed Eagle, Whistling Kite, Sacred Kingfisher and Cockatiel. At the water ponds near the Forbes Golf Course we saw Fairy Martins nesting under the railway bridge, White-breasted Woodswallows flying overhead, an Eastern Great Egret posed for the photographers as it perched on a walkway railing, and a Yellow-billed Spoonbill fed in the shallows. We had morning tea there and watched the Australian Reed-Warblers and Little Grassbirds as we enjoyed out tea and coffee. Our next stop was Gum Swamp and as usual there were plenty of water and bush birds. The White-bellied Sea-Eagles were at their nest, White-winged Choughs were feeding young in their nest, and Striped Honeyeaters, Brown Treecreepers and Rainbow Bee-eaters were soon located, and a lone Black-tailed Native-hen preened and sunned itself on an exposed log in the water. Both Hoary-headed and Little Grebes were present, A few Freckled Ducks were seen but the Blue-bills could not be located.

We headed northwest for lunch in a forest reserve on Warrigal Road, where we had good views of Weebills, Cockatiels and a Wedge-tailed Eagle overhead. At Bogan Gate we had a slow drive around the village adding Mallee Ringnecks to our list. Another bush stop on a Travelling Stock Route found Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Inland Thornbill, Red-capped Robin and Western Gerygones feeding young in a low, well-concealed nest in a bunch of eucalypt leaves. Our last stop of the day was at Trundle where Australian Pelicans and White-necked Herons were found at a waterhole and Jacky Winters were seen. Our intended look at the Trundle STW did not happen owing to us not being able to find it! We headed back to camp Bird Call and a barbecue at our airy shelter meeting place where we sat around the log fire. On Sunday we set off for Baldry atlassing along the way and we saw both Little and Musk Lorikeets, an Australasian Pipit and a Brown Songlark near Terrills Lane. Also of interest was a large drooping swarm of bees, hanging in a eucalypt branch over the road. Morning tea was at the Spring Creek section of Goobang National Park, where we saw both Rufous and Golden Whistlers, Western and White-throated Gerygones, Speckled Warbler, Striated and Inland Thornbills and a Brown Goshawk. Further along Spring Creek we found both White-throated and Brown Treecreepers, Brown Quail and a Collared Sparrowhawk, a group of White-browed Babblers were seen and Black-chinned Honeyeaters were heard calling but not seen. Lunch was at the Baldry Hall in the shade before we did a loop along the Manildra Road. Here we added Diamond Firetails, Zebra and Double-barred Finches and a Brown Falcon. Striated Pardalotes were heard and seen at most of our stops and a pair were found nesting in a fallen tree and on a cross bar on a power pole. Our daily counts were 98, 96 and 99 species with a total of 144 species for the camp. We had 23 birders and thanks to all of you for your attendance and helping to make the camp a great success.

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## MIDWEEK OUTING CAPE SOLANDER AND BOAT HARBOUR

24 September

Ann Pritchard

On a sparkling morning three of us met to walk round to the rock platform at Boat Harbour. We flushed birds at the start of the platform including Ruddy Turnstones and Double-banded Plovers but they quickly flew right out to the end of the rocks where many more were roosting and feeding. There was an interesting mix of birds— Double-banded Plovers starting to go into breeding plumage; some 20 or so Golden Plovers, a few quite blotchy on the chest; lots of Red-necked Stints (two with a little bit of a reddish tinge on their necks) plus Ruddy Turnstones, Crested Terns and Silver Gulls. Feeding on rocks were two White-faced Herons with nice breeding plumage, a dark phase Eastern Reef Egret and an Eastern Great Egret also with breeding plumes. The latter flew up to the cliff top where we had to walk but as it was stalking something it was unfazed by us.

Overhead we saw a Whistling Kite and a White-bellied Sea-Eagle and in the grass there were Superb Fairy-wrens and Red-browed Finches. An Australasian Pipit flew in and New Holland Honeyeaters called from the bushes. On to Bonna Point for lunch where the new facilities are excellent and we found a Sacred Kingfisher who was very vocal as were the Red Wattlebirds. Down on the bay there was an Eastern Curlew and a Pied Oystercatcher plus many birds on posts but apart from an Australian Pelican all were too far away to identify. In spite of lots of people and dogs (due to school holidays) we had a modest list of 30 species but some quality birding and good views of unusual plumages and behaviour. Thanks ladies.

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## DUBBO GULLY OUTING

27 September

Kaye Pointer

A cool spring morning, very different from last year's high temperature but only eight birders flocked where the usual species were added to the day's list like Little and Red Wattlebirds, Noisy Friarbirds and Grey Fantails were seen and White-throated Gerygones, Peaceful Dove, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Eastern Whipbird, Spotted Pardalote and Scarlet Honeyeaters made vocal claims for their territories and gave alarm calls while two Brown Goshawks circled overhead. While car-pooling was organised, a White-necked Heron flew over the meeting place at the corner of Waratah Road and Wisemans Ferry Road at Mangrove Mountain. With 33 species on the list before we started, we could only add another two species, Crimson Rosella and Willie Wagtail before we reached the first gate, but as we opened the gate, Wonga Pigeons, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Brown Cuckoo-Dove and White-throated Treecreepers let their presence be known. A not so familiar call was heard from the tree tops which turned out to be three Black-faced Monarchs returning for the summer visit, closely followed by a pair of Leaden Flycatchers, also a first return for the season.

When we arrived at the second gate and entered the valley we were observing a White-browed Scrubwren when the first Fan-tailed Cuckoo was heard calling, as did a Superb Lyrebird and then three Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos flew over and a Grey Butcherbird called in the distance. A short walk down the creek added Brown Thornbill, Silvereyes and Rufous Whistlers and the first sighting of a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo. We had a short cuppa break here before moving onto the recently slashed grass parking area adjacent to the big waterhole. A short walk to the second

gate added Satin Bowerbird and Olive-backed Oriole. While waiting for a truck to pass through this gate we all had great views of a Scarlet Honeyeater feeding in a flowering Native Clematis. On the walk back a party of Variegated Fairy-wrens were seen. We checked out the waterhole but there were not many birds but Australian Reed-Warblers were loudly disputing territory boundaries. During lunch at the waterhole we had several diversions first a Brown Quail flew past although all but a few saw it before it disappeared in the long grass. The second was a call from Malcolm seeking confirmation about two raptors overhead, a reply came, 'That's not a raptor, it's a hang glider!!' Fortunately for Malcolm, on closer inspection, we observed two Wedge-tailed Eagles, one carrying a large object, probably a large tree branch for nest construction.

