



Hunter Bird Observers Club

Affiliated with Bird Observation and Conservation Australia

NEWSLETTER

Issue 4/11
August 2011 - September 2011

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

Flagged Shorebirds

It will soon be southward migration time again and this year there are some very special Red Knots out there. Pavel Tomkovich, a Russian shorebird expert, has been in Siberia all summer working on Red Knots and has banded quite a few. He has used the light green Chukotka flag and a three-letter engraved flag. Some birds also have data loggers, so naturally we are very interested in any observations of these birds. If you are out and about in estuarine and coastal areas this year can you please make a special effort to look for these flagged Red Knots. Some data-logged birds only have the pale green flag and not an engraved one. All the engraved flags have 3 letters but the first two are CK.



If you see any of these or any New Zealand birds (with white engraved flags) can you please let Adrian Riegen in New Zealand know by email: riegen@xtra.co.nz and also inform the Australasian Wader Study Group by emailing: mintons@ozemail.com.au

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chrisliz@internode.on.net
Deadline for the next edition - 30 Sept 2011

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President's Column

It certainly appears that spring is approaching as the wattle is beginning to bloom, the Magpies have been gathering nesting material (including from the mat at the back door!), several pairs of Wood-duck are presently parading across the grass and the local Grey-crowned Babblers are investigating the tree where they set up home last year. Excitement too is rising in anticipation of the great birding that awaits us, especially the expected return of the migratory shorebirds to the Hunter.

Speaking of shorebirds, Tom Clarke, the Club's Project Coordinator, reports that the project to remove mangroves from Milham Pond on Ash Island is all but complete and that volunteer effort in that area will be reduced. The next visit to this area will be to install the MPEDs (Mangrove Propagule Exclusion Devices) designed to catch this season's influx of mangrove seeds and hence reduce the chances of mangroves re-establishing in the cleared areas. The restoration of this prime shorebird habitat has been a huge effort, an effort already showing dividends with encouraging signs of increased usage of the area by foraging birds. The Club is indeed indebted to all the volunteers involved and especially to Tom for driving this project; they are all deserving of our congratulations for their determination and dedication in bringing this very practical, hands-on project to fruition for the benefit of the birds and the community.

From an administrative perspective there is an identified need for us to better manage the way in which the Club exercises its duty of care to protect the health and safety of members. Although many aspects are covered at outings, camps and surveys this procedure is generally of an informal nature and there is a need for a more systematic, accountable approach to this issue. To this end, a "small group" of members is currently working to draft a user-friendly system to better ensure that we maintain a caring and safe environment for all members attending club outings. Any draft produced will be evaluated and amended in response to feedback from members before it is fully implemented.

There are many activities coming up over the next few months and it is also the time of year to start thinking about potential activities for the coming year. There have already been several suggestions of outings for next year and you are encouraged to let a committee member know, as soon as possible, of any ideas that you may have for camps, outings, guest speakers or Bird of the Evening presentations. This will greatly assist the Committee to meet members' needs by planning a varied, interesting and balanced calendar of events for 2012.

Enjoy the spring, and good birding.

Paul Baird

New Members

The Club extends a warm welcome to:

Shea Brunt of Bobs Farm
Paul Freeman of Woronora
Wendy Hall & family of New Lambton Heights
Rod and Karen Howie of Floraville
Robin Hundt of Fassifern

We hope to meet you at Club outings and meetings

HBOC's new logo, on the front page, has been designed by HBOC member Rob Kyte of Designbridge graphic design consultants, using an image of the Golden Whistler kindly provided by Wayne Taylor of mitconphotographics.com

HBOC Committee for 2011

President	Paul Baird 4938 5039
Vice President	Mick Roderick 0421 761 237
Secretary	Rob Kyte 4961 6211
Treasurer	Joy Nicholls 4957 3612
Committee Members:	Hayley Boyce 0421 175 922 Robert McDonald 0408 877 827 Lorna Mee 4988 6579 Kristy Peters 0438 328 049 Allan Richardson 4977 2508 Dan Williams 0408 023 262
Conservation Coordinator:	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008
Membership Secretary:	Ian Martin 4943 9256
Records Officer:	Sue Hamonet 4958 1023

Club Outing Reports

Hunter Region Botanic Gardens

Tuesday 3 May 2011

The Tuesday group's outing for May was held at the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens, Heatherbrae. Sunny and windless, the day was ideal for birding and as often happens, various groups went different ways. Twenty-four members attended and between us we finished with 35 species sighted and 2 heard. These included 30 Variegated Fairy-wren, 10 Superb Fairy-wren, 20 Red-browed Finch and 8 Scarlet Honeyeater. Mosquito sightings, however, were just under the 5000 mark. Despite this hazard it was a pleasant and enjoyable outing.

