



Newsletter

Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with Bird Observation and Conservation Australia

Issue 2/12
April - May 2012

The Club aims to:

- encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat;
- encourage bird observing as a leisure-time activity

Atlassing and the Hunter Region Annual Bird Report

Nowadays, each year Birdlife Australia sends a copy of the BA Atlas database of records for the Hunter Region to HBOC. This information is used in the Hunter Region Annual Bird Reports which I prepare on behalf of HBOC.

For those of you who submit records to the BA Atlas can you please lodge any of your remaining 2011 records within the next month as we will be receiving the 2011 Hunter Region data soon afterwards and there needs to be sufficient time allowed for the data entry to be done in Melbourne. This timing deadline particularly applies for those of you who submit hard copy records i.e. the BA Atlas "pink sheets". If you do electronic data entry instead, you have a little extra time – but not a lot.

For those of you who do not submit records to the BA Atlas, or to the NSW Bird Atlassers as an alternative – why not? I invite you to contact me if you would like to know how to go about becoming involved. Phone: 4952 8569.

Alan Stuart

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| President's Column | 2 |
| HBOC Committee for 2012 | 2 |
| Featured Birdwatching Site: Yengo NP | 3 |
| Club Activity Reports: | |
| Tocal Agricultural College | 4 |
| Stockton Sandspit & Worimi Regional Park | 4 |
| Future Activities | |
| Mid-week Camp September 2012 | 5 |
| Capertee Tree Planting | 5 |
| Flyway | 5 |
| 600 Club Badge | 5 |
| Help Wanted | 5 |
| Features | |
| Flagged Shorebirds in the Hunter Estuary | 6 |
| Hunterbirding & Yellow Wagtails | 7 |
| 2011 Twitchathon Results | 8 |
| Conservation Report for 2011 | 9 |
| Advertisement | 12 |
| Club Night Observations | 13 |
| Club Activities | 15 |

Hunter Wetlands National Park

Are you interested in the future of **Hunter Wetlands National Park**?

Be involved with the plan of management at:

www.hunterwetlandsnationalpark.com.au

Alternatively, inform Chris Herbert, HBOC's representative on the Stakeholder Working Group for the Plan of Management, about any issues you wish to be considered in future management of the Hunter Wetlands National Park. Chris can be contacted on 4959 3663 or by email: chrisliz@internode.on.net

White-eared Honeyeater, Yengo NP - Grant Brosie



Please send Newsletter articles direct to the Editor, Liz Crawford at: chrisliz@internode.on.net
Deadline for the next edition - 31 May 2012

HBOC postal address:
PO Box 24 New Lambton NSW 2305
Website: www.hboc.org.au

President's Column

As the incoming President I'd like to start my first "regular column" by expressing my delight in being elected to the position. It really is difficult not to be passionate about this Club; it is such a diverse and active group of people supporting an equally diverse range of bird-related outings, studies, meetings, conservation deeds just to name a few – one just needs to read the Club's Annual Report to get an idea of the depth of activities the Club is involved in (you will find it on our website). I'd also like to extend a genuine thank-you to the outgoing President Paul Baird, who has remained on the Club Committee in 2012. Paul recognised the diversity in the Club that I alluded to above and laid a platform giving structure within the organisation that will certainly make my job a lot easier this year.

My attention was recently drawn to a comment made by Alan Stuart on the Hunterbirding chat-group. It was in relation to reported breeding records for Spotted Quail-thrushes and Double-barred Finches locally. Alan made the comment that there has been a substantial drop in the number of breeding records reported. As editor of the Club's Annual Bird Report (within which breeding records are also reported) Alan is well-placed to make an informed comment on this subject. It led me to think about why this could be. Is there actually less breeding activity in the region or are we, as observers, simply not making that extra effort to report breeding activities, even for common species? Either way, one could say that it is of concern.

Obviously it would be a better situation if it could be explained by the latter of the two scenarios. Perhaps it could be explained in part by the former, but not because of widespread declines in our birds, but by the possibility that we could have less breeding in our coastal catchment(s) given the sustained rainfall in inland areas where several species that may have otherwise bred here

have left for 'greener pastures'.

With conjecture aside, it is probably timely that we be reminded of the importance of recording and reporting breeding activity in our region (keeping in mind of course the sensitivities of publicly reporting nesting birds). This is probably best done by reporting to our Records Officer (Sue Hamonet) or to Alan directly. Details about reporting breeding records are outlined in the Introduction of the 2010 Annual Bird Report.

These are certainly exciting times given that much breeding has taken place in inland areas and with continued rainfall in those parts of the continent this is likely to continue. A few people who study birds have commented that we should expect to see dispersing post-breeding birds in places like the Hunter over the next few years as conditions change inland. With all of the challenges that birdlife faces in this day and age, it is heartening to see them respond to favourable circumstances and furthering generations for the future.

It is also exciting that this period sees the 'initial phase' of Australia's key birding organisation – *BirdLife Australia*. Formed out of a merger between Birds Australia (BA) and Bird Observation and Conservation Australia (BOCA), the new entity is now more closely aligned with the global bird advocacy body – BirdLife International (in fact, if you simply drop the ".au" off BirdLife Australia's website address you will find yourself at the BirdLife International website). HBOC supports many of the programs managed by BirdLife Australia and we look forward to working closely with the new amalgamated organisation into the future.

Good birding in 2012 to all.

Mick Roderick

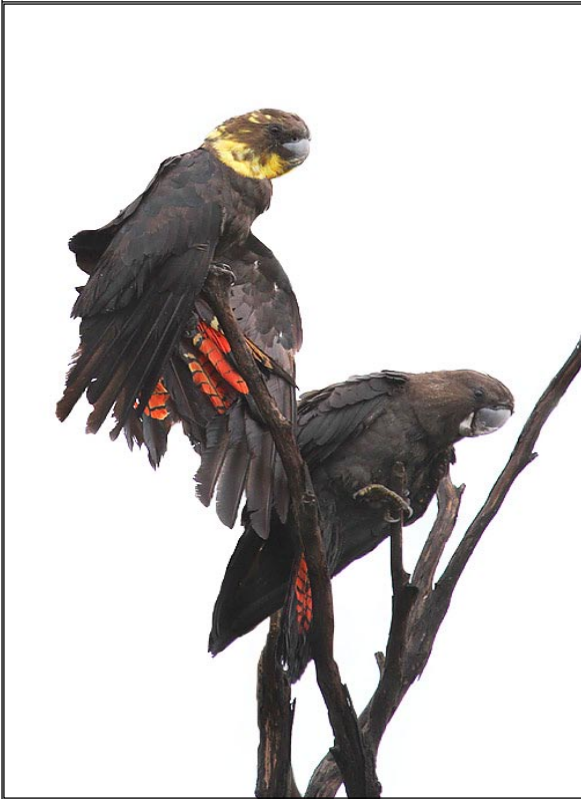
HBOC Committee for 2012

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| President | Mick Roderick 0421 761 237 |
| Vice President | Allan Richardson 4977 2508 |
| Secretary | Hayley Boyce 0421 175 922 |
| Treasurer | Joy Nicholls 4957 3612 |
| Membership Secretary: | Rob Kyte 4961 6211 |
| Records Officer: | Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 |

Committee Members:

| |
|-------------------------------|
| Paul Baird 4938 5039 |
| Lucas Grenadier 4962 1987 |
| Rob Kyte 4961 6211 |
| Lorna Mee 4988 6579 |
| Kristy Peters 0438 328 049 |

Featured Birdwatching Site - Yengo National Park



Yengo National Park has only been a recent discovery of mine and therefore my knowledge of the area is pretty light. However, from the few visits I have made it has quickly turned into one of my favourite birding locations close to home (within 1.5hr of Rutherford).