A walk along the edge of the waterhole which was echoing with Australian Reed-Warblers calling, revealed a Purple Swamphen, one Black Swan, an Australian Raven on a nest, nine Pacific Black Ducks, a sun-baking Red-bellied Black Snake and a Brush Cuckoo calling. The loop to the cemetery and back to the cars provided some interesting vocals from at least three Fan-tailed Cuckoos and several Crimson Rosellas. Back at the corner of the Dubbo Gully and Waratah Road we made a brief stop to say farewell and we observed two Jacky Winters, the only ones sighted for the day, Eastern Spinebill, House Sparrow and Yellow-rumped Thornbills. A total of 62 species were seen and heard, and were added to Gosford Council's Monitoring Program for the Gully. An enjoyable days birding with interesting vocals and sightings. Thanks again to the support team and all reporters.

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## HALF-DAY OUTING OURIMBAH CREEK RAINFORESTS

8 October 2014

Alan Morris

Thirty birders met on a cool, wet morning at the M1 Rest area at Ourimbah, being a combined Cumberland Bird Observers and Birding NSW Outing to rainforest on three private properties in the Ourimbah Creek Valley. Unfortunately it rained or drizzled rain for most of the morning, the rain only stopping around lunchtime. However despite the rain there were plenty of birds to see. Our time at the meeting place enabled us to see just how busy the Australian Brush-turkeys could be at that time of the morning, three small flocks of Topknot Pigeons flew over, and an adult male and a number of female Regent Bowerbirds, Satin Bowerbirds and Green Catbirds all fed in a fruiting Wild Tobacco Bush alongside the loop road of the rest area car park! Our first

stop along the Ourimbah Creek Valley Road was at the property of Eileen and Brian Patterson, which consists of five acres of rainforest along Ourimbah Creek. Twenty years ago this was just cleared land but now, what with natural re-vegetation and careful plantings to supplement the remnant rainforest trees present when the property was purchased, the Patterson's have returned this property to a delightful rainforest. Some good birds were found here including Rufous Fantail, Black-faced Monarchs, Superb Lyrebird, Striated Thornbills, Australian King-Parrots, Channel-billed Cuckoos and Scarlet Honeyeaters, while in the paddocks nearby were Cattle Egrets, White-faced Herons, Long-billed Corellas and Dusky Moorhens.

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We moved onto Rosanna Jone's property *Lilly Pilly* where we joined Rosanna for a well-provisioned morning tea in out of the rain followed by a walk around her rainforest block. Highlights there were a Superb Lyrebird foraging in the garden, a pair of Eastern Shrike-tits busily demolishing some hanging bark in a large Blue Gum, Olive-backed Oriole, plenty of Yellow-throated Scrubwrens and more Rufous Fantails and Black-faced Monarchs. Our final stop for the day was at Pattie Koln's *Forest of Tranquility*. Despite the rain we were soon traversing the constructed paths through this rainforest where we saw seven separate Yellow-throated Scrubwren nests plus another, which had been taken over by some Large-billed Scrubwrens. Additional birds for our list here were Sacred

Kingfisher, White-throated Treecreeper, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Fan-tailed Cuckoos and Shining Bronze-Cuckoos, Bell Miners, Eastern Whipbirds and Brown Gerygones. We were able to have lunch in the picnic shelters that are available at this site and during lunch we watched the antics of a Satin Bowerbird that had a bower nearby. Red-whiskered Bulbuls were present in the creek and the raptor seen overhead turned out to be a Square-tailed Kite, ably photographed by Christian Port. I want to thank Brian and Eileen and Rosanna and Patti for being our hosts for the morning and giving us access to their properties. Despite the wet weather we saw 66 species and gained a good insight and knowledge about the rainforest areas and their birds of the Ourimbah Creek Valley.

## SYDNEY PELAGIC TRIP REPORT

11 October 2014

Roger McGovern

We departed from Rose Bay in the Zane Grey with 20 passengers, mostly locals but with visitors from the UK and Canada. We set up a trail of fish offal behind the boat before leaving the harbour and soon had large numbers of Silver Gulls and several Great Cormorants following the boat. As we passed through the heads, those on the upper deck had distant views of the resident pod of Inshore Bottlenose Dolphins and we soon had good numbers of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters joining the gulls behind the boat. A single Hutton's Shearwater was well seen behind the boat and several more were seen close in to the heads.

Small numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters showed well and we soon had our first views of a distant group of Humpback Whales - although we saw up to 10 Humpbacks on the way out, none were close enough for us to observe at closer quarters unfortunately. The small group of Great Cormorants continued to stay with the boat until about 4 NM off the heads which is most unusual behaviour. As we travelled through the first half of the 22 NM journey to Brown's Mountain, we added good numbers of Fluttering Shearwaters to the tally along with a few Australasian Gannets, Greater Crested Terns and our first albatrosses of the day, young Shy Albatross (ssp *steadii* or 'White-capped' Albatross) and a single immature Black-browed

Albatross, and a few Flesh-footed Shearwaters were spotted amongst the Wedge-taileds behind the boat. A distant jaeger was seen harassing the Silver Gulls behind the boat and although it was almost certainly an Arctic Jaeger, it was too far away to be certain. As we headed into deeper water, the number of birds following the boat began to drop off but we had a number of sea creatures to maintain our attention as we came across a breaching marlin, two Southern Ocean Sunfish (one of which was well seen close to the boat), a couple of fur seals and a shark near a ball of bait fish, which may have been a Tiger Shark.



*Dwarf Minke Whale. Photo: Stephen Hey*



As we approached Brown's Mountain, a giant petrel was seen behind the boat and made a couple of reasonably close passes showing the pale green bill tip which confirmed that it was a Southern Giant Petrel. Although there were a few Providence Petrels around the shelf break, we decided to keep motoring into deeper water to try and find greater concentrations of birds. This was not particularly successful but we eventually stopped about 5 NM east of Brown's Mountain and set up a berley slick to see what would come in. A few Providence Petrels, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and the odd Great-winged Petrel came by and then several Wilson's Storm Petrels came to the slick and provided good, close views. The first Wandering-type Albatross of the day approached the boat and settled on the slick revealing itself to be an Antipodean Albatross ssp gibsoni. With no new species coming in to the berley trail, we motored back up the slick to give close views of this bird before taking off on a course to the northeast. We continued to see a few birds but no new species - the highlight of this period was a passing look at a very young Wandering-type Albatross (probably another gibsoni) resplendent in its chocolate brown plumage and white face.