Keith Woods

Morpeth and Butterwick

Tuesday 7 June 2011

Twenty-two people met at the Morpeth Cemetery and observed the birds on the nearby lagoon and sewage treatment works. We saw many Black Swans – some with cygnets, others on nests – also Cattle and Intermediate Egrets, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Hardhead, Pacific Black Duck, Chestnut Teal, Australasian Grebe, Australian Wood Duck, Australian Pelican, Welcome Swallow, Eastern Rosella, Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Galah, Pied Butcherbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Australasian Figbird, Little Pied Cormorant and Australasian Darter. A total of 45 species.

After morning tea, which we had at the Morpeth Common, Ray McLean took us to Butterwick Reserve, where we walked the fire-trail and around the nearby Equestrian Centre – this was a new area for the Mid-week Group. A total of 26 species was seen which included Yellow, Striated and Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantail, Eastern Yellow Robin, Superb Fairy-wren, Red-browed Finch, Mistletoebird, Silvereeye, Golden Whistler, Jacky Winter and two Wedge-tailed Eagles.

Thanks Ray for getting permission for us to visit these sites and for organizing maps and keys. Overall, a grand total of 66 different species was seen.

Val Moon

Kitchener

Tuesday 2 August 2011

There was a real touch of spring in the air when 22 members of HBOC ventured onto the Kearsley Fire Trail and we were not disappointed. On the trail and at the nearby Heritage Park in Kitchener we saw a total of 64 species with another 3 heard. The numbers were boosted by 5 duck species on the adjacent farm dams and a Black Swan, Australasian Grebe and 3 cormorant species on the old pit dam in the park.

The undoubted highlight was the constant presence of 12 Gang-gang Cockatoos, at least one of which was a fledged young being fed. Other observations of note were: one Scarlet Robin (nearly always present on Kearsley Fire Trail, just beyond the top of the home paddock), 15 Spotted Pardalote (at least one nest building), a good selection of honeyeaters, including over 20 Yellow-tufted, 6 White-cheeked, 10 Brown-headed, 3 White-naped and 3 Striped. We noted plenty of buds on the eucalypts and were pretty sure that the birding on this site will be even better in two or three weeks time.

As is usual with the mid-week group there was plenty of conversation, both ornithological and otherwise. Our next outing will be to Blue Gum Hills Regional Park at Minmi on Tuesday 6 September, meeting at 8 am in the carpark off Minmi Road. This will be followed by our mid-week camp at Seal Rocks on 19, 20, 21 September.

Robert Stewart

Myall View Camp

11-13 June 2011

This camp turned out to be on another uncomfortable June Long Weekend but despite that 5 crazy birdos made the journey to *Myall View*. Plenty of rain and boggy slippery ground proved too much in the end and we abandoned the place before midday on the Sunday.

We did get to see at least 35 species including a couple of Pale Yellow Robin and some Glossy Black-Cockatoo and we heard Powerful Owl at night.

What a shame for poor Rowley who laboured long and hard in preparing a toilet (one of his best) only to fill it in again with hardly a deposit being made.

Tom Clarke

Club Outing Reports continued

Kitchener and Quorrobolong Sunday 19 June 2011

Winter birding can be a bit of a struggle as many birds move north for the cooler months and nectarivorous birds follow flowering gums and other food sources. So we were pleasantly surprised to find a good variety of birds on our winter outing to Kitchener and Quorrobolong. Heritage Park at Kitchener has several red-flowering Mugga Ironbarks (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) which provided a good winter food source for a small collection of Yellow-tufted, Brown-headed, Yellow-faced, White-naped, Scarlet and Striped Honeyeaters. The bush surrounding the old pit dam at this park has a variety of habitats which revealed Red-browed Finch, Yellow Thornbill, White-browed Scrubwren, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler and Eastern Whipbird. Some members glimpsed an Azure Kingfisher on the margins of the dam, while Dusky Moorhen, Pacific Black Duck and Australasian Grebe foraged on the water.

We moved to *Iomar*, a private property off Quorrobolong Road, for morning tea. The owners have entered into a voluntary conservation agreement with the Department of Conservation and Climate Change to conserve a stand of beautiful valley-floor forest on this property. It is floristically diverse and important bird habitat. Regent Honeyeaters have been known to breed here and are often recorded when appropriate food sources are available – unfortunately we didn't find any this time, but we did enjoy walking through the forest and seeing Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Little Lorikeet, Grey Shrike-thrush, Jacky Winter and Crimson Rosella among others.

Nineteen members, including four first-timers, shared the joy of discovery and being in the great outdoors on this fine morning, with a total of 41 species at Kitchener and 27 species at *Iomar*.

Liz Crawford

HBOC Camera Twitch Sat/Sun 16/17 July 2011

In all 10 competitors took up the challenge of photographing as many bird species as they could over an 8 hour time frame. Unfortunately the weather wasn't the best, but there were just enough breaks in the rain to get out and have a go.

The winner with a very respectable 120 species, is Hunter birder Robert McDonald.

