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Newsletter

NSW Field Ornithologists Club Inc

Issue 261

February 2014

President's Report

For the first time, the December meeting last year combined the Arnold McGill Memorial Lecture, the Club Christmas party and the Club Annual General Meeting. Everyone present agreed that this format worked well. The attendance at the meeting was excellent. The committee will consider whether to hold all three events in December on a regular basis.

Our Arnold McGill Memorial speaker, Alan Rogers, has been a past President of the NSW Field Ornithologists Club (1980–4) and he has been a member of both the NSW FOC and the Cumberland Bird Observers Club since the inception of both clubs. He reminisced about his personal encounters with Arnold McGill. He remembered Arnold fondly as a very generous birder and as an entertaining companion. Alan gave a captivating address about his birding experiences in Russia. Tantalisingly, he said that he had a second talk about the latter half of his Russian odyssey with even better bird pictures, and we are hopeful that we can draw him back sometime this year.

Over 50 people attended the Annual General Meeting. The committee, including your President, was re-elected unopposed for a further year. I am grateful for the Club's support. As always, I thank all of the numerous volunteers who sustain the Club. We owe a debt not only to the committee members, but also to all the leaders of field activities, the helpers at Club meetings, and to all the others who contribute their time and effort to keep the Club running. I must particularly acknowledge the valuable work of Barrie Ayres, who stood down from the committee in 2013. As well as being our Treasurer for many years, Barrie provided great guidance to the committee. Our present Treasurer, Leigh Hall, presented the financial report, and commented that our financial position was sound. He noted that our financial records would now be available on our website.

The Christmas bring-a-plate party worked a treat once again, and I think that this will be the formula for future years.

The 2014 Grenfell surveys dates are 29–30 March and 27–28 September. The committee has worked hard to ensure that these dates do not clash with other birding events in 2014. Information for the first survey is available with the Club Activities.

We have had communication with both of our twinned clubs, in Nagoya, Japan, and in Portsmouth, UK recently. A contingent from the Nagoya chapter of the Wild Bird Club of Japan will be visiting Sydney in October. I am sure that Allan will be looking for volunteer guides closer to the time. The Portsmouth RSPB group has sent us a copy of their latest newsletter, and also a list of their outings for the next six months. If any of you will be in the Portsmouth area during this period and would like to participate in their outings, please let a member of the committee know.

The number of entries for the annual Photographic Competition in November was up there with the record, and as usual Charlie Andrews did a great job as Master of Ceremonies, as did he, Adrian O'Neill and David Stowe in the judging. Outback Track Tours continues to support this event. We are thinking of changing some aspects of the competition in 2014.

The website is becoming more and more important as a portal for access to the Club. Over 60% of members renew from the site (vs. 21% two years ago), and most new members join through the website. There will be more frequent updates of Club activities on the website in 2014. The committee has decided that access to the newsletter from the website will remain password-protected for the time being.

Tom Karplus

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

J & E Bastick

Howrah Tasmania

Christopher Pappas

Cambridge Park NSW

Tony Smith

Saratoga NSW



CLUB ACTIVITIES

FIELD OUTINGS AND MEETINGS

NATIONAL PARK USE FEES AND ON-THE-SPOT FINES

A valid day pass or annual pass is necessary for 47 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. In many parks failure to display a valid pass will incur an on-the-spot \$100 fine. Day passes can be purchased from the Entrance Station when open, or the pay and display machines that take exact money (\$11 or \$7 for most Birding NSW outings), or a credit card.

A safer alternative if you visit national parks regularly is to obtain an Annual Pass. When you pay online for an annual pass ask for a reminder when it is due for renewal.

Members in doubt are encouraged to make their own enquiries and arrangements when visiting a national park.

FEES AT CAMPOUTS

A camping fee may be applicable at some campsites.

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.

SAFETY

It is a condition of attendance at Club outings or Club campouts that those wishing to leave early should ensure that the leader is aware of their intention.

PETS

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

SECURITY

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

NESTLINGS' OUTINGS

These half-day outings are a combined enterprise of Birding NSW and the Cumberland Bird Observers' Club. They are specially designed to introduce children from 5 to 12 years of age to bird watching. An adult must accompany the children.

CENTRAL COAST OUTINGS

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

HEALTH AND SAFETY

As from New Year's Day 2012, The New South Wales State Government has spread the requirement for formal Health and Safety procedures, designed for employers, to social and voluntary societies, which have ANY paid employees. Our Insurers, in this vein, require us to record policy for our officers and members – even though we are currently outside the scope of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS).

Birding NSW resists introducing very formal procedures into its activities, except to continue our practice of asking all participants to sign the attendance register at each meeting and outing, to signify that one attends at one's own risk and will refrain from any behaviour which might put oneself or others at risk.

For new Club members—bring morning tea, lunch and a chair.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 1 February Central Coast Outing: 'Breakfast with the Birds' at Pioneer Dairy, Central Coast Wetlands, Tuggerah at **7.30 am**. Cost \$5 per person. Birding in the Tuggerah/Chittaway area afterwards. Lunch at cars. Contact: Alan Morris 02 4334 2776

Tuesday 4 February Club Meeting: The Mitchell Theatre, Level 1, The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney at 7.30 pm, 'The Vocalisations of the Australian Pied Butcherbird', speaker: Hollis Taylor.

Saturday 8 February Club Outing: Colo River and Swallow Reach, Ebenezer. Meet 9.00 am at the south side of the Colo River Bridge on the Putty Road north of Wilberforce. Lunch at cars. Leader: Philip Brook 9929 4818

Saturday 15 February Club Outing: Bicentennial Park and Sydney Olympic Park. Meet 8.00 am at Lake Belvedere, 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. Leader: Judy Harrington 9712 5904 or 0403 026 660

Tuesday 25 February Central Coast Meeting: Meet at the Progress Hall in Anzac Street Tuggerah opposite McDonalds at 7.30 pm. 'Birding in the Northern Territory', speakers: John and Carole Carpenter.

Wednesday 26 February Midweek Outing: Narrabeen and Long Reef. Meet 9.00 am at Jamieson Park at the end of Mactier Street (becomes The Esplanade). The

actual time of the visit to Long Reef will be determined by tides and conditions on the day. Lunch at cars.
Leader: Elisabeth Karplus 9816 2285 or 0421 665 553

MARCH

Saturday 1 March Central Coast Outing: Ash Island and Stockton. Meet 8.30 am at the Recreation Ground, Woodford Street, Minmi. Lunch at cars. Leader: Alan Morris 02 4334 2776 or 0418 269 482

Tuesday 4 March Club Meeting: The Mitchell Theatre, Level 1, The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney at 7.30 pm, 'Lord Howe Island's Masked Owls—an introduced apex predator on an oceanic island', speaker: David Milledge.

Saturday 8 March Club Outing: Botany Bay area. Meet 8.30 am at Sir Joseph Banks Park, Fremlin Street, Botany. Includes a long, level walk to the Penrhyn Estuary. Lunch at cars. Leader: Allan Richards 9660 8062 or 0432 064 660

Wednesday 12 March Central Coast Half-day Outing: Dubbo Gully. Meet 8.30 am at the corner of Wisemans Ferry and Waratah Roads, Mangrove Mountain. Lunch at cars. Leader: Margaret Pointer 4374 1163

Saturday 15 March Club Outing: Budderoo National Park. Meet at 8.30 am for birding around the car park before a 9.00 am start. Travel along Jamberoo Mountain Road past the Barren Grounds turn-off towards Carrington Falls/Robertson. Continue for approximately 2.9 km until you reach a dirt road on the left. There is a sign at the turn-off for Budderoo National Park. This dirt road leads to a gate (approx 300 metres from the turn-off) where there is parking for about 4 to 5 cars. The turn-off area also has room for cars to be parked. Bring a jacket, as some parts of this track are exposed and very cold if there is any wind. Carry morning tea; lunch at cars. Leader: Jill Molan 0439 134 827

Weekend Central Coast Campout 21–23 March. Boomerang Way Tourist Park, Tocumwal. Tel: 03 5874 2313. Meet at the caravan park. Visiting the Murray River region. Leaders: Alan and Anne Morris 02 4334 2776 or 0418 269 482

Tuesday 25 March Central Coast Meeting: Meet at the Progress Hall in Anzac Street Tuggerah opposite McDonalds at 7.30 pm. 'Atacama, Altiplano and Santiago, Chile', speaker: Trevor Waller.

Wednesday 26 March Midweek Outing: Mitchell Park. Meet at 8.00 am outside the entrance to Mitchell Park, just before the pay station. Lunch at cars. Leader: Elisabeth Karplus 9816 2285 or 0421 665 553

Saturday 29 March Central Coast Outing: Ourimbah Reserve and Chittaway. Meet 8.30 am at the M1 Motorway Roundabout and Rest Area at Ourimbah. Lunch at cars. Leader: Christina Port 02 4340 4767

Saturday and Sunday 29–30 March IBA Survey: Grenfell. More information below.

APRIL

Tuesday 1 April Club Meeting: The Mitchell Theatre, Level 1, The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney at 7.30 pm, 'Stopping and reversing the decline of Australia's birdlife', speaker: Shauna Chadlowe.

Saturday 5 April Club Outing: Royal National Park. Meet 8.30 am at Wattle Forest Picnic Area near Audley. Turn into Lady Carrington Drive at Audley, then right over the timber bridge to the western side of the river. Turn left and meet at the last car park. Lunch at cars. Leader: Elisabeth Karplus 9816 2285; 0421 665 553

Wednesday 9 April Central Coast Half-day Outing: Dog Trap Road, Somersby. Meet 8.30 am at Somersby Store, Junction of Wisemans Ferry Road and Peats Ridge Road, Somersby. Lunch at cars. Leader: Wendy Gillespie per Alan Morris 02 4334 2776

Saturday 12 April Club Outing: Chiltern Road and various other sites along the Northern Beaches. Meet 9.00 am at the end of Chiltern Road, Ingleside. Lunch at cars. Leader: Coleen Southall 9982 5453 or 0410 549 321

Tuesday 22 April Central Coast Meeting: Meet in the Progress Hall in Anzac Street, Tuggerah opposite McDonalds at 7.30 pm. 'Birding on Norfolk Island', speaker: Michael Scobie.