On the journey back to Sydney, no new bird species were seen and it was generally a very quiet trip back to the heads. Another fur seal was well seen and showed itself to be an Australian Fur Seal. By far the highlight of the day occurred about 10 NM off the heads when a glimpse of a medium size whale was seen near the boat. We immediately stopped and cut the engines and the whale surfaced again nearby showing itself to be a DWARF MINKE, a species that we rarely see off Sydney possibly because of the difficulty in locating them rather than because of their extreme rarity. As we drifted quietly, the Dwarf Minke continued to swim around the boat, obviously curious, and it surfaced several times in close proximity. It was still with us more than 20 minutes later when we decided to resume our homeward trip. As we approached Sydney Heads, a couple of us on the upper deck found a Sooty Shearwater amongst the many Wedge-tailed Shearwaters but it had quickly gone from view before others could be alerted.

Although there were not huge numbers of birds evident on the day, there was plenty to keep the attention and everyone on board enjoyed a typical Sydney pelagic experience on a beautiful spring day.

### BIRD LIST SYDNEY PELAGIC TRIP

(Note that the numbers in parentheses represent the approximate maximum number of that species in view at one time)

Antipodean Albatross	2	(1) both gibsoni	Australasian Gannet	8	(3)
Black-browed Albatross	3	(1) all immature with one looking much like a Campbell Albatross	Greater Crested Tern	4	(2)
Shy Albatross	7	(2) all steady	Jaeger sp	1	(1) probably an Arctic Jaeger
Southern Giant Petrel	1	(1)	Silver Gull	200	(120)
Great-winged Petrel	3	(1)	<b>OTHER</b>		
Providence Petrel	10	(2)	Humpback Whale	10	
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	120	(60)	DWARF MINKE WHALE	1	
Short-tailed Shearwater	150	(40)	Inshore Bottlenose Dolphin	3	
Flesh-footed Shearwater	3	(1)	Fur Seal (sp)	5	one confirmed
Sooty Shearwater	1	(1)	Australian Fur Seal		
Fluttering Shearwater	30	(5)	Southern Ocean Sunfish	2	
Hutton's Shearwater	8	(3)	Marlin (sp)	1	
Wilson's Storm Petrel	9	(5)	Shark (sp)	1	probably a Tiger Shark

### ROYAL NATIONAL PARK OUTING

11 October 2014

Wendy Cope

The group of nine began the day in the Wattle Forest Picnic Area and passed the bower of the Satin Bowerbird on the way along the river where good views were had of a Superb Lyrebird busily scratching on the opposite bank. A Shining Bronze-Cuckoo was a welcome find before coming upon Brown Gerygones building a nest. On Lady Carrington Drive some photographers captured

a Green Catbird and our group enjoyed a Black-faced Monarch. The birds of the day were the Topknot Pigeons, which we saw many times throughout the day sitting not too far away affording clear views. We were also very close to three Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos after lunch. The species count for the day was 46.

## CENTRAL COAST CAMPOUT URUNGA HEADS

17-19 October 2014

Graeme Catt

Twenty-seven birders arrived at Urunga Heads Caravan Park in glorious weather. The count around the park and boardwalk on the Thursday resulted in us seeing 69 species which was outstanding, some we saw each day including the Beach Stone-curlews, along with the Sooty Oystercatchers, Nankeen Night Heron, Eastern Curlews, 30+ Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos and Rainbow Bee-eaters nesting in a bank 20 metres from the start of the boardwalk.

On Friday we left for Sawtell to do the walk below the caravan park along the waters' edge seeing many Little Terns and Pied Oystercatchers, Lesser Sand, Pacific Golden and Red-capped Plovers, Brahminy Kite, Eastern Osprey, Whimbrel and a distant Australasian Gannet. Coming back through the park the usual camp followers of Pied and Grey Butcherbirds and Australian Brush-turkeys were seen. Back to the car park for morning tea then up the hill and along 200 metres on the left a short walk of a few hundred metres produced Drongo, Regent Bowerbirds, Golden Whistlers, Eastern Rosellas, Eastern Shrike-Tit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Fan-tailed and Brush Cuckoos, Black-faced Monarch, Eastern Yellow Robin and both Grey and Rufous Fantails. Along about two km north of Sawtell, a walk along the base of the lookout was a bit quiet seeing only Brown Cuckoo-Dove, White-cheeked Honeyeater, Variegated Fairy-wren and an Eastern Spinebill. We returned to camp via Mylestrom, and on the way we saw Eastern Great and Cattle Egrets, a Pied Butcherbird and an Eastern Koel was calling. Around our campsite we found two Regent Bowerbirds and a Black-faced Monarch and along the road, White-breasted Woodswallows were seen on the wire. Around the Yellowrock Road we found a large flock 30 + Red-browed Finches, Common Starlings, Dollarbirds, a White-breasted Sea-Eagle and Figbirds.

On Saturday after picking up Richard Jordon at Bellingen and doing a short walk along near the bridge over the river a Tawny Grassbird was found, which was the first one that Richard had seen in the ten years he had been in Bellingen. On the way to Dorrigo a friendly Emu was seen in the house yard of a property. We went up the top to the lookout overlooking the Thora Valley for morning tea and the Forest Ravens were making their deep note call. Many Satin Bowerbirds were seen crossing the road and there were Australian King-Parrots Crimson Rosellas, Eastern Yellow Robins, Pied Currawongs and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens. Back to the Information Centre and along the trail below the Sky Walk we saw Green Catbird,



*Beach Stone-curlew. Photo: Graeme Catt*

Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Australian Logrunners, Large-billed Scrubwrens, Shinning Bronze-Cuckoo, great views of Rose Robins and Rufous Fantail and White-browed Scrubwrens feeding young in a nest at the base of a large tree which had blown over in a recent storm. Back up on the road for the walk back to the Information Centre 100 metres from the car park two Topknot Pigeons gave great views at close range. While I walked back to the car to get my camera, a male Paradise Riflebird appeared to the delight of many but I missed it. We returned to photograph the pigeons and only four of us were there to see three female Paradise Riflebirds, obviously the best birds of the weekend. Where else could you see Paradise Riflebirds and Beach Stone-curlews within 35 km in a straight line from each other?