This large national park is located 45km southwest of Cessnock and can be accessed via Laguna in the east or off the Putty Road in the west. The terrain is rough with many valleys and ridges which host fairly basic habitat types. As you wind your way up the Finchley Track from Laguna you pass through large amounts of rocky, dry eucalypt forest and this habitat dominates the area. According to the NPWS website there are remnant patches of rainforest in the deeper gullies and open woodland on the western side of the park. I have not yet experienced these habitats in Yengo.

The best birding I have found so far is around the Finchley Lookout and the Aboriginal cultural site on the Finchley Track. There is a very basic camping ground nearby which has only a pit toilet for amenities. Within walking distance I have seen Spotted Quail-thrush, Rock Warbler, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Cicadabird, Gang-gang Cockatoo and Turquoise Parrot.

Driving around the park should produce Common Bronzewing, Wonga Pigeon, Painted Button-quail, Superb Lyrebird and various other 'roadside' species. Various honeyeaters can be found in the area with the most common being Yellow-faced, Yellow-tufted and White-eared.

I haven't managed much night-time birding but have seen White-throated Nightjar and heard Southern Boobook. I believe there are records of Barking Owl

within the park and I wouldn't be surprised if all of the Hunter's forest owls are in there somewhere.

Unfortunately that is about the limit of my knowledge. My advice would be to get out and start exploring the area. I'm keen to continue visiting Yengo in the hope of finding Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Masked Owl and who knows, maybe a Grey Currawong.

Grant Brosie



Clockwise from top left: Glossy Black-Cockatoos; Chestnut-rumped Heathwren; Striated Thornbill; Rockwarbler; Spotted Quail-thrush (male) - Grant Brosie

Trip Reports

Tocal Agricultural College

6 March 2012

Twenty members enjoyed a rare sunny day at Tocal Agricultural College recently. The grounds of the college contain several lagoons and also part of Webbers Creek, so waterbirds were present in good numbers, including Royal Spoonbills, Great Egrets and Little Black Cormorants, with 40 Masked Lapwings on the shores. Two Black-fronted Dotterel were enjoying a puddle on the road as we set out. Although much of the land had been cleared for agriculture, there were many trees on the property, including a huge 400-year-old fig, and bush birds such as Golden Whistler, Dollarbird, Spangled Drongo, Superb Fairy-Wrens (one with a nest) and Silvereyes were observed. Flocks of Welcome Swallows, and both Fairy Martins and Tree Martins whirled overhead and landed on the roof ridges. A resident White-bellied Sea-Eagle soared by, a Whistling Kite landed on a tree with its prey and a Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen in the distance. Our total species number for the day was 60.

As well as bird spotting, members enjoyed looking at the historical aspects of the property, with its well-labelled buildings – barns, stables etc. Another bonus was a colony of flying foxes, very active for the time of the day.

Our thanks go to Ray McLean for organising this outing and to Sandy Earls from the college, with whom he liaised.

Margaret Stewart



Keen birdwatchers enjoying a sunny day at Tocal Agricultural College - Judi Thomas

Stockton Sandspit & Worimi Regional Park

Tuesday 3rd April 2012

Twenty-three HBOC members began the April mid-week outing at Stockton Sandspit. A lovely sunny autumn day with very light wind made conditions perfect. The tide was falling, two hours after high tide, but there was still a lot to be seen, aided by a few generous members sharing their telescopes. One of the early telescope views was of a Double-banded Plover with two Red-capped Plover and two Pacific Golden Plover, all in one view, making a comparison easy.

After watching for some time from the informative new sign near the car park, we walked down to the shore to watch the waders feeding. Other migratory waders seen were Eastern Curlews, Bar-tailed Godwits, Red-necked Stint and a good count of 21 Grey-tailed Tattlers. There were four Black-winged Stilts and one Whimbrel.

Other birds in the Sandspit area included all cormorant species, Little and Intermediate Egrets, White-faced Herons, Striated Heron, Gull-billed, Caspian and Crested Terns. One Brown Quail was seen near the Bird Hide.

After morning tea at the boat ramp, down towards Stockton, the remaining enthusiasts drove the short distance to Worimi Regional Park where we found a good collection of small bush birds and the one raptor for the day, an Australian Hobby. We then moved to the adjoining Stockton Cemetery and did another short, exploratory walk adding Variegated Fairy-wrens and Yellow Thornbills to our growing list. The total for the day was 69 species seen and a further three heard.

Judi Thomas



Bar-tailed Godwits roosting in shallow water off the beach at Stockton Sandspit - males are colouring for breeding and fat deposits have been laid down for the long flight ahead - Chris Herbert

Future Activities

Mid-week Camp in September 2012

The mid-week camp this year will be held at Lake Glenbawn State Park from Monday 17 September to Wednesday 19 September 2012. Our base will be at the Eastern Foreshore 3 or 4 kilometres from the entrance. Cabins (sleep 6) and bungalows (sleep 5) are available for about \$80 (bring own linen and blankets or hire). Those sharing might prefer cabins but cabins and bungalows are similar. Powered sites are \$28 and unpowered sites \$18 but powered sites might be near the entrance, not on the eastern foreshore. Enquire when you book. If arriving after 5 pm you might need to make special arrangements beforehand. For enquiries and booking phone 6543 7193.

There is good birding at Broad Crossing on Glenbawn Road on the way and in the State Park itself. Meet at the BBQ near the kiosk about 5 pm Monday for evening bird count and BYO BBQ. Tuesday will probably be a full day visit and lunch at Towarri National Park beyond Scone.

For further information Contact Max Blanch 4961 1655 or mobile 0425 300 389.

Capertee Tree Planting

A big thanks to all those who took part in our plantings last year. Approximately 98,000 trees and shrubs have been planted since the project to regenerate habitat for Regent Honeyeaters began in 1994. This year, a notable milestone will be reached when the 100,000th tree is planted.

Our planting program is currently funded until mid 2013. This year, there will be two plantings as usual. The dates are:

5-6 May 2012 and 18-19 August 2012

We look forward to seeing you in the Valley again this year. If you come in May, you could be the one to plant the 100,000th tree.

If you have any queries or would like to register your interest, please contact Pixie at the Birdlife Australia office in Sydney on 02 9647 1033 or email

southernsw@birdlife.org.au

Iain Paterson

600 Club Badge

Many years ago I took over a specialist birding magazine originally started by the late John McKean. Margaret Cameron became the editor and one of our first jobs was to reproduce the 600 club badge. This was John's invention and features an Eyrean Grasswren. It has only taken me 45 years to get this badge and I have now taken over its distribution from Margaret. We have plenty of badges so please contact me if you would like one. IT IS FREE. This is an honour system and is only available to those that have genuinely seen 600 birds, in other words it is not for badge collectors.

A prominent birder said to me that 700 is the new 600! He is right of course and I will get a 700 Club badge made, as well as an 800 Club badge for Mike Carter. I have been told a 700 club badge exists and would appreciate hearing from an owner of one.

