



# NEWSLETTER

*Issue 4/09 August - September 2009*

## Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc

affiliated with Bird Observation and Conservation Australia

### **Committee**

President: Paul Baird  
Vice-president:  
Grant Brosie  
Secretary: Tom Clarke  
Treasurer:  
Rowley Smith

### **Committee Members**

Craig Anderson  
Liz Crawford  
Ann Lindsey  
Robert MacDonald  
Ian Martin  
Mick Roderick

**Conservation  
Coordinator**  
Liz Crawford

**Activities Officer**  
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**Life Members**  
Wilma Barden (dec)  
Ed Hamonet (dec)  
Sue Hamonet  
Alan Stuart

**Newsletter Editor**  
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02 4959 3663

### **The aims of the club are:**

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

### **New Members**

The Club extends a warm welcome to:  
Sarah Jackson and Nathan Cooper of Rankin Park  
John Craig of Swansea  
Terry and Sarah Fenning of New Lambton Heights  
Alex and Austen Ginn of Belmont  
Brian Gordon of East Maitland  
Brian and Felicity Jackson of Catherine Hill Bay  
Gloria Swan of Beresfield  
Bruce Turnbull and Anne Robotham of New Lambton Heights  
Maureen Turner of Toronto

We hope to meet you often at Club Nights and on Club Outings.

Membership Fees for 2009 are \$30.00 Single and Family, \$5.00 Junior  
Membership forms can be obtained at Club Night or by downloading  
from the website: [www.hboc.org.au](http://www.hboc.org.au)  
Please pay at Club Night or send cheque or money order payable to  
HBOC to PO Box 24, New Lambton 2305.  
Telephone: (02) 4958 5942

Newsletter articles welcome - please contact Editor  
Next newsletter copy deadline 4 October 2009

## President's Column

Recently I attempted to compile a list of activities and tasks undertaken by HBOC members. It was an impressive list, not only because of the number of items but also because of the diversity of opportunities for membership involvement. To help find a way of ensuring that members are fully aware of these opportunities and to develop the best means by which members can be supported in their endeavours, a sub-group of the Committee was formed to look at these issues. This group, comprising Alan Stuart, Tom Clarke, Craig Anderson, Grant Brosie and Paul Baird, met recently to initiate discussions and seek solutions. The ideas generated will be discussed further and, in due course, offered to members for their consideration (at this stage, the October Club Meeting).

It is also evident from the activities list that a significant proportion of the total member effort is directed to practical field-based studies. Members are involved in making inventories and monitoring the Hunter birdlife in a diversity of habitats including the industrial complexes of the Hunter estuary, coastal and woodland habitats, public reserves and privately managed agricultural lands. (See a list of some of these activities elsewhere in this Newsletter). This process occurs through regular, organised surveys, atlassing, and personal observations with members working in groups or individually. The result is an extensive record of data established over a long period of dedicated work. The long-term collection, analysis and reporting of these data are vital aspects to overcoming limiting factors such as the gaps in the information base, the level of awareness and the provision of education within the public and private sectors. Crucially, the information can be utilised by responsible agencies to develop and implement effective land management strategies. The high quality of this HBOC data has been recognised locally and has been an influential factor in the establishment of several collaborative relationships with both local government and private sectors. HBOC is working (or has worked) with Newcastle, Maitland and Lake Macquarie City Councils, Hunter Wetlands Centre, Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group, BHP Billiton, Kooragang Wetlands Rehabilitation Project, Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, and National Parks and Wildlife Service to further the conservation effort. The formation of collaborative partnerships (whilst adhering to our core values) between volunteer environmental groups such as HBOC and the corporate and government sectors constitutes a potentially rewarding strategy for securing conservation outcomes. What do you think? Good birding, keep looking!

Paul Baird

## Port Stephens Winter Wader Survey

Alan Stuart

On Monday 27 July 2009, 13 people from HBOC did the 2<sup>nd</sup> winter survey of Port Stephens, using 6 boats (5 skippered by NPWS and Marine Park personnel and the Kooragang Wetlands Rehabilitation Project boat skippered by Chris Herbert) to cover all the targeted areas simultaneously.

Overall, the results compared reasonably well with the first winter survey last year. We had 738 shorebirds including 588 that were migratory species. The count included 122 Australian Pied Oystercatchers – not as many as the 154 birds from last year but still an amazing count for them and confirming the importance of Port Stephens for this species. We found that many were young birds i.e. <4 years old and not yet at breeding age. This suggests that young birds move to Port Stephens having hatched elsewhere. Clearly, more work is needed on this front (and we will look at getting your help on this).

We had 340 Bar-tailed Godwits, very similar number to last year's count. These will also be young (pre-breeding) birds that did not fly back to the northern hemisphere in March/April. The Eastern Curlew count of 223 birds is also very noteworthy and is in contrast with only 52 birds last year. Again these would be young birds and the count possibly indicates that the species had better breeding success in the 2008 season. Or it could just mean that conditions were less favourable for them in Port Stephens last winter.

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## Field Data Collection Activities Conducted by HBOC Members

Paul Baird

The following is a listing of field data collection activities that contribute to the HBOC record base of the bird life in the Hunter Region. They are in no particular order and there may be activities that have been inadvertently overlooked; if that is the case please mention it so the list can be amended. If you'd like to participate in any of these surveys, please contact a Committee Member.

Personal observations of members, both individual and on Club Outings and Camps; surveys of Hunter Estuary shorebirds, Newcastle rock platform birds, Lake Macquarie shorebirds, Port Stephens waterbirds, Worimi Nature Reserve and Swan Bay, Tomago Wetlands, waterbirds of Kooragang/Ash Islands, Morpeth Wastewater Treatment Works, waterbirds of Walka Recreational and Wildlife Reserve, Green Wattle Creek, *Greswick Angus* at Seaham, *Muralla* at Vacy, Blackbutt Reserve, Irrawang Swamp, Hexham Swamp; Regent Honeyeater/Swift Parrot Survey, Ibis Count, Snipe Count, Sea Watch, and Observations for the Annual Bird Report.

## Future Courses, Conferences and Events

### **National Threatened Species Day** Saturday 5 September 2009

Self-drive tour stopping at a number of sites between **Kurri** and **Branxton**, to see and learn about a range of threatened plants, endangered ecological communities and evidence of threatened animals, maybe even see the animals themselves! Meet 9am at entrance to Richmond Vale Railway Museum, Richmond Vale, 4km south of Kurri Kurri along Leggetts Drive (the road to Mulbring). Finish around 3pm, although you are welcome to leave the tour at any stage throughout the day. For those keen for more, there will be an optional 'bonus' excursion beyond 3pm. Bring your own vehicle (try to car pool with friends), hat, sunscreen, water, sensible walking shoes, binoculars, camera, snacks and lunch (we will be stopping for lunch near shops where food can be purchased if needed). To register phone Tricia Hogbin or Mick Roderick (02) 49086828 or email: [tricia.hogbin@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tricia.hogbin@environment.nsw.gov.au) or [mick.roderick@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mick.roderick@environment.nsw.gov.au).

