



Newsletter

Hunter Bird Observers Club

Issue No. 6/16 December 2016

Affiliated with BirdLife Australia

- The Club aims to:
- Encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat; and
 - Encourage bird observing as a leisure-time activity

Little Terns are a beach nesting species, as demonstrated by this photo of a chick taken by Neil Fraser at Port Stephens on 12th December.



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Please send Newsletter articles direct to the Editor,
 Dan Williams at scythrops@yahoo.com.au
 Deadline for the next edition – 5 February 2017

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President's Column

Everyone has their favourites and birders are no exceptions. You may be a rainforest devotee, a woodland lover, or you may be drawn to ocean wanderers or the birds of the floodplains. But what about the common birds or the apparently unlovely? Miners and Mynas spring to mind. Both species are quite unpopular amongst birders, and in some ways for good reason. Both are very successful in our neighbourhoods and usually to the detriment of other bird species. Yet the individuals of both species that we have in our backyards should perhaps be afforded a little more understanding than the contempt we give them, if we consider the plight they find themselves in.

It's true that the local individuals we see are poor representatives of their respective clans, but that really isn't their fault. Each has the unfortunate ability to take advantage of the way humans change the landscape. Miners do well on the native plants we raise in our gardens and their size and group alliance tendencies allow them to exploit the open habitats we proscribe. Mynas, in different ways to miners, are also able to weather the attacks of larger birds, while exploiting lawn habitats and the rubbish we so often neglectfully discard. Yet neither species behave in a manner that is true to their original species identity. A species is more than just a pattern of colour and shape – each bird species is as much defined by the resources they use, the habitats they live in and the communities they influence. In high quality

woodland, Noisy Miner family groups grow into dominating sizes less often, and these are the 'real' Noisy Miners.

Spare a thought for some of these species that are being urbanised to the detriment of more naturally occurring populations. It is possible that naturally occurring individuals may be in dire straits in some parts of their range, while being declared a too abundant pest in an urban setting. Common Mynas have perhaps ventured further down the road of true identity loss than our own miners, particularly here in Australia, since they never naturally occurred in the Australian setting. Whether it continues to exist in its original guise somewhere in Asia is perhaps doubtful, so its true identity may be extinct in the wild. Yet neither of these birds can be blamed for the adaptations they've made; the blame must lie squarely at our own feet.

Both miners and mynas are beautiful in their own way, even if some of their behaviours attract our disdain, but I'm not sure there is any fairness in maligning these new species we've essentially created by our changes to their original habitats.

Happy birding and a safe Christmas period to all.

Allan Richardson

New Members

The Club extends a warm welcome to:

Sarah Allison of The Hill
Elspeth Bradbury of Eleebana
Paul Huolohan of Coal Point
Jeff Jones of Warabrook
Stewart Knight of New Lambton Heights

Peter and Georgia Phillips of Salamander Bay
Mark Shanks of Kincumber
Brooke Weber of Belmont North
Dorothy Zammit of Toronto

We hope to see you at club meetings and outings.

Health and Safety Awareness for Activities

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

Please sign the attendance register at field outings and also at meetings. If you leave an outing early, please let the leader know before you go.

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

Profile of an HBOC Member

Mike Newman has had a life-long involvement in bird research and conservation. When he moved from Tasmania to the Hunter Region in 1993, he soon joined Hunter Bird Observers Club. His passion for birds and their welfare are underpinned by a common-sense, practical approach and the knowledge that their conservation is reliant on knowing as much as possible about their life histories.

Mike almost immediately established monthly surveys at several sites including Green Wattle Creek, Warakeila (a private property in the upper Hunter) and Black Rock Road, and jointly helped set up monthly surveys at Morpeth Wastewater Treatment Works. More importantly, he encouraged other people to set up their own monitoring areas. Some sites now have data sets spanning more than 20 years.

All data collected (in excess of 3000 surveys) have been entered into the BirdLife Australia (BLA) Atlas project (Birdata), which now has a new portal, making it so much easier to enter information online. He initiated the now annual return to HBOC of all data entered into the BLA Atlas Project database. This has led to publication of statistics for most species in the Annual Bird Report, the production of range maps, and assisted in numerous species analyses published in *The Whistler* by Mike or others.