[Click here to view an image of the badge on our website](#)

www.AndrewIsles.com

Phone (03) 9510 5750 Email: books@AndrewIsles.com

Andrew Isles

Help Wanted

Every month a dozen or so members of HBOC count shorebirds at 16 sites around the Hunter Estuary. The data gathered are entered onto a Club database by me and stored to provide a source for future articles and conservation. The data also go to Birdlife Australia's Atlas project and to Shorebirds 2020 in written form. The data are in turn entered onto their databases by volunteers. This is a quite cumbersome process and provides an increased opportunity for error. I would like one or more reliable HBOC people to volunteer to enter the data online every month on the Atlas database which is called Birdata. It is not difficult and would probably take a couple of hours, less as proficiency improved. So, if you don't already have a birdy job, please consider this.

Ring me on 02 4951 2008 if you are interested.

Ann Lindsey

FLYWAY is on in Melbourne in May. The [Next Wave Festival](#) runs from 19 to 27 May 2012 and is always full of lots of amazing works so it's well worth a visit. This year will include an interactive video feature developed by Elizabeth Dunn, who travelled from Melbourne to Maryborough in December 2011, interviewing shorebird enthusiasts and photographing shorebirds and their habitats along the way. You can read about the festival on www.nextwave.org.au

Flagged Shorebirds in the Hunter Estuary

The first two weeks in October 2011 was an exciting time for sighting flagged shorebirds in the Hunter Estuary. A truly international cast was present with Bar-tailed Godwits bearing leg flags from Alaska, China, New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand; and Red Knots bearing leg flags from Kamchatka in Russia, Chongming Dao in China, Victoria and New Zealand. Engraved leg flags made field identification of individual birds possible and photos taken with digital cameras recorded and often clarified field observations. Scanning roosting shorebird flocks at Stockton Sandspit every two to three days during October allowed us to infer the likely duration of shorebirds' staging in the Hunter Estuary on southward migration. A total of 41 flagged migratory shorebirds was identified; of these, 22 birds were individually marked with engraved leg flags or colour bands in addition to a flag.

One Bar-tailed Godwit bearing a black engraved leg flag (6D) was banded in July 2009, on the breeding grounds in the Colville River basin of northern Alaska – about as far away from the Hunter River as these birds fly! It was observed on 4 and 8 October 2011 and was not seen subsequently – it stayed for only a short time in the Hunter.



Six Bar-tailed Godwits bearing orange engraved leg flags (WS, SS, DN, SY, 59 and KS) that had been banded in Victoria were observed between 29 September 2011 and 18 October 2011, staying for a minimum of 4 to 14 days before moving on from the Hunter Estuary. 'DN' and 'KS' were banded in June 2010 at Corner Inlet in Victoria as one-year-plus birds. It will be interesting to see if they return to their banding site after their first breeding event.

All the others were more than two years old when they were banded in January or February and are likely to return to their banding sites in Victoria. '59' was banded in February 2009 at Corner Inlet and has staged in the Hunter Estuary on southward migration in 2009 as well as 2011; it was seen in the Hunter Estuary between 9 and 17 October 2009 and again between 8 and 15 October 2011. (We were absent in October 2010 when this bird probably staged again in the Hunter Estuary). 'SS' and 'SY' were banded in January 2011 at Barwon Heads in Victoria and 'WS' was banded in February 2011 at Corner Inlet. We expect these birds will be seen again next year in the Hunter Estuary during southward migration.

A New Zealand-flagged Bar-tailed Godwit with a white flag and coloured bands stayed for about four days; last seen on 8 October 2011. Another bird flagged in New Zealand stayed for about a week and was last seen in the

Hunter Estuary on 15 October 2011.

Fifteen Bar-tailed Godwits were banded with orange over green flags in the Hunter Estuary in November 2004 for a BSc honours project. Five years later, in the summer of 2009/10, four of these flagged birds were sighted regularly between October 2009 and March 2010, but only two flagged birds were sighted in the following summer of 2010/11 and again this season. Where are the remaining birds? Is this showing an attrition rate or are they going elsewhere?

One Bar-tailed Godwit bore green over orange flags on its right tibia. This bird had been banded in China – another confirmation of the route these birds take on migration.

Observations of engraved leg flags confirm that many shorebirds stage for a relatively short time in the Hunter Estuary while on southward migration.

Two Red Knots with white engraved leg flags from New Zealand arrived in mid to late September while another five arrived in the first week of October. Most stayed for less than a week. The bird wearing 'ACD' was banded in October 2005 in Miranda and not re-sighted until 2 October 2009 when it was seen in the Hunter Estuary. The same bird was seen again in the Hunter Estuary between 6 and 8 October 2011 – showing a very similar timing for southward staging. Another knot wearing an inverted 'AAA' white flag was last seen in the Hunter Estuary on 18 October 2011; it was next seen at Miranda, New Zealand only 5 days later on 23 October 2011. It had most likely flown directly across the Tasman Sea from the Hunter Estuary.

Two Red Knots marked with black over white flags in China arrived in the first week of October; engraved Chinese flags were observed on two Red Knots during the second week of October and both these knots had gone by the third week in October.

Some shorebirds returned from their northern hemisphere breeding event as early as August but the majority began arriving in September and continued to arrive well into November. It is evident that during southward migration, many shorebirds stage in the Hunter Estuary for periods ranging from a couple of days to several weeks, while others stay for the whole non-breeding season. Red Knots are particularly obvious since the majority spend only a limited amount of time in the Hunter Estuary before moving further south to Victoria or New Zealand.

Individually marked birds are like friends whose faces we recognize in the street – from the mass of birds these ones stand out, allowing us to track their migration and staging habits more closely.

Liz Crawford and Chris Herbert

Hunterbirding

Hunterbirding is an email group set up by HBOC that is run through the Yahoo Groups. It is a great way to keep in touch with the latest goings-on in Hunter Region birding. Members are able to report sightings, post questions to the group and get involved with group discussions on bird-related issues. If you are interested in joining the group then please visit the HBOC website for details on how to sign up: <http://www.hboc.org.au/index.cfm?menukey=27>. You can choose to receive either individual emails or a single daily digest. Alternatively, email me at scythrops@yahoo.com.au and I'll sort it out for you – what could be easier?! The following article highlights some of the reports and discussions that have happened on hunterbirding within the last two months.

The winding up of the summer season brought with it some inevitable discussion on migrants, including many late observations (and often lack of vocalisation) of both Channel-billed Cuckoo and Eastern Koel. There was also a debate as to the status of Spangled Drongo in the Hunter, with the potential for early records of this species to relate to birds which have over-summered, most likely being first-year birds. Other contributions of interest over the last two months have included:

- Discussion on the size and dynamic of Grey-crowned Babbler family parties;
- The PWCS T4 coal terminal proposed for Kooragang Island;
- Known locations of Powerful Owl and Masked Owl in the Lake Macquarie area;
- A Request for information (RFI) regarding birding sites in the Hunter for a visiting Kiwi;
- Reports of White-winged Black Tern, Pale morph Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Square-tailed Kite and Australian Shelduck;
- Discussion on the feeding habits of the Red Wattlebird; and
- A camera lens offered for sale, with unexpected consequences...