### **How to Identify Sydney's Little Brown Birds** Saturday 12 September and again on Sunday 20 September 2009

Meet at 7:30 am at **Castlereagh Nature Reserve**, on Northern Rd, Windsor (opposite the auto wreckers with the graffiti-designed walls). Ends at 2:00pm.

Share a day with ornithologist, bird guide and presenter Ricki Coughlan as she introduces you to the thornbills, gerygones, scrubwrens and fairy-wrens of Sydney. Ricki has an infectious passion for this enchanting assemblage of birds and will help you learn the keys to confidently identify them all.

Limited to 14 persons, so book early by contacting Pixie at BASNA office, phone: (02) 9647 1033 or email: [basna@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:basna@birdsaustralia.com.au) for more information. COST: \$69 for Birds Australia members and \$79 for non-members (incl. GST).

### **Shorebirds Identification Workshop** Saturday 10 October 2009

Shorebirds 2020 and HBOC will hold a workshop at the **Hunter Wetlands Centre** from 9am till 12.30pm with field practice in the afternoon at Stockton Sandpsit. Learn about shorebird life cycles and ecology and how to identify and count these amazing long-distance travellers. Cost is free; numbers limited to 50. Register with Liz Crawford, phone: 02 4959 3663 or email: [chrisliz@tpg.com.au](mailto:chrisliz@tpg.com.au)

### **Atlassing Workshop - the how, when and where of Birds Australia Continuing Atlas** Saturday 14 November 2009

From 9am to 2pm at the Birds Australia Discovery Centre at Newington Armory, **Sydney Olympic Park**.

Would you like to do atlassing but you are not sure how? How do you select a site? How do you measure out the area you are supposed to cover? How do you find out the co-ordinates? How do you fill in the forms? This will be BASNA's third Atlassing workshop, run again by Alan Morris. COST: Free for Birds Australia members and \$10 for non members.

Please register your interest in attending by contacting Pixie at BASNA office, Ph: (02) 9647 1033, email: [basna@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:basna@birdsaustralia.com.au)

### **7<sup>th</sup> Australasian Shorebird Conference, Hobart Tas**

The conference theme is "*Resident and Migratory Shorebirds – Managing Their Future*", which will include the following topics:

- Future prospects for shorebirds in the East-Asian Australasian Flyway,
- Knowledge gaps in regard to resident shorebirds,
- Beach nesting birds and sea level rise, and
- Conservation status and threats to shorebirds.

It will run from Friday evening 4 September to Sunday 6 September 2009. Registration costs \$240 and includes an Icebreaker on Friday night and Conference Dinner on Saturday night. To register, contact the Australasian Waders Studies Group organisers by emailing: [awsug2009@gmail.com](mailto:awsug2009@gmail.com)

### **Australian Bird Fair, Leeton NSW**

This annual event will be held from 13 – 15 November 2009 and will include:

- Seminars and lectures about birds and other aspects of the natural world
- Birding and Nature related organisations, Market Stalls
- Exhibits of interest to the birdwatching industry
- Evening events
- Organised, and self-guided birdwatching tours
- Music, art, and varied cultural activities.

#### **Ticket prices**

- Adult One Day Ticket \$5 each
- Children (16 and under in the company of an adult) FREE

### **2009 Australasian Ornithological Conference at Armidale NSW**

"Connectivity" is the theme of this conference which will feature results of the latest bird research. The conference will run from Tuesday 30 November to Saturday 4 December at the Armidale Ex-Services Memorial Club, with a mid-conference opportunity on Wednesday 1 December to visit some of the New England Tableland's best birding spots.

You can register for the conference and express an interest in presenting a paper at the Birds Australia website: [www.birdsaustralia.com.au/whats-on/australasian-ornithological-conference.html](http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au/whats-on/australasian-ornithological-conference.html)

Registrations and submissions must be lodged by 31 August 2009.

The **Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2009** recently introduced into NSW Parliament seeks further provision for the management and regulation of hunting of game. It seeks to allow hunting in national parks, expansion of the list of game animals including 23 species of native birds, and release of exotic species into private game parks. HBOC objected strongly to the bill and received a letter of assurance from the Minister for the Environment that the NSW Government "does not support hunting in national parks or the hunting of native animals, including waterbirds, on conservation or other grounds."

Liz Crawford

## Blue Gum Regional Park, Minmi

Judi Thomas

Mid-week outing 7th July 2009

Blue Gum Regional Park at Minmi is a pleasant area for an outing. Twenty-three HBOC members met at 8am and despite another overcast and showery day we found the birding worthwhile. Our first walk took us into a bushland area circling a creek which ends in a small dam. We hadn't investigated this track on previous outings and due to recent rains it was a little muddy at times. However when we had our birdcall at morning-tea break we had seen 27 species including several flocks of honeyeaters: Eastern Spinebill, Bell Miner, Noisy Miner, and Lewin's, Yellow-faced, Brown, White-cheeked and White-naped Honeyeaters. We also saw male and female Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush and Spotted Pardalote.

Regent Bowerbird  
- Steve Happ



Satin Bowerbird  
- Steve Happ

A heavy shower after our morning-tea stop caused more than half our number to leave but the hardy nine who remained were rewarded. Our second walk was down by the cemetery over the bridge and up the staircase which leads to the gully where we have previously found bowerbirds. We had very good observations of two brilliantly coloured male Regent Bowerbirds accompanied by three females. Nearby was at least one male Satin Bowerbird and females. In the same area were two Brown Cuckoo-Doves, Tasmanian Silvereyes, many Pied Currawongs, Australian Magpies and a Magpie-lark; so our total for the Blue Gum area rose to 35 species observed.

After lunch we decided to take a quick look at Pambalong Nature Reserve and Lenaghans Swamp. This turned into quite an extensive look with another 37 species observed including eight Black Swans on nests and a group of four cygnets with two adults. All the usual ducks and marsh



Royal Spoonbill - Steve Happ

birds for the area were present including a pair of Australasian Shovelers. A Grey Goshawk flew quite close to us and other raptors were two Whistling Kites, one White-bellied Sea-Eagle, a Swamp Harrier and an Australian Hobby on a tall tower looking for prey. We watched the Hobby for some time as we walked along, expecting to see it pounce on something. Obviously it was also keeping an eye on us. Immediately we stopped and looked away at a nearby Royal Spoonbill it vanished. Its patience was greater than ours.

Editor's note: More of Steve's photos can be viewed on: [www.stevhapp.com/](http://www.stevhapp.com/)

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## Australian Pied Oystercatchers in South-east Tasmania – A Most Ingenious Species

Mike Newman's talk for the October Club Night:

My studies, which commenced in the mid 1970's in the Hobart area, have demonstrated the adaptive nature of this species. Increasing residential development, recreational use of beaches and rising sea levels have forced the oystercatchers to change their nest site preferences as well as forcing them to forage and roost in new areas. In 1991 I predicted a crash in the local oystercatcher population as a consequence of these mounting pressures based on measured decreases in breeding productivity. Against the odds the oystercatchers have increased in numbers, particularly at Lauderdale, where the enclosed bay provides secure roost options and excellent feeding opportunities. Unfortunately a marina development, deemed to be a project of state significance, has been proposed which if it proceeds will cover more than half the bay including the primary feeding area of the oystercatchers. At times flocks of the order of 500 are present. Involvement in the opposition to the development resulted in a possible explanation of why my predictions in 1991 of a population crash were wrong and is the basis of this talk.