Saturday 26 April Central Coast Outing: Glenola Reserve, Bunning Creek. Meet at 8.30 am opposite the Yarramalong Church, 800 metres west of Yarramalong. Lunch at cars. Leader: Margaret Pointer 4374 1163

Wednesday 30 April Midweek Outing: Warriewood Wetlands. Meet 8.00 am at Katoa Close, Warriewood. Lunch at cars. Leader: Coleen Southall 9982 5453 or 0410 549 321

IBA SURVEY AT GRENFELL

Weekend 29-30 March 2014

Grenfell is part of the South-west Slopes Important Bird Area, the largest in Australia. Grenfell was chosen by the Club to monitor because it is a manageable distance from Sydney and has some threatened species such as the Superb Parrot. The Club is organising its fifth survey on Saturday and Sunday 29-30 March 2014. The survey will be conducted on Saturday morning allowing time to relax and bird watch in the afternoon. Teams of three or four people will survey three or four sites for twenty minutes at each site. It may be necessary to survey some of the sites on Sunday morning, if not we will have time for bird watching at leisure. You are most welcome to join us regardless of your bird-watching skills. Members will have to make their own arrangements regarding accommodation as soon as possible as accommodation is limited in Grenfell. There are three cabins and both powered and unpowered campsites at the local Caravan Park. It will also be possible to camp on private property. There are four hotels, a motel and several B&Bs in town. If you are able to join the group please advise the Club Activities Officer on 9660 8062 or by email at activities@birdingsw.org.au

THE RED-NECKED STINT

Eduardo Gallo-Cajiao

Long Reef Waders Coordinator

Honorary Associate, Department of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University

Natural History

The Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* belongs to a group of birds collectively known as shorebirds (Charadriiformes), whose ecology is strongly associated with intertidal areas on the coast and inland wetlands. Along the former, their lives are dictated by the tides, feeding on marine invertebrates that get exposed on rocky shores and mud flats when the tide recedes, then roosting on rocky outcrops and sandy beaches when the tide rises.

By far the most amazing feature of this tiny bird, with a weight of just 30g, is the intercontinental flights undertaken every year between the northern and the southern hemisphere. This species breeds in the tundra of Siberia and Alaska, the treeless vegetation that dominates the northernmost part of the world, an inhospitable environment with unbearable frozen winters. Adult Red-necked Stints arrive there by the end of the northern hemisphere spring with a tight schedule to mate and nest. Their chicks are highly precocial, hatching well developed and growing quickly. As parents conclude their duties and chicks reach full size, they take off, leaving their offspring behind, returning to the southern hemisphere non-breeding grounds on coastal areas and inland wetlands across Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Subsequently, it is up to the newly fledged Red-necked Stints to find their own way south, leaving their breeding grounds before the snow blankets the tundra again, thus commencing their independent lives. Juvenile birds will then start replicating their parents' migratory pattern, travelling between the northern and southern hemisphere every year. Red-necked Stints arrive in Australia in spring and depart in autumn, completing an annual migration cycle of thousands of kilometres covered by long-haul flights, with stopovers, along the east coast of Asia. (see text box on page 5).



Red-necked Stint. Photo: Michael Hanvey

Conservation Status

The Red-necked Stint is not considered endangered and its global population may not be declining. However, habitat destruction in critical stopover areas along their migration route, as well as in estuaries in Australia, should be considered cautiously. Even though the species is listed as Least Concern by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* and the *NSW Threatened Species Act*; several Bilateral Migratory Bird Agreements between Australia, China, Japan and South Korea have granted it protection.

Red-necked Stint Watching

Red-necked Stints can be easily seen along the NSW coast. Some reliable locations include the estuaries of the Richmond, Clarence and Shoalhaven Rivers, as well as Long Reef and Boat Harbour within the Sydney region. As these birds are small, the use of binoculars and spotting scopes is recommended.

Further Information

Geering, A., Agnew, L. and S. Harding. 2007. *Shorebirds of Australia*. Canberra, Australia: CSIRO Publishing. 256 pp.

www.longreefwaders.org

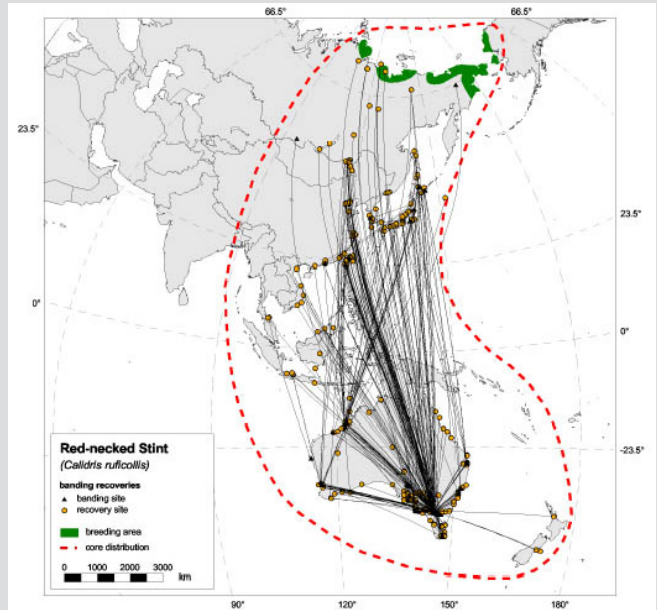
www.shorebirds.org.au

THE RED-NECKED STINT IS A FASCINATING BIRD TELLING US A STORY OF ENDURANCE, TRAVELLING THOUSANDS OF KILOMETERS IN ORDER TO COMPLETE ITS LIFE CYCLE

The migratory path of the Red-necked Stint has been unveiled by coordinated and continuous monitoring. This process has involved the deployment of uniquely numbered bands and region-coded colour leg flags that can be then used to track individuals along their way (see photo). Amateur birdwatchers and scientists have reported many of these marked birds across the Asia Pacific region over the years enabling the mapping of their migratory route (see map). This information has allowed the identification of critical areas for their conservation.



This red-necked Stint was recorded at Long Reef in Sydney's northern beaches. The displayed colour leg flag combination indicates that this individual was initially caught at Bohai Bay in the northwestern section of the Yellow Sea of China, over 8000 km away. Photo: Alfred Schulte.



Distribution of Red-necked Stint: non-breeding grounds include Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand; breeding grounds (green areas) encompass the tundra across Siberia and Alaska. Yellow dots and black triangles represent places where banding and recoveries have occurred. Map © 2004 Australasian Wader Studies Group.

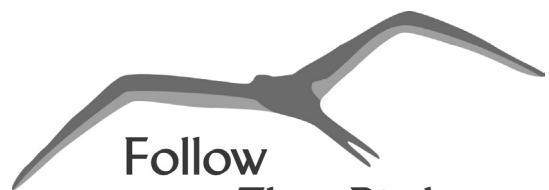
This article was first printed in *Nature New South Wales*, Journal of National Parks Association of New South Wales, Volume 56, No 4 Summer 2012 and is reprinted with permission.

OUTBACK TRACK TOURS

7-DAY COACH ACCOMMODATED AND CAMPING TOUR

16-22 April 2014

Join us on a group tour for Easter to *Comeroo Station* on the banks of the Maranoa Waterhole, 150 km northwest of Bourke. This cattle and sheep property covers 100 000 acres of red and black soil plains. It has been in the Sharpe family since 1919. The varying habitat provides the opportunity to see a wide range of inland species. The station has a vast wetland area, which plays home to a multitude of different waterbirds and parrots, a real treat! The rare Halls Babbler and Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush have been seen on Comeroo by birders recently. There is also the opportunity for some stargazing where the skies come alive – excellent for both novices and experienced stargazers. Inexperienced birdwatchers and those who have not camped before are particularly welcome. This tour is ideal to try before booking on a longer tour. Judy Harrington, an experienced leader will assist with the identification of birds. Available as a camping tour or as an accommodated tour; we always enjoy the Easter tour for its camp oven cooking and easy outback style. Check the website for more details www.outbacktracktours.com <<http://www.outbacktracktours.com>> or email us at res@outbacktracktours.com for more information.



Follow That Bird

February 2014

South Coast NSW \$3020
12-16th Guide Bob Ashford

Hong Kong & Mai Po Marshes \$3365
27th-3 March Guide Locals

March 2014

Bird Photography Weekend \$1190
15-16th Guide Christina Port

April 2014

Bhutan – Thunder Dragon Birding \$14330

**Monthly Scheduled Day Trips
Birds & Camaraderie**

Follow That Bird - sydney's birding company
Tel 02 9973 1865 Website www.followthatbird.com.au

MARCH TALK

Lord Howe Island's Masked Owls - An Introduced Apex Predator on an Oceanic Island

Speaker: David Milledge

During the 1920's five species of owls were introduced to Lord Howe Island in an attempt to combat a population explosion of the Black Rat. Only the Masked Owl successfully established and now maintains a viable population of between 20 and 30 pairs. David will talk about how they have adapted and thrived and some of the known impacts of the introduction as well as a proposed removal of them as part of a biodiversity management plan.

APRIL TALK

Stopping and Reversing the Decline of Australia's Birdlife

Speaker: Shauna Chadlowe

*Development Executive,
Australian Wildlife Conservancy*

An alarming number of Australian birds are currently threatened with extinction: the Malleefowl, the Bush-stone Curlew, the Gouldian Finch, the Purple-crowned Fairy-wren. These are just a few of our unique birds whose future is uncertain. Across northern Australia, populations of seed-eating birds are crashing. In the southern part of the continent many of our uniquely Australian birds have all but disappeared. Find out what is driving this decline and be inspired by the latest innovative strategies Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) is deploying to successfully stop and reverse the decline in Australia's birdlife.

BIRD-WATCHING PELAGIC TRIPS

Sydney Pelagic Trips A two-level medium-speed catamaran suitable for pelagic trips out of Sydney has been sourced. The first pelagic trip is scheduled (subject to weather of course) for SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2014 and will depart from 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 the same as they were on Halicat, ie \$120 and \$110 for seniors/students. As an incentive for regulars prepared to commit to a minimum of 5 tours each season we are considering offering a \$100 concessional fare. Again please advise of your interest by contacting Roger or Hal to make a booking. Roger rogrou@bigpond.net.au or Hal hepstein@bigpond.net.au

At this stage future trips are tentatively planned for April, June, July, August, September, October and possibly November. Call Hal on 0411 311 236 or email 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

HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF THE WORLD *Alive*

Subscription to the Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive

The Birding NSW Committee approved the purchase of a 'Supporting Subscription' to the Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive (HBW Alive) for 2014.

Many members may already have a subscription to HBW Alive but this will give those members who don't a chance look at it and find out whether they find it useful.