For this article, I have decided to make a special feature of a recent discussion regarding the observations of **Yellow Wagtail on Ash Island** and their **taxonomic status** within Australia. According to hunterbirding, “The taxonomy of Yellow Wagtails is a bit of a moving feast. If BirdLife Australia decides to adopt the IOC nomenclature (this being the successor to Christidis & Boles) the Green-headed Yellow Wagtail will disappear from the Hunter list – it will be rolled into the Eastern Yellow Wagtail complex i.e. no longer a separate species. The Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* is recognised to have several sub-species. One of these is sub-species *simillina* (*Motacilla tschutschensis simillina*) and that's the bird we mostly get here. Previously it was known as *Motacilla flava simillina* and if you go back

to some of the early ABRs you'll find that is how it is referred to. Green-headed Yellow Wagtail is *Motacilla taivana* according to Christidis & Boles, and presumably is *Motacilla tschutschensis taivana* according to the IOC nomenclature. There is only one confirmed record of it in the Hunter (Ash Island, February 2003).”

The investigation of the Yellow Wagtail complex taxonomy then led to a broader discussion on the IOC (International Ornithological Congress) Checklist and what it meant for our Australian list... “I've had some brief discussions with people about this and it seems that some people aren't big on the idea because it is maintained by an international group that may not be fully versed with the latest taxonomical studies in Australia (but you would like to think that it is better than the current system which sees updates on a very irregular basis). The seabird taxonomy is certainly ahead of Christidis and Boles, with the result that the Hunter list would gain the following species: Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis* (split from Wandering Albatross *D. exulans*); Campbell Albatross *Thalassarche impavida* (split from Black-browed Albatross *T. melanophris*); and Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini* (split from Shy Albatross *T. cauta*).” An argument was made for adopting an international checklist to move with the times, “In my view Australian taxonomy is so far



Eastern Yellow Wagtails
on Ash Island 5 January
2012 right and 12 March
2012 above
- Mick Roderick

Hunterbirding cont.

behind the rest of the world it's not funny (e.g. I cannot believe there is only one species of *Sittella*). To me an international taxonomy is much more with the times."

The reference to the *Sittella* was seized upon and the discussion was then taken in a new direction. "In Le Souef's 1911 *The Birds of Australia* there were seven species of Tree-runners (*Sittella*) and in Cayley's 1967 *What Bird is That* there were six species of *Sittella*. Even the 1976 Readers Digest Bird book had five species. Don't know when they lumped them together though." Apparently though these references "are not 'official' Australian lists. The first 'official' Australian checklist was published in 1926 by the RAOU (which you would all know as Birds Australia before the merger with BOCA). That checklist pretty much remained unchanged (apart from the kind of on-going changes mentioned) until sometime in the 1960's when H. Condon (SA Museum) was given the task by the RAOU of producing a new checklist."

The history of the Australian list continued... "By the 1990s, it was again time for a new/up-dated list and Christidis & Boles were commissioned to do it. Their first update was published by the RAOU in 1994 as *The Taxonomy and Species of Birds in Australia and its Territories*. Thirteen years later C&B produced a revision in which they more fully explained the reasons for the taxonomic treatment adopted. C&B clearly stated that they adopted a conservative approach, drawing only on published taxonomic studies, with poorly resolved issues and novel changes noted but not incorporated. This is the Australian checklist that was adopted by Birds Australia - whether Birdlife Aust. adopts it is another question."

And finally "as for the *Sittellas* and *Pardalotes*, my understanding is that there is work being done on these groups and the number of species of each is likely to increase. People will find some an ID challenge. The *Sittella* hybridise a lot and everyone will have to look quite closely at the *Pardalotes*, particularly when distinguishing between the Striated group." Food for thought and possible new identification challenges right under our noses. I for one went straight to my field guide and started investigating birds that I'm familiar with, but for which I may have overlooked or neglected to observe the potential for different subspecies. In the Hunter these include, Spotted and Striated *Pardalotes*, Varied *Sittella*, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike and Silvereye. It is easy to forget that these various subspecies occur and important to record observations of them to improve our understanding of their status in the Region.

Dan Williams

2011 Twitchathon Results

The Main Race was won by the **Menacing Monarchs** (250 species), followed by the **Hunter Home Brewers** on 246 and the **Dodgy Drongos** on 215 (all Hunter teams).

The team in the Main Race that saw the highest ratio of birds per km travelled other than the 1st & 2nd prize-winners, was the **Varied Wrenegades** (another Hunter team), while the similar prize in the Champagne Race was won by the **Warbler Specklers**.

Independent expert Dion Hobcroft chose the Ruff, seen near Grafton as the "Rarest Bird" for the Rare Bird prize, won by Greg Clancy of the **Black-necked Stalkers** Team. The Biggest Dip Prize went to Dan Williams of the **Dry-throated Buzzards** (Hunter team), whose team failed to find a Sooty Oystercatcher on the Newcastle waterfront where they are usually quite common. The Lucky Twitchers Prize was won by Eula McKane of the **Grumpy Frogmouths** (another Hunter team). The latter two prizes were drawn from the hat at the November meeting of Birding NSW Central Coast by Kurtis Lindsay, a former Twitcher!

The prize for the person who raised the most money went to **David Hair**, of the **Bumbling Bee-eaters**, who raised **\$3650**; while **Tiffany Mason**, of the **Not One Wrong Tern** was again the second prize winner, raising **\$1642**; and third prize winner was **Dan Williams** of the **Dry-throated Buzzards** who raised \$1361.

The total amount of money raised including both donations and sponsorship money has exceeded \$26,500 which enables me to provide \$25,000 to the Powerful Owl Project and leave \$1500 in hand to cover expenses and prizes for 2012 Twitch!

2012 Twitchathon Project

This year it is the member groups of BIGnet who make a recommendation for the Twitchathon Project for 2012 (BASNA, now Birdlife Sthn NSW Branch, makes the recommendation each alternate year). Therefore I am calling on all BIGnet members to consider making an application for the 2012 Twitch. For the last 3 years, \$22,000, \$24,000 & \$25,000 respectively has been raised for the IBA Monitoring, Bush Stone-curlew (x 2 projects at \$12,000 each) and Powerful Owl Monitoring Projects, so it is expected that at least \$20,000 but probably more, will be available for a project in 2012. Applications are to be in the form of a half to one page submission to be made to myself. I will then prepare a recommendation to BIGnet to be considered at their meeting in Cowra on 14-15 April 2012.

Alan Morris Twitchathon Co-ordinator

Conservation Report for 2011

Ann Lindsey, Conservation Coordinator

2011 was my last year as conservation officer for HBOC after accepting the position officially at the beginning of 2003 as a result of Max Maddock's insistence that I take on the job. I think he knew that my heart was in conservation and he worked on that until I was hooked. I have never regretted doing so and despite the many frustrations and some degree of anxiety I have enjoyed it immensely.

I had never been a great letter writer, but I can say that my skill in that direction progressed in leaps and bounds. I must have written countless letters over the years, and the thing is that the letters do not have to be great works of prose; certainly mine were not. One of the many things I discovered is that letters do make a difference so long as they are based on fact, and, the only thing better, is lots of letters pertaining to the same issue. The research needed to deal with such matters as development applications or issues around threats to bird welfare and their habitats has kept my mind alive and active and above all, it was interesting. My computer skills went from nothing to sufficiently adequate to deal with emails, the web and manipulating data albeit at a basic level. I attended many meetings which gave me the opportunity to hear other viewpoints and arguments and to meet people from industry, government and the community.