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## Bands on Birds - Left Leg or Right Leg?

Ann Lindsey

Looking for bands on birds keys straight into our innermost desire to find something rare and exciting and, for me, at least, finding a band is very exciting. Whilst looking at the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) website I found this piece of interesting history: “On 18th September 1887, an albatross of undetermined species was found near Triggs Island, Western Australia, with a tin collar around its neck which carried the following message: ‘13 naufrages sont refugies sur les iles Crozet 4 Aout 1887’ (thirteen shipwrecked sailors have taken refuge on the Crozet Islands, 4 August 1887). This message was telegraphed to the French authorities, who despatched the warship La Meurthe from Madagascar to the Crozets, which are in the south Indian Ocean. It was established that the message had been attached to the albatross by the crew of the French sailing ship Tamaris, which was wrecked in the Crozets on 9th March 1887. The unfortunate seamen, however, did not live to see the successful result of their experiment in bird banding, as they apparently perished in an ill-fated attempt to reach nearby Possession Island, two months before the arrival, on 2nd December 1887, of La Meurthe.

Although this episode is far removed from the bird-banding methods in use today, it is the earliest and most remarkable case of a banded bird arriving in Australia from overseas; the bird had covered a distance of 3027 miles (4904km) in no more than 46 days”.

Modern scientific bird banding started in Denmark in 1899 when aluminium bands, stamped with numbers, were placed on the legs of 162 young starlings. Bands were first used in Australia in 1912 and were placed on Short-tailed Shearwaters and White-faced Storm-petrels. In 1953 the Australian Bird Banding Scheme was launched by the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research to co-ordinate bird banding in Australia at a national level. Later this became the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) which now manages the collation of information on threatened and migratory bird and bat species.

### Why are birds banded?

Birds are banded for many reasons depending on the type of study being undertaken. Some basic questions may be answered:

- Where do they live?
- How old are they and how long might they live?
- Do they fly far away from here?
- Where will they go?
- Where do they feed?

Answers to these questions are important for conserving our native birds and the places where they live.

### Types of Bands

Bands have to be especially designed for particular species and be of a durable material. A bird may have a metal band which will have a number and a return address. In addition, it may have a number of different coloured plastic bands. The combination of colours can be seen at a distance and gives the bird a unique identity. More recently coloured leg flags have been introduced and are commonly used on migratory birds, though not exclusively. The colour of the flag may show the area where the bird was caught. Such flags may be plain or may be engraved with a letter and a number. Some examples follow:

#### Colour

Orange flag  
Yellow flag  
Blue over orange flag  
Orange over blue flag  
Orange over green flag

#### Place Banded

Victoria  
Northwest Australia  
Southern Japan  
Tasmania  
NSW

### What can you do?

If you see a bird with some sort of band, it is important to note down as much information as possible. The first thing to do is to work out which leg the band is on – right or left leg remembering to establish this from the bird’s point of view. Quite tricky really! Then, is the band on the upper leg, i.e. up among the feathers below the belly where you can hardly see it or is the band on the lower leg i.e. between the toes and the ankle? The next thing to do, before you forget, is to write down the following in your handy notebook or, on the palm of your hand, if you left your notebook in the car:

- identify the species if you can;
- right or left leg;
- upper or lower leg;
- if applicable, the colour combinations on the correct legs and starting from top to bottom; this is critically important as the combination identifies a particular bird;
- the band number – you probably won’t be able to read this unless you have the bird in your hand;
- where you found the banded bird (GPS if possible);
- when you found the banded bird (date).

If the bird is dead:

- take the band off;
- gently straighten it as much as you can;
- stick it to some cardboard;
- write the band number onto the cardboard;
- write whether you have telephoned the ABBBS about this band;
- send the band to the ABBBS.

If you don’t want to send the information in yourself give it to a committee member of HBOC who will then pass it on to ABBBS. The ABBBS will send you a letter telling you where and when the bird was banded.

Over the years, several HBOC members have recorded some very interesting banded birds including orange, yellow or white flagged shorebirds from Victoria, northwest Australia and New Zealand respectively. A highlight was certainly a Ruddy Turnstone found by Judi Thomas at Newcastle Baths in September 2007 which was banded in New Zealand in 2006. On the upper left leg it had a white flag and on the lower left leg a blue band over a yellow band; on the lower right leg it had two yellow bands.



Ruddy Turnstone - Judi Thomas

More recently two Australian Pied Oystercatchers were sighted on Stockton Beach by Mike Newman, Warren Mayers, Tony DeMamiel and myself, each with yellow engraved flags – A4 and H7. They had been banded on the north coast of NSW in 2008 and 2009. Even more exciting is finding a bird in a foreign land banded in your own home territory as happened to Chris and Liz when they were in South Korea in 2008 when a “Newcastle Bar-tailed Godwit” was sighted.

### Contacts

The Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme,  
GPO Box 8, Canberra, ACT 2601.

Phone 02 6274 2407 or email [abbbs@environment.gov.au](mailto:abbbs@environment.gov.au)  
An on-line form for reporting band observations is available at the web address :

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/science/abbbs/recovery.html>

Alternatively contact:

Ann Lindsey 02 4951 2008 [ann.lindsey@bigpond.com](mailto:ann.lindsey@bigpond.com)

Liz Crawford 02 4959 3663 [chrisliz@tpg.com.au](mailto:chrisliz@tpg.com.au)

Alan Stuart 02 4952 8569 [almarosa@bigpond.com](mailto:almarosa@bigpond.com)

Mick Roderick 02 4023 0322 [fred\\_barney\\_72@yahoo.com](mailto:fred_barney_72@yahoo.com)

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## Australian White Ibis – tagged and banded

Liz Crawford and Chris Herbert

On 11 July 2009, we observed two Australian White Ibis with black patagial tags (wing shoulder tags, with white numbers 024 and 168) in a flock of about 60 birds roosting in trees at Rathmines, on the southern side of Kilaben Bay in Lake Macquarie. The tags were very obvious, sticking up from the folded wings of the birds. Excited, we

emailed our observation to John Martin, Scientific Officer at the Australian Museum, who informed us that both birds had been tagged in south-west Sydney, the adult (024) at a landfill and the juvenile (168) as a chick at an urban island colony at Lake Annan, between Campbelltown and Camden. They were both dispersing northwards from their area of tagging!