Mike supported HBOC conservation efforts over 14 years and wrote many letters to government agencies

objecting to land clearance in a valley where over 80% of native vegetation has already disappeared. He attended many meetings with local industry, negotiating for positive outcomes for bird habitat. He was also willing to share his knowledge and experience with other HBOC members, both formally and informally. Mike was also a member of HBOC's Records Appraisal Committee from 2006 to 2014.

Mike has been joint editor of the occasional journal *The Whistler* since 2008 and in that time-consuming role has encouraged many people who have never written a semi-scientific or scientific paper to write papers or short notes for the journal. He has also written or co-written at least 33 articles for *The Whistler* about Hunter birdlife, as well as articles published in other journals, thereby greatly increasing our knowledge of avian habits and range.

He served as co-Field Studies Officer from 2009 to 2014 and jointly organised such studies as the Rufous Scrub-bird surveys and Ash Island Burnt Site studies.

Even though Mike returned to live in Tasmania in 2014 he continues as joint editor of *The Whistler* and to support HBOC in every possible way. In October, he visited to help with the Rufous Scrub-bird surveys at Gloucester Tops and to check out many of his favourite former haunts.

AGM in February 2017 and Membership Renewal

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland, on Wednesday 8 February 2017 (noting the new start time of 19:00). Notices relevant to the AGM are available on the website and will be mailed to those who receive their Newsletter by post. Forms for nomination of Committee positions are included and must be submitted to the Committee by Wednesday 1 February 2017.

Also, a reminder that with the New Year comes the renewal of Club membership. Membership fees are due on 1 January. Please ensure that you have paid your

annual fees by the April Club Meeting, Wednesday 12 April 2017. Any members who have not paid their fees by then will be regarded as un-financial and will not receive any further newsletters or mail-outs until they become financial again. New members that joined from September 2016 are not due for renewal until 2018.

Fees are currently set at \$35 single, \$40 family and \$5 for junior (under 16 years old) members. Fees can be paid in person to the Treasurer at any club night (noting that there is no club night in January) or by direct bank transfer – please see the Club website for details.

Regent Honeyeater Breeds in the Lower Hunter

A local birdwatcher made the find of a lifetime when she noticed a pair of yellow-and-black birds in a park south of Cessnock.

What she found was a pair of Critically Endangered Regent Honeyeaters feeding on blossoming Silky Oak trees in Poppethead Park, Kitchener. The birds were first found by birdwatcher and member of the Hunter Bird Observers Club, Shelly Zvingulis, on 18 November. The most exciting news though is that they were accompanied by a juvenile bird, probably only a couple of weeks out of the nest. The age and behaviour of the juvenile bird indicates that it fledged from a nest locally, possibly very close to Poppethead Park itself.



Regent Honeyeater by Shelly Zvingulis

“It was exciting enough to have found such a rare and endangered bird,” said Shelly, “but to know that they have bred in the area is amazing.”

The Regent Honeyeater is one of Australia’s most threatened bird species. Recent population estimates are between 350-400 adult birds. The species is listed as Critically Endangered under all threatened species

Publications Milestones

The 2016 issue of The Whistler and the 2015 bird report have recently been published and are being distributed to members. They are being distributed by hand at club meetings and outings over the coming few months. Copies will be posted to members who can’t get along to club activities and can’t arrange for someone to collect for them – this service is only available on request because postal costs are fairly steep these days.

legislation and international conventions, meaning that it is at extremely high risk of extinction in the immediate future. The forests of the Cessnock area have been recognised as a ‘Key Biodiversity Area’ based on their importance to Regent Honeyeaters (and Swift Parrots).

BirdLife Australia monitors the population of Regent Honeyeaters with funding from the NSW government’s ‘Saving Our Species’ program and maintains a national database of sightings. Project Coordinator for BirdLife Australia’s ‘Woodland Birds for Biodiversity’ project Mick Roderick, says it is a very important find.

“We have not been able to confirm successful nesting in the Lower Hunter since the well-documented breeding event that occurred in the Hunter Economic Zone (Tomalpin Woodlands) in 2007–2008.”