To have a look at the site go to: <http://www.hbw.com>

To fully access the site you need to sign in with a username and a password.

I will send that information to the online members when I notify them that the February 2014 Newsletter is on the website.

We will also pass on the username and password in the February Birding Bulletin.

If you don't receive the Birding Bulletin and are not an online member and you would like to access the site use the newsletter email to request the username and password. newsletter@birdingnsw.org.au

CAMPOUT AT BINGARA

18–20 October 2013

Alan Morris

The October Camp was held at Bingara located on the western edge of the Northern Tablelands and the eastern edge of the north-west Slopes of NSW. Twenty-one members and friends joined the Camp at the Bingara Caravan Park and it turned out to be a great birding adventure with 149 species seen over the four days. Even though the Camp was only three days, (18-20/10/13) at least half the participants arrived early so we had a birdcall on the Thursday evening and we started with a list of 93 species. Not bad eh, shows you just what a good birding place Bingara is! The caravan park is located between Halls Creek and the Gwydir River, which was running a banker because of good seasonal conditions and because of a water release from Copeton Dam. It had been decided to bird around the two water courses on the first morning while waiting for a number of late arrivals. In those first two hours we managed to see 52 species before morning tea as the birds were just so busy and there were so many to see. These included nesting Jacky Winter, Restless Flycatcher, Noisy and Little Friarbirds, Australian Magpie, White-winged Chough, Rainbow Bee-eater, Lewin's and Striped Honeyeaters. Other birds present included Dollarbird, Sacred Kingfisher, White-browed Woodswallow, Little Lorikeet, Red-winged and Australian King-Parrots, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, White-winged Triller and White-throated Gerygone.

After morning tea we headed off to Upper Bingara (Bird Route No 1) with stops at Serpentine Ridge National Park (NP), the Upper Bingara Village and a grove of flowering Grass Trees. Highlights on this trip were three sightings of Diamond Firetails also Double-barred Finches, Rufous Songlark, Hooded Robin, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Musk and Little Lorikeets and Leaden Flycatcher. We checked out The Ponds site north of Cobbadah and the Travelling Stock Route (TSR) at Andersons Bridge on our way home and added Australian Pelican, White-necked Heron, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Hardhead, Brown Treecreeper, Cockatiel, Dusky Woodswallow and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike.



Sacred Kingfisher. Photo: Carole Carpenter



White-browed Woodswallow. Photo: Carole Carpenter

We returned to Camp where we were joined by the six last arrivals and replete with lunch we were off to check out Bird Route No 4 on the Whitlow Road. At the southern end of the former Bingara State Forest (SF) we added a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles (the first of many), Scarlet Honeyeater and Eastern Yellow Robin. Further along the road in the woodland and grazing paddocks we chanced upon a juvenile Pallid Cuckoo, Singing Bushlark, five more Diamond Firetails, two Emus and a flock of about 60 Plum-headed Finches! Our final stop for the day was at the Myall Creek Massacre Site where we learned about the sad event that took place there and checked out the birds



Flowering Grass Trees. Photo: Carole Carpenter

that included Brown Honeyeater, Weebill, Tree Martin, Nankeen Kestrel and Black-shouldered Kite. Spotlighting near Myall Creek that evening found Barn Owl and a Tawny Frogmouth, while Southern Boobooks were calling in the camp. At the end of the first full day our bird list had grown to 127.

On the Saturday we ventured west on Bird Route No 2 where we first checked out the Eaglehawk and Horseshoe Bend TSRs on the Gravesend Road. The common birds of the day were the White-browed and Masked Woodswallows, which were everywhere. Nesting Leaden Flycatchers, and Olive-backed Orioles, Little Eagle and Whistling Kite were the highlights at the former site, and nesting Diamond Firetail and nesting Weebill, and both Western and White-throated Gerygone, Brown Falcon, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Yellow-throated Miner, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo and Inland Thornbill were the highlights at the latter site. Morning tea was on the banks of the Horton River at the Gravesend Road Crossing where there were nesting Nankeen Kestrels and Rainbow Bee-eaters, as well as Red-browed and Double-barred Finches. We crossed the river and followed it upstream, travelling by way of Caroda, to the village of Upper Horton for lunch. Emus, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, another Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Golden-headed Cisticola, Australasian Pipit and nesting Fairy Martins were seen there. At our lunch stop we found Apostlebirds, Diamond Dove, Spotted Bowerbird, more Australian King-Parrots and Red-winged Parrots and Wedge-tailed Eagle as well as House Sparrows and Rufous Whistlers in the village trees and gardens.

Returning to camp we stopped off at two Barraba Bird Route sites viz Fagan Mountain and Dunnee TSRs between Upper Horton and Cobbadah. Highlights included more Dusky Woodswallows, Rufous Songlarks, Little Lorikeets and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes at the former and Little Lorikeets, Jacky Winters and Leaden Flycatchers at the latter. Our total at the end of day two was 139. As is our usual custom we all dined at the local RSL Club for dinner that night.

Our final day was set aside to visit the Gwydir River upstream of Bingara and Copeton Dam. At Borah Creek/Bingara SF we located the first Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Golden Whistlers for our

Camp, a stop near Coonagoora Homestead found Pale-headed Rosellas, Brown Treecreeper, Brown Falcon and Cockatiel. Near the former Munro SF we had our first Shining Bronze-cuckoo while at a brief stop near the property *Ravens Craig*, there were Fuscous Honeyeaters and Crimson Rosellas (the next morning a pair of Painted Button-quail were flushed from the side of the road at this location). We spent some time at Burree Point on the shores of Copeton Dam where a pair of Red-capped Plovers was nesting, and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Black-fronted Dotterels were feeding on the water's edge while Eurasian Coots, Whiskered Terns and Silver Gulls were seen on the Lake. Grey-crowned Babblers and Apostlebirds were found at Sepoy Point. We returned to camp after lunch and spent the rest of the afternoon checking out the Bingara Sewage Treatment Works where Pale-headed Rosellas, Australasian Pipits, Rufous Songlarks, Golden-headed Cisticolas, Tawny Grassbirds, White-winged Trillers, an Australian Hobby and two flocks of Plum-headed Finches were some of the highlights.

At the end of the day our camp bird list had grown to 149. Two weeks prior to our camp, Birdlife Australia held their Annual Camp at Bingara, and the 70 participants saw 164 species, but they did range much further than we did! Birds seen by us but not the BirdLife Bingara Camp included Diamond Firetails, Hooded Robin, Jacky Winter and Plum-headed Finches. Thanks to all the participants who helped to make this camp a great birding and social experience.

HALF-DAY OUTING PEARL BEACH AND PATONGA

6 November 2013

Graeme Catt

Fourteen Birders arrived at the Pearl Beach Arboretum on a bright and sunny morning; amongst them were our friends from England Jay and Di Nicholson who are back in Australia for a short stay. An inspection revealed that the resident Satin Bowerbird's bower was well adorned with the usual blue everything, while along the track, three baby Australian Brush-turkeys were busy feeding, two different sizes indicated different batches of eggs. Other species seen included Olive-backed Orioles, Little Corellas, Golden Whistlers, Sacred Kingfisher, Variegated Fairy-wren and there were great views of a pair of Cicadabirds, while Yellow-tailed Black- Cockatoos were heard.



Satin Bowerbird bower. Photo: Carole Carpenter

We went down to Pearl Beach for morning tea but there were only a few Cormorants and a Pelican to be seen. We then relocated to Warrah Trig, in Brisbane Water National Park and down to the lookout, overlooking Broken Bay. Here, much to our surprise, three Rock Warblers gave us good views especially when there were not many other birds around. We then proceeded to Patonga for lunch.

Highlights there were Brown Goshawk, Whistling Kites and a White-bellied Sea-Eagle. In the mangroves there was a pair of Royal Spoonbills waiting for the tide to drop. After a short walk along the waters edge we spotted a Nankeen Night Heron in a tall pine tree. It was a great morning birding with a total of 53 birds sighted and heard.

THAT REGULAR PROBLEM!

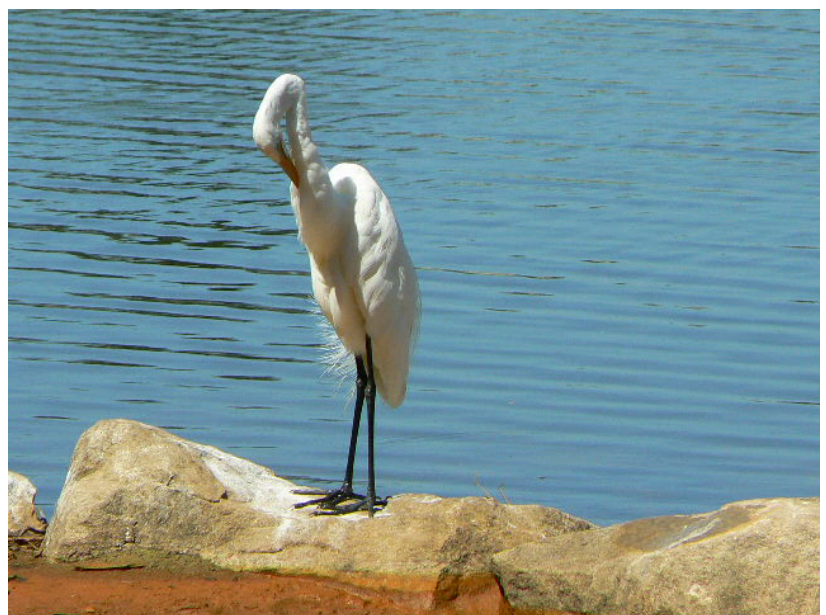
Barrie Ayres

On Saturday 9 November the field outing was in Centennial Park. Now walking rather slowly, several companions and I became separated from the rest, when we had an excellent close view of the egret pictured.

Hopefully the majority of readers will see the photo online, and so in colour –an orangey/reddish bill and all black legs. I was confident that we were seeing an Intermediate . . . but there was disagreement, with others seeing yellow extending behind the eye, and being sure it was a Great!

My (old) Simpson and Day tells me that, if an Intermediate is in breeding plumage, there should be red upper legs (tibia); if not, black - but few or no plumes! My Photographic Field Guide makes no mention of red tibia whilst in breeding plumage. Pizzey and Knight state that an Intermediate's legs should be yellow, grey or reddish above the knee, but helpfully say that there are plumes on the breast (which the pictured bird has), which are not found on the Great.

Will you forgive me for being a bit confused?