John Martin explained: “As many members of the Hunter Bird Observers Club may know, Australian White Ibis have colonised several urban areas over the last 30 years. Within the Sydney region over 7000 adults were counted at the height of the breeding season in 2008. Unfortunately, colonial nesting in urban areas commonly upsets the community. The Australian Museum (Richard Major) and University of Wollongong (Kris French) have been researching the Sydney regional population over the last four years through radio tracking, colour banding adults and regional population surveys. Patagial tagging is an extension of colour banding to individually identify birds to monitor movements, breeding and habitat use. We have found that tags offer increased visibility and easier identification compared to bands. We tagged 105 adults in July 2008 to assess if an urban colony at Lake Annan (near Camden, SW Sydney) will continue to support Sydney’s 2nd largest colony following the closure of the local tip. We have observed that the birds readily foraged 30km to alternate tips. We tagged 58 chicks and also individually colour banded 58 chicks in November 2008 to assess chick survival with respect to each technique, as cattle-ear tags have not been used on ibis chicks previously. An additional benefit of marking the birds is reports of movements at all scales by the community (especially birdo’s). All observations are greatly appreciated and can be emailed directly to me [John.Martin@austmus.gov.au](mailto:John.Martin@austmus.gov.au) or the ABBBS (Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme).”

Further information about ibis research is available on the following website: <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>



Tagged Australian White Ibis image from the Birds In Backyards website.

## Martins Creek – Sunday 19 July

Gaye Drady

Fifteen HBOC members huddled around an imaginary campfire in the Maitland Railway Station car park, all conventionally dressed for a winter morning's bush outing, except trip leader Rob, who sported a bright pink matted hair-do and matching pink painted nails (after effects of a night out on the town, he says!).

By 8.15 there were unlikely to be any stragglers turning up, so, after arranging car-pooling we headed for Martins Creek, northeast of Paterson. It was a pleasant rural drive, and following a frosty start to the day, we were treated to sunshine and clear skies.

Our destination was private property; our friendly and generous host was Kathy. Kathy is a carer of neglected and unwanted pets and farm animals, and we were greeted by the enthusiastic tail-wagging component of her menagerie. Her property comprises varied ecosystems from eucalypt woodland and heath, to rainforest. Kathy is enlisting professional help to undertake weed reduction and native plant regeneration, and, as with much of the Hunter, the major shrubby weed appears to be Lantana. Like many conservation-minded landowners, Kathy shuns the use of herbicides, so the eradication of Lantana is a labour-intensive exercise. I had not previously put much thought into the possible detrimental effects of weed eradication on our native wildlife, but as Ann pointed out, undergrowth reduction must be a gradual process in order to allow the birds and animals to adapt to the changing environment.

As we gathered ready for our birding excursion, Rob cheerily announced, "Sorry about the hill" - (he didn't sound one bit sorry!). And as we were confronted by "the hill", I felt a little daunted. Slowly and steadily I managed the steep, rocky, lengthy hill climb, and was relieved when the terrain levelled out. Righto, on with the bird watching! But, as with any bushwalk, I was soon distracted by the native flora, most notably the terrestrial orchids. I was delighted to discover another amateur orchid enthusiast amid the birding group – Tom. We compared notes and observations, and together we spotted and photographed four orchid species: *Pterostylis nutans* (Nodding Greenhood), *Taurantha concinna* (Trim Greenhood), *Acianthus fornicatus* (Large Mosquito Orchid or Pixie Caps), and *Petalochilus catenatus* (White Caladenia or White Fingers). We also saw one pink-tinted specimen of *Petalochilus catenatus*.

The group wandered along the ridge line, binoculars pointed skywards. The Shining Bronze-Cuckoo was a highlight for me, only the second time I have observed this bird in any detail. We were all a tad amused to see a Pelican fly overhead, but very pleased to admire the White-naped Honeyeaters, female Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters flitting through the eucalypt

foliage in a flurry of activity; and then they were gone, and we moved on. Half of the group descended a gully into rainforest country, and came back with interesting tales of an unoccupied nest – a huge stick construction made by Wedge-tailed Eagles.

Negotiating the rocky downhill track back to base, a group spotted a flock of Striated Thornbills. Ann is a mine of information, which she is keen to impart to novices. I was keen to listen, observe and learn: Striated Thornbills are not normally ground-feeders, so it was interesting to note the initial ground feeding taking place. Brown and Striated Thornbills can be confusing for novices to tell apart as they both have striations leading from under the bill onto the breast, but the Striated will have striations on the crown, absent on the Brown Thornbill. Further down the hill, Ann pointed out the identifying features of the Buff-rumped Thornbill, which I was able to recognise with the close encounters we were treated to, right down to the white iris. A Speckled Warbler was spotted, and it was all eyes following this beautiful little bird. I was fortunate to get a detailed look at its superb, heavily streaked plumage.

The thought of coffee was enticing us to continue walking, and once we were relaxing on Kathy's verandah, she offered us freshly prepared fruit salad and whipped cream, followed by coffee and biscuits. What an exceptionally gracious host! Chat was interspersed with bird spotting in Kathy's wild, rambling garden. And then it was time for the Bird Call, with 49 species recorded, and another three species added later.

With rested bodies and nourished bellies, we all headed out to wander up the unsealed country road in search of more birds. A male Satin Bowerbird posed for easy identification, and Galahs finally put in an appearance, along with Crested Pigeons. A Sulphur-crested Cockatoo was cleaning out a hollow while her mate watched. Following a group photo, lunch was had on the veranda, but Grahame and I had to leave at that point to head home. Many thanks to welcoming landowner, Kathy, trip leader Rob, and the friendly group of HBOC members; a special thank you to Ann who is a wonderful teacher.

Editor's note: If you enjoyed this article, you might enjoy more of Gaye's blogspot: <http://australianbirdblog.blogspot.com/search/label/HBOC%20outings>

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### Bird Photography Ethics

As spring approaches and birds begin nesting in earnest, it is timely to remember that:

nesting sites should not be altered or interfered with in any way;

the removal of foliage from around a nest site is not acceptable; birds choose nest sites because of the protection offered - altering the site may result in the elimination of shade or may open the nest to predators.

## Easter at the Macquarie Marshes and Bowra Station

Di Johnson

The Easter break proved to be one of the most fantastic bird trips I have ever participated in. Twenty-four members saw approximately 160 birds, some of us twitching over 10 new species. How exciting is that?

On Good Friday I drove up with Melva Fisher and got bogged on the way at the Warren Sewage Treatment Works in my attempts to see a great raptor. However, in no time we were pulled out by a passing motorist and we continued on our merry way to be greeted at the gate to Willie Retreat by a lovely Hooded Robin. The homestead behind looked inviting, though I was a little apprehensive at seeing the tame(?) Emu and a humungous pig. We were soon greeted warmly by Phillip and Myra Tollhurst who have a sincere interest in wildlife and domestic animals being registered as Wildlife Carers. I didn't go over to the house – not sure how the pig would react!



Saturated Apostlebirds - Di Johnson

The Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve covers 18,150ha of the Marshes and is recognized as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. Apparently in flood years up to several thousand Straw-necked and Australian White Ibis can be observed breeding on scattered lignum heads within the channels and lagoons. The Marshes have been drained considerably and on our arrival it was reasonably dry on that Good Friday. We really enjoyed walking amongst the clumps of salt bush with sparse White Wood and Leopardwood trees sheltering Red-winged, Australian King, Mulga and Red-rumped Parrots with beautiful Australian Ringnecks and Blue Bonnets passing through the camping ground. Every now and then a huge flock of Cockatiels or Budgerigars would alight briefly, only to take off in a kaleidoscope of colour. That was a sight to behold!!!