“We have recorded significant numbers of birds in the area in recent years and have seen nests being built. We strongly suspected breeding has occurred, but we’ve had no proof until now. Shelly has made a very important observation and is to be commended for reporting it.”

BirdLife Australia is working to recover populations of the Regent Honeyeater as part of broad, multi-jurisdiction recovery team. Records of Regent Honeyeaters are invaluable. Anyone who sees one is encouraged to call (03) 9347 0757 or email woodlandbirds@birdlife.org.au.

Article sourced from <http://www.birdlife.org.au/media/critically-endangered-regent-honeyeater-breeds-in-the-lower-hunter/>

It’s the 10th issue of The Whistler, and thus a substantial milestone. Over the ten years since the first issue in 2007, there have been about 150 articles published, either as full papers or short notes. Collectively these have massively enhanced our knowledge about Hunter Region birdlife. It’s been an eclectic collection of articles in that time, and from an eclectic selection of authors. Everyone involved (authors, referees, editors,

Club Activity Reports

production & distribution) deserve our thanks and congratulations.

It's the 23rd annual bird report and this latest one features several innovations. The most important of those is that there are now distribution maps for all the common and most of the not-so-common species. Also, for migrant species and seabirds, there are timelines showing when they are most likely to be present in our

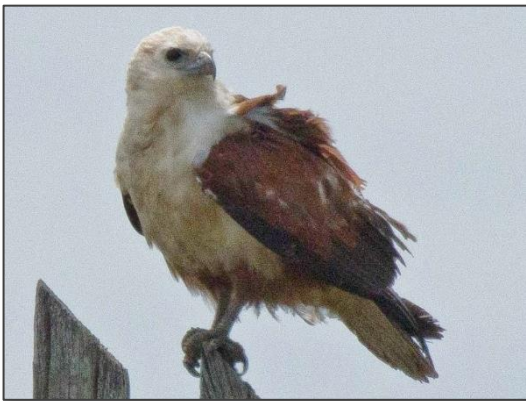
Club Activity Reports

Stockton Sandspit

1 November 2016

On arrival at the Stockton Sandspit we were entertained by 10 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos which flew in and landed near us. Neither the weather nor the tides were favourable, but the mid-week outing for November was enjoyed by 22 people, including two new members who have moved from the Central Coast.

We began at the Stockton Sandspit near the carpark. From there we could see about 50 Eastern Curlews, a Whimbrel, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits, a flight of Curlew Sandpipers flying towards the dykes, Masked Lapwings, White-faced Heron and two Chestnut Teal. The two Pied Oystercatchers, although present, don't seem interested in nesting at the moment. From the shore, we saw a second year Brahminy Kite flying low along the lagoon.



Brahminy Kite by Rob Palazzi

Along the bank beside the road we found 18 Grey-tailed Tattlers and two Terek Sandpipers. In the mangroves, there was a variety of cormorants and egrets. Two Striated Herons kept us, and the telescopes, occupied for some time. We then moved further down the channel to the grassland opposite the oval and found six Pacific Golden Plover. A walk to the wreck produced a

region. So, it has become not just an annual record but also a reference book for the bigger picture about Hunter Region birdlife.

Please be sure to collect your copies of both these publications as soon as you can.

variety of other birds. The birdcall at morning tea time totalled 56 species, to which we later added another four.

Recently some members have explored interesting tracks near the large new subdivision at Fern Bay. The tracks are on Worimi Conservation Land on the southern side of the four-wheel drive track. We moved to this area and walked up to four kilometres. It was a bit hot for the birds by this time but we still managed some good observations including two Black-faced Monarchs, a Leaden Flycatcher, Mistletoebird, White-throated Gerygone, Olive-backed Oriole and Rufous Whistler.

Great Knots, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, a Little Tern, Golden-headed Cisticola and White-browed Scrubwren were seen by some as we returned home via the Sandspit.



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo by Rob Palazzi

Judi Thomas

Broke Area

20 November 2016

A generous 8am meeting time at Broke Park and 15 people (with about 10 cars) turned up. It was a cloudy start but then got quite sunny and up to 27°C.