On Sunday we did an early morning walk along the boardwalk and saw 49 Little Black Cormorants roosting on a sandbank, as well as Gull-billed Terns, Mangrove Gerygones, Channel-billed Cuckoos, Pied Cormorant and Bar-tailed Godwit. We went south from Urunga to the Sewage Treatment Works (STW) where all the usual ducks and waterfowl were seen and down along the fence on the southern side of the ponds a Buff-banded Rail and a Swamp Harrier were found. From there we went to Hungry Head and turned left at the blue shelter shed to the first freshwater lagoon which produced the resident female Musk Duck and Hardheads, an Aussie Grebe and a Spangled Drongo that nearly landed on John Carpenter's lap. Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos were calling and then onto the second lagoon where only a few waterfowl

were seen. We relocated to Valla Reserve and morning tea. Afterwards we walked along the Valla Estuary which produced Striated Pardalotes, Galahs, Figbirds, Striated Heron, Black-winged Stilts, a Little Egret and a pair of Scaly-breasted Lorikeets were very busy looking in and out a hollow limb. Also along the edge there were Pied Oystercatchers, Eastern Osprey, Bar-tailed Godwits and a Black Swan. On the way back five Royal Spoonbills gave great camera shots with one male in breeding plumage having a bad hair day in the strong Nor'easter wind that was blowing. Some members crossed the footbridge to look for the Red-backed Fairy-wrens but they could only find Superb Fairy-wrens.

After lunch we moved to Nambucca Heads STW arriving about 2.30 pm and it was starting to warm up. It was great

to see the mowed walk all the way round the Ponds was in the shade. Here we saw two Goannas and an Azure Kingfisher, White-breasted Sea-Eagle, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Grey Butcherbird, Square-tailed Kite, Olive-backed Oriole, White-throated Gerygone, Latham's Snipe and all the common species of waterfowl. Along to the Nambucca Cemetery where it was very warm and the best bird was a Brahminy Kite that flew over but there was very little else to be seen. Over the weekend we saw and heard 158 species, which was a very good count. Best birds were without doubt the Paradise Riflebirds and the Beach Stone-curlews. Special Thanks to Richard Jordon for the Sunday trip to Bellingen and Neville Compton for his great help in planning this trip.

## STANNIX PARK OUTING

18 October 2014

Trevor Waller

I just knew this outing was going to be a good one. As I drove past McGrath's Hill Treatment Works I saw the water level in the pond beside the road was very low. This changed my plans for the day and I'm glad it did.

While waiting for members to arrive at Stannix Park three Yellow-tailed Black- Cockatoos flew low overhead. Around me there was an avalanche of bird calls. This is as good as I've seen Stannix Park for birds in a long time. We spent some time looking around the bush area along the river where we found nesting White-throated Gerygone, Sacred Kingfisher and Little Corella. These were some of the many nesting birds we saw during the day. Other birds found here included Restless Flycatcher, Little Lorikeet and Black-faced Monarch.

We then walked along the road towards the bridge and found Dollarbird, Australian King-Parrot and Brown Goshawk. We were treated to a prolonged display of aerial gymnastics by a Grey Fantail. There were also nesting Grey Butcherbird and Yellow Thornbill.

Our morning tea stop was at Wilberforce Park. Here we saw a distant Australian Hobby that then came close enough to swoop low between the trees. We then moved on to Pugh's Lagoon where we found a Black-shouldered Kite, Azure Kingfisher and Fairy Martin. In one tree we had nesting Magpie-lark and Willie Wagtail.

Our next stop was along Triangle Lane in the Richmond Turf Farms. Here we had views of a few Rufous Songlarks, Golden-headed Cisticola and Cattle Egret in breeding plumage. Along Cornwallis Lane we stopped for a Brown Songlark that sat on a post next to the road and allowed great views for all.

McGrath's Hill Treatment Works was definitely worth a stop. There were many Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Black-winged Stilts to be seen. There were also Red-kneed Dotterel

and Chestnut-breasted Mannikins. The star of the show was the Baillon's Crake that Elizabeth found.

We had lunch near the cars at Pitt Town Lagoon before venturing down to the hide. There were many water birds and we found Freckled Duck, Australasian Shoveler, Pink-eared Duck and Hardhead. Two Caspian Terns flew in and landed on one of the islands. There were three Pacific Golden Plovers roosting on an island as well. This was a great day birding and one in which we saw 100 species.

## GREBES ON THE PARRAMATTA RIVER (INNER HARBOUR)

Barrie Ayres

I have now lived in Chiswick, close to a cliff-bank of the Parramatta, looking down at about 45° into the water, for well over 20 years . . . and, even with kayaking for about 10 years, have never seen a shark!

Despite reports from other people of sightings, until the other day, I had not seen a grebe in the river either. Then, by pure chance, my eye was in the right spot to see a tiny blur a moment before it hit the water, with hardly a splash or a ripple. The grebe dived almost immediately and did not reappear within my sight . . . (probably resurfacing nearer to the bank).

Normally my peripheral vision is good . . . but the flight of the bird across the water had not been noticed. Now I understand that they are about – but almost invisible!

## THE BEST UNUSUAL REPORTS FOR NEW SOUTH WALES, AUGUST-OCT 2014

### ALAN MORRIS

Region Abbreviations: **NC**–North Coast; **H**–Hunter, **CC**–Central Coast; **S**–Sydney Region; **I**–Illawarra; **SC**–South Coast; **NT**–Northern Tablelands; **CT**–Central Tablelands; **ST**–Southern Tablelands; **NS**–North-west Slopes; **CS**–Central-west Slopes; **SS**–South-west Slopes; **NP**–North-west Plains; **CP**–Central-west Plains; **R**–Riverina; **UW**–Upper Western; **LW**–Lower Western