Needless to say, I did not do the job alone and could not have done it without the generous support of the conservation committee which I formed (in my own interests) because I knew I would need help. Max, Liz Crawford, Mike Newman and more recently Mick Roderick fixed up my letters and unwound my woolly thought processes. Neil Fraser who resigned from the conservation committee at the end of last year was a great researcher and sent me many short versions of very long, convoluted development applications. Chris Herbert and Dan Williams dealt with any maps I required.

In short, it was me who gained from this grand experience of being HBOC's conservation officer. However, I am tired now and this position needs some new blood to deal with the pressures of increasing development around the Hunter Valley. In the interests of our avian companions, it is my greatest wish that HBOC's conservation work continues and that the new conservation officer enjoys the job as much as I have done.

In 2011 the HBOC conservation committee was invited by National Parks, the Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4 Project (T4), Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (HCRCMA), the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project (KWRP), the Newcastle City Council and other organizations to work with them and provide expert opinion about birds and their habitat.

Following is a list of issues addressed in 2011:

Hunter Wetlands National Park – HCRCMA's Hexham Swamp Rehabilitation Project

Ann Lindsey (AL) attended three meetings of the Steering Committee for this Project. In September an approval from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure was received to go to the next stage of the Project and open a further three tidal gates at Ironbark Creek. These were opened on 29 September 2011. On behalf of HBOC, AL was invited to open a gate, but was unable to attend. Apologies were tendered. Six gates, equivalent to four fully open, are now allowing tidal flow to the wetland and it is expected that the last two gates will be opened before winter 2012 and that this will achieve the target inundation of 700ha in Hexham Swamp.

As requested AL updated the November meeting of the Steering Committee on the diversity and abundance of birds during 2011 compared with 2010.

In November HBOC sent a letter to the Environment Manager of Hunter Water Corporation, asking for modification to the barbed wire fencing installed on the eastern side of Hexham Swamp. The invisible nature of the fence has the potential to harm birds which may fly into it and become entangled. As a result of discussions with National Parks about the barbed wire, the ranger flagged part of the barbed wire fence with bright ribbon in December.

Hunter Wetlands National Park – Ash Island

As a result of a verbal report by AL backed up by a letter from HBOC member, Joy Nicholls, the Rebel Flying Club flyway zone on Ash Island was restricted in the vicinity of Australian Painted Snipe habitat.

An on-site meeting on Ash Island with Robyn Coombes, the environmental officer for Ausgrid (formerly Energy Australia) was attended by AL and Neville McNaughton in March about birds hitting their powerlines. Four priority areas were identified – Wagtail Way and Palm Road, Phoenix Flats and Teal Loop. Ausgrid is anxious to reduce impacts on the environment by their powerlines. Hopefully, bird-deflecting devices will be installed in the near future where the lines are over land. It is more difficult to install devices where the lines are over water. Ausgrid is developing an implement which may be able to address this problem.

In November letters were sent to the Minister for Environment NSW, Ms Parker; the National Parks Association; Mr Burke, the Minister for the Environment, Australian Government; and Birdlife Australia objecting to the removal of 18.5 ha of wetland from Hunter Wetlands NP - Ash Island, Area E site. An acknowledgement from Ms Parker, and a letter from Mr Burke were received.

Hunter Wetlands National Park - Stockton Sandspit

In September 2011, AL went with National Parks to inspect a potential future breach in the sand wall at the eastern end of Stockton Sandspit. It was agreed that the wall required maintenance and that steps would be taken to build up the wall.

Conservation Report for 2011 cont.

Hunter Wetlands National Park - Kooragang Dykes

National Parks undertook works to stabilise the Kooragang Dykes in April and the works were completed in May. 215 metres of the dyke wall have been repaired and the level has been raised by 200 mm. Several species of shorebirds are roosting on the new work.

Hunter Wetlands National Park - Tomago Wetlands

Funding from the Caring for the Country Hotspots programme became available to modify the eastern north-south drain at Tomago Wetlands. National Parks commenced work and new tidal gates were installed.

Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority

HCRCMA requested information on community assets and ran workshops accordingly. The workshops provided an opportunity for community members in various locations to identify and record local natural assets and their value for social, economic or environmental reasons. Participants were also asked to identify what they perceive as potential threats to these assets and their capacity to manage them. AL *et al.* made a list of significant bird sites and Dan Williams entered the sites on the HCRCMA database.

Port Waratah Coal Services Terminal 4 Project (T4), Kooragang Island

Liz Crawford observed that the species, Black-tailed Godwit, had been omitted from the list of birds in the T4 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) referral. In response AL sent a letter in August, to the consultants, EMGA Mitchell McLennan, PWCS and the Dept of Sustainability, Environment Protection Branch. A copy of the paper, "Birds of Deep Pond" from *Whistler* 2, 2008, was also sent to the consultant. The omission has been noted and this species will be included in the list.

An email was received from the T4 Project in May 2011 saying that it was unlikely that PWCS would pursue the option for a berth on the North Arm of the Hunter River and that HBOC data for the North Arm were no longer required. PWCS looks forward to further cooperation in the future. The T4 Project was referred under the EPBC Act and deemed a 'controlled action'.

Mike Newman attended a T4 community meeting in October and has presented a report. The environmental assessment for the Project is due in 2012.

Eastern Star Gas Liquefied Natural Gas Export Terminal

The proposed site for this project is on Kooragang Island adjacent to the western approach to Stockton Bridge, with possible shipping berths in the North Arm downstream of Stockton Bridge.

An HBOC submission was sent by email to the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, EPBC Act Referral Department, Canberra, disagreeing with the company Eco Logical who wrote the referral. Eco Logical claimed that the project was not a 'controlled action' under the EPBC Act.

In view of the proximity of migratory shorebirds' roosting and foraging habitat and the potential for adverse effects from dredging the North Arm, HBOC counter claimed that the project should be a 'controlled action'. This Project has been deemed a 'controlled action' under the EPBC Act. The Environmental Assessment for the Newcastle LNG Facility is anticipated to go on public exhibition around mid 2012.

Newcastle Port Authority

In September 2011 AL attended an Oil Spill forum organized by Seabird Rescue and Native Animal Trust Fund. National Parks and the Newcastle Port Authority also attended. A good outcome for HBOC presence at this meeting was an invitation to give a presentation on shorebirds and their important sites in the Hunter Estuary to the Oil Spill Management Response Team. The presentation was given in November by AL.

Hunter Wetlands Centre (HWC)

Dan Williams is the new representative for HBOC on the HWC site management committee. Many thanks to Harold Tarrant who has resigned from this committee for his contribution over the years.

HBOC sent a submission to Newcastle City Council objecting to an application by HWC for proposed camping on the site. An acknowledgement from Newcastle City Council was received.

Market Swamp and Newcastle Wetland Reserve and Newcastle City Council

The Final Action Plan for **Market Swamp and Newcastle Wetland Reserve** was accepted subject to an on-site meeting with Tom Clarke to discuss the details of the proposed engineering design for flow control structures during the preparation of the environmental assessment. The environmental assessment will be prepared before the implementation of the Management Plan. Newcastle City Council has installed a gate on the call-car road at Sandgate Road.

Blackbutt Reserve, Newcastle

Joy Nicholls attended the **Blackbutt Management Plan** community meeting in April on behalf of HBOC.

Worimi Conservation Lands Stockton Beach

In April, HBOC member, Lois Wooding, gave a presentation to the community consultation group for the Worimi Conservation Lands (Stockton Beach). The group has the historical/heritage information in place and is now proceeding with ecological data.