Second place goes to our youngest and only competitor from outside the Hunter, Aiden Webb. Aiden photographed a respectable total of 91 species, including an Australasian Bittern in flight!

Third place with a total of 78 species goes to Penny Williams and the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists who used a team of three for spotting species to photograph.

Congratulations to the winners and to everyone who competed. I am interested to know people's feelings on the event and to find out if further events should be held.

Thank you again and happy bird photo-ing :)

Darryl Luck

New Members Field Day Outing Sunday 24 July 2011

The annual HBOC New Members Day was held on Sunday 24 July at the Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland. The outing was well attended with approximately 25 new and long-term members of all ages getting together to share a morning of birdwatching and a delicious barbeque lunch. Thankfully, the rainy conditions experienced all week prior cleared to a warm, blue sky winter's day.

Our party split into smaller groups to complete a circuit of the main ponds and adjoining bushland. A total of 65 species was observed including a good variety of waterbirds - resident Magpie Geese, Black Swans with cygnets, Wandering Whistling-Ducks, Hardheads, Australasian Grebes, White-faced Herons, Pacific Black Ducks, an Australasian Darter, Australian White Ibis, Purple Swampheens and Dusky Moorhens. Bushbirds observed included a Spangled Drongo, Golden Whistler, White-browed Scrubwren, Red-browed Finch, Yellow Thornbill and nine honeyeater species. A Red-bellied Black-snake was also an unexpected sighting, given the time of year, soaking up the sun along one of the tracks.

Thank you to our President, Paul Baird for coordinating the day, to Rowley Smith for his prowess on the barbeque and to all who contributed salads and sweets. It was great to meet some of our newest members and we hope to see you at upcoming Club nights and field outings.

Kristy Peters

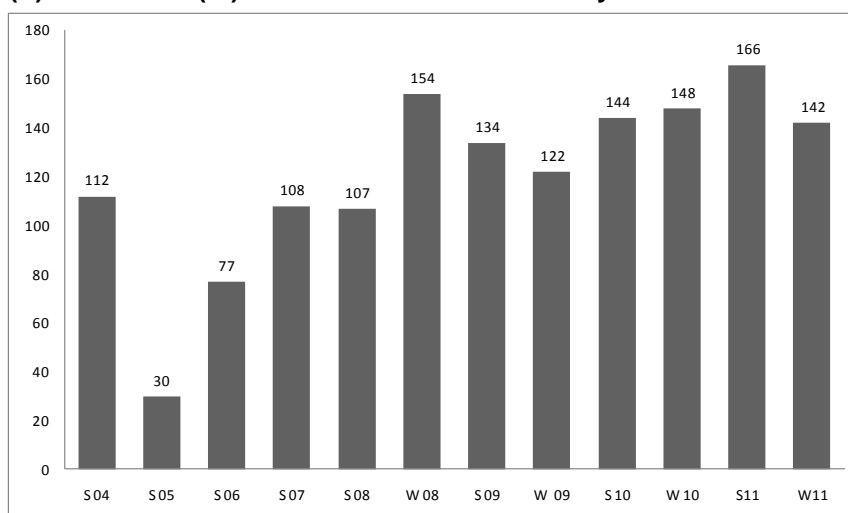
Port Stephens Waterbirds Survey Monday 18 July 2011

Once again the annual winter survey of Port Stephens has generated very interesting information that helps build our knowledge about the importance of Port Stephens for waterbirds. The annual surveys are boat based, with 14 observers covering six sub-sections of the Port, and are achieved with the vital assistance of Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (National Parks and Wildlife Service) and the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park Authority. The main focus is shorebirds but all waterbirds are recorded.

The weather in the days immediately before the July 18 survey was rather dismal, and it became dismal again in the days following. However, somebody must love us as on the survey day itself we had glorious conditions of blue skies and sunshine, and no wind.

One of the key questions ahead of each Port Stephens surveys is – how many Pied Oystercatchers will we find? Since the surveys first began in 2004, we have recorded 100+ oystercatchers in the majority of the summer and winter surveys. In this July's survey, the early results seemed a bit disappointing – only 54 birds were found in the first five of the sectors completed. Then, the Delta sector team finally reported in (their start was delayed, hence they were late finishing) with the news that they had found 88 Pied Oystercatchers in their sector! So, 142 birds in total were in Port Stephens on July 18. It is very clear that Port Stephens is a crucial location for this species which is classified as Endangered in NSW (the NSW population is perhaps 500 birds nowadays).

Summer (S) and Winter (W) counts of Australian Pied Oystercatcher in Port Stephens



Usually there are good numbers of over-wintering Bar-tailed Godwits in Port Stephens. This year we found 227 of them – a good total, but considerably down on the 3 previous winter surveys when we have recorded 300-400+ birds. There were modest numbers of Eastern Curlews and Whimbrels, as in other winters, plus some Grey-tailed Tattlers and Double-banded Plovers (which, surprisingly, we have not recorded before in a winter survey, although the team that surveys at Gir-um-bit National Park sometimes finds some there). But undoubtedly the highlight was the pair of Beach Stone-curlews on Dowardee Island. These birds have been present on Dowardee Island for a couple of months now but it was great to get them “officially” during a survey. Fingers crossed that they breed there – it will be a first for Port Stephens if it happens.