Mistletoebird by Rob Palazzi

We checked out four local areas. The park at Broke was reasonably quiet but still gave us a good list. Striated and Spotted Pardalotes, a close encounter with a Mistletoebird – eating mistletoe fruit right in front of us, a chattering Sacred Kingfisher, Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Rufous Whistlers, Double-barred Finches (at a nest), White-browed Scrubwrens and a Hobby in a hurry.

At our morning tea spot at Fordwich Crossing, we had Double-barred Finches and a sole Zebra Finch, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Red-rumped Parrots, great views of Crested Shrike-Tits (a new bird for some) and, unfortunately, a raptor being attacked by a Nankeen Kestrel. At first, we decided it was a Black Falcon but, with hindsight (and a photo), it was a Peregrine Falcon. There was also a group of four Rufous Whistlers having ongoing vibrant discussions.



Double-barred Finch by Rob Palazzi

We then moved to Bulga Park – toilets and a shelter from the sun for our early lunch. We got Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Eastern Rosellas and Noisy Friarbirds.

Finally, we convoyed to Wallaby Scrub Road – controversial mine territory – and stayed outside the fence. It was fairly quiet but we did see a Wedge-tailed Eagle and saw Dusky Woodswallows collecting nesting material, as well as White-plumed Honeyeaters and White-winged Choughs.



Dusky Woodswallow by Rob Palazzi

It was a longish day but, all up, we got 69 birds seen and heard. And a fun day for some members who got several new birds. A special thanks to Peter Alexander for guiding us at fairly short notice

Anthony Gooden

Earthcare Park

6 December 2016

A large group of birders met on the Tuesday morning at Earthcare Park, Tenambit where we wandered for around two hours. We were pleased to welcome Kevin, a visiting English birder, and Linda whose attendance had been well-flagged in the preceding days. They both saw several new species, so no doubt by the end went home feeling very happy.

Earthcare Park is improving as the habitat rehabilitation program there proceeds. There are plenty of trees popping up and we ended up with quite a respectable bird list, including a pair of Long-billed Corellas (along with many of their close relatives) and there were also several honeyeater types in small numbers, including Brown-headed and Fuscous Honeyeaters. At one point a very large flock of White-throated Needletails (of ~400 birds) drifted over us – they were quite high up and in glary conditions due to the cloud cover, so we couldn't easily check them out for more exotic co-travellers.

We then went around to Ray Lawler Reserve in Morpeth where there were no Nankeen Night-Herons, to everybody's disappointment. However, we found lots of other birds including Rufous Fantail, Satin Bowerbird, juvenile Swampheens and Moorheens hanging around with their parents, and also a Willie Wagtail on a nest. But the highlight was to find an Olive-backed Oriole nest with one chick still in it and a second chick sitting on a branch not far away. It was very punk-like and many photos of it

Field Studies – Busy in October
were taken (Bob Stewart has put one of them up on HBOC’s Facebook page if you want to take a look).

We found 76 species over the morning (within a 5km radius encompassing the two sites). Details about both sites are in the Maitland birding route if you are interested in making a follow-up visit.

Field Studies – Busy in October

HBOC is involved in several important long-term studies and October is very much at the pointy end of those activities. Every month we survey the waterbirds in the Hunter Estuary, with usually 6-8 people involved, and October was no exception. Many other club members count waterbirds at their local and/or favourite wetlands each month. All the data are published as monthly summaries in the annual bird report. In fact, the 2016 ABR will have some extra tables because more wetlands are being monitored than ever before.

October is the time each year when we go to Broughton Island and the Gloucester Tops to do surveys (we also go to Broughton Island in autumn). The scenery on Broughton Island is amazing and the birdlife is quite special too. Getting around the island is tricky – the terrain abounds with trip hazards (vines at ground level, many shearwater burrows) and the rock shelves below the cliff formations disappear when the tide rolls in. Some of our survey points we can only reach at low tide and we have to calculate the timing of them carefully. A group of four of us (we had room for more, but no volunteers) spent three days there over 10-12 October, with highlights including watching Little Penguins coming ashore to their burrows, observing Silvereyes bringing food to a nest right behind the spacious NPWS hut where we stay, and seeing a White-bellied Sea-Eagle casually pluck a swimming Wedge-tailed Shearwater from the water in a perfectly timed swoop.