Walka Waterworks

In August HBOC member, Jim Smart, wrote to the Maitland Council Manager responsible for Walka Waterworks objecting to excessive mowing to the edge of the wetland. The Council is aware of the excessive mowing habits of the people interested in the miniature rail track. A plan to define the suitable limits of mowing is in progress and hopefully it will be restricted to no more than two metres either side.

Conservation Report for 2011 cont.

Green Wattle Creek Crown Reserve at Butterwick - Reports from Mike Newman

A hazard reduction plan involving controlled burns has been drawn up for the Reserve at Green Wattle Creek by the Crown Lands Department and Rural Fires Service. The plan involves a staged burn of a mosaic of 10 patches over five or six years. In the longer term the area will be burnt over a 10 to 15 year cycle. The initial schedule allows intervals of at least two years for a burnt patch to recover before an adjacent patch is burnt. Riparian borders will be left. Most of the burns will be outside the spring breeding season.

The aim is to protect wildlife diversity and enhance the bush quality. Lantana and weed species are being progressively removed. Consultation with HBOC member, Mike Newman, in the selection of the areas to be burnt and the schedule has been excellent. The plan has flexibility to delay the schedule if the burnt areas have not recovered sufficiently to provide refuges when adjacent areas are burnt.

The long-term studies at Green Wattle Creek as published in *The Whistler* 3 provide base line data. Four additional 2ha sites have been set up in burnt areas to measure the rate of recovery of bird populations. Additional data is being collected at these sites to determine how the birds are using different layers of the vegetation. Mike Newman is monitoring its recovery and noting what birds are using the area. In December, he flushed a pair of White-throated Nightjars from a spot close to where they have bred previously and it is suspected that they have young. It is very encouraging to know that the area is suitable for nightjars within six months of the burn. Following the burn at Green Wattle Creek Speckled Warblers are again numerous and appear to be breeding profusely. Painted Button-quail numbers have also been restored to the numbers regularly observed more than a decade ago.

Ellalong Lagoon and surrounding forest

4000 ha of land around Ellalong Lagoon and the lagoon itself were put on sale by Hardie Holdings. HBOC wrote to Steve Meadows representing the Communities of Congewai Catchment Inc. advising that HBOC could offer information on natural attributes and bird data as support.

In September letters were sent to Robyn Parker, NSW Minister for the Environment and Brad Hazzard, NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure about the advertised sale of Ellalong Lagoon and surrounding forests asking that they be incorporated into the national park system. A copy of the HBOC submission to the Department of Planning was sent to Cessnock Council and receipt of the letter was acknowledged.

Warkworth Extension Coal Mine

AL presented at the independent **NSW Planning Assessment Commission** about the Warkworth Extension at Singleton in November. This Project, which included mining of a previously agreed Environmental Offset area, has been rejected by HBOC and other environmental organisations, the local community and the Singleton Council.

AL gave a ten minute presentation to BIGnet in April about DECCW offset principles and related them to the proposed Warkworth Extension Project, which proposes offset areas

unrelated to the Wollombi Sands ecological communities that will be removed by the proposed mine.

A submission to **Coal and Gas Strategy Scoping Paper NSW Government** was sent in April.

An acknowledgement was received.

Maules Creek Coal Project, Boggabri

HBOC sent a letter in support of the Birds Australia Southern NSW and ACT Group's submission objecting to Ashton Coal's Project in October.

Conservation of shorebird habitat in the East Asian Australasian Flyway

In April Liz Crawford, HBOC member, sent a series of largely the same letter to Mr Burke, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Senator Bob Brown, Leader of the Australian Greens, Mr Hunt, Shadow Minister of the Environment, Mr Chen Yuming, Chinese Ambassador to Australia, Mr Kim Woo-Sang, Ambassador from the Republic of Korea to Australia, Mr Gerovich, Australian Ambassador to the Republic of Korea and Dr Raby, Australian Ambassador to China asking for the protection of tidal mudflats in the Yellow Sea and raising the following points in the relevant letters:

- At future meetings of the bilateral migratory bird agreements Australian delegates ask their counterparts what is being done in their countries to retain sufficient appropriate habitat to ensure that birds can successfully stage there on migration;
- The Australian government advocates for the issue of shorebird habitat loss to be listed as a standing agenda item at each Conference of Parties of Ramsar, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Migratory Species (the Bonn Convention);
- You request and lobby for the issue of reclamation of shorebird habitat in the Yellow Sea to be included as a major agenda item on the program for the next IUCN World Congress to be held in the Republic of Korea in late 2012; and
- The House of Representatives Joint Standing Committee on Treaties undertakes a parliamentary review of Australia's performance in maintaining its obligations to international environmental treaties.

Bohai Bay, China

In July HBOC sent largely the same letter to Senator Bob Brown, Leader of the Greens, Dr Raby, Australian Ambassador to China and Mr Chen Yuming, Chinese Ambassador to Australia, asking for the protection of remaining shorebird habitat in Bohai Bay and reminding them of their obligations to shorebirds under the Agreement between China and Australia on the protection of Migratory Birds (CAMBA).

Travelling Stock Routes

A submission was sent by HBOC to the Livestock Health and Pest Authority Review in September pointing out the

Conservation Report 2011 cont.

importance of travelling stock routes to birds.

Red Fox

A submission was sent to the Director of the Wildlife Trade Regulation Section, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities objecting to the introduction of the Red Fox for the pet trade.

Distribution of *The Whistler* 4

The Whistler 4 contained an important paper on the "Status of Threatened Species in the Hunter Region". Copies of *The Whistler* 4 and covering letters were sent to 11 local governments of the Hunter Region. In addition, ten covering letters with copies of *The Whistler* 4 were sent to the 10 sitting members of the Hunter Region: Charlestown, Newcastle, Wallsend, Port Stephens, Lake Macquarie, Myall Lakes, Upper Hunter, Maitland, Cessnock and Swansea. Garry Edwards MP Swansea replied thanking HBOC for *The Whistler* 4 and expressed his interest in conservation.

CSIRO Survey Form

In response to an email from the recently formed CSIRO coastal cluster, HBOC member, Chris Herbert, filled in a survey form. This group was formed to examine science uptake in Australian coastal management. Part of this project is to analyse the role of coastal champions in linking coastal science with coastal policy. This will help planning for effective coastal management in the future.

NSW Government

In April the planning instrument, Part 3A, was scrapped by the new liberal government. There will be a review of planning legislation over the next 18 months.

Hunter Estuary Technical Working Party

Chris Herbert attended the Hunter Estuary Technical Working Party meetings during the year.

Bank stabilisation works along Stockton Channel are proceeding upstream from the small boat harbour at Stockton. It was agreed that no works would be conducted at the Pacific Golden Plover roosting site in Stockton Channel between September and April when the plovers are present.

WetlandCare Australia

This organization is conducting a Fox Threat Abatement Project for Shorebirds in the Hunter Estuary. HBOC members participated in a fox scat and tracks workshop and have contributed fox sightings and fox scats to the project. Chris Herbert gave a presentation on shorebirds in the Hunter Estuary at a WetlandCare Seminar aimed at informing all parties involved in the use and care of the Hunter Estuary.