In all, 11 shorebird species and 18 other waterbird species were recorded in this latest survey, and 1,812 individual birds in total. These summer and winter surveys are helping to build knowledge about the importance of Port Stephens for these species, and ultimately this will allow the best management plans to be put in place for them.

Alan Stuart

A Little History Lesson

In my recent clean-up, I discovered a tattered, foxed copy of Gould League Notes from 1936. It contains a snapshot of the love for birds people held in those days.

The Gould League of Bird Lovers of New South Wales was founded in Wellington on the 22nd October 1910 by Messrs Webster and Finigan and in 1935 a memorial tablet was affixed to an elm tree in Wellington to celebrate the 25th anniversary. I am wondering if it is still there. The Gould League's mission was to disseminate bird lore among school children and its success was in good measure due to the enthusiasm of interested teachers. I am sure that, those of us old enough, remember the pretty badges depicting various birds. I still have mine somewhere or other. Over the years the Gould League lost its momentum and it was finally wound up last year, I believe.

The 1936 Notes contain drawings, photographs and various articles and announcements. The late prominent Australian ornithologist, Keith Hindwood, contributed notes on and keys to the identification of three species of red-breasted robins with a full page colour reproduction of Neville Cayley's painting of Red-capped, Scarlet and Flame Robins. Roger Tory Peterson of British field guide fame wrote an article on Bird-Study for Schools which included a section on "**Etiquette of the Woods**" and I cannot resist the temptation to repeat it here:

"When a bird's nest is discovered, do not unduly disturb it. The child who finds the nest should be the self-appointed guardian. Too frequent visits to a nest on the ground are apt to draw the attention of predatory animals.

"Do not yell in the woods. Noise there is a desecration; as about 75 per cent. of birding

is done by ear, it is necessary that there be silence.

"When a leader pauses, everybody should stop immediately. If they continue walking or talking, a suspicious sound or movement might be lost."

Please take note of these words, 21st century birdwatchers! They still apply!

There were endless competitions – poetry, song, photography and essay writing. The latter encouraged the detailed study of avian habits. Topics included:

- The most useful bird of my district which would be judged on the amount of evidence of usefulness;
- The habits of an Australian native bird based on dated personal observations from the egg to the adult stage;
- The parrots of my district;
- Six birds observed in our playground;
- Native birds observed in cities;
- Best original drawing from life of the beaks of at least six Australian native birds (not to be drawn from books);
- Best original drawing from life.

The focus of activities seems so different from our current efforts and yet some have survived the passage of time. For instance, there are articles on food plants for birds, reports on bird outings, stories about personal avian encounters and homely tales, descriptions of nests and young and the inevitable bird list for the day.

Ann Lindsey

Awabakal Wildflower Walk

Awabakal Nature Reserve - Meet in the car park at the far end of Ocean Street, Dudley

Sunday 4 September 2011 anytime between 10.00am and 3.00pm

Join us in a day of nature-based activities to celebrate our 10th Anniversary Walk. Guided tours and activities with botanical experts, nature photographers, ecologists and National Parks Discovery Rangers. Enjoy a slow guided walk through the spring wildflowers of the coastal heath against the backdrop of the Pacific Ocean.

All members of the public, all ages welcome. Easy walking along sandy tracks. Bring a hat, a camera and something to drink.

Organised by the National Parks Association (Hunter Branch). For more information phone:
John Simpson 0400 882 897
Maree McCarthy 0410 405 815
Greg Giles 4961 1105 (A.H.)

Not So Eagle-Eyed

New Study Reveals Why Birds Collide with Human-Made Objects

ScienceDaily (17 March 2011): From office block windows to power lines and wind turbines, many species of bird are prone to colliding with large human-made objects, many of which appear difficult not to notice to human eyes. The problem of bird collisions is a serious concern for conservationists. Research suggests that bird mortality caused by collisions with human artifacts is the largest unintended human cause of avian fatalities worldwide.

Collisions with large and prominent obstacles may even threaten the survival of endangered species. In Europe over a 16-year period it was estimated that approximately 25% of juvenile and 6% of adult White Storks *Ciconia ciconia* died annually from power line collisions and electrocutions.

A new study recently published in *IBIS* outlines a new approach to understanding how birds see the world and why they find pylons and turbines so hard to avoid.

“From a human perspective it appears very odd that birds so often collide with large objects as if they don’t see them. It is widely held that flight in birds is primarily controlled by vision, an idea captured by the phrase ‘a bird is a wing guided by an eye’,” said Professor Graham Martin from Birmingham University. “However, birds live in a different visual world to humans.”