SYDNEY PELAGIC TRIP SUMMARY

9 November 2013

Roger McGovern

We left the harbour on the MV Lormar with a full complement of 24 passengers with several visiting from overseas and the remainder from around Sydney and the Central Coast. While still in the harbour, we encountered our first cetaceans of the day with views of the resident pod of Inshore Bottlenose Dolphins lounging around near Watson's Bay. David had the berley going straightaway and, although we saw a few moribund Short-tailed Shearwaters just inside the harbour, it was immediately obvious that the hoards of starving birds, which descended on us in recent trips, were no longer there. We quickly attracted a following of shearwaters but the Wedge-taileds easily outnumbered the Short-taileds. As is usually the case at this time of the year, there were fewer Australasian Gannets in evidence and we had a couple of Greater Crested Terns follow the boat and a few well seen Hutton's and Fluttering Shearwaters pass by. It was not long before we were joined by our first albatrosses, immature Black-browed and both juvenile and adult Shy. The usual discussions regarding the separation of the NZ White-capped from the Tasmanian nominate race took place and I always think that many of our hypotheses need to be backed up with a lot more research. A Pomarine Jaeger began to follow the boat as did an Arctic Jaeger shortly afterwards thereby allowing those on board to study the difference in structure between the two species. At about the 10-mile mark, we had a brief visit from a couple of Pantropical Spotted Dolphins and, then, a few minutes later a larger pod of these cetaceans came to the boat and rode on our bow for a while. Just before reaching

our berley location, a Common Tern approached the boat for a close look at us and quickly disappeared and we then came across the only Southern Ocean Sunfish of the day. With our concerns for deteriorating weather, we decided to make our berley stop about 5 NM short of Brown's Mountain, just over the beginning of the continental shelf break. With David laying down a good slick, new species began to appear on a regular basis. The first of these was a handsome adult Campbell Albatross, which was joined later by two more. David and I were wondering why, at this time of the year, all the Black-browed Albatross are immature birds and the Campbells are all adults. A very late immature Yellow-nosed Albatross was the next new species to appear followed by the first of several Wilson's Storm Petrels, a couple of Providence and Great-winged Petrels, and the only Wandering-type Albatross of the day, an Antipodean Albatross ssp gibsoni. The principal excitement of the day came with the arrival of two Black Petrels, which came and fed on the berley close to the boat giving great views to everyone. The journey back to Sydney did not bring any new species, although some on board at about 8 NM saw a third Black Petrel from the heads. We also had our third cetacean species of the day when a group of Short-beaked Common Dolphins came by close to the boat and kept on going. With the excellent weather conditions, the good numbers of birds present and the species count of 20, all on board had a great time and we finished off in the harbour with drinks and snacks to celebrate the end of an era.

BIRD LIST SYDNEY PELAGIC TRIP

Note that the numbers in parentheses represent the maximum number of that species in view at one time.

Antipodean Albatross	1	(1) adult gibsoni	Wilson's Storm Petrel	9	(6)
Black-browed Albatross	15	(7)	Australasian Gannet	3	(1)
Campbell Albatross	3	(3)	Silver Gull	250	(200)
Shy Albatross	10	(5)	Greater Crested Tern	8	(3)
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	1	(1)	Common Tern	1	(1)
Great-winged Petrel	4	(2)	Pomarine Skua	3	(2)
Providence Petrel	2	(1)	Arctic Jaeger	2	(1)
Black Petrel	3	(2)	OTHER		
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	360	(200)	Inshore Bottlenose Dolphin	10	
Short-tailed Shearwater	130	(100)	Short-beaked Common Dolphin	25	
Flesh-footed Shearwater	20	(10)	Pantropical Spotted Dolphin	20	
Fluttering Shearwater	11	(2)	Southern Ocean Sunfish	1	
Hutton's Shearwater	14	(3)			

BIRDING DOWN UNDER

November 2013

Colette Livermore

A poster of a Macquarie Island beach, tightly packed with King Penguins, which stretched out to a steep mountain on the horizon, had hung on my wall for many years. I had always wanted to go there.

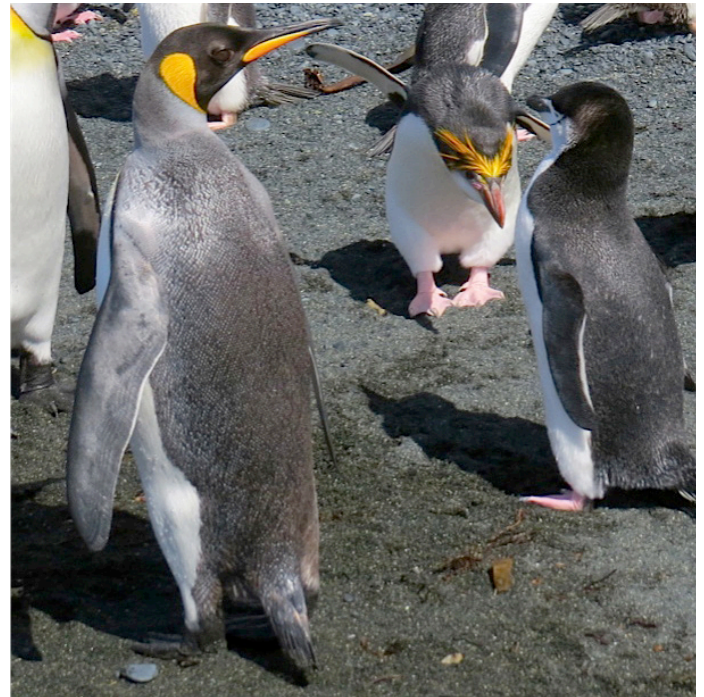
In November 2013 I set sail, with 48 other passengers, from Invercargill in New Zealand to Macquarie Island on the Heritage Expedition's vessel the *Spirit of Enderby*. En route we visited the Snares, Enderby and Auckland Islands where we were able to see the Snares Penguins on their rocky outcrops and Yellow-eyed Penguins hiding in the Rata Forests as well as Banded Dotterels, Tomtits, Tui, Antarctic Terns and the Enderby Flightless Teal and Snipe. The New Zealand fur seals were surprisingly swift on land. At sea many species of Albatross and Petrel followed the ship and we saw the black and white hourglass dolphins and a pod of killer whales.

The trip was rough at times and not for those prone to seasickness but waking up to see Macquarie Island covered in snow outside the portal window was wonderful. Wandering, Light-mantled Sooty and Grey-headed Albatross wheeled around the ship as well as a white morph Southern Giant-Petrel. The King, Royal, Gentoo and Rockhooper Penguins breed on Macquarie Island and King and Royal Penguins were seen swimming dolphin-like around the boat.

After picking up Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Officers from the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) Base at Macquarie Island we set sail for Sandy Beach. On the way, we passed beaches crammed with thousands of King Penguins surrounding the rusting remains of digesters once used in the 19th Century to boil them down for oil. I was very happy to witness the revenge of the penguins. They were nearly wiped out, but have now recovered to number around 200 000 pairs.

Macquarie Island is recovering from more than a century of human activity in the form of sealers, hunters and introduced pests: rodents, cats and rabbits. It is two years since the aerial baiting program on the island set out to eradicate feral pests and no rabbits have been sighted since December 2011. The rats wrought devastation on the bird population but now landing by zodiac on Sandy Bay the native wildlife is flourishing. At first the numerous sea lions strewn around the beach seemed like giant boulders. Inquisitive King Penguins came up to check out these visitors and their gear. Royal Penguins with their bright yellow crests and solid orange beaks mix freely with the sleek Kings Penguins but a lone, lost Chinstrap Penguin seemed to be the object of stranger hostility from its Royal cousins!

Up the hill at the Royal Penguin colony thousands of penguins were sitting on eggs and defending them from



King, Royal and Chinstrap Penguins. Photo: Colette Livermore



Gentoo Penguin and chick. Photo: Colette Livermore

the circling Subantarctic Skuas. In a month the population will double. Macquarie Island is the only place the Royal Penguins breed and there are thought to be 800 000 pairs. At the King Penguin colony at the other end of the beach young penguins were moulting, shedding their brown fluffy winter coat for the sleek black of their ocean going parents.

It is too cold for trees and woody shrubs to grow but plants such as the silver- leaved mega herb with daisy-like flowers (*Pleurophyllum hookeri*), the Macquarie Island cabbage,

ferns and tussock grasses are now recovering from rabbit infestation.

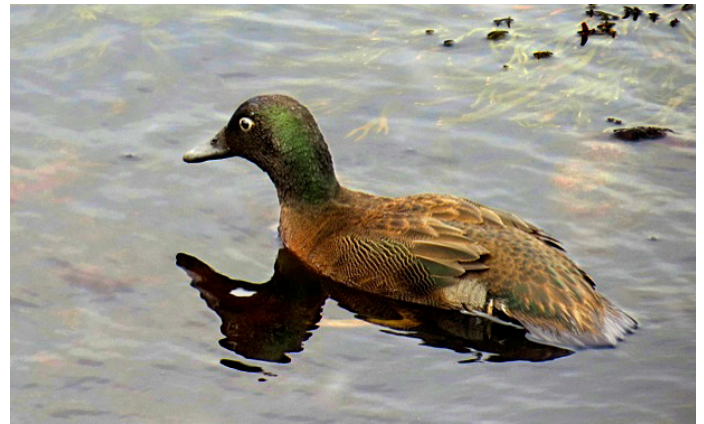
The day following our visit to Sandy beach we visited the ANARE base on Macquarie Island where the animals remain king. Sea lions loll about around the base wrecking havoc in some of the sheds and Gentoo Penguins raise their chicks among the tussocks.

We had an excellent morning tea at the base and then continued exploring along the beach seeing Giant petrels, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Macquarie Island or King Shags with their stunning blue eyes, Redpoll, Great Skuas, Antarctic Terns, Kelp Gulls and the Royal and King Penguins.

On the way back to the ship via zodiac we passed by a Rockhopper colony. Like the Royal Penguins they leave the island in winter but return in summer to breed and moult.

On the return trip to New Zealand we stopped at Campbell Island, which has also been transformed by rat and feral animal eradication. The flightless Campbell Island Teal had become extinct on the island but our tour leader Rodney Ross found Teal surviving on Dent Island some years back when he was working for the NZ Parks and Wildlife Service. From these birds Campbell Island has been repopulated with this beautiful Teal. We also walked up to the Southern Royal Albatross colony and saw their beautiful mating rituals.