Our bird list for Broughton Island, based on visits since 2012, now stands at 57 species, just over half of which are residents or regular visitors. In this latest visit, we again recorded Lewin’s Rails at a few spots (they are “common” on the island) but this time we also found several Buff-banded Rails. We’d only had one prior record, so conditions must be favourable for them currently.

After all that excitement, about 20 of us adjourned for a well-earned end-of-year lunch at the Regal Hotel in Tenambit.

Alan Stuart



ABR map showing occurrence of Lewin’s Rail on Broughton

Just over a week later, ten of us were in the Gloucester Tops. Officially we were doing a two-day survey (20-21 October) but most people went up on the Wednesday and did some private birding as a bit of a warm-up. Our focus up there is Rufous Scrub-birds – since 2010 we have been monitoring their territories within the boundaries of our survey area. However, we record all the birds and by now we have developed a pretty good understanding about the birds of the Gloucester Tops. Highlights this year included Red-browed Treecreepers and Olive Whistlers in good numbers (whereas hardly any Crescent Honeyeaters or red robins except for Rose Robin), and Paradise Riflebird, Bassian Thrush and Lewin’s Rail all at >1,200m.



ABR map showing restricted range of Rufous Scrub-bird

Future Club Activities

This year, with so many volunteers, we completed our targeted program early. This gave us the opportunity to repeat what we did in 2012 – to survey the 10 km descent from the Tops at ~1,200m to the campsite at ~350m. It was somewhat of a logistical challenge to set this up in a way that no-one needed to walk more than 3 km. By strategic positioning of cars, we managed it. This year, Paradise Riflebirds were recorded in seven of the ten 1 km transects. It was very interesting to note the transitioning of bird populations during the descent. We'll aim to repeat this altitudinal profiling within the next couple of years (resources permitting) – with three

sets of results we might have enough data to see some patterns emerging.

All the above field studies are done in collaboration with the local land managers (NPWS, Hunter LLS) and we routinely share the results with them and discuss the implications. If you would like to help in the field studies program, either on a regular or occasional basis, your contributions would be most welcome. Get in touch with me at any time, to discuss.

Alan Stuart

Future Club Activities

Australia Day Weekend Camp to Smiths Lake

26 to 30 January 2017

The January camp in 2017 is from Thursday 26 to Monday 30 and is being held at UNNSW Smiths Lake Research Field Station.

This is a special location and available for special activities. We are privileged to be able to visit it. There is dormitory type accommodation (camping also available) and communal kitchen with cooking requirements, fridges and stoves, flushing toilets, showers and sheltered communal type areas. There is also opportunity to swim in the lake.

Water is from rainwater tanks and although there is plenty some care is required in using this valuable resource. Insect repellent is also advised

The fees are \$15 per adult per night, with the cost of children being subsidised by the Club, so as not to overburden our young families. I will be collecting the camp fees at camp.

The UNSW Smiths Lake Field Station is located on the south-western shore of Smiths Lake, near the village of Bungwahl. It is about 35 km south of Forster, NSW.



The magnificent Smiths Lake entrance

From Bulahdelah, take the Lakes Way, which leaves the Pacific Highway a few kilometres north of the town. At Bungwahl, turn right into Seal Rocks Road. Proceed towards Seal Rocks for 2.3 km. then turn left at Horse Point Road (a dirt road opposite the Fish Co-op). Proceed straight ahead for 1.6 km until you reach the field station. Note: Ignore all signs and do not turn into Dogwood Road.

It is worthwhile reading the UNNSW Smiths Lakes Field Station users guide on the net to ensure you are aware of its special features and problems we may encounter.

Lorna Mee

BirdLife Australia Twitchathon / Birdathon 2016

This year's Twitchathon went national, with a few rule changes to provide balance for teams competing in other States. However, nothing has changed with regards to the Hunter teams dominating the 24-hour main race, which proved to be a very NSW-centric thing.

Many of the NSW main race teams were hampered by the flooded inland conditions, although the winners clearly capitalised on them!

I'll leave the results for more official channels, but there's a couple of reports available from our teams to digest in the interim.