To get a clearer understanding of how birds view the world Professor Martin turned to sensory ecology, a field of study which investigates how sensory information underlies an animal’s behavior and its interactions with the environment.

“Previously most proposed solutions to bird collisions only considered a human perspective of the problem,” said Martin. “Put simply, it has been a matter of finding a solution to bird collision problems based upon making the perceived hazard more conspicuous to human observers, not birds.”

The research reveals that a subtle set of interrelationships exists between a bird’s visual capacities, the interpretation

of sensory information and the behavior of birds when flying in open airspace.

“When in flight, birds may turn their heads to look down, either with the binocular field or with the lateral part of an eye’s visual field,” said Martin. “Such behavior results in certain species being at least temporarily blind in the direction of travel.”

Dr Martin also explores how avian frontal vision is tuned for the detection of movement, rather than spatial detail. When a bird is hunting this detection may be more important than simply looking ahead into open airspace. Birds also have a restricted range of flight speeds. For many birds it is simply impossible for them to fly slowly, making it difficult to adjust the rate of information they gain if visibility is reduced by rain, mist or low-level lights.

“Armed with this understanding of bird perception we can better consider solutions to the problem of collisions,” said Martin. “While solutions may have to be considered on a species by species basis, where collision incidents are high it may be more effective to divert or distract birds from their flight path rather than attempt to make the hazard more conspicuous.”

It may also be best to assume that birds are more likely to be looking down and laterally rather than forwards, meaning a signal placed on an obstacle may also be missed. Instead alerting sounds or signals placed a suitable distance from the hazard may be more efficient.

“The human viewpoint provides just one way of appreciating and understanding the world. Yet such is the difference between human and birds-eye views that a human perspective on the problem of bird collisions is quite misleading,” concluded Martin. “The evidence outlined in this study explains why some species are more vulnerable to collisions with obstacles than others, and helps to inform the development of guidelines for reducing collisions.”

Downloaded from Science Daily website: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/03/110316222022.htm>

Editor’s Note: Observations of dead and injured birds in the vicinity of power lines on Ash Island have been collated by Ann Lindsey and brought to the attention of the Environmental Officer for EnergyAustralia. The company plans to retrofit bird-deflection devices to accessible power lines on Ash Island that are considered at most risk of causing bird fatalities and injuries.

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 either to receive 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.

June

The month began with a cryptic message to the hunterbirding masses. It read “Where am I? In the one spot we saw cinnamon quail-thrush, orange chats, yellow chats and chirruping wedgebills. Not far away we saw numerous silver gulls, black-winged stilts, red-necked avocets and one black-banded stilt. Currently I am sitting in my car, near my tent and I am sending this from my laptop but I am 300km from any town.” Well, a challenge is rarely ignored on hunterbirding and so the fingertips were sent into overdrive. Guesses included Sturt NP, the Birdsville and Stryzlecki Tracks, Coongie Lakes, Lake Eyre, the corner country oil fields and Pandiburra Bore. The answer, for those that are interested, was “Strangways Spring just off the Oodnadatta Track, west of where it meets South Lake Eyre”. Not a serious discussion (or Hunter Region related either), but good fun nonetheless!

A question was raised as to the status of Spangled Drongo in the Hunter, to which several responses were provided. The species is a breeding resident from the Clarence Valley northwards. During late summer / early autumn part of the population moves southwards, as far afield as the South Coast. The majority of birds return northwards in September, with a few hanging on a bit later. In the Hunter Region they are moderately often recorded in the east of the Region over April-October as counts of 1-5 birds. During their stay they prefer littoral rainforest, Coastal Banksia Scrubs and flowering Swamp Mahogany/Forest Red Gum.

July

July heralded the inaugural HBOC camera twitch, which was publicised and reported on through hunterbirding. The event was all about having fun and photographing as many birds as you could in an eight-hour period of the designated weekend. The photos did not have to be of good quality, but the birds had to be identifiable in the photo. All up ten competitors had a crack, despite the unfavourable weather. The winning entrant clicked up an impressive 120 species and highlights of the event included someone snapping an Aussie Bittern in flight! Hopefully the event will gather more interest next year and be an even bigger success than it seems to have been this year – it certainly sounded like a good time was had by all.

The status of Common Blackbird was under discussion this month. From the responses provided it seems that the species is generally localised in the Region. The stronghold is the Cessnock to Maitland area, with other frequented locations including the towns along the New England Highway. The limit of their known range in the area appears to be around Gloucester.

A Prion species, thought to be Slender-billed, caused quite a stir on hunterbirding when it was taken into care from a playground in Medowie. The Prion species can be difficult to tell apart. Contributors to the discussion noted that the best way to tell them apart in the field is the amount of black in the tail and the size of the white eye stripe. In the hand it often comes down to measurements, particularly of the bill. Unfortunately the bird died after two days in captivity.