Emu	1	29/08/14	Dunheved G C St Marys	S	Mark Fuller
Australian Brush-turkey	AM	09/09/14	Gore Hill (entered a house)	S	Judy Clarke
Magpie Goose	8	04/09/14	Clarenza (small wetland)	NC	Greg Clancy
Magpie Goose	90	18/09/14	Narrabri Lake	NP	Michael Dahlem
Freckled Duck	2	05–09/09/14	McPherson Rd Swp Tuggerah	CC	Allan Benson
Freckled Duck	11	20/09/14	Gum Swamp Forbes	CS	John Carpenter
Blue-billed Duck	2	29/09/14	Lake Wallace Wallerawang	CT	David James
Blue-billed Duck	2	30/09/14	Little Llangothlin Lgn NR	NT	Greg Clancy
Blue-billed Duck	4+1Y	03/10/14	Gum Swamp Forbes	CS	Warren Chad
Plumed Whistling-Duck	6	14/09/14	Bungendore Wetlands	ST	Martin Butterfield
Australian Shelduck	2	19/09/14	Parkes STW	CS	Robyn Price
White-headed Pigeon	50	24/08/14	Derby St Epping (privet feeding)	S	Jenny Stiles
Brush Bronzewing	1	30/08–21/09	Deep Ck Narrabeen (2 on 31/08)	S	Henry Coleman
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	1 HC	26/08/14	Iluka NR	NC	Greg Clancy
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	2	27/09/14	Mungo Brush Myall Lakes NP	H	Joshua Bergmark
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	1m	04/10/14	Caniaba Lismore	NV	Paul Griffin
Topknot Pigeon	50+	21/09/14	Deep Creek Narrabeen	S	Paddy De Klerk
Topknot Pigeon	20	22/09/14	Lake Conjola Estuary	I	Richardson Family
Topknot Pigeon	100+	27/09/14	Bulli Pass	I	Paul Freeman
White-throated Nightjar *	2	19/09/14	Station Ck Yuraygir NP	NC	Peter Higgins
White-throated Nightjar *	1	03/10/14	Wog Wog NP Sunny Corner	CT	Marc Anderson
Wandering Albatross	1	27/08/14	North Head Sydney Harbour NP	S	Ivan Chapman
Black-browed Albatross	12	15/09/14	Sydney pelagic	S	Roger McGovern
Campbell Albatross	2	23/10/14	Sydney Pelagic	S	Roger McGovern
Shy Albatross	6	27/08/14	North Head Sydney Harbour NP	S	Ivan Chapman
Buller's Albatross	5	30/08/14	Wattamolla Royal NP (1 on 06/09)	S	Michael Ronan
Northern Giant Petrel	1	15/09/14	Sydney pelagic	S	Roger McGovern
South Giant Petrel (WP)	1	06/09/14	Wattamolla Royal NP	S	Michael Ronan
Cape Petrel	1	27/09/14	Wollongong pelagic	I	Brook Wylie
White-headed Petrel	1	30/08/14	Wattamolla Royal NP (1 on 06/09)	S	Michael Ronan
White-headed Petrel	1	03/09/14	Mistral Point Maroubra	S	David Mitford
Black Petrel	1	23/10/14	Sydney Pelagic	S	Roger McGovern
Great-winged Petrel	40	30/08/14	Wattamolla Royal NP	S	Michael Ronan
Great-winged Petrel	40	03/09/14	Mistral Point Maroubra	S	David Mitford
Fairy Prion	4	30/08/14	Wattamolla Royal NP	S	Michael Ronan
Buller's Shearwater	1	27/09/14	Wattamolla Royal NP	S	Michael Ronan
Little Penguin	1	02/10/14	Chinamans Bch Sydney Harbour	S	David Potter
Black-necked Stork	1m M	29/08–02/09	McPhersons Dairy Swp Tuggerah	CC	Alan Morris
Black-necked Stork	F	30/08/14	Ellalong Lagoon Paxton	H	Christina Port
Australasian Bittern	1	16 & 29/09	Fivebough Wetlands Leeton	R	Sue Proust
Australasian Bittern	HC	28/09/14	Hexham Swamp	H	Joshua Bergmark
Black Bittern	1	30/08 & 21/09	Deep Ck Narrabeen	S	Henry Coleman
Striated Heron	1+N?	08/09/14	Deepwater Park Milperra	S	Greg McLachlan
Striated Heron	1	12/09/14	Warriewood Wetlands	S	Carl Weber
Eastern Osprey	N+1Y	17–25/08/14	Erina (nesting) (died 25/08)	CC	Lisa Ford
Eastern Osprey	1	06/09/14	Cobar (soaring over– out of range)	UW	Val Curtis
Eastern Osprey	1	10/09/14	Penrhyn Estuary Botany Bay	S	Allan Richards
Pacific Baza	1	29/08/14	Terrys Creek Parkland	S	Irene Timmins
Pacific Baza	4	13/09/14	Koorngal Ave Thornleigh	S	Cameron Ward
Pacific Baza	2	22/09/14	Quarry Ck Lane Cove NP	S	Noela Jones
Pacific Baza	2+N	22/09–13/10	Wattletree Rd Holgate (re-nesting)	CC	Eileen Davy
Square-tailed Kite	2	06/09/14	Cattai Wetlands Coopernook	H	Mark Ley