Ann Lindsey – Conservation Officer for Hunter Bird Observers Club 2011

Photo upper right: Common Greenshanks and a Great Knot flying above Kooragang Dykes on 31 March 2012 - Chris Herbert

Advertisement

4 BED COTTAGE FOR RENT Wallingat Coastal Hideaway Wallingat National Park overlooking the beautiful Wallis Lake



Explore the National Forest from your own back yard!
Under 2 hours from Newcastle

- CD/DVD Player
- Decking/BBQ
- Great birding
- High Chair
- Iron
- Large fenced yard
- Microwave
- Non-smoking
- Open Fireplace
- Outdoor fire pit
- Pets allowed
- Refrigerator
- Rumpus Room
- Sleeps 6-10
- Stereo
- TV Reception
- Video Player
- WMachine/Dryer

For more information and photos visit
<http://www.stayz.com.au/80698>

**For booking details with discount contact
Kate Brown direct on 0448 213 712**



Membership Fees for 2012 are now Overdue

Membership fees for 2012 are \$30 Single, \$30 Family, \$5 Junior (under 16 years). Membership forms can be obtained at Club Night or by downloading from the website: www.hboc.org.au

Please complete a Membership Form and pay at Club Night, or mail a cheque or money order to HBOC, PO Box 24, New Lambton NSW 2304.

If you prefer to pay by electronic transfer, please include your name in the transaction to: Greater Building Society; BSB 637000; Account No. 782260316; Account Name: Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. Please also mail a completed Membership Form to the Club.

Club Night Observations February - March 2012

Please note that all sighting reports published in HBOC's newsletter or its on-line forum (Hunterbirding) are unofficial and have not been confirmed by the club. Such reports are publicised in order that others can be made aware of the sighting(s) reported and have the chance to help verify them. Official records of bird sightings in the Hunter Region appear in the Annual Bird Report, for which written submissions supported by field notes and photographs are a vital part of the process for acceptance of locally uncommon/rare species.

| Species | Number | Date | Location | Observer |
|---------------------------|--------|---------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Australasian Shoveler | 20+ | 15/3/12 | Morpeth STW | A. Lindsey |
| Australian King Parrot | 8 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Australian Darter | 1 | 12/1/12 | Charlestown Golf Club | G. & A. Feletti |
| Australian Painted Snipe | 1 | 8/2/12 | Ash Island [Wagtail Way] | G. Little |
| Australian White Ibis | 100+ | 17/3/12 | Broadmeadow | R. Walker |
| Australian Wood Duck | ~100 | 5/2/12 | Cockle Creek | R. Walker |
| Australian Wood Duck | 200+ | Feb | Cockle Creek | K. Imrie |
| Azure Kingfisher | 1 | 26/1/12 | Cockle Creek | J. Cockerell |
| Black Kite | 1 | 7/2/12 | Nulkaba | A. Richardson |
| Black-necked Stork | 2 | 12/3/12 | Hexham Swamp | M. Newman |
| Black-necked Stork | Pair | 15/3/12 | Morpeth STW | A. Lindsey |
| Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike | 4 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Black-faced Monarch | 1+1juv | 18/2/12 | Harrington | A. Carlson [MVBW] |
| Brown Goshawk | 1 | 8/2/12 | Black Creek - Lovedale | T. Clarke |
| Brown Quail | 6 | 8/2/12 | Lomas Lane - Black Creek | T. Clarke |
| Brown Quail | 6 | 8/1/12 | Flemming St - Black Creek | T. Clarke |
| Brown-headed Honeyeater | 5 | 11/2/12 | Maitland [suburbs] | G. Brosie |
| Buff-banded Rail | 1 | 24/1/12 | Gundy | G. Newling |
| Buff-banded Rail | 1 | 6/2/12 | Narone Creek [Wollombi] | R. Greig |
| Buff-banded Rail | 1 | 15/1/12 | Charlestown Golf Club | G. & A. Feletti |
| Buff-banded Rail | 3 dy | 17/2/12 | H.W.C. | P. Lightfoot |
| Bush Stone-Curlew | 1heard | Dec/Jan | Dora Creek | C. & R. Goodenough |
| Caspian Tern | 1 | 4/2/12 | Howes Lagoon, E.Maitland | G. Brosie |
| Chestnut-rumped Heathwren | 3 | 29/2/12 | Kurri Kurri [HEZ] | M. Roderick |
| Crested Tern | 80+ | 17/3/12 | N'cle Ocean Baths | R. Walker |
| Dollarbird | 2 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Dollarbird | 2+1dy* | Jan/Feb | Dora Creek | C. & R. Goodenough |
| Double-barred Finch | 4 | 8/2/12 | Gosforth | G. Brosie |
| Eastern Osprey | Pair | 25/2/12 | Woods Point | A. Morris |
| Eastern Rosella | 2 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Emerald Dove | 1 | 18/2/12 | Harrington | A. Carlson [MVBW] |
| Flame Robin | 2 | 21/1/12 | Polblue Swamp | T. Clarke |
| Glossy Black-Cockatoo | 3 | 29/1/12 | Charlestown Golf Club | G. & A. Feletti |
| Glossy Black-Cockatoo | 2 | 16/3/12 | Tenambit [Metford Rd] | G. Brosie |
| Grey Goshawk | 1 | 23/1/12 | Singleton [garden] | P. Alexander |
| Grey-crowned Babbler | 1 | 3/2/12 | Maison Dieu | P. Alexander |
| Grey-crowned Babbler | family | 11/2/12 | Singleton [Main Street] | A. Simple |
| Grey-crowned Babbler | nb | 9/2/12 | Wollombi | R. & M. Stewart |
| Grey-tailed Tattler | 1 | Feb | Teralba [5 Islands] | K. Imrie |
| Latham's Snipe | 1 | 10/1/68 | Narone Creek [Wollombi] | R. Greig |
| Little Corella | ~100 | 2/2/12 | Dora Creek | C. & R. Goodenough |
| Little Eagle | 1 | 11/2/12 | Richmond Vale | C. & R. Goodenough |
| Little Friarbird | 1 | 22/2/12 | Werakata N.P. | M. Roderick |
| Little Penguin | 1 | 27/1/12 | Glenrock Lagoon[offshore | T. Clarke |
| Magpie-lark | 4 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Marsh Sandpiper | 14 | 19/2/12 | Ash Island [Swan Pond] | T. Clarke |
| Musk Lorikeet | 10+ | 21/2/12 | Eleebana [Stobbard Res] | A. Gooden |
| Nankeen Kestrel | 1 | 5/2/12 | Warners Bay | R. Walker |
| Nankeen Night-Heron | 1juv | 3/1/12 | Wollombi | R. Greig |
| Nankeen Night-Heron | 1 | 8/2/12 | Black Creek -Lovedale | T. Clarke |
| Noisy Friarbird | 2 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |

Club Night Observations February - March 2012 cont.