The end of the month saw the return of Pink-eared Duck to the Hunter. The species has largely been absent from the region for the last 19 months, following the inland rains and it is good to hear of their reappearance (in Morpeth at least!). As was the case last year, discussions on hunterbirding were restricted during the winter months. Clearly the subscribing population goes into hibernation, returning to the bush and keyboard come the arrival of spring. Of course, the salt continued to be rubbed into my wounds with a smorgasbord of Black-necked Stork sightings!

Dan Williams

WetlandCare Australia secures two year, Lower Hunter Wetlands Corridor: Shorebird Protection Program

The Lower Hunter Wetlands corridor is internationally recognised as the most significant site for migratory shorebirds in NSW. They use the complex mosaic of roosting and feeding habitats provided across these wetlands. Of the migratory shorebirds present at the Lower Hunter Wetlands Corridor, 38 of the 66 migratory species are listed under the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) and the China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA). These international migratory bird treaties play an important role in international efforts to conserve migratory birds of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway.

Unfortunately for these birds, their annual arrival is met with a high density of feral predators which take easy advantage of ground dwelling species. Further to this, the habitats that are critical for these species are being continually degraded and often lost.

Considerable work by a range of community organisations and government agencies is being undertaken across the Hunter estuary to protect migratory shorebirds. WetlandCare Australia is pleased to be able to complement this work with additional resources that will support local stakeholders in implementing threat abatement and community based monitoring. Initial project tasks will be focussed on bringing together landholders, agencies and community organisations to refine *what* are the highest priority actions for shorebird habitat management and *where* the resources in this project can best be directed to achieve the greatest biodiversity outcomes.

The Shorebird Protection Project which is funded by NSW Environmental Trust is part of WetlandCare Australia's *Australian Wetland Biodiversity Program* and delivers on its objectives to promote, protect and restore our unique wetland flora, fauna and aquatic ecosystems.



The Bar-tailed Godwit; listed as an internationally recognised migratory shorebird.
Photograph by Adam Gosling, WetlandCare Australia.

For more information please contact Josh Keating, Program Leader at WetlandCare Australia's Coffs Harbour office on (02) 6652 5589 or email joshkeating@wetlandcare.com.au.

Source: <http://www.wetlandcare.com.au/index.php/our-work/current-projects/shorebird-protection-program/>

Access to Ash Island

Easy car access to the ponds on Ash Island has been impossible since the bridge on Ramsar Road over Dead Mangrove Creek subsided during Hunter Water's construction of a water main upgrade across the Island in 2010. The bridge was removed to allow unobstructed flows through the creek whilst a restoration method was decided. Although Hunter Water informed HBOC that the bridge would be reinstated by mid-July 2011 (subject to wet weather), weather conditions have delayed the restoration which is now expected to be completed during August (again, subject to weather conditions). Watch this space!!

Club Night Observations June - July 2011

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 Grebe	1	18/6/11	Throsby Creek	T. Clarke
Australian Hobby	2	7/1/11	Five Islands [Teralba]	M. Blythe
Australian King-Parrot	1f	Jun/Jul	Speers Point [garden]	S. Hamonet
Australian White Ibis	97	25/6/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Australian White Ibis	220 br	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Azure Kingfisher	1	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Bassian Thrush	1	20/3/11	Gap Creek, Watagans	M. Blythe
Bassian Thrush	1	1/6/11	Carey Bay	K. Wroe
Black Falcon	2	25/4/11	Bureen/Martindale	H. Tarrant
Black Falcon	2	20/6/11	Raymond Terrace	M. Newman
Black Kite	1	27/6/11	near Brandy Hill Drive	M. Newman
Black-necked Stork	1	19/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre [Reed Marsh]	P. Lightfoot
Blue-faced Honeyeater	2	20/5/11	Maryville	T. Clarke
Blue-faced Honeyeater	2	26/6/11	Fassifern	R. Hundt
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	3	5/6/11	New Lambton Heights	P. Lightfoot
Brown Falcon	3	25/4/11	Bureen/Martindale	H. Tarrant
Brown Falcon	1	25/4/11	Medhurst Bridge, Martindale	H. Tarrant
Brown Goshawk	1	9/7/11	Wingen	G. Newling
Brown Goshawk	1	23/6/11	Throsby Creek	T. Clarke
Brown Quail	5	12/2/11	Belmont Lagoon	M. Blythe
Brown Quail	15+	11/7/11	Floraville Quarry	R. & K. Howie
Brown Treecreeper	1	29/5/11	Jones Reserve Rd (west of Jerrys Plains)	H. Tarrant
Buff-banded Rail	1	27/5/11	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough
Buff-banded Rail	1	15/6/11	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough
Buff-banded Rail	1	13/7/11	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough
Button-quail sp.	3	6/4/11	Kotara Quarry	J. Nicholls
Cape Barren Goose	1	June	Newcastle South Beach	J. Thomas
Chestnut Teal	24	25/6/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Chestnut Teal	124	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Common Blackbird	2	6/6/11	Wallsend Nursery	J. Nicholls
Diamond Firetail	2	29/5/11	Jones Reserve Rd (west of Jerrys Plains)	H. Tarrant
Double-barred Finch	~40	8/7/11	Wingen	G. Newling
Dusky Moorhen	143	25/6/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Dusky Moorhen	85	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Eastern Osprey	2	22/4/11	Tea Gardens	M. Blythe
Eastern Osprey	1	8/7/11	Throsby Creek	T. Clarke
Eastern Osprey	1	13/7/11	Corlette Point, Port Stephens	T. Clarke
Eastern Osprey	1	12/6/11	Throsby Creek	T. Clarke
Eastern Osprey	1	9/6/11	Wanda Head	T. Clarke
Eastern Reef Egret	1	June	Rock Shelf, Merewether	J. Thomas
Eastern Reef Egret	1	29/6/11	Glenrock Lagoon	T. Clarke
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	2	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Flame Robin	2	11/5/11	Watchimbark National Park	T. Clarke
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	4	11/5/11	Watchimbark National Park	T. Clarke
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	4	20/4/11	Craigmore	M. Blythe
Glossy Ibis	2	26/6/11	Morpeth Sewage Treatment Works	M. Newman
Grey Goshawk	1	1/7/11	Burwood Beach	T. Clarke
Grey Goshawk	2	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Grey Teal	49	25/6/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Grey Teal	64	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Grey-tailed Tattler	5	9/6/11	Wanda Head	T. Clarke
Hardhead	12	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Hoary-headed Grebe	30-40	12/6/11	Grahamstown Dam	D. Luck