Square-tailed Kite	1	11/09/14	Kellyville	S	Carl Corben
Square-tailed Kite	1	18/09/14	Sydney Olympic Park	S	Stephen Davey
Black Kite	8	09/09/14	Duranbah Tweed Valley	NC	Rob Morrow
Brahminy Kite	2 Im	21/09/14	Wybung Head Munmorah SCA	CC	Rebecca Citroni
Grey Goshawk	1	25/09/14	Wingham Brush	H	Nicholas Beswick
Spotted Harrier	1	27/09/14	Bylong Valley Way	CT	Tom Wilson
Wedge-tailed Eagle	AF+J	01/09/14	Castlereagh	S	Akos Lummitzer
Lewin's rail	1	15/09/14	Chipping Norton	S	David James
Baillon's Crake	1	29/08/14	Fivebough Wetlands Leeton	R	Max O'Sullivan
Australian Spotted Crake	4	29/08/14	Fivebough Wetlands Leeton	R	Max O'Sullivan
Australian Spotted Crake	1	13/09/14	Putta Bucca Wetlands Mudgee	CT	Lisa Abra
Black-tailed Native-hen	1	30/09/14	Lake Wallace Wallerawang	CT	David James
Beach Stone-curlew	1	29/08/14	Wooli	NC	Roger Stonehouse
Beach Stone-curlew	2	17-19/10/14	Urunga	NC	Graeme Catt
Bush Stone-curlew	2	27/09/14	Barham	R	Karl Just
Red-necked Avocet	62	28/08-02/10	Tuggerah Bay Saltmarsh	CC	Luke Ullrich
Red-necked Avocet	450	04/09/14	Swan Pond Ash Island	H	Roger Giller
Red-necked Avocet	40	01/10/14	Ashley (Cotton Farm)	NP	Curtis Hayne
Red-necked Avocet	120	06/10/14	Waterbird Refuge SOP	S	Tom Wilson
Grey Plover	1	22-25/09/14	Lake Conjola Estuary	I	A Wolinski
Double-banded Plover **	1	04/09/14	Long Reef	S	Nicholas Beswick
Double-banded Plover **	1	08/09/14	Pelican Point Norah head	CC	Steve Merrett
Hooded Plover	8	24/07/14	Racecourse Bch Ulladulla	I	Charles Dove
Hooded Plover	2	25/09/14	Cudmirrah Beach	I	Cameron Ward
Latham's Snipe *	1	12/09/14	Kings Rd Swamp Wauchope	NC	Alan Morris
Latham's Snipe *	1	13-18/09/14	Putta Bucca Wetlands Mudgee	CT	Lisa Abra
Latham's Snipe *	2	20/09/14	Mt Annan Botanic Gardens	S	David Vickers
Little Curlew	1	21/09/14	Stockton Sandspit	H	Andrew O'Brien
Great Knot *	3	30/08/14	Clarence River Yamba	NC	Darryl Eggins
Red Knot *	4	23/08/14	Stockton Sand Spit (71 on 05/09)	H	Liz Crawford
Curlew Sandpiper *	1	08/09/14	Soldiers Pt Norah Head	CC	Alan Morris
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *	12	14/09/14	Waterbird Refuge SOP	S	Jenny Stiles
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *	3	18/09/14	Eastlakes Golf Course	S	Mark Young
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *	4	01/10/14	Ashley (Cotton Farm)	NP	Curtis Hayne
Painted Button-quail	1	30/09/14	Glen Alice	CT	Dion Hobcroft
Painted Button-quail	1 D	02/10/14	Wilson St Botany (found dead)	S	David Mitford
Kelp Gull	2	30/08/14	Long Reef Aquatic Reserve	S	Tom Wilson
Common Tern	78	08/09/14	Soldiers Point Norah Head	CC	Alan Morris
Whiskered Tern *	6	14/09/14	Pejar Dam Crookwall	ST	Chris Gladwin
Whiskered Tern *	1	19/09/14	Cattai Wetlands Coopernook	H	Nicholas Beswick
Whiskered Tern *	30	19/09/14	Parkes STW	CS	Alan Morris
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	16/07/14	Bangadilly NP Canyonleigh	I	Terry Edwell
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2+J	09-10/09/14	Coutts Crossing	NC	Greg Clancy
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	10	20/09/14	Butterleaf SF Glen Elgin	NT	David Charley
Gang-gang Cockatoo	2	09/09/14	North Epping	S	Frances Rein
Little Corella	300	09/09/14	147 Levenstrath Rd Levenstrath	NC	Warren Thompson
Superb Parrot	24	19-20/07/14	Cowra Shire (5 sites)	CT	Cowra Surveys
Superb Parrot	12	01/08/14	Kidman Hwy (105 km S Cobar)	UW	Jane Anthony
Superb Parrot	25	26/09/14	Orange Botanic Gardens	CT	Tom Wilson
Red-winged Parrot	3	19/09/14	Glen Innes (19 km W)	NT	David Charley
Little Lorikeet	100+	08/09/14	Eight Mile Lane Glenugie	NC	Greg Clancy
Little Lorikeet	6	13/09/14	Cambridge Gardens	S	Akos Lummitzer
Swift Parrot **	4	08/09/14	Deepwater Pk Milperra	S	Greg McLachlan
Swift Parrot **	2	22/09/14	Wilpinjong Ck Murracamba	CT	Kurtis Lindsay
Swift Parrot **	4	25/09/14	Blacktown (McDonalds)	S	Henry Cook
Turquoise Parrot	2	22/09/14	Wilpinjong Ck Murracamba	CT	Kurtis Lindsay
Turquoise Parrot	2	28/09/14	Crown Stn Rd Glen Davis	CT	Tom Wilson
Turquoise Parrot	6	29/09/14	Binya SF	R	Nick Leseberg