| Species | Number | Date | Location | Observer |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Noisy Pitta | 2juv | 18/2/12 | Harrington | A. Carlson [MVBW] |
| Olive-backed Oriole | 6 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Pacific Baza | 1 | 4/2/12 | Point Wollstonecroft | T. Clarke |
| Pacific Black Duck | 10 | 28/1/12 | Tighes Hill | T. Clarke |
| Painted Button-quail | 2 | 29/2/12 | Kurri Kurri [HEZ] | M. Roderick |
| Peregrine Falcon | 2 | 18/1/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Peregrine Falcon | 1 | 15/3/12 | Morpeth STW | A. Lindsey |
| Pink-eared Duck | 1 | 18/3/12 | H.W.C. | R. & M. Stewart |
| Plumed Whistling-Duck | 13* | 9/1/12 | Charlestown Golf Club | G. & A. Feletti |
| Plumed Whistling-Duck | ~10 | 16/1/12 | H.W.C. [Reed Marsh] | K. Conway |
| Red-browed Finch | 2+2dy | 2/12/12 | Ashtonfield [garden] | M. Maddock |
| Red-capped Plover | 1+1juv | 18/2/12 | Harrington | A. Carlson [MVBW] |
| Red-rumped Parrot | 20 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Rose Robin | 1 | 21/1/12 | Barrington Tops | T. Clarke |
| Ruddy Turnstone | 2 | 17/3/12 | N'cle Rock Platform | R. Walker |
| Rufous Fantail | 1+1fy | 22/1/12 | Blackbutt Reserve | J. Nicholls |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | 1 | 19/2/12 | Ash Island [Swan Pond] | T. Clarke |
| Sooty Oystercatcher | 48 | 29/2/12 | N'cle Ocean Baths | S. Roderick |
| Sooty Oystercatcher | 24 | 17/3/12 | N'cle Rock Platform | R. Walker |
| Speckled Warbler | 4 | 8/2/12 | Gosforth | G. Brosie |
| Spectacled Monarch | 1 | 18/2/12 | Harrington | A. Carlson [MVBW] |
| Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater | 1 | 8/2/12 | Gosforth | G. Brosie |
| Spotted Harrier | 1 | 7/2/12 | Rawdon Vale Rd. | K. Peters |
| Spotted Quail-thrush | 5 | 22/2/12 | Werakata N.P. | M. Roderick |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1 | 10/2/12 | Rutherford | G. Brosie |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1 | 11/2/12 | East Maitland | G. Brosie |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1 | 10/2/12 | Coal Point | L. Crawford |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1 | 11/2/12 | Wangi | S. Roderick |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1imm | 22/2/12 | Kitchener | M. Roderick |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1 | 29/2/12 | Weston | S. Roderick |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1 | 3/9/12 | Toronto | L. Crawford |
| Square-tailed Kite | 1 | 18/3/12 | Weston | S. Roderick |
| Striated Heron | 2 | Feb | Teralba [5 Islands] | K. Imrie |
| Striped Honeyeater | 2 | 26/1/12 | Belmont Lagoon | K. Thumm |
| Sulphur-crested Cockatoo | 18 | 5/2/12 | Wingen [garden] | G. Newling |
| Tawny Grassbird | 1 | 26/1/12 | Belmont Lagoon | K. Thumm |
| Tree Martin | 100+ | 29/2/12 | Kurri Kurri [HEZ] | M. Roderick |
| Turquoise Parrot | 3 | 9/2/12 | Yengo N.P. [Finchley Camp] | R. & M. Stewart |
| Varied Sittella | 8 | 25/2/12 | Woods Point | A. Morris |
| Wedge-tailed Eagle | 1 | 4/2/12 | East Maitland [suburbs] | G. Brosie |
| Wedge-tailed Eagle | 1 | 8/1/12 | Black Creek - Lovedale | T. Clarke |
| White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike | 1 | 29/2/12 | Kurri Kurri [HEZ] | M. Roderick |
| White-throated Needletail | 5 | 4/2/12 | Singleton [Main Street] | P. Alexander |
| White-throated Needletail | 100+ | 11/1/12 | Lovedale | T. Clarke |
| White-throated Needletail | ~50 | 17/1/12 | Black Creek - Lovedale | T. Clarke |
| White-throated Needletail | 22 | 10/2/12 | Maison Dieu | P. Alexander |
| White-throated Needletail | 50+ | 4/3/12 | Singleton Heights | P. Alexander |
| White-throated Nightjar | 1 | 8/2/12 | Kitchener | C. & R. Goodenough |
| White-winged Triller | 1m | 29/2/12 | Kurri Kurri [HEZ] | M. Roderick |
| Yellow Wagtail | 3 | 19/2/12 | Ash Is. [Wagtail Way] | T. Clarke |

HBOC Activities April to June 2012

| APRIL 2012 | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Sunday 15 April | Remove mangrove seedlings Milhams Pond | 10.00am Neville's Nook (Radar Huts) Ash Island | Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 |
| Tuesday 17 April | Tomago Wetlands Survey | 7.30am Entry to Tomago House | Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 Please ring to confirm |
| Saturday 21 April | Hunter Wader Survey | 8.00am Ash Island 8.30am Various locations as directed | Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 – Ash Is Chris Herbert 4959 3663 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Mick Roderick 0421761237 – Deep Pond Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay |
| Sunday 22 April | Field Outing to: Glenrock State Conservation Area | 7.30am Carpark on Burwood Road, Whitebridge | Dan Williams 0408 023 262 |
| Sunday 22 April | Remove mangrove seedlings Milhams Pond | 2.00pm Neville's Nook (Radar Huts) Ash Island | Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 |
| Sunday 29 April | Remove mangrove seedlings Milhams Pond | 8.00am Neville's Nook (Radar Huts) Ash Island | Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 |
| Sunday 29 April | 'Back to the River' Family Festival | 9am – 2pm, Schoolmaster's House, Ash Island | KWRP event Paul Baird 4938 5039 |
| MAY 2012 | | | |
| Tuesday 1 May | Mid-Week Outing – Green Point | 8.00am Parking area off Shores Way, Belmont, at southern end of Green Point Reserve | Garth Cooksey 4954 9620 |
| Wednesday 2 May | Management Committee Meeting | 6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School | All members welcome |
| Sunday 6 May | Remove mangrove seedlings Milhams Pond | 2.00pm Neville's Nook (Radar Huts) Ash Island | Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 |
| Wednesday 9 May | Club Meeting | 7.30pm The Wetlands Centre | Speaker: Nick Carlile – Seabird Breeding Islands off Port Stephens Bird of the Evening: Matthew Blyth |
| Sunday 13 May | Create shelly sand Stockton Sandspit | 7.00am Stockton Sandspit | Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 |
| Tuesday 15 May | Tomago Wetlands Survey | 7.30am Entry to Tomago House | Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 Please ring to confirm |
| Saturday 19 May | Hunter Wader Survey | 7.00am Ash Island 7.30am Other locations as directed | Alan Stuart 4952 8569 – Ash Island Chris Herbert 4959 3663 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Mick Roderick 0421761237 – Deep Pond Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay |
| Saturday/ Sunday 19/20 May | Regent Honeyeater/ Swift Parrot Survey | Various locations as desired or directed | Mick Roderick 0421 761237 Please contact for information |
| Sunday 20 May | Field Outing to: Blackbutt Reserve | 8.00am Mahogany Drive carpark at top of Queens Road, New Lambton | Robert Kyte 4950 9398 |
| Sunday 20 May | Create shelly sand Stockton Sandspit | 10.00am Stockton Sandspit | Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 |
| JUNE 2012 | | | |
| Tuesday 5 June | Mid-Week Outing – Awabakal Reserve | 8.00am Parking area at end of Ocean Street, Dudley | Anthony Gooden 4946 9110 |
| Wednesday 6 June | Management Committee Meeting | 6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School | All members welcome |
| Wednesday 13 June | Club Meeting | 7.30pm The Wetlands Centre | Speaker: Gabe Anderson – Great Eastern Ranges Initiative TO BE CONFIRMED |