Club Night Observations June - July 2011 continued

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Intermediate Egret	2	26/6/11	Morpeth Sewage Treatment Works	M. Newman
Little Black Cormorant	40	29/5/11	Warners Bay	C. & R. Goodenough
Little Corella	~200	21/5/11	Fennell Bay	C. & R. Goodenough
Little Corella	30	13/7/11	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough
Little Friarbird	3	28/1/11	Nelson Bay	M. Blythe
Little Penguin	1	20/5/11	Glenrock Nature Reserve	T. Clarke
Nankeen Kestrel	1	25/4/11	Bureen/Martindale	H. Tarrant
Olive-backed Oriole	1	5/6/11	New Lambton Heights	P. Lightfoot
Pacific Baza	1	11/7/11	Floraville Quarry	R. & K. Howie
Pacific Baza	1	9/7/11	Hunter Botanic Gardens	K. Thumm
Pacific Baza	1	3-8/7/11	Speers Point [garden]	S. Hamonet
Pacific Baza	1	30/6/11	Fishing Point [garden]	M. Hamonet
Pacific Black Duck	12	25/6/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Pacific Black Duck	190	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Pheasant Coucal	1	31/5/11	Yango Creek Road, Wollombi	D. Raine
Pied Oystercatcher	3	5/6/11	Harrington	H. Tarrant
Plumed Whistling-Duck	~130	13/7/11	Doughboy Hollow (near Singleton)	G. Newling
Purple Swamphen	45	16/7/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Rainbow Lorikeet	nest+y	1/6/11	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough
Red-browed Finch	60	20/4/11	Craigmore	M. Blythe
Red-browed Finch	~60	8/7/11	Wingen	G. Newling
Red-capped Robin	1	29/5/11	Jones Reserve Rd (west of Jerrys Plains)	H. Tarrant
Red-rumped Parrot	26	13/7/11	Williamstown	D. Luck
Regent Bowerbird	1m+2f	5/6/11	New Lambton Heights	P. Lightfoot
Rose Robin	1m	6/7/11	Dark Creek [near John Hunter Hospital]	T. Clarke
Royal Spoonbill	23	23/5/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Sacred Kingfisher	1	10&27/6/11	Woodville	M. Newman
Satin Bowerbird	1m +3	5/6/11	New Lambton Heights	P. Lightfoot
Scarlet Robin	1f	9/7/11	Hunter Botanic Gardens	K. Thumm
Sooty Oystercatcher	15	1/6/11	Stockton	J. & T. Iveson
Sooty Oystercatcher	3	5/6/11	Harrington	H. Tarrant
Spangled Drongo	1	22/5/11	Maryville	T. Clarke
Spangled Drongo	2	25/6/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Speckled Warbler	some	29/5/11	Jones Reserve Rd (west of Jerrys Plains)	H. Tarrant
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	2	25/4/11	Medhurst Bridge	H. Tarrant
Spotted Quail-thrush	1	31/5/11	Mt Sugarloaf Nature Reserve	C. & R. Goodenough
Striated Heron	1	18/6/11	Throsby Creek	T. Clarke
Tawny Grassbird	5	25/6/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
Topknot Pigeon	1	1/7/11	Galgabba Point	R. & K. Howie
Varied Triller	3	5/6/11	Harrington	H. Tarrant
Wandering Albatross	1	June	offshore Merewether	J. Thomas
Wandering Whistling-Duck	101	23/5/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	21/6/11	Hunter Wetlands Centre	P. Lightfoot
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	1	31/5/11	Yango Creek Road, Wollombi	D. Raine
White-browed Scrubwren	1	3/6/11	Tighes Hill	T. Clarke
White-fronted Tern	1	June	Nobbys Beach	J. Thomas
White-headed Pigeon	12+1juv	4/6/11	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough
White-headed Pigeon	7	30/6/11	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough
White-headed Pigeon	13	13/7/11	Dora Creek	C. & R. Goodenough
White-headed Pigeon	2	3/7/11	Kotara [garden]	J. Nicholls
Wonga Pigeon	1	19/4/11	Craigmore	M. Blythe
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	6	June	Salt Ash	R. Thompson