Dan Williams

Dodgy Drongos Report

The Drongos entered this year's race with a new look team and a new look route. The Co-pilot was under the knife getting a much-needed tune up before our 2017 campaign, whilst Robbie Drongo was busy socialising and prepping for his new job. Luckily for Maxie and I, Josh Bergmark was itching for a team and the three of us set off for some much needed oiling the day before the race...

http://www.hboc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016_Dodgy_Drongos_Twitch_Report.pdf

Access the above link for the full story.

Back o' Bourke Buzzards Report

As the dust settled following the 2015 competition, the usual post-Twitch blues were softened by the obligatory early-stage planning efforts for 2016. Some of the best planning decisions can be made fresh off the back of the previous year's mistakes and/or shortcomings. Inevitably this also involved toying with the idea of an alternate Saturday base. However, the lure of Bourke eventually prevailed and the Buzzards prepared for another trip to their newly adopted homeland...

http://www.hboc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Buzzards_Twitchathon_2016.pdf

Access the above link for the full story.



Every Twitcher's worst nightmare...



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- *Riverwood Downs Weekends.**

Contact: Dick Jenkin 0407 267207

E: richardnjenkin@bigpond.com

W: www.jenkinphotography.com.au

Whistler 11 – New Authors Wanted



The HBOC Whistler 10 publication is now done and dusted and you might think that the editors would be looking for a break. Not so! Whistler 11 is due on the streets in a little over 12 months and we need to get cracking – now! Some of you, I know are already working on articles, some of you are ‘thinking’ about it and some of you have probably never considered being involved in such a project. So:

- Do you have survey data but don’t know what to do with it?

- Have you been working on a long-term survey project and would like to publish some interim findings?
- Do you have information in old field note books and are not sure whether it is usable data or not?
- Would you like to improve your knowledge of birds through analysis of behaviour and distribution?
- Do you have some interesting observations on bird behaviour that you think are worth documenting?

You don’t need a PhD in biological science to write an article for Whistler. With guidance and support from other HBOC members, you can become a published author and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of ornithology within the Hunter Region. If you don’t have your own pet project, there are many areas with years of HBOC survey data that have never been analysed. Nearly 50% of the birds that occur in our region are either threatened or have declining reporting rates. Every item of published information about birds in the Hunter Region contributes towards efforts to protect our birds and their habitat.

So, if any of the above points ticks a box for you, get in touch with one of the following.

Neil Fraser: neil8fff@gmail.com, 02-49810197

Mike Newman: omgnewman@bigpond.com

Harold Tarrant: haroldandjudith@virginmedia.com

Please get in touch now and don’t wait until the middle of 2017.

Neil Fraser

Recent Observations

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 the easiest way is to send an email to hunterbirding-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.au . 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?! In addition to being a forum for interesting discussions on issues such as bird identification and behaviour it is also a great place to report your observations. Some of the Hunterbirding observation highlights from the last couple of months include:

- Two Grey Currawongs, Pilotbirds and Red-browed Treecreeper observed at Mount Corricudgy on 3 October;
- A Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Emerald Dove and three Wompoo Fruit-Doves recorded at Cape Hawke on 4 October
- A flock of almost 30 Chestnut-breasted Mannikins seen at Hexham Swamp on 6 October;
- Eastern Reef Egret, Lewin's Rails and Buff-banded Rails present at Broughton Island on 11 October;
- A pair of Red-winged Parrots investigating a hollow at Cassillis Park Rest Area on 11 October;
- Two Sanderlings surveyed at Worimi Beach on 14 October, with three and a Great Knot there on 11 November;
- Painted Honeyeaters and Horsfield's Bushlark reported at Medhurst Bridge on 16 October;
- An Eastern Reef Egret observed at Fingal Bay on 18 October;
- A pair of nesting Spectacled Monarchs reported at O'Sullivan's Gap Rest Area on 18 October;
- Two Latham's Snipe seen at Bunning's Swamp, Wallsend on 21 October;
- A possible Barking Owl heard calling at Belmont on 24 October;
- Paradise Riflebird, Noisy Pitta and Spectacled Monarch present at O'Sullivan's Gap Rest Area on 26 October
- Four Painted Honeyeaters recorded at Medhurst Bridge on 27 October;
- A possible Wandering Tattler sighted at Crowdy Head on 28 October;
- A general abundance of Musk Lorikeets reported from across the Hunter Valley throughout October;
- White-browed Babblers and White-winged Triller at Giants Creek on 13 November;
- A Black-necked Stork spotted along Anambah Road on 15 November;
- A Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove heard at Cape Hawke on 15 November;
- A Sanderling recorded at Broughton Island on 17 November;
- Eastern Grass Owl seen in the Hunter Estuary on 17 November;
- A pair of Regent Honeyeaters with a juvenile bird seen at Kitchener on 18 November;
- White-backed Swallows and Black Falcon observed near Broke on 20 November;
- Over 30 Fork-tailed Swifts seen with White-throated Needletails over Kotara/Blackbutt on 21 November;
- Australian Logrunner and Spectacled Monarch seen at O'Sullivan's Gap Rest Area on 22 November; and
- A Cook's Petrel, 16 Gould's Petrel and c.200 Grey-faced Petrels from the Port Stephens pelagic on 27 November.