The Antipodean Islands are formed from an extinct volcano with impressive columnar basalt cliffs. Travelling by Zodiac we saw the Antipodean Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus unicolor*)



Campbell Island Teal. Photo: Colette Livermore

Reischek's Parakeet high up in the tussock grass and Erect-crested Penguin on the cliffs. The Antipodes Island Pipit, and the Antipodes, Light-mantled Sooty and Royal Albatross circled the island.

We could not go out on the zodiac around Bounty Island due to rough seas but hundreds of Salvin's Albatross and several Bounty Islands Shags came around the ship. Erect-crested Penguins could be seen high up on the rocky cliffs as well as roosting albatross.

We returned via the Pyramid, the breeding site for Chatham Island Albatross. It was a wonderful trip covering 2630 nautical miles during which we saw 14 species of albatross, 9 species of penguin and 49 species of tubenoses as well as numerous other birds.

CHRISTMAS OUTING TO SCHEYVILLE NP AND MITCHELL PARK

7 December 2013

Elisabeth Karplus

Fifteen people met on Pitt Town Dural Road including Morven from the UK and Bruce and Jill from the USA. Bruce and Jill, keen birders from Vermont, were already birding in the area when Judy invited them to join us. It is always fun to show off our birds to people from overseas. Now that much of Scheyville forest is overrun with Bell Miners, the best birding occurs along the roadside and on the edge of the forest. White-winged Trillers were feeding in the paddock while a pair of White-browed Woodswallows fed a well-grown chick. Rufous Whistlers called nearby and eventually we saw them well. Jill found a Crested Shrike-tit, which we had all heard calling. Also seen were Jacky Winters (there is usually a pair in the area), Dusky Woodswallow, Eastern Yellow Robins, Grey Fantail, Red-browed Finch and Eastern Rosella. We walked along the stock route beside the forest where Morven found a Scarlet Honeyeater, which we heard calling, and we also saw White-throated Gerygones and Leaden Flycatchers. Above us were a juvenile White-bellied Sea-Eagle, a Brown Goshawk and a flock of White-throated Needletails. By then we were ready for morning tea in Mitchell Park, where Christmas

goodies were shared. From the picnic area we birded along the main road. Two Brown Cuckoo-Doves were feeding on berries in a low bush while pairs of Leaden Flycatchers and Crested Shrike-tits were seen in the trees above. The expected Dollarbirds and Sacred Kingfishers were easily seen. Variegated Fairy-wrens were in the undergrowth along the river with a female Satin Bowerbird. A Brush Cuckoo called from shrubs along the creek, where there were Brown Gerygones, Silvereyes and Red-browed Finches. Just before lunch we were able to show our visitors a pair of Common Bronzewing. While we ate lunch, our visitors set off for the Hawkesbury Swamps – there Allan showed Morven Banded Lapwings and a Rufous Songlark. The rest of us finished the day with a walk along the track by the swamp in which we saw a White-necked Heron. In the forest we were deafened by the sound of cicadas and could see many of them on tree trunks. Birds were very scarce here – presumably they were troubled by the noise also – so we gave up and set off for home. Thank you to everyone who brought lovely food for us to share to celebrate Christmas, the New Year and the end of another year of great birding.

BIRDING AT IRON RANGE

6-11 December 2013

Dougald Frederick

In early December together with four other birdwatchers I had the opportunity to revisit the avian delights of Iron Range. The trip, which was fly in/fly out to Lockhart River, encompassed five nights and was led by Klaus Uhlenhut of Kirrama Wildlife Tours. From a personal view point the aim of the trip was to finally see the Black-winged Monarch and Spotted Whistling-Duck, get better views of the Red-bellied Pitta and Northern Scrub-robin and generally experience Iron Range in the wet (my previous visit was in August). All objectives were admirably met except for the whistling duck, which disappointingly was last seen at the sewage ponds on the day before our arrival.

The trip was enhanced by great weather, good company and accommodation and excellent meals, which belied the remote location. Only limited travel was necessary as we were based at a private house in Portland Roads for the duration of the trip. We covered all habitats in the Iron range region. Waterbirds were generally scarce due to heavy rains the week before our arrival (and shooting on the farm dam by locals).

Iron Range is not a destination where you go to see large numbers of species (105 species were sighted)—you visit for endemics and other special birds. The birding can be difficult without local knowledge and the Savannah was generally lacking in diversity (principally due to unsustainable annual burning) and was dominated by Rainbow Lorikeets.

Avian highlights were many with the underrated Black-winged Monarch (a lifer) way up there. Others in no particular order included prolonged views of the stunning Red-bellied Pitta and Palm Cockatoo, good views of the difficult Northern Scrub-robin, Eclectus Parrots and Red-cheeked Parrots, Marbled Frogmouth, Yellow-billed and Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfishers, Lovely Fairy-wren, Green-backed, Brown-backed and White-streaked Honey eaters, Yellow-legged Flycatcher, White-faced Robin, Magnificent Riflebird, Trumpet Manucode and Fawn-breasted Bowerbird.

The non-avian highlight was undoubtedly the intriguing fatal encounter between a water python and a Pacific Black Duck, which we witnessed at the sewage ponds. A number of other reptiles and mammals were sighted.

After the main trip I set aside a couple of days to search for Lesser Sooty and Grass Owls in the Atherton Tablelands. My low expectations of success were realised with a very distant Tyto call the only evidence of their existence. A couple of days of non targeted and laid back general birding produced an additional 80 species of which the clear highlights were prolonged views of a pair of Pale-vented Bush-hens on an



Female Eclectus Parrot at the nesting hole. Photo: Alfred Schulte



Collared Kingfisher. Photo: Robin Ashford



Northern Scrub-robin. Photo: Alfred Schulte



Palm Cockatoo. Photo: Alfred Schulte

open road, a male Tooth-billed Bowerbird on his lek and a covey of 10 Brown Quail openly feeding and interacting just metres from the car. Great views of a platypus feeding under a bridge were a nice bonus.

All in all it was a very satisfactory trip with ‘something still left for tomorrow,’ which means that further trips to Far North Queensland will be beckoning in the future.



Marbled Frogmouth. Photo: Robin Ashford

MY FIRST TWITCH

Rae Lister

I have just returned from my first twitch. I was sitting around expecting items for the newsletter to come in as I planned to work on them over the Christmas period and nothing was happening so I was getting pretty restless. I left early on Boxing Day for Leeton arriving around 2.30 pm and was eventually able to raise someone to check into the motel I had booked on the Internet. After I had paid and drove to my room the reason for the delay became apparent as I saw him join the group of drinkers clustered outside a couple of rooms opposite mine! After a break with the mercifully loud aircon shutting out some of the noise I turned on my phone to find a message from Max, the President of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists Inc. Max had kindly agreed to take me out to the rice farm at Wilbriggie south of Griffith where Australasian Bitterns had been found and seen regularly since about 17 November by rice farmer Andrew on his farm. Max suggested we leave as soon as I was ready and we could bird on the way to the farm.

I found Max's house and I was grateful that he offered to drive. Our first stop was the ‘winery site’ on Whitton Stock Route Road opposite the southern site of Binya State Forest where we startled 30+ calling Superb Parrots with young who had been feeding on acacia pods. They didn't fly far and some soon returned to the trees near us. Max next heard a Painted Honeyeater calling which we eventually got to see

well. In the meantime we were chided by a group of White-browed Babblers. I was delighted to hear a favoured call of the Striped Honeyeaters and we saw quite a few along with Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and Common Bronzewing. We found the spectacular Splendid Fairy-wren (like the Superb Parrots, too many superlatives are not enough) in a degraded section of the bush. Along the road we saw emus far off in a field.

Ten minutes drive from the farm for our 7 pm rendezvous Andrew rang Max to say he had just seen an Australasian Bittern fly to a bay near him and he was looking at two in another bay. I tried to stay contained. Other friends of Max's from Griffith pulled up soon after us and in no time Max had the scope on the first Australasian Bittern craning its long neck above the rice. This was my first glimpse of this bird. I had only heard them calling before, booming out into the night to be heard above the cacophony of many frogs in Cheynes Swamp, south-west Western Australia. The excitement was high and remained so for quite a while as we eventually saw three birds craning high to look around them and I was content with that. Then one flew and I watched its flight with binoculars—a whole AB! As we stood taking in our last views two flew coming from separate directions and joined together wings outstretched facing each other and dropped silently below the rice. What a finale!

We headed out slowly in convoy with Max stopping to show us a flock of Banded Lapwings in a field of dried mud and on the other side of the road were three adult Australian Pratincoles with one juvenile that we could see; a ball of fluff on pins in the fast fading light. White-browed Woodswallows, Black-shoulder Kites and a dark phase Brown Falcon were seen on the wires along the road back while Nankeen Kestrels hunted over the fields.

I returned to the motel at 9.30 pm to find that the group of drinkers had swelled to a mini crowd and a car with doors open was blaring out unspeakably loud music. There was a small concession upon my arrival, they closed the car doors but I could still hear it. This was not going to put me off birding. I was going to make the most of my visit to Leeton by spending another day around the area so the next day after very little sleep I picked up Max at 7 am and we drove out to Wattle Dam at Binya State Forest where we set up our chairs and waited for the array of birds that would come in to drink. The highlight was the variety of parrots with Superb, Turquoise, Mulga, Red-rumped, Mallee Ringnecks, Cockatiels and Galahs coming in as Max tutored me on what to look for to recognise males, females and juveniles of those parrots I rarely see. Ever present were Bar-shouldered and Peaceful Doves with the odd Diamond amongst them plus Common Bronzewing. While Striped, Spiny-cheeked, Brown-headed, White-eared and White-plumed Honeyeaters came to drink along with one Black-eared Cuckoo. Max got a glimpse of a Diamond Firetail having a brief sip.

We then walked around beyond the dam seeing Red-capped Robins, Jacky Winter, Speckled Warblers, Leaden Flycatchers, Yellow-throated Miners, Rufous Whistler, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, Yellow Thornbills, Silvereyes, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, a Brown Treecreeper, Splendid Fairy-wrens and the ubiquitous Willy Wagtails and Crested Pigeons.

From there Max directed me to Campbell's Swamp near Griffith. It was very hot by then so we were glad of the hide where we watched a couple of Swamp Harriers making sweeps over the water putting the bulk of the ducks, many Grey Teal, to flight. We managed to find a couple of Pink-eared and Australasian Shovelers amongst them. To the far left side were Black-winged Stilts, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Marsh Sandpipers and Red-kneed Dotterel and towards the far bank in front was a Great Egret, Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Black Swans, Australian White Ibis and Australian Pelicans while White and Straw-necked Ibis festooned the dead trees along with Little Black Cormorants. I saw one European Goldfinch and an Australian Reed-Warbler in the reeds.