Note: br = breeding f = female m = male juv = juvenile y = young

HBOC Activities August to October 2011

AUGUST

Wednesday 10 August	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Rod Kavanagh – The Powerful Owl Project Bird of the Evening: Grant Brosie
Saturday 13 August	Hunter Wader Survey	7.30 am Ash Island 8.00 am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 – Ash Island Chris Herbert 4959 3663 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton
Saturday/ Sunday 13/14 August	Birdcalls of the Hunter Workshop	Sat: 1.00pm – 5.00pm Hunter Wetlands Centre Sun: 7.30am Awabakal Nature Reserve	Presented by Fred van Gessel Bookings essential –Paul Baird 4938 5039
Tuesday 16 August	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 Please ring to confirm
Sunday 21 August	Field Outing to <i>Bush Haven</i> and Wallaroo State Forest	9.00am 393 Italia Rd, East Seaham	Lorna Mee 4988 6579

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 6 September	Mid-Week Outing – Minmi, Bluegum Regional Park	8.00am Car park off Minmi Road	Robert Stewart 4963 2029
Wednesday 7 September	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Paul Baird 4938 5039 All members welcome
Saturday 10 September	Bird Watch near Bengalla Mine	West of Bengalla Mine site, accessed via Wybong Road	Tom Clarke 0418 411 785 [Amy Harburg 0428 429 525 or 6542 9500]
Sat/Sunday 10/11 September	BIGnet meeting	9.30am Warilla Bowls and Recreation Club, Barrack Heights, Illawarra	Liz Crawford 4959 3663
Wednesday 14 September	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Harold Tarrant – Observing Falcons in the Wild
Saturday 17 September	Hunter Wader Survey	10.00 am Ash Island 10.30 am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 – Ash Island Chris Herbert 4959 3663 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton
Monday- Wednesday 19-21 September	Mid-Week Camp	Seal Rocks (See April Newsletter on www.hboc.org.au for details)	Seal Rocks Holiday Park 1800 112 234 or Treachery Camp, Seal Rocks 4997 6138 Pam Hill 4984 5270
Tuesday 20 September	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 Please ring to confirm
Tues - Thursday 20–22 September	Rufous Scrub-bird Monitoring, Gloucester Tops IBA	Camp at Sharpes Creek on Tues 20 and Wed 21	Alan Stuart 4952 8569
Sunday 25 September	Field Outing: Private property at Lochinvar	8.00am corner of Windermere Road and New England Highway, Lochinvar – park in Windermere Road	Pam Durie 4950 4897
Friday 30 September	Biodiversity Day (Set-up around 8.30am)	10.00am Blue Gum Hills Regional Park, Minmi	Paul Baird 4938 5039 Tom Clarke 0418 411 785

OCTOBER

Saturday - Monday 1 - 3 October	Camp at Baerami Creek – National Park	Site details TBA	Robert McDonald 4923 1204
Tuesday 4 October	Mid-Week Outing – Blackbutt Reserve	7.30am Mahogany Drive carpark	Joy Nicholls 4957 3612
Wednesday 5 October	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Paul Baird 4938 5039 All members welcome
Wednesday 12 October	Club Meeting	7.30pm The Wetlands Centre	Speaker: Judy Harrington – White-bellied Sea-Eagles at Sydney Olympic Park Bird of the Evening: Lorna Mee
Saturday 15 October	Hunter Wader Survey	10.00 am Ash Island 10.30 am Various locations as directed	Alan Stuart 4952 8569 – Ash Island Chris Herbert 4959 3663 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton
Tuesday 18 October	Tomago Wetlands Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Neville McNaughton 4951 1265 Please ring to confirm
Tuesday-Thursday 18-20 October	IBA monitoring for Rufous-Scrub-bird in Gloucester Tops	Camp at Sharpes Creek	Alan Stuart 4952 8569