Around the camp Crested Pigeons, Diamond and Peaceful Doves gently foraged. Above us Welcome Swallows, Tree Martins, White-breasted, Masked, White-browed and Black-faced Woodswallows swooped with over 1000 White-browed being recorded. A friendly Restless Flycatcher frequently perched on the barren clothesline

out the back, greeting us each day over breakfast. Just wandering out from the camp, there were great sightings of Red-capped Robins, White-winged Choughs, Golden-headed Cisticolas, Zebra Finches and lots of White-plumed Honeyeaters.

The next day we followed Robert McDonald to Carinda where we parked in a long line and took off scouting for any birdlife. I really enjoyed seeing Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Grey-crowned, White-browed and Chestnut-crowned Babblers on this trip. White-winged Trillers, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes and Spotted Bowerbird provided interest and excitement. Here again there were huge numbers (over 2000) of White-browed Woodswallows. On the way back we stopped at one of Robert's favourite spots for Painted Button-quail but were unsuccessful. We had just seen lovely views of male White-winged Fairy-wren flitting across the tops of the salt bush.

On the Sunday the rain had started and we all contemplated our chances of escaping Willie Retreat in order to proceed to Bowra Station. The road to Quambone was closed just after some of us had gone sliding along to a reserve where lots of birds were seen such as Jacky Winter, Zebra Finches, two Pallid Cuckoos feeding young and lots of Plum-headed Finches. I wandered out into the paddocks, joined by Grant Brosie looking for more Brown Quail.

By Monday Willie Retreat had turned into a quagmire after continual rain the previous night. We all questioned whether we'd be able to get out to the front gate. It proved to be quite a task as some of us had to be winched out. At one stage Steve Happ's van was almost bodily carried out of the squelchy mud. Three Apostlebirds took up residence on the back veranda, looking very dismal. We all left in congo line ready to help if anyone got bogged.



Robert Greig's winch was invaluable after heavy rain turned the black soil into thick mud - Di Johnson

Seventeen of us continued on to enjoy the real outback west of Cunnamulla at Bowra Station. A lovely lagoon was presided over by about five Yellow-billed Spoonbills perched in a magnificent tree with visiting White-



## Stockton Sandspit Shorebird Roost Rehab

Tom Clarke

necked Herons, Australian Wood Duck, White-breasted Woodswallows, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Black-fronted Dotterels and the amazing appearance of a Black-tailed Native-hen adding to this idyllic scene. Bob and Steve settled into the authentic woolshed amongst the bales of wool, with impatient sheep waiting in the pens out the back. The guys had great views of the itinerant Chestnut-crowned Babblers.

The next day we set out searching for the endemic species of this area. We came across a spot with lots and lots of Red-capped Robins, so we named it Robinvale. Oh! How tiresome they were!!! However, not far from that there were Hooded Robins, Variegated Fairy-wrens, Chestnut-rumped and Slaty-backed Thornbills, a vigilant Red-backed Kingfisher, Varied Sittellas and joy for Melva! – a group of Hall's Babblers. Strutting in the background tall and proud was a Crested Bellbird. What a great spot!!

Up the road where it was very rocky, I was so pleased to see a Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush darting between the thorny bushes. A new bird for me! Out further from the homestead in a large paddock on the last day I saw 7 Bourke's Parrots and a squawky lot of Major Mitchell's Cockatoos. Down by the river White-breasted Woodswallows nestled together in a tall gum.

Everyone during our stay was really on the lookout for the enigmatic Grey Falcon which we really didn't see fully to identify. We learnt afterwards that Alan Morris' group 'Follow that Bird' saw one as they had a cuppa on the first day. Ahem!!!

The last bird I must mention is the Emu. Lots of them were seen on this trip and their curiosity amazed me. Tony rattled his keys at the approach of a large flock and they came forward in gangly fashion, their strange heads darting out in front. I just loved them though I can see now how unpredictable they can be in the bush. By sighting these very Australian birds in the wild, it brought home to me what a wonderful trip we'd all had – just a unique experience, hopefully to be repeated.

Hunter Bird Observers Club (HBOC) has been involved in rehabilitation efforts at the Stockton Sandspit (SSS) for many years. In fact a working bee to clear the samphire (saltmarsh) on the "Wader Reserve" was arranged for Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May 1977. Several weeding days have occurred since then and over the last 7 years more than 3400 hours of volunteer work have helped to provide the best possible habitats for shorebirds at SSS.

It is without doubt that all the heavy work, like digging out large bitou bushes or terrifying spiny rush, is behind us these days as we enjoy less strenuous tasks such as plucking the odd bitou seedling or chipping little "puppy" rushes. The effort required to maintain the roost areas can easily be achieved by a couple of dedicated people regularly attending for a few hours each week.

***But we would like to share our SSS experiences with other people now and again.***

There is always something going on at SSS and these days we are watching the Red-capped Plovers and the Pied Oystercatchers starting to check out the ground to settle on nesting sites. These observations can be made while "pretending" to work at another location but still within binocular or scope view of the potential nest areas. Shorebirds relax pretty quickly once they realise that those slow-moving weed pullers are really non-threatening. If you would like to join in and surreptitiously observe shorebirds while removing the odd weed (classic displacement behaviour) then why not try to get along on one of the following dates:

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August** – plan to sweep the saltmarsh areas and chip out *Juncus acutus*.

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September** – plan to sweep non-roost areas for woody weeds.

On both dates the low tide will allow us access to the roost areas but where ground-nesting types have sat down will determine where the weeding effort can take place. Turn up from about 7.00am to whenever or come late if you wish and join us at a time that suits you. You will need to stay hydrated, be sun-safe, dressed for outdoor work and be wearing strong shoes.

### ***Talents wanted!***

Some of you are pretty skilled at **sketching birds**. If you'd like to put your skills to good use for HBOC's Annual Bird Report, please let Alan Stuart know as soon as possible – by email on [almarosa@bigpond.com](mailto:almarosa@bigpond.com)

Some of you are very skilled at taking **photos of birds**. If you'd like to donate digital photos of birds to the Club for use in talks, presentations, and possibly in publications, please let Alan Stuart or John Cockerell know - by email on [almarosa@bigpond.com](mailto:almarosa@bigpond.com) or [jb@cockerell.ws](mailto:jb@cockerell.ws) respectively - see article on HBOC's Digital Photo Library on next page.

## Digital Photo Library for HBOC

Alan Stuart

As most of you will be aware, for a long time HBOC has had a slide library with photos of many Australian birds, and with the slides available to HBOC members for use in presentations at Club Nights and externally. The quality of the photos, and of the slides themselves, is variable. In recent years, digital photography has come into its own, and many excellent digital pictures of birds are now available. In response, HBOC has decided to join the digital world too. We will retain the library of slides, and expand it when the opportunity arises, but we will also establish a collection of digital photographs – aiming to have high quality images of all Australian birds including those where gender, age, season, geography etc. lead to differences in plumage.