That evening I went alone to Fivebough Wetlands. It was dry and very hot even at 7 pm and I didn't persist for too long but it is a good place to see heaps of Yellow-rumped Thornbills! Yes the party was still going when I got back to the motel but not with the same gusto as the night before and I was able to get some sleep with the aid of the noisy aircon.

I decided that since I had come this far I would attempt to twitch another bird that I have longed to see and that is the Malleefowl. There had been a report of Malleefowl

again being seen on Patchewollock Road in Victoria. Max encouraged me in this venture, saying don't bother checking whether they have been seen around in the last few days, just go. I left at 7.30 am for Ouyen. Oh that desolate Hay Plain! It goes on forever just straight driving. I did see one Wedge-tailed Eagle perched on a pole close to the road but at the speed I was going there was not much chance of it being there by the time I turned around.

I arrived at the Ouyen Caravan Park early afternoon in blistering heat with a strong wind blowing the dust around the place. The sign on the door said open 9 to 5 but I couldn't enter. I sat in the car melting, fiddling with my phone trying to Google Ouyen motel numbers when a lady emerged asking had I been there long. I booked in and told her why I had come and she expressed no confidence in my chances with the temperature at 41° and the wind expected to increase. I took refuge in the small room with the aircon on full and read for a bit. It was so confining I decided to drive out to Hattah-Kulkyne National Park in the vain hope that the weather would be different out there. It wasn't and the sign at the entrance of 'Fire Danger Extreme' was enough to dissuade me from venturing into the park alone. Instead I headed in the opposite direction to follow Max's mud map to where I might see Malleefowl, feeling all the while that it was a long shot.

I drove slowly along the road as the signs request drivers to do until I had gone well past the area where the Malleefowl have been seen. I pulled over, reading and looking up from time to time for about one and a half hours. In all that time I had only had about four cars pass me but they were low flying—so much for the signs.

As it was a bit cooler I drove back slowly almost the length of Patchewollock Road with no glimpses even of Malleefowl. I was nearly back to the turn-off when I got a strong feeling to go back. Max had said I reckon you will see them around 7 pm. As I approached the area the first one stepped down from the bank at the side of the road on cue at 7.05! Joy of joys I was more excited I think than when I saw the bitterns. I pulled off the bitumen and drove slowly on the dirt until I was fairly close and then got out and moved towards it. It saw me and moved back somewhat but into the sunlight, which was perfect for me to see the pattern on the feathers.

Continuing to drive very slowly I came up on the next two in the middle of the road—no wonder they become road kill. I followed the same pattern as before and I was reasonably close before they looked in my direction. I turned around at the end of the Mallee Woodland section and saw a group of three, one crossed the road straight away and disappeared but the other two stayed feeding for quite a while before realising I was creeping towards them.

It was a fair drive of 2000-odd kilometres in a few days but worth it for two spectacularly successful twitches and although not a planned trip by a stroke of serendipity I found it is a good time to travel. A vast majority of the population is tied up at home with turkey and tinsel and there are no road works!

THE BEST UNUSUAL RECORDS FOR NEW SOUTH WALES, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2013
ALAN MORRIS, NIKOLAS HAASS & SIMON BLANCHFLOWER

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

Common Pheasant	A,2Y	25/11/13	Albion Park	I	Ted Wnorowski
Magpie Geese	10	26/10/13	Monkeygar Ck Crossing	CP	Nick Carson
Magpie Geese	67	02/12/13	Coutts Crossing	NC	Greg Clancy
Freckled Duck	10	16/10/13	Lawrence Egret rookery	NC	Greg Roberts
Freckled Duck	4	02–24/11/13	Putta Bucca Wetlands Mudgee	CT	Kurtis Lindsay
Freckled Duck	34	24/11/13	Barnetts Lagoon Gladstone	NC	Allen Hamilton
Plumed Whistling-Duck	200	23/11/13	Condobolin STW	CP	Warren Chad
Plumed Whistling-Duck	54	24/11/13	Barnetts Lagoon Gladstone	NC	Allen Hamilton
Wandering Whistling-Duck	4	26/10/13	Lake Cargelligo STW	R	Craig Anderson
Wandering Whistling-Duck	30	29/10/13	West Byron STW	NC	Duncan Fowler
Australian Shelduck	43	26/10/13	Monkeygar Ck Crossing	CP	Nick Carson
Emerald Dove	1	21/10/13	Browns Dve Wahroonga	S	Nick Billington
Brush Bronzewing	1	15/10/13	Cowan (nr railway tracks)	S	Andrew Walker
Brush Bronzewing	1	01/12/13	Popran Ck Spencer	CC	Alan Morris
Flock Bronzewing	2	13/10/13	Sth Myers Tank Sturt NP	UW	Peter Waanders
Diamond Dove	4	19/10/13	Warriapendi Koorawatha	CT	Per M Vesk
Diamond Dove	1	25/10/13	Learld SF Boggabri	NP	Grant Brosie
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	2	27/10/13	Sea Acres NR Pt Macquarie	NC	Tim Morris
Superb Fruit-Dove	F	27/10/13	Pelican Pt Res Pt Macquarie	NC	Peter West
White-throated Nightjar	1	16/10/13	Dunns Swamp Rylstone	CT	Marc Anderson
White-throated Nightjar	1	22/10/13	Westleigh	S	Peter Abbott
White-throated Nightjar	1	27/10/13	Sphinx Tk Ku-ring-gai Chase NP	S	Max de Beer
Marbled Nightjar	2	27/11/13	Whian Whian Nightcap NP	NC	Ashwin Rudder
White-throated Needletail *	6	28/10/13	Sextons Hill Banora Point	NC	Rob Morrow
White-throated Needletail	30+	01/12/13	Pilliga NR NE Baradine (3 sites)	NP	Michael Dahlem
White-throated Needletail	200+	25/11/13	Woolgoolga	NC	B Cook
Fork-tailed Swift	10	18/10/13	Brooms Head	NC	Greg Roberts
Fork-tailed Swift	8	30/11/13	M1 Motorway Warnervale exit	CC	Nick Carson
Black-bellied Storm-Petrel	1bc	28/11/13	Birdie Bch Nth Munmorah SCA	CC	Alan Morris
Wandering Albatross	15	23/11/13	Wollongong pelagic	I	Brook Wylie
Campbell's Albatross	2	23/11/13	Wollongong pelagic	I	Brook Wylie
Black-browed Albatross	45	06/12/13	North Head Sydney Harbour NP	S	Michael Ronan
Northern Giant-Petrel	1	26/10/13	Wollongong pelagic	I	Frank Valckenborgh
White-chinned Petrel	1	26 & 30/10	Wollongong pelagic	I	Frank Valckenborgh
Streaked Shearwater	1	18/10/13	Woody Hd Bundjalung NP	NC	Greg Roberts
Black Petrel	5	23/11/13	Wollongong pelagic	I	Brook Wylie
Short-tailed Shearwater	4700	18/10/13	Sth West Rocks & Back Bch (bc)	NC	Ken Shingleton
Short-tailed Shearwater	1 inj	28/10/13	Anzac Pde Kensington	S	Greg Smith
White-headed Petrel	1	11/10/13	North Head Sydney Harbour NP	S	Michael Ronan
Gould's Petrel	2	24/11/13	Port Stephens pelagic	H	Mick Roderick
Common Diving-Petrel	5 bc	30/10/13	Mystery Bay Beach Bodalla	SC	G Santos
Masked Booby	1m	23/11/13	Wollongong pelagic	I	Brook Wylie
Masked Booby	1m	24/11/13	Port Stephens pelagic	H	Mick Roderick
Black-necked Stork	10+	13/10/13	Moree & Whittakers Lgn area	NP	Curtis Hayne
Black-necked Stork	1	26-30/10/13	Pambalong NR Minmi	H	Jack Adams
Black-necked Stork	1	06/11/13	Maryland Newcastle	H	Andrew Walker
Australasian Bittern	9+	17/11–03/12	Wilbriggie & Coleambally	R	Matt Herring
Australasian Bittern	2	29/11/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	David James
Little Bittern	1	01/12/13	Byron Bay STW	NC	Russ lamb
Black Bittern	1	15/10/13	Lane Cove NP Fullers Bridge	S	Fatih San
Black Bittern	1	18/10/13	Field of Mars Res Ryde	S	Max Breckenridge
Glossy Ibis	16	24/10/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	Tom Wilson
Eastern Osprey	3	24/11/13	Middle Ck Narrabeen	S	Nathan Ruser
Pacific Baza	N+Y	30/11/13	Spencer Wharf	CC	Christina Port
Pacific Baza	1	06/12/13	Narrabri	NP	Kurtis Lindsay
Square-tailed Kite	1	06/10/13	Forbes Ck Woronora	S	Paul Freeman
Square-tailed kite	1	20/10/13	Burke St Oatley	S	Shaun Keyes-Byrne
Grey Goshawk (White)	1	24/10/13	Cowan Railway Stn (south)	S	Andrew Walker
Spotted Harrier	1	18/10/13	Albion Park	I	Lorne Johnson