Bird records are obtained by the club through a variety of means, in addition to bird records communicated via Hunterbirding others are received through the BA atlas database, club outing sighting sheets, the club night observations forum and direct communications with the record officers. Of particular interest to the club are those records of regional significance, including sightings of the more unusual species, observations of breeding activity, early and late records of migratory birds and significantly large counts. A selection of records of this nature reported at the club nights and through direct communications is provided below. Unfortunately, space limitations do not enable all of the records to be reproduced here. However, the club is appreciative of all records that are received and all contributors are acknowledged in the Annual Bird Report.

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observer
Black-tailed Godwit	1	Early Oct	Smiths Lake	A. Fawcett

Club Activities December 2016 to February 2017

DATE	EVENT	MEETING PLACE & TIME	CONTACT
DECEMBER 2016			
Sunday 18 December	Field Outing – Seaham / Raymond Terrace	7.30 am at Seaham Bird Hide	Lorna Mee 0499 015 500
Tuesday 20 December	Tomago Wetland Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 Please ring to confirm
JANUARY 2017			
Saturday 14 January	Hunter Wader Survey	10.00 am Ash Island 10.30 am Other locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 – Ash Island Dan Williams 0408 023 262 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay Steven Cox 0409 848 390– Tomago Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 - Hexham
Tuesday 17 January	Tomago Wetland Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 Please ring to confirm
Australia Day Long Weekend 26-30 January	Long Weekend Camp	Camp at Smiths Lake. See Newsletter article or website for details	Lorna Mee 0499 015 500
FEBRUARY 2017			
Wednesday 1 February	Management Committee Meeting	6.30pm – 9.30pm Garden Suburbs School	Allan Richardson 0459 806 176 All members welcome
Tuesday 7 February	Mid-week Outing – Hexham Swamp	7.30am at the car park on the left over the bridge	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008
Wednesday 8 February	AGM & Club Night	7.00pm The Wetlands Centre, Shortland	Guest Speaker: Beth Mott “The Powerful Owl Project”
Friday 10 February	Port Stephens Waterbird Survey	Various locations as directed. Numbers strictly limited.	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 almarosa@bigpond.com
Saturday 11 February	Hunter Wader Survey	9.00 am Ash Island 9.30 am Other locations as directed	Alan Stuart 0409 978 171 – Ash Island Dan Williams 0408 023 262 – Kooragang Jack Adams 4971 5334 – Swansea Jenny Powers 4944 7274 – Stockton Sue Hamonet 4958 1023 – Swan Bay Steven Cox 0409 848 390– Tomago
Sunday 19 February	Field Outing – Boys Walk	7.30 am at Boys Walk, Cooranbong	Lene Parashou 4950 2768 Allan Richardson 0459 806 176
Tuesday 21 February	Tomago Wetland Survey	7.30am Entry to Tomago House	Ann Lindsey 4951 2008 Please ring to confirm
Sunday 26 February	Family Picnic – Hunter Wetlands Centre	9.30 am at the Hunter Wetlands Centre, Shortland	Robert McDonald 0408 877 827