*Why an HBOC collection, given that good quality images can be obtained from other sources?* Partly it's a service for members, not all of whom know how to find images on-line. And partly it's an opportunity for local photographers to gain some extra recognition locally. Also, not all of the on-line images are of such high quality that they can be used in presentations or for other educational purposes.

*For photographers interested in donating pictures to HBOC, we would like to receive 500kB .jpeg files with your name on the picture and/or within the file name. John Cockerell (the HBOC photo librarian) can coach you in how to do that, if you need assistance. You will retain ownership of the original image. HBOC commits that the downsized image will not be sold and that it will only be used for non-commercial purposes such as community education.*

*For members wanting pictures for use in a presentation, contact John Cockerell email: [jb@cockerell.ws](mailto:jb@cockerell.ws) or phone 0429 435 008. John can also coach you in presentation formatting if you need assistance. There are already >1,200 digital photos in the HBOC library so if you are planning a talk for an HBOC meeting or at some external community forum, the chances are that we already have some pictures that could be useful for you.*

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## Murphys Law: Good Birding on Deserted Roads Guarantees Traffic

Lois Wooding

If you check out the Queensland map between Charleville and Cunnamulla, you won't find much. Somewhere off the thin, connecting line of the Mitchell Highway there's a track leading down to the Warrego River where, on May 20th the birdlife was really jumping. Vehicles were abandoned, and I scurried about with my companions, two top

WA birders, frantically trying to decide which "goodie" to focus on next. Then someone called, "Car coming!"

We'd been travelling for ages without encountering other vehicles, but now two guys in a once-white 4x4 ute pulled up in a cloud of dust. The words "Outback Ministry" could just be made out through the dirt-caked guts of squished insects on the doors. Now, maybe God sent them, or maybe it was a slow day for saving souls out there in red-dirt country, or maybe they were genuinely startled at finding three grey-haired women progressing erratically down a deserted road in the middle of nowhere. Whatever the reason, they were determined to talk...at length...with the motor running.

Almost immediately, another vehicle appeared, this one pulling a caravan. Leaving their motor running, of course, we were joined by two more guys, but not before they let their dog out to run through the bush with happy abandon and joyful barks. In minutes it seemed like we had a whole convention going on, or as one grey-haired woman was heard to mutter, "the full @\$% disaster!"

Finally our visitors moved on, leaving us listening to absolute and utter silence.

We waited for a while hoping the birds would return, then gave up and trudged back to our cars. The scribbled list in my notebook included three "lifers" so I was well pleased, but I couldn't help wondering what we might have missed. I also wondered why guys don't turn up that way whenever I have a flat tyre....You can bet your binocs Murphy applies a different "law" to that situation.

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## Regent Honeyeaters in the Lower Hunter 2009

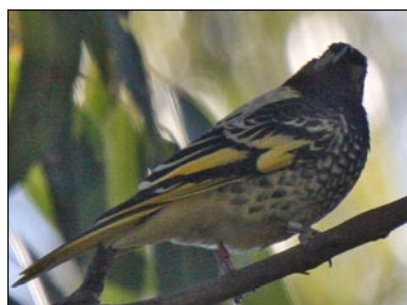
Mick Roderick

2009 has been an interesting year for the nationally endangered Regent Honeyeater (RH) in the Lower Hunter Region. During the first bi-annual Swift Parrot / RH survey (mid-May), Steve Roderick found a handful of RHs at a site in Werakata State Conservation Area near Pelton. Since that time, up to 40 RHs have been recorded in the broader Pelton locality, including a remarkable 30 birds in a single Spotted Gum tree in early June. A single bird was also seen in Werakata National Park near Abermain around this time.

In late June, Robert and Margaret Stewart found a small group of RHs along a track in Werakata National Park, just to the east of Kitchener. Subsequent searches revealed that up to 20 birds were present at this site (peaking in early July). Only a small number of birds were seen at Pelton at the same time that there were 20 birds around Kitchener, so we do not know if these were different birds or not.

Therefore, the maximum count we have for the area thus far is around 40 birds. However, with a lot of uncharted habitat, it is possible that there are more birds out there.

At least one banded bird has been sighted at Pelton. Unfortunately it had lost a band off its left leg, thus we aren't able to say conclusively where the bird was banded (most likely the bird originated from the Capertee Valley). Interestingly though, we do know that the bird was banded at least 9 years ago, possibly up to 15 years ago! **Please – if you do find a RH, look closely at its legs and if banded, take note of colour / leg combinations of bands.** Call-recording done by Birds Australia (BA) officers has revealed that birds at Pelton have been using 'dialects' typical of those previously recorded in the Capertee Valley, although at least one RH has been talking like a Barraba bird – all very interesting!



Banded Regent Honeyeater at Pelton  
- Mick Roderick

BA and the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change are very interested in monitoring the movements of these birds in 2009. Both groups have recently conducted surveys in and around the known sites, along with other

areas of potential habitat. The results of these surveys show that there are still birds in the area, but they seem to be much more dispersed than earlier in the season.

With several winter-flowering eucalypts in flower at present, along with some spring-flowering trees just starting to blossom, it is possible that RHs may attempt breeding somewhere in the Lower Hunter. The last known time that RHs bred successfully in the Lower Hunter (near Kurri in late 2007), the species did not breed successfully at its other core-breeding sites. For a species with such a low population (estimated at between 500 and 1500 birds total) any breeding event that results in the recruitment of individuals into the wild is crucial to the long-term viability of the species. Aside from providing a good source of foraging habitat, it is possible that the Hunter forms an important alternative / supplementary breeding area to the traditional known breeding sites.

HBOC members are encouraged to report all sightings of RH to the relevant authorities. This can be done by contacting me (details below) or Dean Ingwersen (Project Officer with BA) on 1800 621 056. Members are also encouraged to search areas of suitable habitat for the species, despite the fact that the formal bi-annual surveys have finished. See me for ideas on where to look.