Ground Parrot	2 HC	19/09/14	Brooms Hd Heath Yuraygir NP	NC	Peter Higgins
Channel-billed Cuckoo *	1	03/09/14	Eulah Creek Narrabri	NP	Michael Dahlem
Channel-billed Cuckoo *	1	04/09/14	Balmain	S	Robert Griffin
Channel-billed Cuckoo *	1	07/09/14	Kurrajong Heights	S	Eric Finley
Eastern Koel *	1	30/08/14	Kingsford	S	Michael Hooper
Eastern Koel *	1	09/09/14	Maryville Newcastle	H	Tom Clarke
Eastern Koel *	1	13/09/14	Bellevue Hill & Sawtell	S	Gladwin/Higgins
Little Bronze-Cuckoo	1	14/09/14	Old Glen Innes Rd Grafton (TSR)	NC	Gary Eggins
Little Bronze-Cuckoo	1	20/09/14	South Grafton Water Reserve	NC	Greg Clancy
Brush Cuckoo *	1	27/09/14	Dubbo Gully Mangrove Mtn	CC	Kaye Pointer
Brush Cuckoo *	1	29/09/14	Lower Pappinbarra	NC	Ian Kerr
Oriental Cuckoo	1	31/08/14	Cremorne Point	S	Simon Blanchflower
Pallid Cuckoo *	1	30/09/14	Glen Alice	CT	Dion Hobcroft
Pallid Cuckoo *	1	25/09/14	Poley Bridge Orara River	NC	Greg Clancy
Powerful Owl	1 D	09/09/14	Pearl Beach (found dead)	CC	Ian Harvey
Powerful Owl	1	22/09/14	Royal Bot Gardens Sydney	S	Ted Nixon
Barking Owl	1	20/07/14	Cowra Shire	CT	Cowra Surveys
Southern Boobook	1	24/08/14	Nielsen Pk Vaucluse	S	Marie Lister
Sooty Owl	HC	27/09/14	Mt Hyland Wilderness Reserve	NC	Greg Clancy
Forest Kingfisher	AM	11/09/14	Taloumbi Brooms Head	NC	Russell Jago
Sacred Kingfisher *	1	10/09/14	Coutts Crossing	NC	Greg Clancy
Sacred Kingfisher *	1	12/09/14	Ingleside	S	Roger McGovern
Sacred Kingfisher *	1	13/09/14	Bundeena	S	Deryk Engel
Red-backed Kingfisher *	1	18–23/09/14	Rushworth Rd Grafton	NC	Alan Pilkington
Red-backed Kingfisher *	2	02–05/10/14	Eulah Creek Narrabri	NP	Michael Dahlem
Red-backed Kingfisher *	1	05/10/14	Bombi SF Grenfell	CS	Kim Farley-Larmour
Red-backed Kingfisher *	1	01/10/14	Bogee Rylstone	CT	Edwin Vella
Rainbow Bee-eater *	3	31/08/14	Main Beach Byron Bay	NC	Ian Kerr
Rainbow Bee-eater *	2	01/09/14	Sawtell	NC	Michael Cheers
Rainbow Bee-eater *	12	11/09/14	Koolumbung Ck Pt Macquarie	NC	Alan Morris
Dollarbird *	1	21/09/14	Richmond Vale	H	Dan Williams
Dollarbird *	1	23/09/14	Warriewood Wetlands	S	Jayden Walsh
Dollarbird *	2	24/08–09/14	Hallidays Point	H	Nicholas Beswick
Noisy Pitta	1	04/09/14	Kincumba Mountain Reserve	CC	Warren Brown
Noisy Pitta	1	07/09/14	Irrawong Reserve Warriewood	S	Nicholas Beswick
Noisy Pitta	1 HC	11/09/14	Forest of Tranquility Ourimbah	CC	John Weigel
Paradise Riflebird	AM	10/09/14	Mortons Ck Beechwood	NC	Sue Proust
White-throated Gerygone *	1	26/08/14	Caniaba Lismore	NC	Paul Griffin
White-throated Gerygone *	1	06/09/14	King Ck Wauchope	NC	Clive Meadows
White-throated Gerygone *	1	14/09/14	Tathra Taila HSD Mangrove Mtn	CC	Margaret Pointer
Mangrove Gerygone	3	15/09 & 06/10	Sydney Olympic Park	S	J Stiles/T Wilson
Rockwarbler	2	08/09/14	Giants Creek Sandy Hollow	H	Mick Roderick
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	2	01/10/14	Kings Plains NP Inverell	NS	Greg Roberts
Rufous Fieldwren	1	04/10/14	Broken Hill (10 km NW)	UW	James Gunn
Redthroat	2	23/09/14	Broken Hill	UW	Greg Roberts
Southern Whiteface	5	19/07/14	Breakfast Ck & Cowra Hills	Ct	Cowra Surveys
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	4	29–31/08/14	Giants Ck Sandy Hollow	H	Mick Roderick
Regent Honeyeater	4	29/08–09/09	Giants Ck Sandy Hollow	H	Mick Roderick
Regent Honeyeater	2+N	14/09/14	Widden Valley	H	Michael Ronan
Black-chinned Honeyeater	4	20/07/14	Nandewar HSD Cowra	CT	Cowra Surveys
Black-chinned Honeyeater	3	08/09/14	Eight Mile Lane Glenugie	NC	Greg Clancy
Black-chinned Honeyeater	2 HC	23/09/14	Spring Ck Goobang NP Parkes	CS	Alan Morris
Black Honeyeater	2	23/09/14	Broken Hill	UW	Greg Roberts
Painted Honeyeater	3	11/09/14	Yarrie Lake Narrabri	NP	Michael Dahlem
Painted Honeyeater	12	22/09/14	Medhurst Bridge Martindale	H	John Weigel
Painted Honeyeater	3	22/09/14	Wilpinjong Ck Murracamba	CT	Kurtis Lindsay
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	03/10/14	Mogo Camp Yengo NP	S	Alan Morris
Ground Cuckoo-shrike	4	14/09/14	Back Yamma SF Forbes	CS	Loran Szucs

Ground Cuckoo-shrike	3	20/09/14	Eulah Creek Narrabri	NP	Michael Dahlem
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	2	30/08/14	Putta Bucca Wetlands Mudgee	CT	Mark Fuller
White-winged Triller *	3	29/08/14	Giants Ck Sandy Hollow	H	Mick Roderick
White-winged Triller *	2	04/10/14	Mt Banks Blue Mtns NP	CT	Eric Finley
Varied Triller	1	14/09/14	Old Glen Innes Rd Grafton	NC	Darryl Eggins
White-breasted Woodswallow	2	31/08/14	Sawtell	NC	Peter Higgins
White-breasted Woodswallow	2	04/09/14	McPherson Rd Swamp	CC	Allan Benson
White-browed Woodswallow *	2	23/09/14	Pearsons Lkt Capertee	CT	Tom Wilson
Dusky Woodswallow *	4	08/09/14	Bawley Point Batemans Bay	I	Margaret Harmon
Rufous Whistler*	1	29/08/14	Koolumbung Ck Pt Macquarie	NC	Ian Kerr
Black-faced Monarch *	1	19/09/14	Canaiba Lismore	NC	Paul Griffin
Black-faced Monarch *	1	19/09/14	Cattai Wetlands Cooperook	H	Nicholas Beswick
Spectacled Monarch *	1	06/09/14	Sawtell	NC	Peter Higgins
Spectacled Monarch *	2	02/10/14	Ourimbah Ck RTA Res	CC	Alan Morris
White-eared Monarch	HC	24/08/14	Iluka NR Iluka	NC	Greg Clancy
White-eared Monarch	1	14/09/14	Old Glen Innes Rd Grafton	NC	Darryl Eggins
Leaden Flycatcher *	F	04/09/14	Crows Nest Swp Pillar valley	NC	Greg Clancy
Rufous Fantail *	1	26/08/14	Caniaba Lismore	NC	Paul Griffin
Spangled Drongo	1	07/09/14	Irrawong Reserve Warriewood	S	Nicholas Beswick
Spangled Drongo	1	21/09/14	Deep Creek Narrabeen	S	Jayden Walsh
Flame Robin	11	19/07/14	Cowra Shire (4 sites)	CT	Cowra Surveys
Scarlet Robin	2	19/07/14	Kooragindi HSD Cowra	CT	Cowra Surveys
Rose Robin	3	20/07/14	Mulyan & Conimbla NP Cowra	CT	Cowra Surveys
Flame Robin	1 P	24/09/14	Mt Hyland Wilderness Lodge	NC	Boyd Essex
Hooded Robin	4	29/08/14	Giants Ck Sandy Hollow	H	Mick Roderick
Horsfield's Bushlark	6+	23/09/14	Bureen Rd Martindale	H	Mick Roderick
White-backed Swallow	2	23/09/14	Martindale	H	Mick Roderick
Rufous Songlark *	1	14/09/14	Causeway Royal NP	S	Martin Odino
Rufous Songlark *	1	21/09/14	Richmond Lowlands	S	Akos Lummitzer
Rufous Songlark *	2	28/09/14	Crown Stn Rd Glen Davis	CT	Tom Wilson
European Blackbird	AM	22/09/14	Wattle Flat Royal NP	S	Marie Lister
Beautiful Firetail	2	22/09/14	Barren Grounds NR	I	Marc Anderson
Diamond Firetail	2	21/09/14	Baldry (5 km SE)	CS	Carole Carpenter
Diamond Firetail	2	30/09–04/10	Crown Stn Rd Glen Davis	CT	Dion Hobcroft
Diamond Firetail	4	03/10/14	Back Yamma SF Forbes	CS	Nick Leseberg
Plum-headed Finch	3	30/08–13/09	Putta Bucca Wetlands Mudgee	CT	Edwin Vella
Plum-headed Finch	10	03/10/14	Gum Swamp Forbes	CS	Nick Leseberg
<b>Citrine Wagtail</b>	<b>AF</b>	<b>28/08–08/09</b>	<b>Putta Bucca Wetlands Mudgee</b>	<b>CT</b>	<b>Sue Chatfield</b>