Spotted Harrier	1	01/11/13	Cape Banks Botany Bay NP	S	Bas Hensen
Wedge-tailed Eagle	12	18/09/13	Pine View (150 km N Broken Hill)	UW	Leigh Schmidt
Wedge-tailed Eagle	7	25/10/13	Merriwa (10 km W)	H	Mike Kuhl
Little Eagle	1	23/10/13	Kendall	NC	Tim Morris
Black Falcon	1	24/10/13	Cecil Hills	S	Jim Dixon
Black Falcon	2	26/07/13	Butlers Falls Reserve Dubbo	CS	Craig Arms
Black Falcon	1	27/10/13	Teven Rd Swamp	NC	Steve McBride
Australian Bustard	4+N	September	Pine View (150 km N Broken Hill)	UW	Per Leigh Schmidt
Brolga	2	15–29/10/13	Boyers Lane Jerseyville	NC	Lynn Roubin
Buff-banded Rail	3	04/11/13	Haslems Pier SOP	S	Allan Richards
Pale-vented Bush-hen	2	09/12/13	Terania Creek	NC	Gus Daley
Baillon's Crake	1	04/11/13	Haslems Pier SOP	S	Allan Richards
Baillon's Crake	3	13/10/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	Michael Ronan
Australian Spotted Crake	2	29/11/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	David James
Spotless Crake	2	13–27/10/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	Michael Ronan
Beach Stone-curlew	1	12/10/13	Picnic Pt The Entrance (+ 23/11)	CC	Tim Faulkner
Beach Stone-curlew	1	16/11/13	Nullica River Mouth Eden	SC	R Miller
Beach Stone-curlew	1	01/12/13	Shoalhaven Heads	I	Charles Dove
Bush Stone-curlew	3pr	Sep–Oct	Brisbane Water (nesting)	CC	Alan Morris
Bush Stone-curlew	6pr	Sep–Oct	Ballina-Tweed Heads (nesting)	NC	Bob Moffat
Banded Lapwing	12,4Y	27/10–25/11	Cornwallis Rd Windsor	S	Elisabeth Karplus
Grey Plover	1	03/11/13	South Ballina	NC	Kathy Wilks
Grey Plover	1	04–25/11/13	Red Rock Estuary Corindi	NC	Russell Jago
Grey Plover	1	07/12/13	Toowoan Bay Reefs	CC	Steve Merrett
Pacific Golden Plover	3	01/11/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	Mark Young
Pacific Golden Plover	120	20/11/13	Shoalhaven Heads	I	Martin Potter
Oriental Plover	2	06–12/10/13	Long Reef Golf Course	S	Bob Way
Oriental Plover	6	15/10–09/11	Sydney Airport	S	Nigel Coghlan
Oriental Plover	1	11/10/13	Moruya Bch Moruya Heads	SC	Julie Morgan
Oriental Plover	2	05/12/13	Wanganella	R	Philip Maher
Double-banded Plover	1	26/10/13	Breeza Cotton Dam	NS	Robert Hynson
Red-necked Avocet	1000	07/10/13	Lake Goran Quirindi	NS	Michael Dahlem
Little Curlew	1	12/10–14/11	Fivebough Swamp Leeton	R	Max O'Sullivan
Little Curlew	1	06/12/13	Wanganella	R	John Nevinson
Asian Dowitcher	1	16/11–01/12	Shoalhaven Heads	I	Charles Dove
Black-tailed Godwit	20	28/10/13	Stockton Sandspit	H	Andrew Walker
Marsh Sandpiper	2	15/10/13	Barnetts Lagoon Gladstone	NC	Ken Shingleton
Marsh Sandpiper	2	25/10–03/11	Pitt Town lagoon	S	Max Breckenbridge
Marsh Sandpiper	1	29/10/13	West Byron STW	NC	Duncan Fowler
Common Sandpiper	1	15/10/13	Barnetts Lagoon Gladstone	NC	Ken Shingleton
Wood Sandpiper	1	13/10/13	Narrabri Lake	NP	Sue Proust
Wood Sandpiper	1	26–27/10/13	Lake Cargelligo STW	R	Steve Roderick
Wood Sandpiper	1	19/11/13	Fivebough Wetlands Leeton	R	Keith Hutton
Terek Sandpiper	1	14/11/13	Red Rock Estuary Corindi	NC	Russell Jago
Wandering Tattler	1	20/10/13	Soldiers Point Norah Head	CC	Steve Merrett
Great Knot	1	31/10/13	Red Rock Estuary Corindi	NC	Russell Jago
Great Knot	2	01/12/13	Shoalhaven Heads	I	Ron Imisides
Red Knot *	1	07/10/13	Earthcare Pk Tenambit	H	Grant Brosie
Red Knot *	9	07/10/13	Long Reef Marine Reserve	S	Tom Wilson
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	15/10/13	Barnetts Lagoon Gladstone	NC	Ken Shingleton
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	20/10–01/11	Pitt Town Bushells & Bakers Lgn	S	Edwin Vella
Pectoral Sandpiper	1	01/11/13	Cockle Bay Lgn Empire Bay	CC	Andrew Walker
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	62	28/10/13	Bakers Lagoon Richmond	S	Ted Wnorowski
Curlew Sandpiper	3	28/10/13	Bushells Lagoon Wilberforce	S	Ted Wnorowski
Curlew Sandpiper	2	28/11/13	Spring Ck Res Orange	CT	Neville Schrader
Curlew Sandpiper	1	19/11/13	Fivebough Wetlands Leeton	R	Keith Hutton
Sanderling	1	14/10 & 11/11	Red Rock Estuary Corindi	NC	Russell Jago
Sanderling	1	01/11/13	Boat Harbour Kurnell	S	Lynn Roubin
Sanderling	2	08/12/13	Comerong Is NR Shoalhaven Hds	I	Carla Jackett
Ruff	2	25/10–03/11	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	Joshua Bergmark
Ruff	1	26/11/13	Jetty Beach Coffs Harbour	NC	Garth McGilvray
Plains Wanderer	9	11–12/12/13	Wanganella	R	John Nevinson
Australian Pratincole	2	26/10/13	Lake Cargelligo (1 km N)	R	Ben Warmasley
Australian Pratincole	2	29/10/13	Bellata (5 km SE)	NP	Michael Dahlem
Australian Pratincole	5	20/11/13	Whitton	R	Keith Hutton
Black-breasted Button-quail	1	25/11/13	Mallanganee NP Casino	NC	Michael Ronan

Long-tailed Jaeger	2	24/11/13	Port Stephens pelagic	H	Mick Roderick
Gull-billed Tern	5	04/12/13	Lake Cathie Entrance	NC	Alan Morris
White-winged Black Tern	1	13/10/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	Michael Ronan
White-winged Black Tern	1	26-27/10/13	Lake Cargelligo STW	R	Steve Edwards
White-winged Black Tern	1	04/12/13	Lake Rosendahl Reservoir	NC	Alan Morris
White-winged Black Tern	1	07/12/13	Hexham Swamp NR	H	Allan Richardson
White-fronted Tern **	2	26/10/13	Wollongong pelagic	I	Frank Valckenborgh
Little Tern *	20	11/10/13	Boat Harbour Kurnell	S	Aaron Payne
Little Tern	8+N	30/11/13	Burrill Lake estuary	I	Bob Rusk
Sooty Tern	2	24/11/13	Port Stephens pelagic	H	Mick Roderick
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	3	06/11/13	Fearnly Tk Dudley	H	Rebecca Citroni
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	8	11/11/13	Yarrabimbi Leeton	R	Andrew Thompson
Superb Parrot	AM	25/11/13	Forest Rd Orange	CT	Rae Lister
Superb Parrot	2	12/10/13	Yarrie Lake Narrabri	NP	Michael Dahlem
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	2	29/11/13	Narrabri	NP	Michael Dahlem
Musk Lorikeet	12+	05/11/13	Smoothy Pk Wollstonecraft	S	Ted Nixon
Musk Lorikeet	8	02/11/13	Myahgah Rd Mosman	S	Anita Smegberg
Little Lorikeet	3	25/10/13	Bicentennial Pk Glebe	S	Simon Gorta
Little Lorikeet	2	26/10/13	Pallamallawa	NP	Curtis Haynes
Budgerigar	6	19/10/13	Whittakers Lagoon Moree	NP	Curtis Haynes
Budgerigar	200	20-31/10/13	Narrabri Lake Narrabri	NP	Michael Dahlem
Budgerigar	60+	27/10/13	Terry Hie Hie	NP	Curtis Hayne
Turquoise Parrot	6	13/10/13	Upper Bullawa Ck Mt Kaputah	NP	Michael Dahlem
Turquoise Parrot	20	01/12/13	Backyamma SF Forbes	CP	Lorand Szucs
Bourke's Parrot	3	21-25/09/13	Spring Ck (80 km E Broken Hill)	UW	Leigh Schmidt
Pheasant Coucal	1	30/11/13	Mehi River Moree	NP	Curtis Hayne
Eastern Koel	1	31/10/13	Nail Can Hill Albury	SS	Janet Chapman
Eastern Koel	1	01/11/13	Eden	SC	Len Axen
Eastern Koel	1	25/11/13	Hill St Parkes	CS	Warren Chad
Brush Cuckoo *	1	24-25/10/13	Eastlakes Golf Course	S	Bas Hensen
Pallid Cuckoo	1	24/11/13	Riverstone	S	Edwin Vella
Black-eared Cuckoo	1	25/10/13	Leard SF Boggabri	NP	Grant Brosie
Little Bronze-Cuckoo	HC	24/10/13	King Ck Wauchope	NC	Clive Meadows
Powerful Owl	HC	16/10/13	Dunns Swamp Rylstone	CT	Marc Anderson
Powerful Owl	A+J	25/10/13	Redbank Ck Picton	I	Gerard Proust
Powerful Owl	2A2J	27/10/13	Cherrybrook	S	Carol Abbott
Southern Boobook	1	04/11/13	Cumberland SF Pennant Hills	S	Colleen Southall
Eastern Grass Owl	2	31/10-01/11	Bellata (5 km SE)	NP	Michael Dahlem
Azure Kingfisher	2	24/11/13	Tycannah Ck Terry Hie Hie	NP	Curtis Hayne
Red-backed Kingfisher	1	22/10/13	Capertee R Glen Davis	CT	Mick Roderick
Noisy Pitta	1	25/11/13	Mallanangee NP Casino	NC	Michael Ronan
White-browed Treecreeper	2	25-26/09/13	Churinga HSD (E of Broken Hill)	UW	Leigh Schmidt
Southern Emu-wren	3	29/10/13	Voyager Pt Wetlands Liverpool	S	David James
Scarlet Honeyeater	1	25/11/13	River Rd Bathurst	CT	Tiffany Mason
White-eared Honeyeater	1	27/10/13	Terry Hie Hie	NP	Curtis Hayne
Crimson Chat	6	26/10/13	Lake Cargelligo STW	R	Mick Roderick
Crimson Chat	4	09/12/13	Belougerly Flt Warrumbungle NP	CP	Sue Brookhouse
Crimson Chat	6+	23/11/13	Barren Box Swamp Griffith	R	Tony Dymond
Black Honeyeater	4+	12/10/13	Cobar Louth Rd (7 km NW)	UW	John van der Woude
Black Honeyeater	6+	26/10/13	Willie (7 km W)	CP	Alan Morris
Black-chinned Honeyeater	12	16/10/13	Glen Alice	CT	Mark Anderson
Black-chinned Honeyeater	3	19/10/13	Warripendi & Koorawatha (2 sites)	CT	Per M Vesk
Brown Honeyeater	3	28/11/13	Junee Wetlands	SS	Tim Dolby
Little Friarbird	4	30/11/13	Sackville Reach	S	David James
Pied Honeyeater	2	18/09/13	Pine View (150 km N Broken Hill)	UW	Leigh Schmidt
Pied Honeyeater	4	18/09/13	Springs Ck (80 km E Broken Hill)	UW	Leigh Schmidt
Painted Honeyeater	20	12-29/10/13	Yarrie Lake Narrabri	NP	Michael Dahlem
Painted Honeyeater	2	20-28/10/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	Jenny Stiles
Painted Honeyeater	2	01/11/13	Mt Panorama Bathurst	CT	Tiffany Mason
Regent Honeyeater	3+	16-18/10/13	Glenrowan Bridge Glen Alice	CT	Marc Anderson
Regent Honeyeater	44	01/11-09/12	Capertee Valley (19A 25J 4 sites)	CT	Mick Roderick
Regent Honeyeater	1	31/10/13	Thurgoona (banded bird)	SS	Ian Davidson
Speckled Warbler	2	27/10/13	Moree (20 km SE)	NP	Curtis Hayne
Spotted Quail-thrush	2	19/10/13	Spring Forest HSD Koorawatha	CT	Per M Vesk
Olive Whistler	2	10/11/13	Kalaru Bega	SC	D Jones
Ground Cuckoo-shrike	1	25/10/13	Kelvin SF Gunnedah	NS	Grant Brosie