Phone: 0421 761237; email: [mickhbb@yahoo.com.au](mailto:mickhbb@yahoo.com.au)



Regent Honeyeater -  
Dean Ingwersen

## Twitching the Twitcher

Colin Goodenough

All observations that were published in the 2007 Annual Bird Report (the one you got last year) have been tallied quite obsessively to find out who had the most. To refresh your memory, an observer gets one point for one observation of one species at one location on one day. The place-getters are:

Place	Observer	Points
1st	Michael Kearns	2961
2nd	Jenny Musicka	2474
3rd	Judi Thomas	1193
4th	Ann Lindsey	1087
5th	Mike Newman	1082
6th	Tom Clarke	1057
7th	Max Maddock	1031
8th	Robert McDonald	939
9th	Penny Drake-Brockman	841
10th	Alan Stuart	682
11th	Sue Hamonet	472
12th	Harold Tarrant	450
13th	Grant Brosie, Alan Morris	369
15th	Don and Val Moon	273
16th	Lorna Mee	219
17th	Paul Baird	208
18th	Jack Adams	190
19th	David Geering	182
20th	Paddy Lightfoot	139

The next Bird Report (for 2008) will be out later this year. It is not too late to help your chances of making it into the top 20 for the 2009 Bird Report. Send or hand your observations of both common and rare species to Sue Hamonet, at Club Nights or by email: [ninox@exemail.com.au](mailto:ninox@exemail.com.au)

## OBSERVATIONS FROM CLUB NIGHTS JUNE/JULY 2009

*These reports are not authenticated records: researchers are advised to check with the observers before citing.*

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Australasian Gannet	30	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Australian Hobby	1	22/06/2009	New Lambton	A. Stuart
Australian Pelican	38	22/06/2009	Stockton Sandspit	G. Little
Azure Kingfisher	1	6/06/2009	Weston [Peace Park]	S. Roderick
Azure Kingfisher	1	30/06/2009	Narone Creek [Wollombi]	J. Greig
Azure Kingfisher	1	8/07/2009	Wollombi Brook [Laguna]	J. Greig
Bar-tailed Godwit	~300	22/06/2009	Stockton Sandspit	G. Little
Bar-tailed Godwit	19	24/06/2009	Mudbishops Point	A. Stuart
Bar-tailed Godwit	7	13/07/2009	Forster	A. Stuart
Beach Stone-curlew	1	24/06/2009	Mudbishops Point	A. Stuart
Beach Stone-curlew	1	25/06/2009	Harrington	A. Stuart
Black Swan	15	6/06/2009	Toronto	P. Durie
Black Swan	25+dy	5/07/2009	Pambalong N.R.	J. Nicholls
Black-browed Albatross	10+	31/05/2009	Off Nobbys	M. Roderick
Black-browed Albatross	3	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Black-chinned Honeyeater	2	29/05/2009	Werakata N.P.	S. Roderick
Black-shouldered Kite	3	5/07/2009	Tank Paddock	J. Nicholls
Black-winged Stilt	5	22/06/2009	Stockton Sandspit	G. Little
Blue-billed Duck	7	8/07/2009	Walka Water Works	J. Smart/P. Baird
Blue-faced Honeyeater	5	18/05/2009	Cessnock	C. Goodenough
Brahminy Kite	2	24/06/2009	Manning Point	A. Stuart
Brahminy Kite	1	24/06/2009	Crowdy Head	A. Stuart
Brahminy Kite	2	13/07/2009	Mudbishops Point	A. Stuart
Brown Skua	1	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Buff-banded Rail	1	27/05/2009	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough
Cape Petrel	3	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Caspian Tern	A	22/06/2009	Stockton Sandspit	G. Little
Caspian Tern	7	13/07/2009	Forster	A. Stuart
Common Greenshank	6	28/05/2009	Marks Point [oval]	C. Goodenough
Crescent Honeyeater	1	24/06/2009	Saltwater N.P.	A. Stuart
Crested Shrike-tit	6-20	27/05/2009	Doyles Creek	H. Tarrant
Diamond Firetail	9	27/05/2009	Doyles Creek	H. Tarrant
Double-banded Plover	66	13/07/2009	Mudbishops Point	A. Stuart
Eastern Osprey	2	20/05/2009	Cromarty Bay [Pt Stephens]	T. Clarke
Eastern Osprey	1	16/06/2009	Fern Bay	L. Crawford/C. Herbert
Eastern Osprey	1	6/07/2009	Teralba	L. Crawford
Eastern Reef Egret	1	2/06/2009	Newcastle Rock Platform	N. Livanos
Eastern Reef Egret	1	12/07/2009	Crowdy Head	A. Stuart
Fantail Cuckoo	2	5/07/2009	Tank Paddock	J. Nicholls
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Pr	3/06/2009	Werakata [Pelton]	L. Livanos
Gang-gang Cockatoo	4	7/06/2009	Ellalong	M. Roderick
Giant Petrel [spp]	4	31/05/2009	Off Nobbys	M. Roderick
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	4	9/06/2009	Near Gwandalan	S. Roderick
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	2	15/06/2009	Nelson Bay	D. Hatfield
Glossy Ibis	8	6/06/2009	Lenaghans Flat	S. Roderick
Glossy Ibis	9	5/07/2009	Lenaghans Swamp	J. Nicholls
Grey Goshawk	1	20/05/2009	Bulahdelah	N. McNaughton
Grey Goshawk	1	27/05/2009	Doyles Creek	H. Tarrant
Grey Goshawk	1	16/06/2009	Williamtown [Lavis Lane]	L. Crawford/C. Herbert
Grey Goshawk	1	19/06/2009	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Grey Goshawk	1	27/06/2009	Fern Bay	L. Crawford/C. Herbert
Grey Goshawk [white phase]	1	20/05/2009	Cromarty Bay [Pt Stephens]	T. Clarke
Grey-crowned Babbler	8	2/06/2009	Doyles Creek	T. Clarke
Gull-billed Tern	~20	22/06/2009	Stockton Sandspit	G. Little
Large-billed Scrubwren	2	24/06/2009	Saltwater National Park	A. Stuart
Little Black Cormorant	40	10/06/2009	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough
Little Lorikeet	100+	17/05/2009	Werakata S.C.A. [Pelton]	M. Roderick
Little Penguin	4	8/05/2009	Hawks Nest	M. Evans
Little Wattlebird	20+	6/06/2009	Morisset Pool	P. Durie
Mallard	6-20	May/June	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough
Musk Lorikeet	250-300	2-6/07/09	Eleebana [Stobbart Ck Reserve]	A. Gooden