\*=First Return \*\* Last Date hw= hit window rk = road kill bc= beach cast, CWBS= Cowra Woodland Bird Survey

**Bold** – On the Review list of the NSW Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee – submission required.

(Bird names used and the order in which they occur are in accord with 'Systematics and Taxonomy of Australian Birds' 2008)

## COMMENT

Springs has arrived and the migrants are funneling through fast but there have been no special rarities other than the **Citrine Wagtail** that made the Putta Bucca Wetlands at Mudgee its home, staying for over three weeks and it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> NSW record. The drought in south-west Queensland and western NSW with the accompanying drying up of wetlands in the Paroo, Bulloo and Lake Eyre Basin continues to drive large numbers of **Freckled Ducks, Pink-ears and White-necked Herons** into north-eastern and eastern NSW with extraordinary numbers of each species being seen in places not previously reported, however **Black Kites** which were also pushed into north-west NSW appear to have gradually returned to the western Regions. Other **Freckled Ducks**: 2 Parkes STW 22/09 (CS), 2 Lithgow STW 25–30/09 (CT); **White-throated Nightjar**: 1 Brooms Hd Heath Yuraygir NP 19/09 (NC); **Eastern Osprey**: 1 Long Reef Aquatic Res 06/09, 1 Lane Cove River, LCNP (S) 14/09; Other records of **Pacific Baza** include: 1 Dunbogan 06/08, 1 Kororo, Coffs Harbour 25/08 (NC), 1 Kurrajong 13/09, 1 Devlins Rd Castlereagh 20/09 (S), 1 South Grafton WR 20/09, 1 Mt Hyland Wilderness Lodge 28/09, 1 Shark Ck Grafton 05/10 (NC); **Square-tailed Kites** have also been reported from Dunbogan 07/08 (NC), Warden Hd Ulladulla 27/08 (I), Chiltern Trl Ingleside 10 & 28/09, 1 Middle Dural 04/10 (S); Coastal **Spotted Harriers** remain in many locations including singles at Killalea SRA 26/07 (I); **Gull-billed Tern**: The one reported from The Entrance Channel on 16/08, is only the first Central Coast report this year! (CC); **Glossy Black-Cockatoo**: 2 Capertee Village 24/09 (CT); Other **Superb Parrots** seen included: 2 Tarcutta Ck Tarcutta (SS), 3 Holmwood HSD 30 km E of Parkes 18/09 (CS); **Turquoise Parrot**: 2 Coco Ck Glen Davis 04/10 (CT); **Swift Parrots** occurred in smaller numbers than usual this winter with only one report from the Central Coast and only a few northern records from the Hunter and North Coast, other records include: 9 Badgery TSR 20/07, 2 St Clair 24/08 (S), 2 McPherson Rd Swamp Tuggerah 29/08 (CC), 12 Dunheved GC St Marys 03/08 (S); Other **Powerful Owls** HC include: King Ck Waughope 19/09 (NC); **Channel-billed Cuckoos** returned early again (last year first record was 29/08!) Bundeena 05/09, Bicentennial Pk Glebe 07/09, North Epping 09/09 (S); Other **Eastern Koels**: 1 Epping 15/09 (S), Hawks Nest 19/09 (H), Kariong 27/09 (CC); Other **Sacred Kingfisher** arrivals included 5 Gum Swp Forbes 22/09 (CS), Bradleys Head 28/09 (S); Other **Dollarbird** arrivals were: 2 Bundeena (S) and Sawtell (NC) 25/09, 2 Clarencetown 27/09 (H), 2 Ourimbah Ck Chittaway 29/09 (CC); **Noisy Pittas** continue to be regularly reported for the Sydney region, other records include 2 Woody Head, Bunjalung NP 22–23/08, another Iluka NR 24/08 (NC); **Regent Honeyeaters** have been noticeably absent this winter while a few **Black-chinned Honeyeaters** have been around viz: 1 Crown Stn Rd Glen Davis 28/09 (CT); **Painted Honeyeaters** have returned in reasonable numbers this spring and other records include 2 Giants Ck Sandy Hollow 23/09 (H) and 1 Binya TSR 29/09 (R), 1 Genowlan Bridge Glen Alice 04/10 (CT); **Leaden Flycatcher**: Other arrivals Couatts Crossing 09/09, Taloumbi and Red Cliff 11/09 (NC), Dubbo Gully 27/09 (CC); Other **Black-faced Monarch** arrivals : 3 Dubbo Gully 27/09 (CC), Bradleys Head 28/09 (S). Good Birding!

## BIRDING NSW DIRECTORY

### Postal address:

Birding NSW, PO Box Q277,  
QVB Post Shop, NSW 1230

**Email:** [info@birdingnsw.org.au](mailto:info@birdingnsw.org.au)

**Website:** [www.birdingnsw.org.au](http://www.birdingnsw.org.au)

### Sydney Club Meetings:

The Club meets on the first Tuesday of the month, February to December at 7.30 pm on Level 1, Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney. There is an illustrated talk followed by Club business and unusual sighting reports. Visitors are welcome.

### Central Coast Club Meetings

Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at Anzac Street, Tuggerah at 7.30 pm. Convenor: Alan Morris 4334 2776

### Annual membership fee:

Single adult \$35.00

Family \$40.00

Junior (under 18 years) \$15.00

Fees are due on 1 October. Membership includes subscription to the Newsletter and the Club's Annual Bird Report.

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Email articles, trip reports etc to  
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