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	3	27/10/13	Terry Hie Hie	NP	Curtis Hayne
Cicadabird	1	30/11/13	Bundanoon	I	Lorne Johnson
White-winged Triller	2M	15/10/13	Nepean River Penrith	S	Bob Sinclair
White-winged Triller	2	21/10/13	Terry Reserve Albion Park	I	David Bourne
White-winged Triller	2	10–12/10/13	Picnic Pt Res The Entrance	CC	Steve Merrett
White-browed Woodswallow	30	14/10/13	Shoplands Rd Annangrove	S	Daryl Smedley
White-browed Woodswallow	50	14/10/13	Scheyville NP Hdqtrs Windsor	S	Keith Brandwood
White-browed Woodswallow	30	26/10/13	Blacktown Rd Freemans Reach	S	Edwin Vella
Masked Woodswallow	4+	14/10/13	Shoplands Rd Annangrove	S	Daryl Smedley
Little Woodswallow	2	01/12/13	Salt Caves Dam Timmallallee NP	NP	Michael Dahlem
Grey Currawong	1	27/10/13	Helensburg	S	Paul Freeman
White-eared Monarch	1	25/11/13	Mallanganee NP Casino	NC	Michael Ronan
Spangled Drongo	1	08/10/13	Eastlakes Golf Course	S	Bas Hensen
Satin Flycatcher	Pr	12/10/13	Sun Valley Winmallee	S	Gerry Flanagan
Flame Robin **	2	19/10/13	Spring Forest HSD Koorawatha	CT	Per M Vesk
Tawny Grassbird	1	19/10/13	Lake Cargelligo STW	R	Graeme Stevens
Tawny Grassbird	1	20/10/13	Bingara STW	NS	Alan Morris
Rufous Songlark	1	13/10/13	Sydney Airport Control Tower	S	Nigel Coghlan
Rufous Songlark	1	25/10/13	Eastlakes Golf Course	S	David Mitford
Beautiful Firetail	A+N	28/11/13	Lady Carrington Dve Royal NP	S	David James
Diamond Firetail	2+N	19/10/13	Horseshoe Bend SF Bingara	NS	Alan Morris
Diamond Firetail	1	02/11/13	Rollands Plns Rd Telegraph Pt	NC	Phil Shelley
Plum-headed Finch	60+	18/10/13	Whitlow Rd Bingara	NS	Alan Morris
Plum-headed Finch	4	26/10/13	Pitt Town Lagoon	S	Tony Dawe
Plum-headed Finch	6+	27/10–29/11	Lake Cargelligo STW	CP	Warren Chad
Plum-headed Finch	10+	01/12/13	Backyamma SF Forbes	CP	Lorand Szucs
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	10	30/11/13	Mehi River Moree	NP	Curtis Hayne
Eastern Yellow Wagtail	1	27/10/13	Byron Bay STW	NC	Debra Pearce

*=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

Both migratory shorebirds and other migrants have all been heading south into NSW in the past two months, bringing with them some unusual species like **Oriental Plovers** to 4 sites, **Grey Plovers** to 3 sites, **Little Curlews** to 2 sites and an **Asian Dowitcher** to the Shoalhaven area. Large wrecks of **Short-tailed Shearwaters** were recorded on the beaches of South-east Queensland, NSW, Victorian and South-Australian in late November in numbers larger than previously reported in recent times. The drought in South-west Queensland with the accompanying drying up of wetlands in the Paroo, Bulloo and Lake Eyre Basin continues to drive large numbers of **Freckled Ducks**, **Grey Teal**, **Pink-ears**, **Yellow-billed Spoonbills**, **White-necked Herons**, **Spotted Harriers** and **Budgerigars** into north-eastern and eastern NSW with extraordinary numbers of each species being seen in places not previously reported, however **Black Kite** records appear to have peaked and are now declining. The numbers of **Freckled Ducks** continue to rise in NSW, other records include: 2 Pitt Town Lgn 30/10–28/11 (S), 2 Lake Cargelligo STW 26/10 (R), 3 Gunnedah STW 26/10 (NS), 12 West Byron STW 29/10 (NC), 1 Cut Hill Res Cobbitty 02/11 (S), 2 Condobolin STW 23/11 (CP), 7 Lower Kangaroo Ck 24/11 (NC), 2 Eastlakes GC 21–27/11 (S), 18 McPhersons Rd Swamp, Tuggerah 07/12 (CC); other **Plumed Whistling-Duck** records include: 8 Coutts Crossing 02/12 (NC); **White-throated Nightjar**: HC Tanja, Wallagoot Bermagui and Merimbula 14/10–22/11 (SC), 1 Mill Ck Dharug NP 23/10 & 10/12 (CC); **Australasian Bittern**: Neil Bull, Coordinator of the Bitterns in Rice Project in the Riverina reports that Bitterns have been found in many rice fields this season (R); **Black Bittern**: 1 Tuggerah Ck Central Coast Wtds 07–10/12 (CC); **Glossy Ibis** records include: 800+ Fivebough Wetlands 03/12 (R), 5 McPherson Rd Swp Tuggerah Nov-Dec (CC); **Eastern Ospreys**, the birds on the Georges River at Illawong, would appear to be the most southern nesting pair at present in NSW, other southern records include: singles at Merimbula Lake 20/10 & 24/11, Wombon Lake entrance 17/11 (SC), 1 Long Reef Marine Res 24/11, 2 Riverview 27/11 (S); **Pacific Baza**: 1 Glenbrook Lgn Glenbrook 26–27/11, N+2Y Holgate Nov, 1 Irrawong Res Warriewood 01/12 (S); **Square-tailed Kites** reported include: Eastern Valley Way Killarney Vale 07/12 (CC), 1 Acacia Gardens 08/12 (S) & 4 reports from Tura, Bermagui & Mandini 02/10–24/11 (SC). Coastal **Spotted Harriers** remain in many locations including 1 Yurammie 01/10 (SC); **Grey Goshawk**: 1 Fitzroy Falls, Morton NP 25/11 (I); The surge in **Black Falcon** numbers continues, other records include 1 Macquarie Marshes 26/10 (CP); **Australian Spotted Crane**: Curalo Lake Eden 25/10 (SC); **Spotless Crane**: 1 Bermagui 28/10 (SC), Byron Bay STW 01/12 (NC); Other **Brolgas** were in a rice crop at Koonadan 01/12 (R); During Jul–Aug **Bush Stone-curlews** 3 prs nesting East Ballina, 1 pr Pottsville, 1 pr Fingal Head, Boys Hay & Hastings Pt (NC); Single unattached **Beach Stone-curlews**, because of the upsurge in the population’s breeding success, have been wandering around the Central, Illawarra and South Coasts recently including: Orient Point Culburra 03/10 (I) & Toadgy Pt Moruya Hds 15/12 (SC); **Hooded Plover**: 2A+3Y Tura Bch Tanja 07/11 (SC); **Common Greenshank**: 1 Fivebough Swamp 01/11 (R); **Marsh Sandpiper**: Fivebough Swamp Leeton 01/11 (R), 1 Whyjuck Bay, Lake Illawarra 09/10 (I); **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**: 250 Fivebough Swamp 03/12 (R); **Whiskered Tern**: 400+ Fivebough Swamp 03/12 (R); **Superb Parrot**: 189 birds seen at 33 sites Cowra District 19–20/10 (CT), 16 Canal St Leeton 02/12 (R); The movement of **Budgerigars** in eastern NSW continues viz; Narrabri area Nov–Dec, 10+ Barren Box Swamp Griffith 23/11 (R); There are more **Powerful Owl** records 1 Dunns Swp Rylstone 16/10 (CT) & Mill Ck Dharug NP (CC), 2J Eastern Arterial Rd Lindfield 21/10, HC Park Ave Roseville 24/10 (S), HC Tanja 28/10 (SC), 1 Sheldon Forest Turramurra 03/11 (S), Whian Whian, Nightcap NP 28/11 (NC); **Eastern Bristlebird**: 2+ Border Ranges NP 16/10 (NC); **White-fronted Honeyeater**: 3+ 17 km SW Rankins Springs 12/10 (R); **Black Honeyeater**: 3 Spring Ck, Broken Hill 24/09 (UW), 2+ 17 km SW Rankins Springs 12/10, 6 The Basin Dam, Koonadan 18/11 (R); **Painted Honeyeater**: Other reports include 3+ 17 km SW Rankins Springs 12/10 (R), 2+ Glen Alice 16-18/10 & 09/12, 1 Badgery TSR Cowra 19/10 (CT), Kelvin St Gunnedah 25/10 (NS), Willie 26/10 (CP), 4+ 7 km W of 2 Gibbs Rd Fivebough 03/12 (R); **White-browed Woodswallows**: other coastal records include 30 Blacktown Rd Freemans Reach 26/10 (S), 150+ Bellawongarah 02/11 (I) while they were very abundant in the Cowra District when during the October surveys 749 birds were seen at 34 sites (CT); **Plum-headed Finches** were seen in the past 2 months at locations not previously reported viz Backyamma SF and Lake Cargelligo, but also 20+ at Bingara STW 20/10, 20 Leard SF Boggabri 25/10 (NS) & 50+ Narrabri Lake 04/10 (NP). Good Birding!

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