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Northern Giant Petrel	2	31/05/2009	Off Nobbys	M. Roderick
Northern Giant Petrel	1	2/06/2009	Off Newcastle Baths	N. Livanos
Northern Mallard	6-20	June	Dora Creek	C. Goodenough
Pacific Baza	2	9/06/2009	Belmont	A. Ginn
Pacific Golden Plover	4	25/06/2009	Harrington	A. Stuart
Painted Button-quail	2	29/05/2009	Werakata N.P.	S. Roderick
Pied Butcherbird [albinistic]	1	10/07/2009	Birmingham Gardens	N. McNaughton
Pied Oystercatcher	12	12/07/2009	Harrington	A. Stuart
Pied Oystercatcher	15	13/07/2009	Forster	A. Stuart
Pink-eared Duck	7	19/06/2009	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Plumed Whistling-Duck	~200	13/06/2009	Doughboy Hollow	G. Newling
Powerful Owl	1	31/05/2009	Werakata [Pelton]	M. Roderick
Powerful Owl	1	9/06/2009	Near Gwandalan	S. Roderick
Red-kneed Dotterel	17	19/06/2009	Milhams Pond [Ash Is]	T. Clarke
Red-kneed Dotterel	16	22/06/2009	Milhams Pond [Ash Is]	T. Clarke
Red-necked Avocet	28	22/06/2009	Stockton Sandspit	G. Little
Regent Honeyeater	8	24/05/2009	Werakata S.C.A. [Pelton]	S. Roderick
Regent Honeyeater	1	30/05/2009	Werakata [Abermain]	M. Roderick
Regent Honeyeater	40	3/06/2009	Werakata [Pelton] peak count	M. Roderick
Regent Honeyeater	3	28/06/2009	Kearsley South	J. Greig
Restless Flycatcher	1	25/06/2009	Rutherford [Industrial estate]	M. McCarthy
Rose Robin	1	20/06/2009	Tank Paddock	M. Fisher/L. Huxtable
Rose Robin	1	24/06/2009	Narone Creek [Wollombi]	J. Greig
Rufous Whistler	1m	22/06/2009	City Farm [Ash Is]	T. Clarke
Sanderling	1	25/06/2009	Harrington	A. Stuart
Satin Bowerbird	1m	8/05/2009	Styx Creek, Kotara	M. Evans
Scarlet Robin	1	27/05/2009	Doyles Creek	H. Tarrant
Shy Albatross [cauta]	2	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Silver Gull	2	22/06/2009	Stockton Sandspit	G. Little
Solander's Petrel	15	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Sooty Oystercatcher	7	May/June	Merewether Beach	C. Goodenough
Southern Emu-wren	Pr	20/06/2009	Tank Paddock	M. Fisher/L. Huxtable
Southern Giant Petrel	1	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	2	30/04/2009	Martindale	H. Tarrant
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	2	27/05/2009	Martindale	H. Tarrant
Square-tailed Kite	1	6/06/2009	Farley	S. Roderick
Square-tailed Kite	1	12/07/2009	Crowdy Bay NP	A. Stuart
Straw-necked Ibis	45	13/06/2009	Doughboy Hollow	G. Newling
Straw-necked Ibis	500+	2/07/2009	Salt Ash	A. Stuart
Striated Thornbill	5	14/06/2009	Werakata [Abermain]	M. Roderick
Swift Parrot	16	17/05/2009	Werakata S.C.A. [Pelton]	M. Roderick
Swift Parrot	23	19/05/2009	Werakata S.C.A. [Pelton]	M. Roderick
Swift Parrot	25	27/05/2009	Werakata [Kearsley]	M. Roderick
Topknot Pigeon	1	8/07/2009	Mayfield	P. Chegwidan
Varied Triller	2	25/06/2009	Harrington Rainforest	A. Stuart
Wandering Albatross [gibsoni]	1	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
White-backed Swallow	1	7/07/2009	Scotts Flat [nr Singleton]	T. Clarke
White-breasted Woodswallow	20+	9/06/2009	Toronto	P. Durie
White-faced Storm Petrel	10	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
White-fronted Chat	4	29/06/2009	Milhams Pond [Ash Is]	T. Clarke
White-fronted Tern	4	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
White-fronted Tern	11	12/07/2009	Harrington	A. Stuart
White-fronted Tern	5	13/07/2009	Mudbishops Point	A. Stuart
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	15	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Yellow-nosed Albatross	15	7/07/2009	Off Port Stephens	M. Roderick/A. Stuart
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	12	8/05/2009	Winda Woppa	M. Evans
Zebra Finch	25	17/05/2009	Bolwarra	H. Tarrant

All observations offered at Club Nights are recorded in the Club's database and may be used in the Annual Bird Report. Your observations are welcome - uncommon birds are particularly interesting.

#### **Club Library**

HBOC has an excellent collection of books, CDs, DVDs and videos of birds, bird habitats and bird calls for members to borrow. Have a look at our library next Club Night and take something home with you!

## HBOC Activities - August to October 2009

DATE	EVENT	MEETING PLACE & TIME	CONTACT
<b>Wednesday 12 August</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b>	<b>7.30pm The Wetlands Centre</b>	<b>Speaker: Adam Blundell – Grass Owls in the Hunter</b>
Saturday 16 August	Stockton Sandspit Shorebird Roost Rehabilitation	8.00am Stockton Sandspit car park	Tom Clarke 4951 3872 <i>Juncus acutus</i> removal and birdwatching
Tuesday 18 August	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
Saturday 22 August	Hunter Wader Survey	9.00 am Ash Island 9.30 am Various locations as directed	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 - Ash Is Chris Herbert 4959 3663 - Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea
Sunday 23 August	Field Outing to Ellalong	8.00am Cessnock McDonalds	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Tuesday 1 September	Mid-Week Outing Tomago Area	8.00am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265
Wednesday 2 September	Management Committee Meeting	7.00pm – 10pm Garden Suburbs School	All members welcome
<b>Wednesday 9 September</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b>	<b>7.30pm The Wetlands Centre</b>	<b>Speaker: John Cockerell – Kangaroo Island</b>
Sunday 13 September	Stockton Sandspit Shorebird Roost Rehabilitation	8.00am Stockton Sandspit car park	Tom Clarke 4951 3872 Woody weeds removal and birdwatching
Mon/Tues/Wed 14–16 September	Mid-week Camp	Fossickers Tourist Park, Nundle	Margaret & Robert Stewart 4963 2029
Tuesday 15 September	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
Saturday 19 September	Hunter Wader Survey	8.00 am Ash Island 8.30 am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 - Ash Is Chris Herbert 4959 3663 - Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea
Sunday 20 September	Field Outing to Awabakal Nature Reserve	7.30am The end of Ocean Street, Dudley	David and Chris Eastham 4944 7958
Saturday 26 September	Birdwatch at Bengalla Mine	8.00am Keys Bridge, Bengalla Road, Muswellbrook	Rowley Smith 4964 1389
Saturday - Monday 3 - 5 October	Camp at Denman	Private property, “Limb of Addy”	Robert McDonald 0408 877 827
Tuesday 6 October	Midweek outing: Kilaben Bay	7.30 am western end of Kilaben Road	Garth Cooksey 4954 9620
Wednesday 7 October	Management Committee Meeting	7.00pm – 10pm Garden Suburbs School	All members welcome
Saturday 10 October	Wader Identification Workshop	9.00am The Wetlands Centre, off Sandgate Rd, Shortland	Liz Crawford 4959 3663 In conjunction with Shorebirds 2020
<b>Wednesday 14 October</b>	<b>Club Meeting</b>	<b>7.30pm The Wetlands Centre</b>	<b>Speaker: Mike Newman - Australian Pied Oystercatchers in South-east Tasmania – A Most Ingenious Species</b>
Saturday 17 October	Hunter Wader Survey	7.30 am Ash Island 8.00 am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 - Ash Is Chris Herbert 4959 3663 - Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 - Swansea
Tuesday 20 October	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 <b>Please ring to confirm</b>
Sunday 25 October	Field Outing: Hawks Nest	8.00am Tea Gardens Hotel	Tom Clarke 4951 3872
Saturday - Sunday 31 October – 1 November	TWITCHATHON Join a team & help raise money for Birds Australia	4.00pm Sat to 4.00pm Sun for a BBQ at Hunter Wetlands Centre (\$4.50 entry)	Mick Roderick 0421 761 237